CHAPTER - VIII

ON WOMEN

8.1 On equality of sexes

Both Tagore and Gandhi held in high esteem women in general, and the Indian women in particular. Both of them pointed out that woman is not a competitor of man, nor an inferior or weaker sex, but only a complementary to her male partner.

Rabindranath explained that woman could not be regarded as a mere replica of man. Woman, by the very nature of her mind and body, differs from man. The poet wrote, "If woman's nature were identical with man's, if Eve were a mere tautology of Adam, it would give rise to monotonous superfluity". Like Tagore, Gandhi explained that whilst both men and women are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in the form there is a vital difference between the two. "The duty of motherhood, which the vast majority of woman will always undertake, requires qualities which man need not possess. She is passive he is active," observed Gandhi. He emphasized that it is the man who earns the bread and the woman who keeps and distributes the bread. "She is care-taker in every sense of the term." But somehow or other man has dominated woman from ages past and so woman has developed an inferiority complex. She has
innocently believed in the man's interested teaching that she is inferior to him. Gandhi, like Tagore, insisted that woman was not inferior to man but only a complementary to him. Gandhi added that the art of bringing up the infants of the races is woman's special and sole prerogative. "Without her care the races must become extinct". Thus a woman's position in a family and in the society is unquestionably great and important. Her presence in the family and the society is as necessary as that of man. In the words of Gandhi, "They (man and woman) are a peerless pair being supplementary to one another, each helps the growth of other, and without the support of one the other cannot conceive".

Rabindranath glorified the passive quality of woman and compared it with the inner vitality of the soil which not only helps the tree to grow but "helps it to grow in limit". Rabindranath explained that man is always busy in creating power and wealth. He never fears extermination for the sake of adventure, never cares for tremendous loss for achieving the impossible through competition, conflict and chaos, while the woman with her passive qualities like charity, modesty, love and self-sacrifice imparts rhythm to the reckless movement of man. She is necessary for healing, nourishing and storing of life. Tagore wrote that without the support of feminine love and sympathy, "the masculine
Like Tagore, Gandhi maintained that a woman's contribution to her family and society is more beneficial and permanent in nature than that of her male partner. According to Gandhi, she is economical and careful, never rash, maintains balance and conserves what is good and pure. In the words of Gandhi, "Women are special custodians of all that is pure and religious in life . . . . (also) they are slow to give up all that is pure and noble in life".

8.2 She is the personification of self-sacrifice

Gandhi observed, "Woman, I hold is the personification of self-sacrifice". He explained that the greatest power of humanity is the power of creation and self-sacrifice. Woman finds freedom in the acts of creation, self-sacrifice and love. She endures innumerable sufferings during child birth and child rearing. She not only creates but feels extremely happy to suffer and sacrifice for her creation. Gandhi observed, "She suffers daily so that her babe may wax from day to day. Let her transfer that love to the whole of humanity". Like Gandhi, Tagore glorified the role of woman as a mother, the supreme symbol of love and self-sacrifice. Rabindranath wrote, "Whenever there is

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.
something which is concretely personal and human, there is woman's world . . . . the domestic world has been the gift of God to woman".

8.3 **The vocations of man and woman must be different**

In pointing out the fundamental difference between the nature of man and woman, glorifying the passive and motherly qualities of a woman, Gandhi maintained, "Hence the vocations of the two must also be different". Rabindranath shared fully Gandhi's view that the vocations of the two must be different. Eve was different from Adam. Rabindranath wrote, "Life finds its truth and beauty not in exaggeration of sameness but in harmony". Like Gandhi, Tagore maintained that a woman is not man's competitor but only his complementary and her sphere of work is quite different from that of a man.

In saying so, the thinkers never meant that woman should exclusively be confined to her home only. 'Home' or 'domestic world' carries a deeper meaning to both Rabindranath and Gandhi. As Rabindranath clearly explained, "I do not mean to imply that domestic life is the only life for a woman.

