Chapter - 5

Ideas on Man:
The Universal Voice
Rabindranath Tagore’s ideas on man are really very special. Rabindranath Tagore speaks that man has great bond with nature. Rabindranath Tagore’s concept of man/human personality is finding its fruition through the realization of the feeling of intimacy with nature. From his childhood days, he is fascinated by the splendour of nature—the rising of the sun, the chirping of the birds and the whistling of the wind through the trees. He is of the opinion that nature does not lose herself but reveals its true colour to a person’s self, having its own eternal bindings with human nature. Nature is not alien but is essentially related to man. In the vastness of nature, one is not unknown stranger; one is her kith and kin.

He also compares the beautiful nature with one’s mother. Rabindranath Tagore thinks that there are essentially two senses in which one can think of one’s relationship with nature— one in which one ordinarily treat it as an insentient, objective mode for information, binding down man to the physical and essential needs; and the other in which it satisfies one’s personality with manifestations that make one’s life rich and stimulate one’s imagination in their harmony of forms, colours, sounds and movements. He argues that one is face to face with this world and one’s relations to it are manifold. One is always making things that will satisfy one’s need, and one comes in touch with Nature in one’s efforts to meet this need “The Surplus in Man: The Poet’s Philosophy of Man.” (S.C. Sen Gupta, *The Surplus in Man: Rabindranath Tagore and the Challenges of Today*, 39). Argues that the inter-relation between man and nature can be found at the lower or the communication stage and the higher or the communion stage. They are not two different stages. Rather, one stage is ultimately passing over to the growth of another stage.

Man has a very good communication with nature. Nature helps man to develop his personality in as much as man helps nature to reveal its beauty. Man grows along with nature in so far as he can identify himself with nature and
makes it his messenger of communication. With the help of nature man creates his own nature, creates beauty, and creates art. In his creativity and self-expression, man becomes conscious of the abundance, his ability to go beyond his physical finitude and through creation of art, strives to send his communication to the Supreme Person who reveals Himself to him. Again, Communication as a form of inter-relation between man and nature has two levels—one is the cognitive and the other is the existential. (49.)

At the cognitive level, nature contributes to knowledge not as an externality but as revealed to man. Rabindranath Tagore writes, “All our knowledge of things knows them in their relation to the Universe, in that relation which is truth.” (Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II, 496*).

But man due to his engagements with the day to day activities, forgets that nature is his. It is not because that the nature has grown out of touch with us, rather, we do not perceive nature in its aspect of unity; we are driven to destruction by our focus on the fragmentary. He laments that, “we grow out of touch with this great truth, and we forget to accept its invitation and its hospitality, when in quest of external success our works become unspiritual and unexpressive.” (496)

Rabindranath Tagore also quotes here Wordsworth’s line. “The world is too much with us; late and soon, Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers. Little we see in Nature that is ours”. (Ibid. 496) At the existential level, we see nature’s contribution to human development; and this is possible if one can free oneself from the attitude of closeness caused by the ego. There is always a correlation between the extent of receiving from the nature and separating from
the ego. There is now a deepening of self-knowledge, and self-development at the higher level of relatedness to nature is communion or unity.

Rabindranath Tagore thinks that the unity of man and nature has its source in the One or the Absolute. The spirit and nature are the twin aspects of the Absolute. It is in man’s consciousness of a deeper unity with nature, with the universe, and finally with the Supreme Person who has created this universe for man. Communion as a higher mode of relationship between man and nature is characterized by inwardness and depth. The depth has an educating purpose. Nature teaches man in as much as one teaches others. The communion as a matter under discussion is the experience of joy, freedom and love.

Therefore, in Rabindranath Tagore’s opinion nature forms the background for the development of human personality. Man and nature have a relation of collaboration and transcendence. It is not a relation of anti-thesis between man and nature-man against nature, but a relation of man with nature. Both man and nature are, ontologically, equally important for Rabindranath Tagore. (S.P. Banerjee, Rabindranath Tagore’s Concept of Personality, 31.).

However, man is not satisfied with what he is. He has a desire to transcend his own limitation and finitude and ultimately wants to reach a point where one is identical with oneself, and it is nature that helps man to realize this goal. Man carries within himself the beauty of nature and an urge to transcend one’s activity and reaches the Infinite.

Rabindranath Tagore says that man is a bridge between two poles. He remarks: “At one pole of my being I am one with stocks and stones. There I have to acknowledge the rule of universal law. That is where the foundation of my existence lies, deep down below....But at the other pole of my being I am
separate from all. There I have broken through the cordon of equality and stand alone as an individual. I am absolutely unique, I am I, I am incomparable.” (Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II, 306.*)

Interestingly Rabindranath Tagore asserts that realizing the Absolute/Infinite requires more toil and suffering. Rabindranath Tagore’s notion of the consciousness of consciousness (I=I) has affinity with the transcendental consciousness of Immanuel Kant. Kant says that all representations have relations to empirical consciousness and all empirical consciousness has a necessary relation with transcendental consciousness. It is necessary in our knowledge situation that all empirical consciousness belong to one transcendental consciousness, that is, the consciousness of ‘I’ or me. Kantargues, “…all empirical consciousness has a necessary consciousness of myself as original apperception. It is therefore absolutely necessary that in my knowledge all consciousness should belong to a single consciousness, that of myself.” (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, 142.*).

This abiding and unchanging ‘I’ (pure apperception) is the basis of all one’s representations. This pure perception is the highest principle in the whole sphere of human knowledge. This consciousness of ‘I’ or the thinking ‘I’ expresses the act of determining one’s existence. One is conscious of one’s own existence. This consciousness of one’s existence is given by self-intuition.

According to Rabindranath Tagore, man’s personality and creativity go together. Man comes out of his boundary of physical necessities and moves forward to realize the Infinite run on two parallel lines-that of utility and of self-expression. True freedom is the transcendence of mere being through creative becoming. This reminds us of the opinion of Sartre, when he says: “Man is all the time outside of himself: it is in projecting and losing himself beyond himself
that he makes man to exist; and, on the other hand, it is by pursuing transcendent aims that he himself is able to exist. Since man is thus self surpassing, and can grasp objects only in relation to his self surpassing, he is himself the heart and centre of his transcendence. There is no other universe except the human universe, the universe of human subjectivity”. (Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, 55).

The creation of art, music, painting and dance elevates man from a mere being to a personal man. The personality of man, according to Rabindranath Tagore, is “Personality of man, conscious of its inexhaustible abundance; it has the paradox in it that it is more than itself; it is more than as it is seen, as it is known, as it is used. And this consciousness of the infinite, in the personal man, ever strives to make its expressions immortal and to make the whole world its own.” (Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II*, 362.)

