CHAPTER III
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THE SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO POLITICS OF TAGORE AND GANDHI

3.1 Religion and politics

It is not an easy task to analyse and investigate the political thoughts of Rabindranath and Gandhi—the more so as their writings are vast and many-sided. The profundity of their thoughts often defies analysis; the broad canvas of their writings increases greatly the responsibilities of interpreting their political philosophies. Unless the fundamentals of their thoughts are clearly grasped, the reader is bound to lose his way in the mazes of their analytic writings.

The two thinkers' political thoughts centered round their spiritual ideals and religious beliefs which proclaimed clearly, that the highest truth of man's life on earth is 'self-realization' i.e. realization of the 'divine' in him. The thinkers insisted that man's individual, social, economic and political activities should be guided by that supreme ideal of life.

On this basis, Gandhi commented, "For me, politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt". He added that he could not isolate politics from the 'deepest things' of life.
He could not get out of politics because it encircled him "like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much on tries". He explained that he wished "to wrestle with the snake" and in that process he had been experimenting with himself and his friends "by introducing religion into politics". Rabindranath similarly observed, "Our fight is a spiritual fight. It is for Man. We are to emancipate Man from the meshes (organization or systems) that he himself has woven round him".

The political philosophy of Rabindranath as well as of Gandhi proceeded from their deep spiritual humanism. They refused to equate political action with expediency and opportunism; thus they were great opponents of Machiavellian state-craft in all its forms. But it must be pointed out that when the thinkers talked about the religious basis of politics they were not preaching 'primitivism' or the establishment of any 'theocracy'. They only stressed the need for incorporating moral values in politics. They desired to create a 'spiritual awareness' in mundane matters. The thinkers' social, economic and political thoughts may be said to have been based on old Biblical precept, that, "it is

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words."
far better to lose the world than to lose one's own soul. understood thus, freedom, rights, nationalism, internationalism and similar other familiar terms seem to lose their external meanings. Their creative and cultural significance are thus widely re-emphasized and their meaning is raised to a higher spiritual level. Or in other words, Rabindranath's and Gandhi's approach to politics was basically 'spiritual', having its root deep in the thinkers' religious conviction that 'man is essentially a spiritual being'. The other corresponding factors which should be taken into account before analysing the thinkers' spiritual approach to politics are:

(i) The thinkers' believed that man's life and his problems could not be divided into separate water-tight compartments namely individual, social, political and economic and others. The man's life and his problems on earth should be taken as an 'integrated spiritual whole' as observed Gandhi, "All act and react upon the other". Rabindranath like Gandhi believed that human life being an undivided spiritual whole could not be divided into different compartments. He explained that European civilization was based on the spirit of 'conflict' and 'separation' while Indian civilization is based on the spirit of 'unity of the soul'.
Like Dayananda, as pointed out by V.P. Varma, both Gandhi and Tagore believed in an immanent cosmic law of moral governance in the world. Any conscious or unconscious violation of the 'law' has to pay its price either by extinction or death. Imperialism, despotism, exploitation, cruelty and other similar political and social ills thus contain the seeds of self-destruction in themselves. Rabindranath described the law in his *Creative Unity* as the "universal law of moral balance". Regarding the spheres of influence of the 'law', Gandhi wrote, "I do not believe that the spiritual law works on a field of its own. On the contrary, it expresses itself only through the ordinary activities of life. It thus affects the economic, the social and political fields". He described the law as 'benevolent' which carries with it "not its vindictive, but its purifying, compelling punishment".

The thinkers believed that the sum total energy of mankind was working towards the fulfilment of a highest spiritual ideal. Rabindranath wrote that he believed, "all men are marching from epoch to epoch towards the fullest realization of his soul". The poet explained that this 'realization of soul' was greater than the things man accumulated, the deeds he accomplished, the theories he built, the 'soul' whose onward course was never checked by death or destruction. Like Rabindranath,
Gandhi wrote that he believed that sum total energy of mankind "is not to bring us down but to lift us up". He emphasized, "Human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment in terms of spirituality." Gandhi wrote that man's ultimate aim was the realization of 'God' and all his activities, social, political, religious had to be guided by the "ultimate aim of the vision of God". To Rabindranath, there is no metaphysics in it, the human being is the son of the 'Immortal One', and that 'know-thyself' is the *Summon bonum* of his existence. He wrote, "I believe that there is an ideal hovering over and permeating the earth, an ideal of that Paradise, which is not the outcome of fancy but the ultimate reality in which all things dwell and move."  