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.*
I mean that the human world is the woman's world, be it domestic or be it full of other activities of life". In another place Rabindranath repeats the same truth only in different words: "The permanent significance of home is not in the narrowness of its enclosure, but an eternal moral idea. It represents the truth of human relationship".

A woman should be given equal opportunity and privilege to serve the society like that of man, but her sphere of activities should be different from men. Or in other words, a woman is best suited to social-welfare work, educational, nursing and various type of organizational and improvement works for the villages and the society. She should not be called to undertake heavy duties like that of man. Gandhi explained that in his opinion it is degrading both for man and woman that she should be called upon or induced to, "forsake the hearth and shoulder the rifle for the protection of the hearth". It is a reversion to barbarity from the beginning to the end. "In trying to ride the horse that man rides, she brings herself and him down". The sin lies with the man who encourages or compels his companion to desert her special calling. "There is as much bravery in keeping one's home in good order and condition as there is in defending it against..."
attack from without"¹⁸, added Gandhi. In this context, it must be pointed out that Gandhi did not mean by it that women should devote their energy and work to their homes only. Many women joined Gandhi during his Satyagraha movement in the preindependent era of India and rendered invaluable services to the society and the country as a whole. This fact led Gandhi to remark, "I am firmly of opinion that India's salvation depends on the sacrifice and enlightenment of her women"¹⁹.

Habindranath similarly appealed to the woman of India to devote their service and energy to the good of their home, society and country and not to compete with their male partners in the difficult and hardest jobs of life for earning money. He explained that this very feeling of competition among the women is a sign of weakness on their part.²⁰

8.4 The problem of woman in the Western society

Rabindranath in analysing the position of women in the West commented, "It is evident that an increasing number of women in the West are ready to assert that their difference from men is unimportant. The reason for the vehemence of their utterance of such a paradox cannot be ignored. It is a rebellion against a necessity"²¹. He explained that in the West, women are

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.
treated with a feeling of negligence and disrespect by their male partners. 'Equalisation of sexes', the common catch-word of Western people is going on the wrong line. The men in the West are treating their wives as "dolls" or decorative articles of the household. Comforts of home no longer appeal to them and hotels and recreation clubs are building on the ruins of home. The men in the West, in the words of Rabindranath, are "for dogs, horses, guns and gambling clubs rather than for home". Thus the natural relationship between a husband and wife is strained and is undergoing a change. As Rabindranath says, "The very psychology of men and women about their mutual relations is changing and becoming the psychology of primitive fighting elements rather than of humanity seeking its compe tence through the union based upon mutual self-surrender".22 Rabindranath explained, that is the reason, why a group of women in the West are trying to compete with their male partners in every sphere of activities in the outside world and "trying to prove that they are not women". Rabindranath wrote that modern "women are feeling ashamed of their own womanliness ... they feel that their pride is hurt when they are taken as mere mothers of the race".23 Their defeatist mentality has originated from a feeling of

*The underline has been given to emphasise the words.
helplessness or inferiority complex because their men are not paying due respect to the dignity of their womanliness. Rabindranath criticized the modern Western educated men, who, to satisfy their "lust for power and wealth, robbed woman of the most part of her world and home is every day being crowdout by the office".

Gandhi similarly commented, "Wives should not be treated as dolls and objects of indulgence but should be treated as honoured comrades in common service". He explained that any trend that affects the natural relationship between the two "will involve the equal ruin of them both".

Addressing the students, Gandhi commented, "Instead of making your wives the queen of your homes and hearts, you have converted them into chattles to be brought and sold".

In short, the thinkers believed that the growing indifference and disrespect to the dignity of women on the part of Western educated men were equally responsible for increasing unrest, feeling of dissatisfaction and unhealthy competitive spirit noticeable among the modern women. The very spirit of competition, conflict for self-interest are an antithesis to a woman's nature which is the symbol of love and self-sacrifice.