Sartrean’s notions of ‘man is not what he is, man is what he is not’ echoes in the writings of Rabindranath Tagore, when he says, “...man has a feeling that he is truly represented in something which exceeds himself. He is aware that he is not imperfect, but incomplete.” (Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. III*, 106.)

The personal man, according to Rabindranath Tagore, is the highest in man, the Eternal man, the Complete Man in this realization of the unity of beauty, truth and goodness. There is an inter-relation between the world in which one lives and the personality of man. In fact, this world is indispensable for the development of the personality of man. In his words, “with our love and hatred, pleasure and pain, fear and wonder, continually working upon it, this world becomes a part of our personality....If this world were taken away, our
personality would lose all its content.” (Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II, 353.*)

Rabindranath Tagore calls this *creative urge*, which is found within all human beings as the surplus in man. This surplus seeks its channel in the creation of the beautiful and the good that builds man’s true world; and this creation is the proper function of Art. In creating Art, man reveals himself and not the object. In his creativity, man realizes the Supreme Person (*Jivan Devata*), who has made this world so personal to man. Rabindranath Tagore thinks that “man is true, where he feels his Infinity, where he is divine and the divine is the creator in him. Therefore, with the attainment of his truth, he creates. (359).

In his approaching the Supreme Person, man also gets the assurance of his immortality, for men are the symbol of light. Whenever they fully realize themselves they feel their immortality. Man can live in his own creation and considers the world of God as his own world. The Supreme Person reveals Himself to one in a world of endless beauty across the lightness world of facts. In this respect, he argues, man listens to the voices, which was once heard by the great Indian sages: “Hearken to me, ye children of the Immortal, dwellers of the heavenly Worlds, I have known the Supreme Person who comes as light from the dark beyond. (360).

While explaining the distinctiveness of human personality, Rabindranath Tagore also shows the difference between man and other animals. An animal is very nearly bound within the limits of its necessities, the greater part of its activities are being necessary for the self-preservation and the preservation of the race. Man on the other hand, has the capacity to transcend these necessities and exercises his freedom in creativity. According to him, “Man has a fund of emotional energy which is not all occupied with his self-preservation. This
surplus seeks its outlet in the creation of Art, for man’s civilization is built upon his surplus.” (Ibid. P.352.)

He further says that man as a knower is not fully himself; but as a person, he is the organic man, who has the inherent power to select things from his surrounding world and makes them his own. A work of art has its origin in a feeling of unity, which is creative, and therefore a successful work of art is a creative unity.

Rabindranath Tagore conceives of art as an encounter of the self with its other. The world and the personal man are face to face, like friends. The central theme of Rabindranath Tagore’s theory of art is the notion that art is a bridge across the chasm, which alienates the individual from the world. The art is a process of delineation. The intentionality of human consciousness maps on to a non-solipsistic world are brought out by this statement: Reality reveals itself in the emotional and imaginative background of one’s mind. One feels oneself in a special field of realization.

The consciousness of the real within me seeks for its corroboration the touch of the Real outside me. In art “we express the delight of this unity by which the world is realized as humanly significant. Where the harmony is not deeply felt, we are aliens and perpetually homesick. By nature man is an artist; he never receives passively a physical representation of things round him. There goes on a continual adaptation, a transformation of his sentiments and imagination.” (Pabitra Kumar Roy, Beauty, Art and Man : Recent Indian Theories of Art, I).

Furthermore, there is another important characteristic in man, which the other creatures are lacking. In Rabindranath Tagore’s opinion, it is the dualism in
man’s consciousness of what is and what and ought to be. Again, in the animal life, the conflict is between what is and what is desired, but in man, the conflict is between what is desired and what should be desired. Rabindranath Tagore says, “What is desired dwells in the heart of the natural life, which we share with animals; but what should be desired belongs to a life which is far beyond it.” (Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II, 378.*) Therefore, the important distinction between what is and what ought to be looms large in the relation between man and other animals. In this relation, there is a continuation and a conflict. Many things that are good for one are evil for another.

This necessity of struggle with himself has produced an ingredient to his persona, which is character. From the life of desire, it directs man to the life of purpose, and in Rabindranath Tagore’s words, it is the life of the moral world. In the ethical world, we come from the world of nature into the world of humanity, the world where man has his freedom of creation. The human world is truly a world of ideas and institutions, of stored knowledge and trained habits. This is the world of man’s second birth, the extra-natural world, where the dualism of the animal life and the moral makes us conscious of our personality as man. It thus, shows a development from the natural order of existence to a spiritual order of existence, that is, to the inter-personal (I-thou) level of existence.

In this inter-personal level there is certainly a special role for ‘evil’ to play. So, Rabindranath Tagore says, “In the very beginning of his career Man asserted in his bodily structure his first proclamation of freedom against the established rule of nature.” (Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. III, 103.*) So evil and imperfection are with him from the very beginning.
Then the question why there is evil in existence is the same as why there is imperfection, or, in other words, why there is creation at all. One must take it for granted that it could not be otherwise; that creation must be imperfect, must be gradual, and that it is futile to ask the question, why one is? But this is the real question one ought to ask: Is this imperfection the final truth, is evil absolute and ultimate? The river has its boundaries, its banks, but is a river all banks? Or are the banks the final facts about the river? Do not these obstructions themselves give its water an onward motion? The towing rope binds a boat, but is the bondage its meaning? Does it not at the same time draw the boat forward?

“The current of the world has its boundaries, otherwise it could have no existence, but its purpose is not shown in the boundaries which restrain it, but in its movement, which is towards perfection. The wonder is not that there should be obstacles and sufferings in this world, but that there should be law and order, beauty and joy, goodness and love. The idea of God that man has in his being is the wonder of all wonders. He has felt in the depths of his life that what appears as imperfect is the manifestation of the perfect; just as a man who has an ear for music realizes the perfection of a song, while in fact he is only listening to a succession of notes. Man has found out the great paradox that what is limited is not imprisoned within its limits; it is ever moving, and therewith shedding its finitude every moment.” (Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II*, 298.)

In fact, imperfection is not a negation of perfectness; finitude is not contradictory to infinity: they are but completeness manifested in parts, infinity revealed within bounds. Pain, which is the feeling of one’s finiteness, is not a fixture in one’s life. It is not an end in itself, as joy is. To meet with it is to know that it has no part in the true permanence of creation. It is what error is in one’s intellectual life. To go through the history of the development of science is to go
through the maze of mistakes it made current at different times. Yet no one really believes that science is the one perfect mode of disseminating mistakes.

The progressive ascertainment of truth is the important thing to remember in the history of science, not its innumerable mistakes. Error, by its nature, cannot be stationary; it cannot remain with truth; like a tramp, it must quit its lodging as soon as it fails to pay its score to the full. As in intellectual error, so in evil of any other form, its essence is impermanence, for it cannot accord with the whole. Every moment it is being corrected by the totality of things and keeps changing its aspect. We exaggerate its importance by imagining it as a standstill.