3.2.1 No politics of convenience or expediency  

Rabindranath wrote, "Utility could never occupy man's whole being." He explained that when man looked at the world through the veil of his desires, he made it small and narrow and failed to perceive its full 'truth'. Of course, it is obvious that the world serves him and fulfils his needs, but his relation to the world does not end there. Tagore wrote, "He (man) is bound to it (world) with a deeper and truer bond than that of necessity". The

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.*
relation is one of love. In a poetic way he wrote, "In love, loss and gain are harmonized." Similarly, Gandhi explained that he noticed that "life persists in the midst of destruction" and so there must be a higher law than that of destruction. The law was nothing but 'love' and he believed that only under that 'law of love' a well-ordered society could sustain and grow. Gandhi wrote that it was love "that binds together and saves men from destruction and death." He added and emphasized that the universe would disappear without the existence of love. Thus 'love' not 'utility' as the thinkers believed was the basis of man's relationship with the others and the world. Thus 'Ahimsa' or 'love' becomes an all-pervasive eternal principle applicable to every situation in life without any exception. On this basis, any 'economics' or 'politics', which is based on the spirit of 'utility' only, was unacceptable to Gandhi and Tagore. The thinkers believed that the 'mental' or 'spiritual' was more real than the material, and that true reality was 'spiritual' rather than 'material'. The objective universe is an embodiment of human mind and his love to others. In its wider application, it goes against the 'politics of convenience' in Machiavellian sense, and 'materialistic interpretation of human history' by Marx and Engels.
3.2.2 Ends and Means

Thus both to Gandhi and Tagore, 'ends' and 'means' were identical terms. Purity of 'means' should be accepted as a comprehensive principle in achieving an 'end'. The isolation of politics from moral principles in the name of 'science' or 'realism' was, to them, as Gandhi put it, 'a trap to kill the soul'. The thinkers' political ideal was a part of their philosophy of life. The thinkers did not make any distinction between an honest 'ideal' and the means of achieving it. They pointed out that success lies more in an honest 'endeavour' than in real 'fulfilment' or 'accomplishment' of that ideal. Tagore observed, "Our life is facing the infinite, and it is in movement. Its aspiration is therefore infinitely more than its achievement". Similarly, Gandhi observed, "Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory". He explained that faith in one's ideals constitutes true life, "in fact, it is man's all in all". The goal always recedes from man. The greater the progress the greater the recognition of one's "unworthiness". Man should not be "afraid of ideals or reducing them to practice to the uttermost". Like Rabindranath, Gandhi observed, "Life is an aspiration*. Its mission is to strive after

*The underline has been given to emphasize the inner meaning of the words.
perfection which is self-realization. The ideal must not be lowered because of our weakness or imperfections.\textsuperscript{28}

Thus to Gandhi and Tagore, real life is not which is 'being' but which is 'becoming'.

3.2.3 Human nature

By and large, it is a faith in the inherent goodness of human nature. It implies that it is more natural for man to be good than to be evil though apparently descent may seem easier than ascent thought, Gandhi\textsuperscript{29}. It was his firm faith that man is by nature going higher\textsuperscript{30}. Rabindranath on the eighty-first birth-day anniversary in 1941, gave out a message to his countrymen, wherein he observed, "As I look around I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man". It is also the theme of Rabindranath's famous work entitled \textit{The Religion of Man}\textsuperscript{31}.

3.3 Man above institution

Thus both Gandhi and Tagore established 'Man' above 'institutions' or 'organisations' whether political, social

*The underline has been given to emphasise the words.*
or economic by nature. Gandhi observed, "I have discovered that man is superior to the system he propounded". Rabindranath similarly explained that man's fight is a 'spiritual fight', he is always fighting to free himself from the meshes of organizations or systems that he himself has woven round him. To Rabindranath, in the West 'organization' is placed before 'man' while in India 'organization' is placed after 'man'.

3.4 Individualism

Consequently, Gandhi observed, "The individual is the one supreme consideration". Similarly, as V. P. Varma rightly observed, Rabindranath "was a prophet of individuality and not of domination". As also Rajendra Verma in his Tagore, Prophet against Totalitarianism, in analysing some of Rabindranath's famous novels and dramas very successfully points out how much the poet challenged the cause of 'individualism' against the 'the spirit of organization' which is not social, but utilitarian in character.

3.5 Rights

While defending the cause of 'individualism', both Gandhi and Tagore, in no way encouraged unrestricted enjoyment of 'freedom' and 'rights' of the individual. Rights to them, were not exclusive possessions but proceeded
from disinterested contribution to higher good. Tagore explained that only in 'society', man realizes his 'self' through the unity with his fellow creatures. This 'social consciousness' or 'sympathy' is the very basis of man's right. He wrote, "...the only true human progress is coincident with this widening of the range of feeling...

Man does not acquire rights through occupation of larger space, nor through external conduct, but his rights extend only so far he is real, and his reality is measured by the scope of his consciousness. Gandhi's ideal of rights was based on the same principle of 'service' and 'sympathy' to others. To quote Gandhi, "...the right to perform one's duties is the only right that is worth living for and dying for. It covers all legitimate rights. Thus both Gandhi and Tagore believed that 'rights' in order to be best realized, should proceed from self-imposed responsibilities and duties of the individual towards his fellow beings in the society. It is a voluntary surrender of one's own self interest to the cause of many.

3.6 Good of all

In its wider implication it means Sarvabhumita or 'good of all' instead of 'good of many'. By and large, it goes against the Lockean theory of Majoritarianism, Marx-Angel's concept of class and racial struggle and
Benthamine formula of the 'greatest good of the greatest number'. As Gandhi observed, "A votary of ahimsa cannot subscribe to the utilitarian formula (of the greatest good of the greatest number). He will strive for the greatest good of all and die in order to realize the ideal". Rabindranath similarly wrote, "The narrow emphasis of utility diverts our attention from the complete man to the merely useful man. The thick label of market price obliterates the ultimate value of reality".