8.5 An appeal to the women of India

Both Gandhi and Rabindranath appealed to the women
of India not to imitate their counterparts in the Western world but to follow the great examples set by their great ancestors. They should restore self-confidence in themselves, by cultivating the 'soul force' or 'spiritual strength' exhibited by India's great women like Sita, Savitri, Damayanti and others. Rabindranath wrote, "True womanliness is regarded in our country as the saintliness of love. It is not merely praised but literally worshipped"28.

Rabindranath explained that the women of India should reaffirm their faith in the old ideals set by their great ancestors as he wrote, "our women know by heart the legends of the great women of the epic age - Savitri who by the power of love conquered death and Sita who had no other reward for her life of sacrifice but the sacred majesty of sorrow"29. Like Rabindranath, Gandhi advised the women of India to reassure and reawaken the old spirit of self-sacrifice, love and inner strength in themselves as he observed, "They (women of India) may not ape the manner of the West, which may be suited to its environment. They must apply methods suited to the Indian genius". They should employ their "strong, controlling, purifying, steadifying hand" to preserve the best in Indian culture. "This is the work of Sitas, Draupadis, Savitris and Damayantis, not of amazons and prudes"30, observed Gandhi.
Gandhi criticized the modern educated girls of India who want to attract the attention of men by outward glamour and show. In the words of Gandhi, a modern girl, "loves to be Juliet to half a dozen Romes".

The Indian women, as the thinkers point out, should not seek legal remedies to safeguard their rights in the Western fashion. In the words of Gandhi, "We will have to produce women, pure, firm and self-controlled as Sita, Damayanti and Draupadi. If we do produce them, such modern sisters will receive the same homage from Hindu society as is being paid to their prototypes of yore". He added that "woman must cease to consider herself of man's bust. The remedy is more in her hands than man's". Gandhi commented that man "should learn" to give due respect and place to women, "a country or community in which women are not honoured cannot be considered as civilized". The question is more spiritual than legal. In the words of Tagore, "because men in their pride of power have taken to deriding things that are living and relationship that are human, a large number of women are screaming themselves hoarse to prove that they are not women".
8.6 The marriage ideal

Both Gandhi and Rabindranath maintained that the ideal of marriage is more spiritual than physical. Gandhi commented, "The ideal that marriage aims at is that of spiritual union through the physical. The human love that it incarnates is intended to serve as a stepping stone to divine or universal love".

Rabindranath similarly in his famous article entitled, "India's Ancient Literature" pointed out that in India, the ideal of marriage had always aimed at "spiritual union" through physical. Rabindranath explained that "Sakuntala's" first love originated from an immatured young heart attracted by physical love. So it remained incomplete. She had to wait for a long time for achieving mental maturity aided by spiritual love to win her king for ever. Similarly "Parvati's" first love to "Siva" was helped by "Madan and Rati" (physical love) which was burnt down by "Siva's" third eye. She had to undertake long painful self-purifying Sadhana to win "Siva" for ever. Thus to Indians "Siva-Parvati's" love has always become a symbol of 'divine' and 'universal love'.

8.7 Divorce

Both Gandhi and Tagore believed that divorce should be granted within well-defined limits. They were against
carrying on any propaganda in favour of it. Or in other words, both the thinkers point out that "divorce" as it is indulged in in the Western countries in the name of "equality of sex" involves the risk of increasing family unhappiness and discomfort. As Gandhi observes, "Just imagine our plight if I had dissolved my marriage with Ba (his wife) because she would not readily accept my views on untouchability." Gandhi explained that marriage confirms the right of union between two partners but it confers no right upon one partner to demand obedience of the other to one's wish for union. A husband cannot demand obedience from his wife, through his right obtained by marriage. Citing his own case, he explained that he failed to win his wife in this way, later his love to his wife enabled him to win her. Gandhi commented, "I have mentally become a woman in order to steal into her heart. I could not steal into my wife's heart until I decided to treat her differently than I used to do, and so I resorted to her all her rights by dispossessing myself of all my so-called rights as her husband. And you see her today, as simple as myself." Gandhi believed that if "divorce was the only alternative he would not hesitate to accept it. He also explained that in common Hindu family the problem of divorce does not come as the wife by her right of love dominates her husband, a thing rarely found in Western society. He observed, "They (Hindu wives) exercise
an authority over their husbands which any woman can envy. It is an authority which love gives.\(^{40}\)