Could one collect the statistics of the immense amount of death and putrefaction happening every moment in this earth, they would appeal one. But evil is ever moving; with all its incalculable immensity it does not effectually clog the current of our life; and one finds that the earth, water, and air remain sweet and pure for living beings. All statistics consist of one’s attempts to represent statistically what is in motion; and in the process things assume a weight in one’s mind which they have not in reality.

For this reason a man, who by his profession is concerned with any particular aspect of life, is apt to magnify its proportions; in laying undue stress upon facts he loses his hold upon truth. A detective may have the opportunity of studying crimes in detail, but he loses his sense of their relative places in the whole social economy. When science collects facts to illustrate the struggle for existence that is going on in the kingdom of life, it raises a picture in one’s mind of ‘nature red in tooth and claw.’ But in these mental pictures one gives fixity to colours and forms which are really evanescent.
It is like calculating the weight of the air on each square inch of one’s body to prove that it must be crushingly heavy for one. With every weight, however, there is an adjustment, and we lightly bear our burden. With the struggle for existence in nature there is reciprocity. There is the love for children and for comrades; there is the sacrifice of self, which springs from love; and this love is the positive element in life. If one kept the search-light of our observation turned upon the fact of death, the world would appear to us like a huge charnel-house; but in the world of life the thought of death has, one finds, the least possible hold upon one’s mind. Not because it is the least apparent, but because it is the negative aspect of life; just as, in spite of the fact that one shuts one’s eyelids every second, it is the openings of the eye that count.

Life as a whole never takes death seriously. It laughs, dances and plays, it builds, hoards and loves in death’s face. Only when one detaches one individual fact of death does one sees its blankness and become dismayed. One loses sight of the wholeness of a life of which death is part. It is like looking at a piece of cloth through. Evanescent means ephemeral or transitory. Sadhana: The Realization of Life. It appears like a net; one gazes at the big holes and shiver in imagination.

But the truth is death is not the ultimate reality. It looks black, as the sky looks blue; but it does not blacken existence, just as the sky does not leave its stain upon the wings of the bird. When one watches a child trying to walk, one sees its countless failures; its successes are but few. If one had to limit one’s observation within a narrow space of time, the sight would be cruel. But one finds that in spite of its repeated failures there is an impetus of joy in the child which sustains it in its seemingly impossible task.
One sees it does not think of its falls so much as of its power to keep its balance though for only a moment. Like these accidents in a child’s attempts to walk, one meets with sufferings in various forms in one’s life every day, showing the imperfections in one’s knowledge and one’s available power, and in the application of one’s will. But if these revealed one’s weakness to one only, one should die of utter depression. So one should get educated to know the reality; he should get rid of the avidya.

Rabindranath Tagore’s Philosophy of Education cannot be understood without understanding his Meta Physical theory. In this theory the concept of universal man is very important. Referring to universal man as the ultimate reality Rabindranath Tagore elaborates the concept. He says “The truth is the infinite dwells in the ideal of unity which we find in the deeper relatedness.” (Sisir Kumar Das, The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II, 109).

Rabindranath Tagore was a great human being who had written voluminously in prose and touched almost all aspects of Indian life and culture, its history and tradition and tried to connect it to the other world. Strictly speaking, Rabindranath Tagore’s prose is imbibed with the spirit of his poetry. Its grandness and limitations are conditional by the fact that he is basically a poet. Its logic is the logic of poetry. In place of facts and figures there will be symbols; instead of agreements, there will be breezy warmth in it. It will be one-to-one talk. Its lyricism and inner beauty have a magnificent effect on the reader. The readers are convinced not by its agreements but by its swag and force. His thought on Man’s Humanism too has a significant place in literature.

Being a wonderful thinker, he gives maximum priority to the existence of human being in this world. He places man above all living things, Nature and sometimes even above God too. Rabindranath Tagore’s philosophy of
‘humanism’ has three aspects. First he mingles humanism with the whole world including God. Second he attributes ‘divinity’ to man and thirdly according to him ‘man’ is finite world being. In this way in all his works his love for humanity has been expressed soundly. At this point of time, before concentrating on these aspects of humanism let one know the nature of his ‘humanism’. However, in general the nature of Indian ‘humanism’ is based on ‘spiritualism’. So, humanism in India gives importance to spiritual and ethical nature of man, but Western humanists give more importance to material nature of man.

Man’s quest to know about himself is as old as he is. Philosophers of previous ages answered this question in their own way. Even the man in primitive stage was not satisfied with the fulfillment of material and biological needs but desired to know who he was. Many thinkers tried to answer this but it is a never ending one since each of them differ the other.

However, it is to be accepted by everybody that man is a complex creature to be defined. Man is a psychological being unlike animals and birds which possess life and matter. Man has ‘mind’ in addition to these. After this, man is a social being, who needs to be a socializer for the sake of the society. Since he is religious he requires some help from the higher beings in his life.

He becomes a spiritual being by realizing that humanity regards all creatures alike. In this way man’s complexity is there in his very nature. Truly accepting man as a material, living, philosophical, social and moral being, Rabindranath Tagore gives more importance for spiritual aspects of man.

Truly speaking, man has both spirituality and animalist in him. He combines in his very being both spirit and nature. Since he is a biological being he needs physical and material satisfaction. But without spiritual approach it is
incomplete. His glory and joy depends upon knowing more and more about himself. He wants to discover this and express himself in nature. But is this the real nature of man?

In this regard Rabindranath Tagore says that man is yet to realize his true nature. This real glory of man is hidden in him. All his works and accomplishments do not spell out his actual nature. He is not satisfied with his present state and wishes for what he ought to be. So Rabindranath Tagore says that when a man begins to have an extended vision of his true self, when he realizes that he is much more than at present he seems to be, he begins to get conscious of his moral nature. Then he grows aware of that which he is yet to be, and the state yet experienced by him becomes more real than that under his direct experience.

If moral instinct in man is extended, he observes the difference between ‘will’ and ‘wish’, and ‘desirable’ and ‘good’. Thus man has both higher and lower parts in his nature. The lower part gives him instant pleasure. But the higher or the real being of him leads to ‘good’ which is desired by his greater self. So man’s real nature is expressed only when he exceeds himself. That is why Rabindranath Tagore says that man is not imperfect but incomplete.