3.7.1 Freedom

Gandhi and Tagore considered intellectual slavery more dangerous than political slavery. Both of them had a spiritual concept of freedom and they did not make any clear cut distinction between 'political freedom' and 'spiritual freedom'. To them, one was complementary to other. Rabindranath said that those who had not achieved 'Swaraj' in their inner nature, deprived of the same in the outside world as well. Gandhi similarly observed that he was not interested in freeing India merely from the "English yoke" but from "any yoke whatsoever". He explained that he had no desire to exchange, "king log for king stork" as the movement of Swaraj to him was only a "movement of self-purification". True freedom could not be attained only by change of power from one hand to another, it should come
from within. Gandhi wrote, "A perfect constitution super-imposed upon a rotten internal condition will be like whited sepulchre". Tagore similarly explained, "We must win our country, not from some foreigner, but from our own inertia, our own indifference. He added that however determinantly India might try to hunt the "monster of foreign dependence" with "outside lethal weapons" it would always elude her pursuit by changing its "skin" or its "colour". But when she would learn to grow from within she could best realize her freedom. As Dr. Sachin Sen rightly points out, Rabindranath wanted freedom for his countrymen from fear and freedom from burden of ages.

Rabindranath's famous poem on 'Freedom' under the title 'India's Prayer' which he read at the Indian National Congress session held in Calcutta in 1917, expressed the poet's concept of "freedom" as it should be. In this poem the poet prayed to God to help him to realize the "freedom of the soul" which would enable him "to stand firm and suffer with strength*. For the True, for the God, for the Eternal in Man, for the kingdom which is in the union of hearts, for the Freedom which is of the Soul". Rabindranath's concept of the 'freedom of the soul' is identical with Gandhi's concept of 'soul force'. In its

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.
wider application, it imposes a duty on the part of the individual to resist firmly an 'evil' by the power of the 'soul' and not by the 'sword'.

3.7.2 The price of freedom

Both Gandhi and Tagore considered 'suffering based on the 'strength of the soul' to be the surest and permanent means of winning 'Swaraj' or real freedom.

Rabindranath wrote that the great gift of freedom could not come to the people through charity, "we must win it before we can own it"\(^{50}\). He added that India's opportunity for winning freedom would come to her when she could prove that she was morally superior to the people who ruled her by their right of conquest. The poet wrote, "She (India) must willingly accept her penance of suffering, the suffering which is the crown of the great. Armed with her utter faith in goodness India should stand unabashed before the arrogance that scoffs at the power of spirit"\(^{51}\).

Gandhi developed his famous "non-violence" doctrine on the basis of this ideal of suffering. His whole life and his death are symbols of this ideal. He observed, "Swaraj can never be a free gift by one nation to another. It is a treasure to be purchased with a nation's best blood"\(^{52}\). He explained that no country had ever risen, "without being
purified through force of suffering and he advised his countrymen to be prepared for many "repetitions of the wrongs" such as "Jalianwala Bag Massacre" and face them with their courage of mind and suffering.

3.8 Non-violence vs political revolution

This way of attaining freedom 'through suffering' is based on the spirit of 'love' and not on 'violence' and 'hatred'. It is a long drawn process, but the surest and permanent way of achieving freedom. On the other hand, the path of 'violence' although seems to be a 'quick' and 'convenient' method, could not bring any permanent and beneficial result. Gandhi observed, "Non-violence in its positive aspect as benevolence . . . is the greatest force because of the limitless scope it affords for self-suffering'.

Rabindranath similarly, condemned bitterly the 'path of violence' to be the most ineffective way of winning Swaraj. He wrote, "The way of bloody revolution is not the true way . . . a political revolution is like taking a short-cut to nothing, that the wrong way may appear shorter, but it does not reach the goal and only grievously hurts the feet'.

He added that the refusal to pay the full price for a thing leads to the "loss of the price without the gain of the thing". Thus, like Gandhi, Rabindranath was a great apostle of non-violence. As pointed out by many of the
biographers$^{58}$ of Rabindranath, that it was with this ideal of 'long-suffering' and 'non-violence' the poet threw himself actively in the anti-partition movement of Bengal in 1905 but withdrew himself from the movement in 1906, as 'terrorism' and 'violence' were fast overtaking the anti-partition movement. Although Tagore withdrew himself from active politics of the time, he used his pen insistently preaching non-violence and constructive works as the most noblest means of achieving Swaraj. In the famous journals of the time namely, Vangadarsan, Bhander (he used to edit) Pravasi and Bharati, the poet contributed a series of articles in which as pointed out by Niharanjan Roy, the poet stressed the need of constructive and creative nationalism and gave a completely new scheme for the regeneration of Indian society through 'non-violence' and 'constructive' or 'self-help' $^{59}$ basis. The articles 'Svadeshi Samaj' (1904), 'Atma Sakti' (self-strength, 1905), Bharat-Varsha' (India, 1906), 'Raja-Praja' (The King and his Subject, 1908), 'Samuha' (Collection, 1908), 'Our Siksha' (Our Education, 1908), 'My Vision of Indian History' (1908) - these titles, which are chronologically set forth, only represent a fraction of what Rabindranath wrote, page after page and month after month on Indian society, politics and history. Even as pointed out by Niharanjan Roy, Krishna Kripalani and host of eminent autobiographers of
Rabindranath, the poet had written a drama in 1909, entitled *Prayasthit* (Atonement) in which he propounded, through the words of the saintly rebel Dhananjay Vairagi, the message and technique of non-violent struggle against the unfeeling and unseeing authorities of power. His technique included passive resistance, non-hatred even for the enemy, no-rent campaign, self-purification and atonement, etc., that were destined a decade or so later, to be adopted and made familiar as 'Satyagraha' by Gandhi in his struggle against the British policy and administration in India.