Similarly, Rabindranath maintained that in an ordinary Hindu family, a wife is treated as a queen of love and self-sacrifice and she lives in peace and happiness which is rarely found in a Western family. In the words of Rabindranath, "(True womanliness) has not been a metaphor to us because, in India, our mind is familiar with the idea of God in an eternal feminine aspect"\(^{41}\). Like Gandhi, he was also against the theory of unquestionable authority of husband over his wife and pointed out that in some aristocrat families the men keep public women with full social support, while their wives, feeling neglected and humiliated, suffer tremendous sorrows. Rabindranath argued that if in the Hindu society a man could divorce an unfaithful wife why a wife is denied the same privilege when her husband is not faithful to her\(^{42}\). Or in other words, like Gandhi, Rabindranath believed that in extreme cases or where there is no other alternative, 'divorce' should be accepted as a final settlement. But he also insisted that 'legal measures' or 'laws made in British parliament' were not sufficient enough to eradicate the social evils in India. In their cases "moral pressures" or 'public opinion' should be organized or formed through the spread of education, as a vital means to combat the evils\(^{43}\). Gandhi expressed the
same truth when he observed, "It is not legislation that will cure a popular evil, it is enlightened public opinion that can do it". 44.

8.8 **Child marriage**

Both Gandhi and Rabindranath were against 'child marriage'. Gandhi explained that a father has no right to arrange early marriage of his children. "He (father) is their protector not owner". A parent who has so abused his trust as to give in marriage an infant to an old man in his dotage, or to a boy hardly in his teens could only purge himself of his sin "by remarrying his daughter when she becomes widowed". 45. According to Gandhi, it is desirable to keep the age of marriage for a girl at 20 rather than at 16, if it is possible. 46. Like Gandhi, Rabindranath maintained that for hygienic reasons girl should attain the age of full physical and psychological maturity during her marriage, as an unhealthy or immatured mother could not give birth to a healthy child. The poet shared Dr. Carpenter's views that the marriageable age of a girl should not be less than 13 to 16 years. 47. Rabindranath explained that as the old Hindu joint family system was changing day by day and the old Brahmacharya ideal has been given up, the rules and customs of Hindu marriage should also change and improve according to the social needs of the people. In this case also, any hasty decision of legislation
would do more harm than good.

8.9 The dowry system

Both the thinkers were against the dowry system. Gandhi advised the women of India to remain unmarried rather than be a party to a marriage arranged on the basis of dowry. As a measure against the dowry system, Gandhi encouraged inter-caste marriage\(^49\). Rabindranath also regarded the system as a fishy business deal which stands in the way of establishing heart-to-heart relationship between the two parties of a marriage\(^50\). In his many short stories, Rabindranath narrated with great sympathy the plights of the poor father and daughter who usually become victims of the soulless system. Like Gandhi, he was in favour of choice of mates without unnecessary parental and social interference\(^51\).

8.10 On widow remarriage

Gandhi observed, "To force widowhood upon little girls is a brutal crime for which we Hindus are daily paying dearly". In the same spirit, Gandhi again explained, "Voluntary widowhood consciously adopted by a woman who had felt the affection of a partner adds grace and dignity to life, sanctifies the home and uplifts religion itself"\(^52\). In short, Gandhi was against 'enforced widowhood', while glorifying the grace of 'voluntary widowhood' as the symbol
of love, sacrifice and service. Rabindranath in his famous essay on the "West and the East" very clearly pointed out that in a middle class Hindu family a widow never feels neglected or suffers from extreme loneliness as her counterparts in European countries. A Hindoo-widow's ever servicing hands are always busy with different kinds of activities. She is entrusted with the noble and honoured tasks of serving the family deities and rearing up the children of the family. Thus in India voluntary widowhood has always been regarded as a sacred symbol of service and disinterested love, as pointed out by Rabindranath.