This is because he is yet to know the real meaning of himself. Just like mist covers the sun, one’s selfish desires cover one’s soul, which has a real vision. So sin is man’s failure, a revolt against his true spirit. So Rabindranath Tagore says, that it is one’s desires that limit the scope of one’s self realization, hinder one’s extension of consciousness and give rise to sin which is the inner most barrier that keeps one’s apart from one’s God.
Sin and evil are the nature of one’s self. So man’s external nature influences him to commit a sin, but the inner instinct always tries to stop him. According to Rabindranath Tagore the narrow self is the reason for his committing a sin. So Rabindranath Tagore says about man, “The truth, which is man, has not emerged out of nothing at a certain point of time, even though seemingly it might have been manifested then. But the manifestation of man has no end in itself—not even now.” (Sisir Kumar Das, The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. III, 90.)

He also says that man is not yet complete and so there will be imperfection in him. Here one can find, like other Indian thinkers Rabindranath Tagore too feels that basically man tends to be good. Christianity says that by nature man is sinful and guilty, but Indian philosophy in general accepts goodness in man’s nature. Rabindranath Tagore says though man has yet to reveal the infinity in his nature, the infinity is present in him and so by nature he is not sinful, but good. Rabindranath Tagore too like vedanties believes that with the removal of ignorance or avidya, man’s real nature can be discovered. His real nature or goodness is covered by ‘Aham’ which makes him limited.

The man truly neglects the material satisfaction only because it makes him ego-centered. So, he wants to get moral values. He transforms his ego-centeredness and works for the good of all. He wants to merge himself into the current of humanity and crosses the boundaries of the limited lower self. Thus transforming his dualism he moves to his universal self. Hence Rabindranath Tagore says about man, in his heart of hearts, man, the animal, reaches up to the world man. There he no longer wants more happiness, but something greater. He wants magnificence.
This magnificence gives him the power of giving himself and becoming universal. Thus by giving himself or by suffering pain he realizes perfection in his nature. “This suffering has driven man with his prayer to knock at the gate of the infinite in him, the divine thus revealing his deepest instinct, his unreasoning faith in the reality of the ideal the faith shown in the readiness for death, in the renunciation of all that belongs to the self”. (Sisir Kumar Das, The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II, 105.) All these speak volumes that man is divine and infinite by nature. He wants to get infinite beauty, perfect goodness and infinite truth.

According to Rabindranath Tagore this universal man is known by the individual not through direct realization. He says that reality, in all its manifestations reveals itself in the emotional and imaginative background of one’s mind. One knows it, not because one thinks of it, but because one directly feel it. It is not vanished from one’s conscious mind.

The concept of universal man in his philosophy agrees with the cosmic vision of divine in the Gita. The universal man is at the back of all movements, all change, and all systems in the universe. Man is very much a part of him. Man and nature cannot be conceived separate from God. The universal man includes both. Rabindranath Tagore himself says: I have never looked at God, man and nature as problems which can be considered in isolation from each other. I could never conceive of their occupying watertight compartments. “In discussing the reason of this conflict I have said that in the mind of man, there is, on the one hand, the Universal Man and on the other, the animal man limited by his self-seeking.” (Sisir Kumar Das, The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. III, 209.)
According to Rabindranath Tagore this universal man is in every individual person. He lives even in the humblest man. Therefore we should not neglect even the most poor, illiterate and humble human being. He said “He is there where the tillers are tilling the hard ground and where the path maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower and his garment is covered with dust. Put off the holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil. For Rabindranath Tagore personality is not something limited and mundane but also unlimited and supramundane, while in the human being it is found in the first form in universal man it may be seen in the second meaning.

Rabindranath Tagore explaining this meaning of the universal man said, Freedom exhibits the truth of his nature. Man is free in thinking, in imagination and in action. Rabindranath Tagore says of all his freedom, the freedom of thinking and imagining which is translated into works of science and arts, is the most distinctly human of all our faculties. With the assistance of this, man fulfils the dream of the Supreme Dreamer who though has not created him perfect, has given perfectness to his nature as a potentiality. About the mental capabilities of man, Rabindranath Tagore says that it is there to help a creature who has been left unfinished by his designer - undraped, undecorated, unarmored and without weapons, and what is worse hidden by a mind, whose emerges for the most part are not tamed and tempered into some difficult ideal of completeness upon a back ground which is bare. “The only goal of human life is to offer freedom and be free, the freedom that guides it to be life.” (210).

So man’s spirit is free in nature, but his ego blinds him, his desires do not let him to act freely. So, for total flourish of human being, he needs to be independent completely. One has much material, social, political and ethical bindings which obstruct one’s freedom. So desire less free actions give one pure
joy. Freedom of man is expressed in his personality. Man’s consciousness shared by him with animals has developed itself into personality.

At this there is no difference between animal and man and also man and man. But he differs from other beings. Rabindranath Tagore says that, what he meant by personality was a self-conscious principle of transcendental unity within man which comprehends all the details of facts that are individually his in knowledge and feeling, wish and will and work. In its negative aspects, it is limited to the individual separatedness while in its positive aspect it ever extends itself in the infinite through the increase of its knowledge, love and activities. In this way it is the basis of both his individual separateness and mingling with the universe.

The present philosophers differ from the ancient Indian philosophers in the concept of personality of man. The ancient Indian philosophers said that Absolute is Supreme and present everywhere, whereas man is tempted by slowly losing his self, man tries to mingle his self with the super self completely losing his own personality. Atman totally vanished and there remains only the ‘Paramatman’ at the end. But modern thinkers like Gandhiji, Rabindranath Tagore etc., do not accept these philosophies. The ancient thinkers accepted the spirituality of human being but never accepted the personality of human beings which is the base of his humanness. But modern thinkers give importance to the personality of man.

Rabindranath Tagore particularly doesn’t want the ‘atman’ be merged in ‘super atman’, but as distinct personality wants to enjoy the relationship of this personality with the associate personality in endless varieties of forms. According to Rabindranath Tagore the nature of human personality expresses itself in all love-relations and in his creations. He hates any system, and law in
the field of education, politics, religion and morality which becomes a hurdle in the growth of human personality since he believes it to be the real expression of man.

Since man is free, his creation is expressed in his creative arts and he becomes the partner of the supreme soul. So man’s true nature is not expressed when he is compelled, but when he is free and joyfully does. In “Creative Unity” Rabindranath Tagore says that human society is for the best expression of man, and that expression according to its perfection leading him to the full realization of divine in humanity. When that expression is obscure then his faith in the infinite that is within him is weak, then his aspiration cannot go beyond the idea of success.

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Rabindranath Tagore, explaining this meaning of the universal man said that this personality which is the conscious principle of oneness, the centre of relationships is the reality -therefore the ultimate object of attainment. I must emphasize this fact, that this world is a real world only in its relation to a central personality.