Dr. Niharenjan Roy in his studies on Rabindranath, pointed out that it was Tagore who first showed an altogether new way of achieving India's socio-political aspiration in 'non-violent' and 'constructive' way. Tagore's vision had little effect in changing the direction of the political movement of the time till the time when "Gandhi came and adopting much of what Tagore had thought and felt led the socio-political movements along a new path." This view of Niharenjan has been shared by many of the autobiographers of Rabindranath among whom the name of Krishna Kripalani (who married Tagore's grand-daughter Nandita) is also worthy of mention. This view of the author's could also be supported by analysing some of the new initiatives and experiments that Rabindranath had undertaken in the field of re-organization of Indian villages and industries as well
as in the field of education at that time.

3.9 The Swadeshi Spirit and Rabindranath

Long before, the historic Swadeshi movement that stemmed from the partition of Bengal, Rabindranath began to propagate "Swadeshi doctrine" by opening a 'Swadeshi Stores' in Calcutta, where he assembled for sale, from all parts of the country, various articles of Indian manufacture required for day-to-day living. In the store, he stocked everything from footwear to ladies toiletory. Rabindranath himself wrote, "... long before this popular ebullition of excitement (referring to the non-cooperation movement of 1922) I myself had given a thousand rupees, when I had not five rupees to call my own, to open Swadeshi store and courted banter and bankruptcy". As we know from Rabindranath's Reminiscences, he and his brothers tried to manufacture "lucifer matches" out of indigenous materials. Jyotindranath (the elder brother of Rabindranath) with the help of his young brother Rabindranath, even evolved a design of a typical 'National' costume for the whole of India. The famous Hindu Mela had been initiated with the assistance of Rabindranath's family.

In the educational field, Tagore was the first person who took the initiative of infusing a spirit of 'self-help' and 'self-reliance' among the people. He
established the 'Santiniketan' in 1901 and soon he started experiments with what is known today as 'Community Development' programme. As Krishna Kripalani points out, Rabindranath first conducted the experiment among the peasants of his own estates and later in the institute which he founded for the purpose and named "Sriniketan". Krishna Kripalani writes, "His (Rabindranath's) writings on rural education and on the problem of community development are still the finest manual for all works in the field."

It was Rabindranath who took the leading part in establishing the National Council of Education in 1906 and accepted the task of drawing up a comprehensive programme of work for the Council. Many of Rabindranath's suggestions and programmes for improvement in educational field were accepted and adopted by Gandhi in later days, as pointed out by many of the educationists of present time. As we know from Krishna Kripalani, Gandhi imported the first batch of teachers for his Basic School from Santiniketan. He says, "Mahatma Gandhi adopted the scheme of teaching through crafts many years after Tagore had worked it out at Santiniketan." One can, therefore, safely accept Dr. Niharanjan's view that much of what Rabindranath said during the time (roughly from 1892 to 1910) were unheeded, much of what the poet did remain unnoticed at that time, but they were not all in vain, since decades later, when
Gandhi emerged on India's political and social scene, and when the work of social reconstruction came to be taken up as a national issue, many of the threads that were picked up to weave India's social fabric with, were those that had been spun by Tagore.

3.10 Choice between violence and cowardice

Thus while idealizing the spirit of 'self-help' and 'constructive work' both Gandhi and Tagore indirectly discouraged 'self-pity', 'begging attitude' and 'cowardice' among the people. Regarding the choice between 'cowardice' and 'violence' Gandhi clearly said that he preferred 'violence'. He observed, "I do believe where there is only choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence". He explained that he would prefer to see India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than she should in a cowardly manner, remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour. Rabindranath had an identical opinion regarding the choice between 'cowardice' and 'violence'. He wrote, "Weakness is the traitor who betrays our soul".

Like Vivekananda and Gandhi, Rabindranath earnestly wanted that the exploited and destitute humanity of India should cultivate moral force for their regeneration and should refuse to bend before the arrogance of despotic violence and imperialistic might of the West. Rabindranath in his famous Presidential address at the Bengal Provincial Conference
at Pabna in 1908, administered a stern rebuke to the mendicancy of the political leaders of the day and criticized them for the lack of self-confidence in themselves. He clearly declared that he did not belong to the group who believed that "running to and fro on king's highroad with petition is the chief work of the country". The poet bitterly criticized the so-called 'ultraconservatives' who developed in the words of Rabindranath "mendicancy in politics into a fine art". Thus non-violence to Gandhi and Tagore was not a negative principle but also a positive attitude of mind which defies all kinds of sufferings and even 'death' in resisting an evil. Gandhi explained that his 'non-violence' was not for the man who feared death. This noble ideal of self-sacrifice and 'death' had been idealized by Rabindranath in many of his writings. Commenting on the poet's historical writings, Nisharanjan has rightly pointed out that, "he (Rabindranath) seems to have delighted in portraying characters that had learnt to suffer and die nobly without any hatred and malice for the enemy".

