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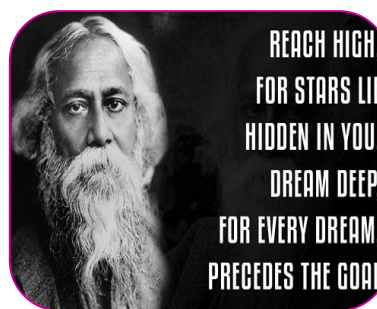
RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S DREAM OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Ideals of liberal humanism is one of the main features of the cultural tradition of ancient India. Rabindranath Tagore had great respect for the traditions of ancient India. He himself was a worshipper of humanism and had dreamt of teaching not only to the Indians but to the people of the world at large the essence of humanism. He wanted a re-evaluation and modernization of the ancient traditions. He wanted a fusion of the Western scientific reasoning with the glorious ancient traditions of India. He had dreamt of reviving the ancient glory of India. But at the same time he had said that we should not refuse the best of the West but should assimilate the best of the West with the best of the East. Assimilation was his key word – assimilation of the best of the East and the best of the West – that would give birth to his dream India. He had advised holistic education for India to give birth to perfect and complete man.



KEYWORDS : *Ideals of liberal humanism , essence of humanism , re-evaluation and modernization.*

INTRODUCTION:

Ideals of liberal humanism is one of the main features of the cultural tradition of ancient India. Rabindranath Tagore had great respect for the traditions of ancient India. Tagore had looked at the essence of Indian culture soaked through his patriotism and intense love of the motherland. He firmly believed in the ancient tradition of the union of the body, mind, and soul. He himself was a worshipper of humanism and had dreamt of teaching not only to the Indians but to the people of the world at large the essence of humanism. In the present day world he stands as a symbol of world humanism. He believed that each and every plot of land, howsoever small that might be, is actually a microcosm of the world. He believed that one has to imbibe the spirit of humanism to love any plot of land and for this he turns back to the ideals of ancient India. Though born at a time when India was full of superstitions, Tagore was quite modern in his approach and did not believe in the superstitions. He did not accept anything without logic or reason. This was obviously because of the education he had learnt from his family. He wanted a re-evaluation and modernization of the ancient traditions. He wanted a fusion of the Western scientific reasoning with the glorious ancient traditions of India. Throughout his literary career it is noticed that his quest is for the creation of an eternal human ideal. He was against the colonial imperialism of Europe, but at the same time he was also against the prevalent social abuses and curses of the 18th and 19th century India like the caste system, untouchability, and other social abuses. He had also raised his voice for mass education and women education. Himself being a seer, he could realize that the internal strife and clashes, disbelief among the different groups, castes, religions, hatred towards one another, petty selfish interests, narrowness of ideas, and imitation of the Westerners were acting as hindrances in the formation of our national unity. He had said that each and every Indian irrespective of

beliefs, caste, creed, or religion should come forward and then only the national consciousness of India can be born. Then only we would be able to defeat the evil designs of the imperialistic powers, then only we would be able to fight against the colonial powers. He was against the practise of imitation of the Westerners which was gradually increasing then. He had warned the youths of India in this regard as that was detrimental for the progress of the nation. He had urged the countrymen to love the nation with what we have, that is, our ancient glory. He had dreamt of reviving the ancient glory of India. But at the same time had said that we should not refuse the best of the West but should assimilate the best of the West with the best of the East, otherwise we would be contracted into narrow traditions forever. He had preached acceptance, assimilation, and re-creation. Assimilation was his key word – assimilation of the best of the East and the best of the West – that would give birth to his dream India. In one of his very famous poems “*Bharat Tirtha*”, he says that the Aryans, the non-Aryans, the Dravids, the Chinese, the Sakas, the Huns, the Pathans, and the Mughals have become one with the Indian consciousness. The doors of the West have been opened and it is high time that we exchange the best gifts. The human sea coast of India will see the fusion of the East and the West. India has been preaching to the world the ideas of assimilation and unity in diversity. Tagore says that this will help in realizing the immortal power that India has in her. Tagore had established Visva-Bharati with this objective that it would propagate the basic features of Indian culture to the people of the world. The world would be Indianized one day, not by the powers of the army but by the powers of spirituality. India had taught to the world the ideas of tolerance, acceptance, and assimilation and India should go on teaching these principles to the world along with the highest and deepest thoughts of philosophy, spirituality, and religion. The natural religion of man is his social religion opines Tagore in his *Russiar Chithi* as the true position of man can be found in the society only. The practical relations, commercial relations, societal relations, or advantageous relations do not lead to real satisfaction, rather it lies in such relations which are beyond the personal relations. The Upanishads have stated that man can realize the truth and feel absolutely happy when man can find their own selves in others and vice versa. Tagore believed in this doctrine of the Upanishads. Tagore believed that it is civilization that manifests man and barbarism unmanifests man.