According to Rabindranath Tagore God is the perfect person. Human beings are persons in an imperfect sense. While man is an individual god, God is universal man. He is the supreme person. This supreme person is in two forms, Saguna and Nirguna. Both are two aspects of the same universal man god is the perfect idea type of man. He possesses human qualities. Rabindranath Tagore says that all human qualities find their suggestion in god. God has even the trait of action which is characteristically human.

He is the meeting ground of man and the world. It is in him alone that human beings exchange their experiences. Thus man tries to express himself in his creation of art and God gets expressed in his creation of world. Thus man too becomes a creator and creates a world for himself with his imagination and personality. Man is never contented with the world given to him. So in his acts man expresses the universal man, the ideal he has in his mind of the perfect man. Open the windows of our mind to the eternal reality of Man. Secondly, “The truth of man is in the heart of eternity, the fact of it being evolved through endless ages”. (Sisir Kumar Das, The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. III, 90). So Rabindranath Tagore feels that man as a creator is very great and has a lot of potential to create anything provided the creative energy is expressed rightly.

According to Rabindranath Tagore Man is free; God’s freedom is expressed in this creation. The creative personality of human being shows that
he is a lot more beyond animalism. An animal is bound to the law of nature and expresses only what is given to it by God and in return it cannot pay back anything. But in man the receptive stage has powered him to give. Thus he becomes a creator and offers his songs, paintings etc. to the supreme creator. Rabindranath Tagore says that God stands himself at his door and asks for his offerings.

He says if man were unconscious like animals, he would have satisfied with what he possesses, but he has the power to create. So man is free to express himself. He is never active on compulsion. Secondly man cannot be content by doing the world assigned to him by nature as animals and birds. His freedom permits him not to act for any use but for his ultimate expression. So here Rabindranath Tagore says, “The principle of unity which man has in his soul is ever active, establishing relations far and wide through literature, art, and science, society, state-craft and religion.” (Sisir Kumar Das, The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II, 291).

Man’s needs are unlimited and he has to strive hard for satisfying them. Man always tries to invent new things in the scientific world. In this field he has fought his mightiest battles, gained continual new life, made death glorious and far from evading troubles, as willingly and continually taken up the burden of fresh troubles. So in no way man fears troubles, pains and even facing death in doing these things just to express his real nature.

By instinct man is all individual and this individuality gives him scope to exhibit his uniqueness among the other creatures. Everyone is special and has no second to him. In this respect Rabindranath Tagore says, “There I have broken through the cordon of equality and stand alone as an individual I am absolutely unique. I am I, I am incomparable.” (306). Nothing can undo this individuality of
him and no other except the Ultimate can enter into this world of him which he
proudly says ‘Mine’. It is his independent will that powers him. Both in his
pride and love this independent will of him is expressed. If pride dominates, it
becomes self-centered or egotic and if love is preferred he is selfless and
universal.

In this way man is not only individual but also universal and he has the
ideal of perfection. This idea of perfect man is seen in every person and here he
is universal within himself. At this stage man feels he is incomplete and when he
is with the perfect man or universal man then only he will be complete.
Therefore, Rabindranath Tagore speaks out that he observed deeper endeavor of
his own heart and felt that he is not exclusive and individual; he is also one in
spirit with the universal man, under whose inspiration the individual engages in
expressing his ultimate truth crossing nature’s limitations.

Thus this universality of man provides him the strength to go beyond the
laws of nature. At this where man is universal; there is no difference between
man and man. So the inherent unity of man cannot be disturbed by his social,
economical, educational and political status. Thus man becomes the part of the
whole universe. He cannot be true unless he realizes this flow of universality
which is common to all and by which he is related to the world which is again
created by the God.

With this idea only Rabindranath Tagore says that man’s individuality is
not his highest truth, there is that in him which is universal. If he were made to
live in a world where his own self was the only factor to consider then that would
be the worst prison imaginable to him, for man’s deepest joy is in growing
greater and greater by more and more union with the all.
It is certainly unbearable for man if he cannot express himself or his individuality in his own works. It is equally painful for him if he remains only as a separate individual and never united with the universe. Where man discovers this unity with all, then he becomes free from all pains and sufferings. Man experiences this unity through his feeling of unity with God. So man is expression of God and he represents the creative spirit. This is the logic that man gets the glimpses of God in all objects of nature as well as in all other human beings.

In ‘The Religion of Man’ Rabindranath Tagore expresses that Man as a creation, represents the creator, and this is why of all creatures, it has been possible for him to comprehend this world in his knowledge and in his feeling and in his imagination, to realize in his individual spirit a union with spirit that is everywhere. So, as an individual man differs from others but he, being a part of the flow of humanity, is united with all.

One more thing is that individual man is limited to time and place but there is a flow of individuality of him which consists in his consciousness flowing from eternal time. This flow of individuality is unbreakable as his consciousness is forever. This flow again meets the flow of humanity which consists of the consciousness of all men of the past, present and future.

Rabindranath Tagore firmly believes in the theory of evolutionary process. He accepts that higher species of life have developed out of the lower. Man is the next stage of animal and so he has many traits of animals. At the same time he has many surplus also which proves his supremacy. The evolution of mind and spirit made man far superior to animals. He not only receives things as they are, but also adopts and transforms the things according to his own will.
Thus, his surplus feelings are expressed in his creative arts. In this evolutionary process, morality of man raises and he attains spirituality. Rabindranath Tagore calls this second birth as vedanties say ‘wijja’. When the morality is awakened man automatically reaches the region of what ought to be. It is correct to quote Rabindranath Tagore’s words here—“In this moral world we come from the world of nature into the world of humanity. We live and move and have our being in the universal man.” (Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, 378)

This clears that man desires to go beyond the present state of him. Unlike the other species, man’s mind always goes towards the unknown than towards known and towards distant than towards near. His impulse to know and learn makes him so special. One more thing of man which makes him great is that he doesn’t want to live in isolation, but wants company.

Man by nature is lower and doesn’t want to be in the shell of ‘aham’, but wants to be associated with others. In his love he is united with all-pervading spirit, who is also the breath of his soul. In man’s acts of his love, he reveals his wealth of soul. This is his greatness. Rabindranath Tagore wants to remind man that he is the child of immortality, his immortality consists in his greatness is compared by Rabindranath Tagore with the morning sun whose horizon is far before us. Man loves to live in future. The future is more precious for him than the present and so he sacrifices himself for all that lies in the future. Man’s greatness consists in this that he knows that he is not yet born; he is yet to realize his real nature. If existence is the criteria, there is no much difference between a lump of clay and a lotus flower. But the values in them differentiate them.

In the same manner, man’s value towards ideals distinguishes him from other creatures. He has an ideal of perfection in his mind. He wants to live but
not just wants to lead life. He wants to realize the human values and wants to live accordingly. Rabindranath Tagore says that ideal of every man is not only perfection of the self but also the realization of the divine in love and joy.