3.11 Nationalism in India vs. internationalism

Thus the thinkers' 'love' for their country was charged with a deep feeling of 'national pride' and 'honour' which refused to bow down to any external 'threat' or 'coercion' or even 'death'. At the same time, it was not
based on 'hatred' against any particular country even not against Great Britain. As Gandhi observed, he did not want India's freedom at the expense of Great Britain or any other country, "that if need be the whole country (India) may die so that human races may live". He explained that his nationalism had no geographical limit, "If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself". Rabindranath expressed the same truth in different words, "I love India, not because I cultivate the ideolotary of geography, not because I have the chance to be born in her soil" but because of the ideal of peace, harmony and universal brotherhood India stood for. The thinkers blended patriotism with humanism and did not see any conflict between the two. Gandhi observed, 'For me patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane'. In short, the thinkers' love for their country did not obstruct their natural relationship with others. They had no 'ideolotary of geography' as Rabindranath put it.

The thinkers' 'patriotism' was based on 'love of mankind'. Thus when India suffered from injustice, the thinkers stood against it, not as Indian but as human being. Rabindranath at the age of twenty wrote an angry protest against the forcing of opium on the people of China in an article entitled "Traffic of death in China" (1881). In 1898,
he condemned the policy of lynching of the Negroes in the United States. The poet felt as much for the Negroes brutally lynched in America as for the Koreans who were the victims of Japanese Imperialism of the time. Rabindranath was a lover of man, not of any particular country. The same was true to Gandhi who observed, "My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service of India includes the service of humanity".

Like Rabindranath, Gandhi stood up as the champion of spiritual nationalism of India which implied the full and comprehensive outflowering of the Indian national consciousness, so that it could make its effective contribution to the universal life of humanity. Secondly, it emphasized the cultivation of moral virtues. This implied that in place of praying for justice and generosity to the British rulers, the higher powers of strength and illumination were to be acquired. Thus to Gandhi and Tagore, India was not merely a 'geographical expression' but was an 'ideal' itself, having its roots in the Vedantic concept of spiritual unity of existence. It is a proclamation of faith in truth, justice and non-violence and essential good qualities of man. Thus Indian nationalism is in no way an antithesis to international understanding and peace, rather it is conducive to it, as Rabindranath and Gandhi interpreted it. Gandhi wrote, "The whole scheme of the liberation of India is based
upon the development of internal strength. It is a plan of self-purification*. The peoples of the West, he added, could best help the Indian movement by setting apart specialists to study the inwardness of it. "Let the specialists come to India with an open mind and in a spirit of humility as befits a searcher after Truth". Similarly, Rabindranath appealed to his countrymen to have faith in their own spiritual mission; "She (India) is seeking for the glorious opportunity when she will know her mind, and give her mind to the world, to help it in its progress". He added, "I turn to look back to India's own pure culture - in those ages when it flourished in its truth - I am emboldened to assert that it is there. In fact, it is with this ideal Rabindranath established his dear school in 'Shantiniketan'.

3.12 Nationalism in the West

The economic reasoning - Both Rabindranath and Gandhi condemned the aggressive spirit of nationalism in the West which they believed was primarily guided by economic 'reasoning' and 'motivation'. The inner spirit of Western nationalism is exploitation of the weaker nations of Asia and Africa. Gandhi explained that it is not the nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations, which is evil. In the
West, each nation "wants to profit at the expense of, and rise on the ruins of, the other. India's nationalism has struck a different path". He declared that Indian nationalism could be no peril to other nations as "we will exploit none". Like Gandhi, Rabindranath identified the spirit of Western nationalism with 'imperialism' in general. He wrote that in the West national machinery and commerce and politics "compressed bales of humanity which have their use and high market value, but they are bound in iron hoops, labelled and separated off with scientific care and precision". He explained that the word 'Nation' as the people of the West understood it (i.e. an organization of power aiming at certain economic gains) did not exist in India nor "occur in our language". The basis of Hindu civilization is society, the basis of European civilization is political organization, namely 'State'. In India social instincts imposed restrictions on the spirit of conflict. She has to accommodate differences in races and in religion. Thus Indian history has been the history of continual social adjustment and not that of organized power for defence and aggression as in Europe. Rabindranath explained that he called India a 'land of the No-Nation' as he did not subscribe to the accepted definition of 'nation' of the West i.e., "a nation, in the sense of the political and economic union of a people, is that aspect...".
which a whole population assumes when organized for a mechanical purpose. In short, Rabindranath interpreted 'nation' in the sense that it was the political and economic union of a people for a mechanical purpose i.e. economic exploitation of the weaker nations. Both Gandhi and Tagore reproached their countrymen for being merely hangers-on of European Culture forsaking the rich granary of their own past. Rabindranath wrote, "... if we ever think that to build up the Nation after European pattern is the only way open and the only way of humanity, we shall be wrong." Similarly, Gandhi explains that European civilization is based on "the incessant search for material comforts and their multiplication" which is an evil. European civilization is no doubt suited for the Europeans, "but it will mean ruin for India if we endeavour to copy it."