Regarding the "enforced widowhood" Rabindranath commented that in a Hindu family if a widower is allowed to marry for the second time, the same privilege should also be given to a Hindoo widow. A widow should not be forced to accept a life of austerity and restrictions in the name of 'religion' against her will. Or in other words, like Gandhi, Rabindranath was against "enforced widowhood" while glorifying the inner spirit of service and disinterested love of "voluntary widowhood", a very uncommon factor known in the West.

8.11 The role of women in shaping the future destiny of mankind

In an address, Gandhi explained that it was for American women to show what power women could be in the world.
But that could only be when they would cease to be the toys of men's idle hours. They have got freedom, they could become a power for peace only by refusing to be carried away by the flood-tide of the pseudo-science glorifying self-indulgence that is engulfing the West today. Gandhi criticized them, "By aping men, you neither become men nor you function as your real selves and develop your special talent that God has given you"**56. He appealed to them to take the lead in the path of non-violence and peace. In the words of Gandhi, "God has vouchsafed to women the power of non-violence more than to man"**57. It must be pointed out that to Gandhi, 'non-violence' was a word having many meanings i.e. peaceful means, love, disinterested service, self-sacrifice, etc. As he explained, "Ahimsa means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but woman, the mother of man shows this capacity in the largest measure?"**58. Gandhi appealed to the women of the world to transfer that love to the whole of humanity as "mother maker and salient leader" of man. Gandhi was firmly of opinion that "India's salvation depends on the sacrifice and enlightenment of her women"**59.

Rabindranath, like Gandhi, believed and explained that the role of women in shaping the future destiny of the

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.*
world would not only be important but needful or demanding. Rabindranath wrote, "At last the present age has sent its cry to woman, asking her to come out from her segregation in order to restore the spiritual supremacy of all that is human in the world of humanity. He explained that the prevailing spirit of brute force and material greed of "masculine civilization" of the modern world could not survive for long and one day it has to give away its place to a world dominated by feminine virtues and qualities. Rabindranath insisted that it was by the logic of history, that the old world once dominated by the mammoths and Dinosaurias with gigantic muscles and mighty strength had to give away its place to "creatures who are much feeble in their muscles and who took up much less space with thin dimensions."

The thinkers' thoughtful analysis of the problem of 'women' has far reaching consequences even today. They voiced their opinion in the context of what they rightfully considered as futile emotional agitation on the part of Western women in the name of "equality of sexes". The revolutionary mood of modern women was regarded by the thinkers as shameful, humiliating and self-defeating by nature. The thinkers really wished to change the character of their struggle altogether into a new line of activities based on self-confidence, self-help, disinterested service
and love to others. The 'soul-force' or the inner-strength of mind that characterized the ancient women of India should be re-assured and re-emphasized as the guiding principle of the so-called modern agitation for emancipation of women. Thus 'emancipation of women' was never regarded by thinkers as synonymous with the 'equality of sexes' in the modern sense, it meant to them emancipation from all kinds of self-pity, self-indulgence, aggressive and rebellious attitude commonly spread among modern women of the world.

The term "womanhood" connotes to the thinkers the idea of proportion, balance, harmony, rhythm, etc. but also the emotional sensitivity and human relationship without which, they believed, the modern mechanical civilization could not survive or sustain. They appealed to the womanhood of the world, particularly to the women of India, to impart rhythm and balance to the man-made civilization of the world and infuse a spirit of emotional sensitivity and heart-to-heart relationship and thus save it from wars, death and destruction.
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47. Rabindra Rachanavali, Vol. XII, pp.430-432.
48. Ibid., pp.448-49.
49. N. K. Bose, Selections from Gandhi, p.275.
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51. Ibid., p.434.
52. N. K. Bose, Selections from Gandhi, p.279.
54. Ibid., p.241.
55. Ibid., p.422.
56. M. K. Gandhi, All men are brothers, pp.212-213.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., p.204.
59. Ibid.
60. Rabindranath Tagore, Creative Unity, p.166.
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APPENDIX - VIII

Rabindranath: The special qualities of woman.