Tagore had assimilated in him the wisdom of the East and the West. He had advised holistic education for India to give birth to perfect and complete man. In *Atmaparichay* Tagore says that a country is not only a geographical territory but it is the culture and civilization of the people of the land. A country is a living entity. A country prospers if its citizens are cultured. The responsibility of the citizens increase with the praise of the country. The fame of a country depends upon the birth of such men who devote themselves for the uplift of humanity. The normal course of nature moves on even if the country does not give birth to such men. The sun rises, the rivers flow, the birds twitter, the animals thrive, but the country still remains arid. In *Nationalism*, Tagore says:

The most important fact of the present age is that all the different races of men have come close together. And again we are confronted with two alternatives. The problem is whether the different groups of peoples shall go on fighting with one another or find out some true basis of reconciliation and mutual help; whether it will be interminable competition or co-operation.

I have no hesitation in saying that those who are gifted with the moral power of love and vision of spiritual unity, who have the least feeling of enmity against aliens, and the sympathetic insight to place themselves in the position of others, will be the fittest to take their permanent place in the age that is lying before us, and those who are constantly developing their instinct of fight and intolerance of aliens will be eliminated. For this is the problem before us, and we have to prove our humanity by solving it through the help of our higher nature. The gigantic organizations for hurting others and warding off their blows, for making money by dragging others back, will not help us. On the contrary, by their crushing weight, their enormous cost and their deadening effect upon living humanity, they will seriously impede our freedom in the larger life of a higher civilization. (101)

Europe has gifted to the world modern science and Tagore believed that it was undoubtedly one of the best gifts of Europe to humanity. He said That India should accept that gift of the West for our own development and prosperity. But in the essay “An Eastern University” he warns us also:

What I object to is the artificial arrangement by which foreign education tends to occupy all the space of our national mind, and thus kills, or hampers, the great opportunity for the creation of a new thought-power by a combination of truths. It is this which makes me to urge that all the elements in our culture have to be

strengthened, not to resist the Western culture, but truly to accept and assimilate it; to use it for our sustenance, not as our burden; to get mastery over this culture, and not to live on its outskirts s the hewers of texts and drawers of book-learning. (*Confluence of Minds*, 73)

In the essay "The Centre of Indian Culture" also Tagore speaks of the perfect harmony of the East and the West:

And this is why the inner spirit of India is calling to us to establish in this land centres where all her intellectual forces will gather for the purpose of creation, and all resources of knowledge and thought, Eastern and Western, will unite in perfect harmony. (*Confluence of Minds*, 58)

Tagore had warned us that if we move with our culture of a few hitherto cultured Indians then a time will come when we will be non-residents in our own country. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was also equally apprehensive in this matter. Tagore said that we should move with the whole nation, otherwise our glorious India with its such a rich heritage and culture will be a thing of the past very soon. He had dreamt of an India which ideal should be a world culture which would be composed of the different traditions and cultures of different nations and races. It would live in various forms but would give birth to a human society based upon the foundations of humanity. He had dreamt of a future India and writes in *Song Offerings*:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the
dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action –
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake. (20, 1-8)

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