3.13 Asia for the Asatics

Both Gandhi and Tagore were against Japan's expounded doctrine, 'Asia for the Asatics'. Gandhi observed, "I do not subscribe to the doctrine of 'Asia for the Asatics', if it is meant as an anti-European combination. He explained that cultural isolation for Asia would be a suicidal step, "... Asia cannot afford to remain a frog in the well." He emphasized that Asia is not for Asia but the whole world, because she has a message which is 2,500
years old namely 'Buddhism', which is based on non-violence. Asia should re-affirm her faith in non-violence of Buddhism and has "to deliver it to the world".

Similarly, in his famous letter to the eminent Japanese writer Yone Noguchi, Rabindranath clearly indicated that he did not support Japan's war of aggression on China in the name of "Asia for Asians". Rabindranath wrote in 1938 to Yone Noguchi: "I have believed in the message of Asia, but I never dreamed that this message could be identified with deeds which brought exaltation to the heart of Tamer Lane at his terrible efficiency in man slaughter . . . . . The doctrine of 'Asia for Asians' which you enunciate in your letter, as an instrument of political blackmail, has all the virtues of lesser Europe which I repudiate".

3.14 Independence vs. interdependence

Gandhi explained that isolated independence was not the goal of world states. "It is voluntary interdependence," he added. In fact, the First World War as pointed out by J. H. Landman, broke out due to the "excesses of nationalism, militarism and economic imperialism" among the nation-states in Europe, as well as of Japan in the Far East. The treaties following the First World War could not solve the old problems, rather it gave birth to twelve new republics. The emergence of new Nation-States in the map
of Europe created in its turn, increasing race-hatred, economic rivalries and ill-feeling among the states, which ultimately led to the Second World War. In fact, Tagore lashed his most celebrated attacks against these so-called Nation-States of Europe in his lectures on 'Nationalism'. In that lecture he showed, how the Nation States of Europe had hindered the development of higher humanity and made the 'Nations' powerful but not free. He characterised the European war of Nations as "the war of retribution". He said, "The Nation, with all its paraphernalis of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns its blasphemous prayers in the Churches and the literary mock thunders of its patriotic bragging, cannot hide the fact that the Nation is the greatest evil for the Nation". He added that thus any new birth of its fellow nation in the world is always followed in the mind of other nations "by the dread of new peril". So like Gandhi, Rabindranath insisted that isolated independence should not be the goal of the world states.

3.15 Social interrelationship in international affairs

Thus Rabindranath explained that the spirit of social co-operation or interrelationship should be encouraged in international affairs. Isolated independence of so-called nation-states is a threat to world peace. Every sovereign
state with its independent foreign policy and aggressive spirit of "nationalism" becomes an enemy of other similar nation states. In his famous lectures on Nationalism he points out that India should protect her age-old 'Samaj' and its ideal of service, love and co-operation. He observed, "Civilization must take its stand upon its basis of social co-operation and not upon that of economic exploitation." Like Rabindranath, Gandhi emphasized that the spirit of 'social interrelation' should replace the ego-centric aggressive 'nationalism' of the so-called sovereign states of Europe who are dominating over the world politics of modern days. He explained that "man is a social being, without interrelation with society he cannot realize his oneness with the Universe". Dependence on society teaches man the lesson of humanity. He added that this spirit of social interrelation in its wider application means, "The World is My Family". Thus 'isolated independence' would not help to solve the world problem, the ideal should be voluntary interdependence.

3.16 On international Organization of Peace

Both Gandhi and Tagore hoped that international organization, like the League of Nations (Rabindranath did not live to see the birth of U.N.O.) would pave the way of international understanding and peace. Rabindranath expressed this hope during his conversation with Roman Rolland.
at Geneva, August 1930. He observed, "The readjustment of international grievances by mutual agreement of nations is probably one of the best legacies of Geneva." At the same time, during his visit to Russia Rabindranath explained that "the strong men of the League of Nations" did not really want to stop their far-reaching acts of depredation, however much they "may shout for peace. Hence it is that in the imperialist countries the sowing of the thistles of armament outruns the sowing of grain. Similarly, appreciating the work of 'Unesco' to "secure peace through educational and cultural activities" Gandhi maintained that so long the mad race for armaments continues there could be no hope of permanent world peace. "Like opium production, the world manufacture of swords is to be restricted. The sword is probably more responsible for misery in the world than opium," observed Gandhi.