"Woman is endowed with the passive qualities of chastity, modesty, devotion and power of self-sacrifice in a greater measure than man is".

Rabindranath Tagore, Personality, p.172.

"For woman's function is the passive function of the soil, which not only helps the tree to grow but keeps its growth within limits".

Ibid.

"The ideal of stability is deeply cherished in woman's nature. She is never in love with merely going on, shooting wanton arrows of curiosity into the heart of darkness. All her forces instinctively work to bring things to some shape of fulness - for that is the law of life".

Ibid., p.171.

Gandhi: The special qualities of woman.

"Woman, I hold, is the personification of self-sacrifice".

M. K. Gandhi, All men are brothers, p.206.
"Women are special custodians of all that is pure and religious in life. Conservative by nature if they are slow to shed superstitious habits, they are slow to give up all that is pure and nobler in life".

Ibid., p.207.

"I am firmly of opinion that India's salvation depends on the sacrifice and enlightenment of her woman".

Selections from Gandhi, p.271.

Rabindranath: Equality of sexes

"If woman's nature were identical with man's, if Eve were a mere tautology of Adam, it would give rise to monotonous superfluity".

Creative Unity, p.137.

"But if woman begins to believe that, though biologically her function is different from that of man, psychologically she is identical with him, if the human world in its mentality becomes exclusively male, then before long it will be reduced to utter inanity. For life finds its truth and beauty, not in an exaggeration of sameness but in harmony".

Ibid.
Gandhi: 'The equality of sexes'

"Whilst both are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in the form there is vital difference between the two. Hence the vocation of the two must also be different. The duty of motherhood, which the vast majority of women will always undertake, requires qualities which man need not possess. She is passive, he is active. She is essentially mistress of the house. He is the bread-winner. She is the keeper and distributor of the bread. . . . Without her care the race must become extinct".

Selections from Gandhi, p. 271.

"In my opinion it is degrading both for man and woman that woman should be called upon or induced to forsake the hearth and shoulder the rifle for the protection of that hearth. It is a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end. In trying to ride the horse that man rides, she brings herself and him down . . . . There is as much bravery in keeping one's home in good order and condition as there is in defending it against attack from without".

Ibid.

Rabindranath: She is only a complementary to man

"She had the instinctive wisdom to realise that it
was her mission to help her mate in creating a Paradise of their own on earth, whose ideal she was to supply with her life, whose materials were to be produced and gathered by her comrade".

Creative Unity, p.158.

"She has been an inspiration to man most often unconsciously, his restless energy into an immense variety of creations in literature, art, music and religion. This is why, in India woman has been described as the symbol of Shakti, the creative power".

Ibid., p.157.

"Woman cannot be pushed back for good into the mere region of the decorative by man's aggressiveness of power. For she is not less necessary in civilization than man but possibly more so".

Personality, p.180.

Gandhi: She is only complementary to man.

"The (woman and man) were a peerless pair being supplementary to one other, each helps the growth of other and without the support of one the other cannot conceive".

M. K. Gandhi, The role of woman, p.5.
Rabindranath: Sheding off the inferiority complex.

"It is evident that an increasing number of women in the West are ready to assert that their difference from men is unimportant. The reason for the vehement utterance of such a paradox cannot be ignored. It is a rebellion against a necessity".

Creative Unity, p.158.

Gandhi: Sheding off the inferiority complex.

"But somehow or other man has dominated woman from ages past, and so woman has developed an inferiority complex."