Love emanates from Brahman and it splits up into different colours as the ray of the sun when it is passed through a prism. Truth, Beauty and Goodness are the components of love. Man’s ideal is to know the perfect truth, perfect Beauty and perfect Goodness. But these ideals man cannot achieve in perfect degree, his ideal of perfection ever remains as an ideal, but it really inspires man towards greater levels of realization. Thus he proceeds towards the life of spiritual world. So man’s ideal is to become a perfect man or to become divine in nature. Though he can never become equal to God or Paramatman, the atman will be proceeding for the infinite forever.

Man and society are interrelated. Man lives in the society and the society exists for man. Man’s ideal is to serve society selflessly. Thus he has to seek the best development of human being. Certainly social circumstances influence the character and personality of man. For this there should be laws but according to Rabindranath Tagore laws must not obstruct the freedom of man. Laws must be in such a way that they should be accepted by all alike and of all time. So he says that to set up creeds and practices to which the universal man cannot respond is called barbarism.

From this discussion one may conclude that society should not be an obstruction to the growth of an individual. Actually it should enhance the scope of individual to expand himself. If the society deprive individual from attaining his position then certainly God has been insulted and if men are forced to do something without their willingness then men are insulted. Man can attain his best in a cozy and friendly atmosphere of freedom. Therefore society should be
careful in framing rules and that those rules should not confine the individual freedom. So Rabindranath Tagore wants to tell that man should respect the society as he is a dependant on society. He has to serve the society because that is called humanism.

Rabindranath Tagore accepts modern science and its inventions to the core but he never supported the idea that machines dominate man. Machines if help man’s progresses, then certainly they are boon to the society. But if these machines hamper the growth of individual then they are curse to the society. He has seen that in Western world man is reduced to machine. That hurts him a lot. To him humanity is rich, and hence, he feels pain when human personality is reduced. He agrees that human personality is above all. After all machines are invented by man so they should be under his control.

He says that in the pressure of machine man’s force of life is withered away, his soul gets imprisoned. But by the touch of love and joy this imprisoned soul can be freed. So machine has been defeated by man’s force of life. Man and humanity are supposed to rule lifeless machines. If man becomes a slave to machine all his internal skills are vanished and he becomes a pale shadow. This act is condemned by the great thinker who gives utmost priority to the humanism as a whole. According to him machines are mere machines which support man’s existence but never dominate him.

He is truly a grand sentinel of the entire human world. Though he speaks as an Indian, his message is recognized in every corner of the world which proves the challenging quality of his humanity. It is possible because he has a broad mind and he has never believed in any popular ‘ism’ or has tried to introduce any such ‘ism’ by himself. For him, the future urge is the urge of man; it is the striving of the new age to develop in the mind the faculty of universality.
Thus his pure feeling devoid of any prejudice and his social philosophy is certainly a progressive one.

**MAN AND RELIGION:**

Rabindranath Tagore was brought up in an atmosphere charged completely with religious fervor. His father, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore was one of the religious leaders of those times. The verses of Upanishads were uttered daily in their family. A lesser level man under such circumstances would have accepted the rich religious inheritance and would have enjoyed a happy life. But the dynamic mind of Rabindranath Tagore could not be passive receptor of the accepted doctrines. As Rabindranath Tagore reveals that he has not come to his own religion through the portals of passive acceptance of a particular creed owing to some accident of birth owing to his idiosyncrasy of temperament, it was impossible for him to accept any religious teaching to be true.

Rabindranath Tagore is a revolutionist and so he begins to believe in his ‘own religion’ and as almost all his thoughts there will be duality as in his ‘own religion’ too. He is both rational and irrational. In his own way he starts his argument on religion with its equivalent term in Sanskrit, that is ‘Dharma.’ He goes on saying in Sadhana, “Dharma which is translated into English as religion has a deeper meaning in our language.” (308).

He stresses the same and says in the Religion of Man that In the Sanskrit language, religion goes by the name dharma, which in the derivative meaning implies the principle of relationship that holds us firm, and in the technical sense means the virtue of a thing, the essential quality of it: for instance, heat is the essential quality of fire, though in certain of its stage it may be absent. Religion and its meaning:
It is the essence and importance of ‘dharma’ that influences Rabindranath Tagore more when he speaks about ‘religion’; he strongly refers to what he means by ‘dharma’. He clearly knows that the English term ‘religion’ does not express the complete meaning that is given by ‘dharma’ in the Indian tradition. But as there is no better word in English literature, Rabindranath Tagore is compelled to use the term ‘Religion’ in his English writings to express the true nature of the Sanskrit word ‘dharma’.

One must be aware of what does this ‘dharma’ say. This according to Rabindranath Tagore is one’s true nature. Usually one thinks of ‘self’ in a narrow and partial way. One generally and falsely feels the ‘ego’ as self, but originally it is far beyond this rigid meaning. By the first sight earth appears to be flat and many people in ancient times believed the same. But after experimental observations the man could know that it is spherical in shape and not at all flat as the ancient man thought.

In the same way ‘self’ is also thought to be the narrow and egoistical one. But when it is observed in totality one sees that its essential reality is not egoistical but far beyond that. If the man travels above the egoistical view, he realizes the real area of self. Here Rabindranath Tagore says that man has within him the hope which always walks in front of his present narrow experience; it is the undying faith in the Infinite in him.

Actually speaking one’s self will be always struggling hard to reveal itself by crossing the obscurity of a narrow vision. So Rabindranath Tagore says with an expression of emotion that if these were inevitable within him, he has glimpses of the infinite, which give him assurance that this truth is not in his limitations. When a man starts to think in this way, he gets the awareness that he
has to travel long to know this. Suddenly he realizes that the real greatness lies in achieving the yet unknown to him.

This Rabindranath Tagore explains that, in what to be he is infinite; there is his heaven, his deliverance. As soon as the hurdle ‘narrow’ is broken, the state not yet achieved seems to appear and attracts the man. The intensity of the will to reach the yet to reach becomes stronger and prepares him to sacrifice his presents a contrast between what he is and what he ought to be. Therefore Rabindranath Tagore says that man’s history is the history of his journey to the unknown in quest of the realization of his immortal self—his soul.

Man is never satisfied with what he is and he always in the depths of his being feels the stronger urge to break through the immediate limitations and marches towards the truth of his real self. Thus he searches within and that is called self-realization. The conflict between the appearance and the real being rises to a contradiction. The truth of one’s higher being stirs one’s religious consciousness and creates a faith in him that he is a lot greater than what he appears. To make it clear Rabindranath Tagore says that, religion has its function in reconciling the contradiction, by subordinating the brute nature to what we consider as the truth of Man.