3.17 Difference between Gandhi and Tagore

Both Gandhi and Tagore had realized, not merely in their abstraction of thought, but in their lives, synthesis of Indian culture was as much Indian as personal. Like all creative thinkers, they had been able to reach the level of the impersonal only by being personal. The ideal of "freedom" thus they spoke of were as thoroughly guided by their respective life philosophies as any other creative activity they sought to express themselves. Thus while to
Gandhi, "India should be free in order to serve the humanity", to Rabindranath, "India should serve the humanity in order to be free". Or in other words, Gandhi believed that the very movement for freedom in India was India's contribution to peace. An independent India with her message of non-violence would serve the humanity more actively and purposefully. Or in other words, he insisted that before the ideal of internationalism was extended, each nation should be free and organized first, so as to act and contribute as an individual. That was why Gandhi wanted national independence before international co-operation. He observed, "It is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible when nationalism becomes a fact." On the other hand, as Rabindranath clearly declared that he did not belong to the group who believed that India required to be strong and rich before she could "raise her voice for the sake of the whole world". He explained that the measure of greatness could not be determined by external possession or by material resources. He argued that "India in spite of her penury and humiliation, can afford to come to the rescue of humanity." Thus to Tagore, the movement for political independence of India was only a part of a larger task to be accomplished first. The end undoubtedly to Tagore was the 'spiritual liberation'.
of whole mankind. On this ground, Rabindranath argued, "Political freedom does not give us freedom when our mind is not free. But one should not be misguided by the apparent differences of opinion between the two thinkers on the question of national liberation and international independence. Both Gandhi and Rabindranath described and desired to see a free India armed with her spiritual strength contributing to the larger cause of humanity. The thinkers were lovers of man, not of any particular dogma or creed. They wanted to emancipate 'man' from the narrow seclusive limited world of today, which is dominated by politics without religion, wealth without responsibility, science without humanity and knowledge without morality."
REFERENCES  III

1. Young India, June 18, 1925, p.214.
2. Young India, October 1, 1931, p.281.
12. Rabindranath Tagore, Man, pp.43-44.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p.25.
17. Sadhana, pp.112-114.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p.29.
36. Modern Indian Political Thought, p.90.
38. Rajendra Verma analysed the two novels of Rabindranath namely (a) The Home and the World, (b) Four chapters, and the two plays namely (c) Mukta Dhara, (d) Red Oleanders.
41. Selections from Gandhi, p.37.
42. The Religion of an Artist, p.21.
44. *Young India*, June 6, 1924, p.195.
45. *Young India*, June 24, 1926, p.226.
47. Ibid.
49. Tagore thus wrote on the ideal of 'freedom':

"Let this be our prayer to thee -
Give us power to resist pleasure where it enslave us
Let us stand firm and suffer with strength
For the True, For the Good, for the Eternal in Man
For thy kingdom which is in the Union of hearts
For the Freedom which is of the Soul".

*Poems by Rabindranath Tagore*, No. 60, Calcutta, Feb., 1924.


51. Ibid.
52. *Young India*, May 1, 1922, p.4.
54. Ibid., p.127.
57. Ibid.
65. Hindu Mela was an annual fair. The Mela used to organize an exhibition of indigenous arts and crafts and encouraged the talent and skill. In the words of Rabindranath, it was "perhaps the first attempt as a reverential realization of India as our motherland".

Rabindranath, Reminiscences, pp.140.

66. Krishna Kripalani, Rabindranath, p.78.

67. H. B. Mukherjee in his Education for fullness, Asia Pub. House; Sunil Chandra Sarkar in his Tagore's educational philosophy and experiment Visva-Bharati, Shantiniketan, and Krishna Kripalani in his Rabindranath, pointed out that many of Rabindranath's educational ideals, schemes and experiments were adopted by Gandhi in later days.


70. The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.142.


75. An Artist in Life, p.42.
76. Selections from Gandhi, p.42.
77. Young India, August 11, 1920.
78. Rabindranath Tagore, A Vision of Indian History, p.45.
79. The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.957.
80. Ibid., p.436.
81. Ibid.
82. Rabindranath Tagore, The Gutsie of Indian Culture, p.33.
83. Ibid., p.44.
84. The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.436.
85. Ibid., p.835.
86. Nationalism.
87. Ibid., p.15.
89. Nationalism.
91. The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.432.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
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95. Ibid.
96. The letter has been reproduced in Rajendra Verma, Tagore, Prophet against Totalitarianism pp.57-58, and also in Sochin Sen, The Political Thought of Tagore, p.137; Poet to Poet, Visva-Bharati, 1939. (July-October 1958).

99. Ibid., p.39.

100. Nationalism.

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104. Letters from Russia, p.25.


110. Ibid.

111. Lectures and Addresses, pp.114-115.
APPENDIX III

Rabindranath: Political versus real freedom and rights

"I believe in freedom, in that freedom which naturally takes upon itself responsibilities in order to express adequately the deeper human impulses of love and service".

Letters from Russia, p.174.

"(Those) who have not achieved Swaraj in their inner nature, and so are deprived of Swaraj in the outside world as well".


"I repeatedly endeavoured to impress on my countrymen, that man is not under any necessity to beg for rights from others but must create them for himself . . . By dependence on acquisition from outside, man's inner nature suffers loss. And it was my contention, that man is not so hard oppressed by being deprived of his outward rights as he is by the constant bearing of the burden of prayers and petitions".

Ibid.

"When freedom is not an inner idea which imparts
strength to our activities and breadth to our creations, when it is merely a thing of external circumstance, it is like an open space to one who is blindfolded".