Selections from Gandhi, p.271.

"I have hugged the hope that in this (ahimsa) woman will be the unquestioned leader and, having thus found her place in human evolution, she will shed her inferiority complex".

Ibid., p.272.

Rabindranath: The fault should go to man.

"But at last the time has come when the material ambition of man has assumed such colossal proportions that home is in danger of losing its centre of gravity for him (man)... Hotels are being erected on the ruins of
homes . . . . . and most men have, for the materials of their happiness and recreation, their dogs and horses, their pipes, guns and gambling clubs . . . . . Therefore, when woman refuses to acknowledge the distinction between her life and that of man, she does not convince us of its truth, but it only proves to us that she is suffering. All great sufferings indicate some wrong somewhere".

Creative Unity, pp.160-61.

"In the present case, the wrong is in woman's lack of freedom in her relationship with man, which compels her to turn her disabilities into attractions and to use untruths as her allies in the battle of life, while she is suffering from the precariousness of her position".

Ibid.

"Nothing make us (man) so stupidly mean as the sense of superiority which the power of the purse confers upon us".

Ibid., p.162.

Gandhi: The fault should go to man.

"She has believed in the truth of man's interested teaching that she is inferior to him".

Selections from Gandhi, p.272.

"The sin will be on man's head for tempting or
compelling his companion to desert her special calling".

Ibid.

Rabindranath: The ideal of marriage - love.

"This drama (Shakuntala) was meant not for dealing with a particular passion, not for developing a particular character, but for developing the whole subject from one world to another - to elevate love from the sphere of physical beauty to the eternal heaven of moral beauty".

Selections from Tagore, pp.124-25.

"In human nature sexual passion is fiercely individual and destructive, but dominated by the ideal of love, it has been made to flower into a perfection of beauty, becoming in its best expression symbolical of the spiritual truth in man which is his kinship of love with the infinite".

Rabindranath Tagore, Creative Unity, p.8.

"He (Kalidas) teaches us that love of man and woman is not beautiful, not lasting, not fruitful, so long as it is self-centred, so long as it does not beget Goodness, so long as it does not diffuse, itself into society over son and daughter, guests and neighbours".

Selections from Tagore, pp.124-25.
Gandhi: The ideal of marriage - physical vs. spiritual love

"The ideal that marriage aims at is that of spiritual union through the physical. The human love that it incarnates is intended to serve as a stepping stone to divine or universal love".

Selections from Gandhi, p.273.

Rabindranath: Indian women should follow their own tradition

"Our women know by heart the legends of the great women of the epic age - Savitri who by the power of love conquered death, and Sita who had no other reward for her life of sacrifice but the sacred majesty of sorrow. They knew that it is their duty to make this life an image of the life eternal".

Creative Unity, p.163.

Gandhi: Indian women should follow their own tradition

"They (women of India) may not ape the manner of the West. . . . . . Theirs must be the strong controlling purifying steadying hand, conserving what is best in our culture and unhesitatingly rejecting what is base and degrading. This is the work of Sitas, Draupadis, Savitris and Damayanties, not of amazons and prudes".

Young India, 17.10.1929.
Rabindranath: The future role of woman

"Habituated to deal with the world as a machine man is multiplying his materials, banishing away his happiness and sacrificing love to comfort, which is an illusion. At last the present age has sent its cry to women, asking her to come out from her segregation in order to restore the spiritual supremacy of all that is human in the world of humanity. She has been aroused to remember that womanliness is not chiefly decorative. It is like that vital heath, which not only imparts the bloom of beauty to the body, but joy to the mind and perfection to life".

Rabindranath Tagore, Creative Unity, pp.165-66.

Gandhi: The future role of woman

"Who again suffers daily so that her babe may wax from day to day? Let her transfer that love to the whole of humanity, let her forget that she ever was or can be the object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for that nectar. She can become the leader in Satyagraha which does not require the learning that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith".

Selections from Gandhi, p.273.