So, man seeks the help of religion to clean the darkness created by the base instincts of ‘self’. In this way man is inspired by the religion and moves on towards the higher level, that level is inward and is beyond the normal limits. At this Rabindranath Tagore says that, he has been building up elaborate religions to convince himself, against his natural inclinations of the paradox that he is not what he is but something greater.
Thus man tries to realize the hidden truth in him. Therefore religion is never a passive acceptance but an active effort towards realization of one self. Rabindranath Tagore says that religion consists in the endeavor of men to cultivate and express those qualities which are inherent in the nature of man the eternal and have faith in him. “I have expressed my belief that the first stage of my realization was through my feeling of intimacy with nature.” (Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II, 89*).

The religion gives strength to man’s faith in the nature of his ideal. By solving the contract between individual self and universal self, religion takes man to a new height and that arena will be free from all contradictions and gives man liberty to travel since he becomes ‘religious’, man finds his meaning in the fundamental reality comprehending all individuals – the reality which is the moral and spiritual basis of the realm of human values…… religion is the liberation of one’s individual personality in the universal person. Thus religion widens one’s vision and highlights his human values and makes him understand the basic truth of religion.

Thus ‘religion’ which frees man from the ignorance of his true-self, leads him to the consciousness of a transcendental spiritual unity. This consciousness gives rise to awareness of a unity whose basic nature is spiritual and which shows him the truth beyond the facts of his immediate experience. The beyond, though outside man’s immediate possessions is never un-human. Here Rabindranath Tagore accepts Adharvaveda which says that one aspect of Man’s self is seen directly here, but the other is the vast unseen.

So the vast unseen also an aspect of man’s self. Truly speaking Rabindranath Tagore doesn’t believe any of the realistic beyond the human truth. He says that, the ultimate truth for man is human truth, and that is why this world
is necessarily a human world. Even if there is any other beside this, it is non-existent, not only for today, but forever.

Rabindranath Tagore believes that religion is predominantly spiritual. Truly the spiritual has a human aspect, which is important for religion. Even though one receives only faint indications of the spiritual from within the frontiers of the physical existence, Rabindranath Tagore says that one seems to have a stronger faith in the spiritual life than in the physical. The great soul who understands completely the comprehensive spirit within and without him, this spirit is dearer than all else. Here Rabindranath Tagore quotes approving the ancient saying that He is dearer than son, dearer than wealth, and dearer than all else is this spirit who is in one’s innermost heart. Rabindranath Tagore is of the opinions that man’s soul is bound to win its prosperity through spiritual life and all great religious of men are directed towards this great end.

Rabindranath Tagore repeatedly stresses the principle of unity as the most fundamental in the mystery of existence. He says that it is some untold mystery of unity in him that has the simplicity of the infinite and reduces the immense mass of multitude to a single point. He extends his saying and says, “The quality of the infinite is not the magnitude of extension, it is in the advitam, the mystery of unity. Facts occupy endless time and space; but the truth comprehending them all has no dimension; it is one. Wherever our heart touches the One, in the small or the big it finds the touch of the infinite.” (495).

The evolution of the world on the physical level too reveals an urge for achieving an ever-higher unity. The realization of this unity, according to Rabindranath Tagore, it is very essential for man’s emancipation. Many times the wrong views of the finality of multiplicity of things drive man away from the truth. Such a view only lures him to gather variety of external possessions and
denies the joy of the realization of the real unity. He also says that this realization of unity provides him with the key to unlock the truth of his spiritual life. So Rabindranath Tagore says that through all the diversities of the world, the one in human beings is threading its course towards the one in all; this is its nature and this is its joy.

So in the realization of unity only lies man’s joy. Rabindranath Tagore wants to finalize this and says that one must know that, as, through science and commerce, the realization of the unity of the material world gives one power, but the realization of the great spiritual unity of man alone can give one peace.

More than this ‘comprehensive spirit of unity’ the religious consciousness of man has a divine character and this religious man expresses his ‘reverential loyalty’ of this awareness of unity. So religion, as Rabindranath Tagore tells, transforms one’s vision inward and there he sees glimpse, his unity with the infinite. In the middle of practical world with all physical needs and temptation of modernism, this religion gives one the needed vision of unity. This unity as per Rabindranath Tagore is not a mere subjective ideal but an emerging truth. Whatever the name of the religion Rabindranath Tagore emphatically says that the consciousness of this unity is spiritual, and one’s effort to be true to it is one’s religion.

What Rabindranath Tagore wants to tell about man is quite simple but his arena is very wider. The start of religious consciousness provided man with a great evolution in the moral and spiritual aspects of man. The primitive level of understanding of religion didn’t enable our forefather to know the truth of the ideal religion. But the urge to realize the fuller meaning of the ideal religion laid path for a process of gradual evolution. It guided man to look in himself for the truth of religion. He gradually begins to learn that the cult of power and greed is
not the real meaning of religious. Rabindranath Tagore in his own words says that through it all there must have been some current of deeper desire, which constantly contradicted the cult of power and indicated worlds of inner good, infinitely more precious than material gain. Its voice was not strong at first nor was it headed by the majority of people; but its influences, like the life within the seed, were silently working.

At first man was mainly concerned with maintaining his life by making a sort of adjustment with the physical world and hence, the first expression of Man’s religion was physical. Therefore his duties were the physical forces of nature and his worship was to in over these forces for his personal benefit. But when he found time to look into the inner reality, the mystery of his own personality gained for him its highest importance.

This gave him chance to proceed in the direction of man’s religion. He began to know that the truth of ideal religion doesn’t lie anywhere outside his self, but within him. It changed the entire way of his worship. The older ways of magic and blind rites were forgotten and man approached the right path of considering the higher spirituality. In Rabindranath Tagore’s words its evolution has been from the external and magical towards the inner as well as moral and spiritual significance.

Rabindranath Tagore treats man as a bearer of a great dignity to the earth. Rabindranath Tagore never believes that Srikrishna, Shankaracharya, Jesus Christ, the Budha, and the Mahammad etc as avatharas in popular sense. Most of the religious people believe that avatars are God in human form. Generally people attribute super-natural qualities to these religious men and come to the opinion that God himself takes his birth in this world to set it right.
When there is inhumanity spread everywhere in the world and sinners dominant God takes birth to establish peace in the world once again. This is the general belief that many religious too believe. But Rabindranath Tagore solely contradicts this idea and reveals that all the above said are perfect men. This employs that according to Rabindranath Tagore avatar means great men. Avatar is a permanent link and mediator between man and God. Great men are they who remind one of one’s greatness. Man, due to ignorance sometimes because of his lower self, forgets the real nature of him.