Rabindranath Tagore, Creative Unity, p.133.

"He only has freedom who ideally loves freedom himself and is glad to extend it to others. He who cares to have slaves must chain himself to them; he who builds to create exclusion for others builds walls across his own freedom; he who distrusts freedom in others loses his moral right to it".

Creative Unity, p.136.

Gandhi : Political versus real freedom and rights

"The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given period. And if this is the correct view of freedom, our chief energy must be concentrated upon achieving reform from within".

N. K. Bose, Selections from Gandhi, p.35.

"Government over self is the truest Swaraj, it is synonymous with moksha or salvation".

Ibid.
Rabindranath: Swaraj through long suffering

"I have always felt, and said accordingly that the great gift of freedom can never come to a people through charity. We must win it before we can own it. And India's opportunity for winning it will come to her when she can prove that she is morally superior to the people who rule her by their right of conquest. She must willingly accept her penance of suffering, the suffering which is the crown of great. Armed with her utter faith in goodness she must stand unabashed before the arrogance that scoffs at the power of spirit".

From Rabindranath's letter to Gandhi dated, Santiniketan, April 12, 1919.

Gandhi: Swaraj through long suffering

"The Satyagrahi seeks to convert his opponent by sheer force of character and suffering. The purer he is and the more he suffers, the quicker the progress".

"I saw the nations like individuals could only be made through the agony of the cross and in no other way".

Selections from Gandhi, p.17.
Rabindranath: Society vs. state

"Europe prizes political independence we set store by spiritual liberation . . . . the basis of Hindu civilization is society, the basis of European civilization is the state".

Rabindranath, "Prachya-o-Pashchatya Sabhyata"
Rabindra Rachanavali, Vol. IV.

"The ideals that strive to take form in social institutions have two objects, one is to regulate our passions and appetites for the harmonious development of man, and the other is to help him cultivate disinterested love for his fellow creatures. Therefore, society is the expression of those moral and spiritual aspirations of man which belong to his higher nature".

Selections from Tagore, p.89.

Gandhi: Society versus state

"Human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment in terms of spirituality".

Selections from Gandhi, p.22.

"Society is largely regulated by the expression of non-violence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for
an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale”.

The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 130.

"What I disapprove of is an organization based on force which a state is, voluntary organization there must be”.

Ibid., p. 41.

Rabindranath: Nationalism in the West or the evil spirit of modern nation

"When a whole body of men train themselves for a particular narrow purpose, it becomes a common interest with them to keep up that purpose and preach absolute loyalty to it. Nationalism (in the West) is the training of a whole people for a narrow ideal; and when it gets hold of their minds it is sure to lead them to moral degeneracy and intellectual blindness”.

Creative unity, p. 148.

"Of course, pursuit of self-interest need not be wholly selfish; it can even be in harmony with the interest of all. Therefore, ideally speaking, the nationalism, which stands for the expression of the collective self-interest of a people, need not be ashamed of itself
if it maintains its true limitations. But what we see in practice is, that every nation which has prospered has done so through its career of aggressive selfishness either in commercial adventures or in foreign possessions or in both”.

Creative Unity, p.150.

Gandhi : Nationalism or the evil spirit of modern nation

"It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rise on the ruin of the other”.

The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.436.

Rabindranath : India's mission and messages to the world

"What India truly seeks is not a peace which is in negation or in some mechanical adjustment but that which is in Sivam, in goodness which is in Advaitam, in the truth of perfect union. . . . . with the pure knowledge of the spiritual meaning of existence".

Rabindranath Tagore, A Vision of India's History, p.46.

"Our society exists to remind us, through its
various voices, that the ultimate truth in man is not in his intellect or his possession, it is in his illumination of mind, in his extension of sympathy across all barriers of caste and colour; in his recognition of the world, not merely as a storehouse of power, but as a habitation of man's spirit, with its eternal music of beauty and its inner light of the divine presence".

Creative Unity, p.27.

Gandhi: India's mission and her messages to the world

"My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service of India includes the service of humanity".

The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.436.

"My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself."

Selections from Gandhi, p.42.

"My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all embracing and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress or the exploitation of other nationalities. The conception of my patriotism is nothing if it is not always in every case without exception,
consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large.  
... my religion and my patriotism derived from my religion embrace all life".

The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.437.

"For me patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane".

The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.435.

Gandhi: India's mission and her messages to the world

"I want to see God face to face. God I know is Truth. For me the only certain means of knowing God is non-violence - ahimsa - love. I live for India's freedom and would die for it, because it is part of that Truth. Only a free India can worship the true God".

Ibid., p.334.

Rabindranath: Humanity and universal brotherhood

"I have great faith in humanity. Like the Sun it can be clouded, but never extinguished ... only those races will prosper who for the sake of their own perfection and permanent safety, are ready to cultivate the spiritual magnanimity of mind that enables the soul of man to be realized in the heart of all races".

Lectures and Addresses, p.146.
"For men to come near to one another and yet to continue to ignore the claims of humanity is a sure process of suicide. We are waiting for the time when the spirit of the age will be incarnated in a complete human truth and the meeting of men will be translated into the unity of men".

*Lectures and Addresses*, p.146.