Then great men come to remind man of the divine origin and to remind him that he is immortal. These great men do not invent any new method, do not preach any new theory but they awake one’s mind, they tell one to rise above one’s narrow self. With the light of their heart great men remove the darkness of ignorance from man. They teach one that man is above all narrowness, customs and creeds which make man not only small but also they limit God too who actually dwells in all human hearts alike.

So according to Rabindranath Tagore all great men are those who have developed in themselves all human qualities in the best way, they never cease to be human, but become perfect men. Thus Rabindranath Tagore doesn’t accept that great men are God, on the contrary he says that they are the path showers for attaining highest human ideal.

The ultimate destiny or goal of human beings is to get freedom or liberty. But Rabindranath Tagore’s freedom differs in many ways from the traditional concept of freedom. According to him freedom consists in the realization of spirit within man and within the whole universe. Man will be capable of attaining freedom not by performing ceremonies but by rising above the ego and by uniting oneself with the whole universe.
Man can achieve freedom by eradicating ignorance which is negative and developing the positive quality of love in himself. He has to develop moral and spiritual aspects in himself to get divinity in him which is said to be the real freedom. To attain this he has to pass through pain, suffering and death. Until man identifies himself in his surroundings, he forgets that to live is to grow out of him. When he understands this, he doesn’t bother about death at all. Man realizes that death opens gates for greater and wider life. Rabindranath Tagore points out that the history of man is not a record of aimless events. Rabindranath Tagore says that man is infinite in strength, love, sense of purity and goodness. There is a purpose for man’s life.

Rabindranath Tagore compares man’s life with ‘lotuses’. Through many births, surpassing many evils and sufferings the life of man unfolds its petals one after the other like a ‘lotus’. Life of each individual proceeds towards its full expression. And thus the history of the universal man is connected with the development of individual man. In this way Rabindranath Tagore says that man collecting and developing his inner strength birth by birth finally tries to become equal to God too. Thus Rabindranath Tagore as he does in all his works gives priority a lot to ‘humanism’. So for Rabindranath Tagore, man is everything and omnipotent.

There is a popular belief that Rabindranath Tagore’s idea may be roughly coined as spiritualistic. At least, by going through some of his writings, one may have such a perception. But this will not be a complete interpretation about him. While Rabindranath Tagore’s thoughts can be considered spiritual but it is not a mysticism of irrationality. Spiritualism of Rabindranath Tagore is not equivalent to Godliness. His God, wherever there is one, manifests himself in the divinity of man.
Radhakrishnan points out, “to Rabindranath Tagore God is not a being seated high up in the heavens, but a spirit immanent in the whole universe of persons and things.” (S. Radhakrishnan, *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*, 54.)

The concept of the all-pervading spirit or the absolute and its realization will not be possible, if the faculty of reason has no control over our mind, which is liable to be stultified by fear, superstition, false prejudices and dogmas. This further brings to mind Kant’s position in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, “where he says that morality leads ineluctably to religion, and the religion or faith is within the limits of reason.” (Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, iv).

Kant says, “...reason can be found to be not only compatible with Scripture but also at one with it...” (Onora O’Neill, Kant, *Reason and Religion*, 302). The idea behind this is that there is not a single belief or hope which is not under the ambit of reason, but only that he identifies a range of beliefs or hopes whose structure places them within the limits of reason.

The spiritual bond between the personal man and the universal world of reason ensure one’s integration in the national sphere and paves the way for international amity. According to him, human civilization can best be understood through one’s loving concern for mankind. He says, “I repeat we never can have a true view of man unless we have a love for him. Civilization must be judged and prized, not by the amount of power it has developed, but by how much it has evolved and given expression to, by its laws and institutions, the love of humanity.” (Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II*, 323.)
Rabindranath Tagore works for one supreme cause, the union of all sections of humanity in sympathy and understanding, in truth and love. His Visva-Bharati is a university of his dreams, where the whole world has become a single nest: *yatra visvam bhavatiekanidam*. It is one such university, where all cultures, languages and faiths are welcome to form a symphony of universalism. It is better to highlight mainly upon the role of language in human ontology, and Rabindranath Tagore’s humanism vis-a-vis inter-personal relationship of *I and thou* that takes the form of intra-personal relationship of *I am thou*. It shall be explained them below—Language plays an important role in human ontology. Rabindranath Tagore’s view of language is ontological, because, human ontology determines the nature and function of language.

Man expresses himself through his creativity, and language is one of the important modes of communication of man’s self-revealing activity. Man is an expressive being, and therefore, he is capable of achieving self clarity and freedom. Freedom is integral to a self-realizing subject. As Charles Taylor says that the realization of man...involved an expression, in the sense of a clarification, of what man is; and this is why the highest fulfillment comes in expressive activity.

Now, the use of language can definitely help one to understand Rabindranath Tagore’s notion of the inter-personal relationship, because he distinguishes between experiences as such, and one’s consciousness of experience. He maintains that in art, it is not the experience itself that the artist expresses, but his personality, i.e., his own consciousness of the experience. The telos of art is to project another order of man’s being, man’s true world.

This world, which transcends the world affects, is called the world of expression, and it is a creation of man’s personality. Personality, therefore, according to Rabindranath Tagore, is both the ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ of human existence. According to Rabindranath Tagore, self-expression is the important channel of
communication. As an expressive being, man recovers communion with the universe. It is in man’s consciousness of a deeper unity with nature, with the world, of which one is a part. The self-revealing being (I) is in interchange with the greater nature.

Furthermore, one’s communion with nature also entails one’s relation with the ‘other’. “The self-expressive being carried an eternal relation with the other and the other is also dependent upon one’s existence. In this way, there arises an interpersonal relationship between ‘oneself’ and the ‘other’ (I and thou). It will be appropriate to fit here the views of Hegel that the Idea becomes its other, and then returns into self-consciousness in Gist. The life of the absolute subject is essentially a process, a movement, in which it poses its own conditions of existence to the universe, and then overcomes the opposition of these conditions to realize its goal of self-knowledge.” (G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A.V. Miller, P.14.) But at the deeper ontological level, this inter-personal relation of I and thou takes the form of intra-personal level of human existence (I am thou). I am dependent upon other and the other is a condition for my union with the all-pervading spirit.

Rabindranath Tagore thinks that to attain one’s world-consciousness, one has to unite one’s feelings with this all-pervasive infinite feeling, and this is possible when one frees oneself from the bonds of personal desires; prepare oneself for one’s social obligations and sharing the burdens of one’s fellow beings. Thus, I and thou work for a common cause to achieve the unity of consciousness. He says that to be truly united in knowledge, love and service with all beings, and thus to realize one’s self in the all-pervading God is the essence of goodness, and it is also the key that opens the gate of the spiritual life, the heavenly kingdom, or as Kant would have it: founding of a kingdom of God on Earth.