

THE TAGORE-GANDHI CONTROVERSY REVISITED

-Or, Further, In Search of Development-II

After tracing the salient features of the Tagore-Gandhi Controversy in part I¹, let us now proceed with consideration of a few of its modern implications and their importance for the future.

I MODERN IMPLICATIONS

1. The Question of Development and Progress; And Other Questions

By advocating and defending burning of garments made from foreign cloth, abandonment of the fetish of English study, taking up spinning of the Charkha, and connection of physical events with man's morality, Gandhi presents one stand point from which the Indian mind could have blossomed. Tagore, on the other hand, by his strong rebuttal, and forceful espousal of ways at variance to these, is the other ideological source from which the modern Indian mind could have gained inspiration.

But what is it that one sees? Neither the integrity nor the appeal of these viewpoints has percolated to even the superficial depths of our national ethos. And why should it be so? Because the controversy, which should have sparked and helped crystallize a national consciousness, has, unfortunately, not even generated enough enthusiasm to initiate a national debate.² The blame, if one can justifiably attach it to anyone other than oneself, cannot rest on the publishers for not bringing out this work earlier—they have done so as early as 1961.³ It can only rest, if at all, on the social thinker, the so-called intellectual of India today, who has not deemed fit to give it any thing more than a casual scrutiny, let alone attempt to understand or endeavour to put forward his own viewpoints on the issues.

RECEIVED : 01/04/91

We shall try, therefore, in the next few paragraphs, to make some amends. Let us begin by first asking a few questions pertinent to a proper understanding of Development.

What, after all, should be considered development in the present Indian context? This question is important because unless we can know what we are searching for, how are we to seek it; or, recognise it when we reach it? Apart from its scientific, economic and other material implications, what *ideological* issues our concept of *proper* development should arouse? How far should science, technology and economics be allowed to guide our ideas of Development; and when should a proper understanding of Development aid in the effective utilization of the means of progress that modern instruments lay at our disposal? Should we consider science, technology and economics as these instruments, nothing more, nothing less? Can we then allow instruments to become our major guide? Can instruments ever guide the goal? Or the goal should be the motivating factor behind our choice of instruments?

Have we been confusing issues by considering Development as synonymous with progress? And if development is our goal, and not progress alone, should we not be able to adequately differentiate between these to confusingly inter-twined concepts? We consider this issue of some worth and will elaborate upon it a little here. While in progress, a going forward *is* involved, it need not necessarily lead to development. In development, a going forward may be involved, but it is not obligatory. At times, development may be the result of going backward, of introspection, of the ability to critically evaluate personal and social history, leading to personal and social development respectively.⁴

Both Tagore and Gandhi voice strong opinions on the matter of development and progress, though not necessarily using these very words. Tagore says, "...I do not believe in the material civilization of the West just as I do not believe in the physical body to be the highest truth in man"⁵ (p.21). But he also believed that the West had powerfully possessed this age 'because to her is given some great mission for man' (p.23) and any effort to alienate ourselves from the West would be a 'spiritual suicide' (p.22). Gandhi believed, "I doubt if the steel age is an advance upon the flint age. I am indifferent. It is the evolution of the soul to which the intellect and all our faculties have to be devoted" (p.78). He also says earlier, "I do want growth. I do want self determination, I do

want freedom, but I want all these for the soul" (p.78).

For Tagore, material and physical progress is important, but it cannot be the highest truth or goal. Gandhi is more explicit. He even lays doubts whether the steel age is a sign of advance on the flint age. Material civilization may be a sign of progress or advance. But if it is development that we seek, then, for Gandhi, this is irrelevant unless it is connected with the evolution of the soul. And it is, therefore, to this that our energies have to be channelized. In other words, Tagore seeks development with progress; Gandhi is ready to consider development even without progress. For both, development is obligatory, progress incidental, and only that progress is acceptable that leads to development. Again instruments can give rise to progress and progress may lead to development. But, if improperly harnessed, progress can as well lead to annihilation, to nuclear warfare, to superpower fights and colonialisation. And one doesn't need to go very far in the past to realize this.

2. Tradition- Modernity- Caution Sounding

We must take up two points here. The first concerns the basic ideological conflict that belief in the traditional and change toward the modern involves. This conflict is especially accentuated in the context of modernity which may be hampered by tradition that drags feet. But steadfastness need not necessarily lead to stagnation. And progress need not necessarily mean showing tradition the dust bin. Both such interpretations of Gandhi and Tagore need to be avoided. The doggedness of Gandhi and the pragmatism of Tagore are both assimilable and synthesizable. In fact, though they appear at variance, it is in the efficient incorporation of both in our ethos that the success or otherwise of our national life will be judged. And what applies to the national applies to a greater or lesser extent to the individual as well. Each one of us will have to have certain ideals that one holds on the steadfast, while many others will be amenable to change with the times. This will give rise to change but with non-effacement, progress but with non-disintegration, growth but with roots firmly in the ground. This will avoid *schiz* in the *psyche* of individual and national life-styles. It will lead to Development.

Secondly, we must also address ourselves to how far shall we carry on in our endeavour of caution-sounding and resolution making. They are essential allright. But we cannot end there. In fact, if anything,

we have to begin from there. To what purpose should we, as the writers of this monologue, continue in our efforts to gain approving nods from you as a reader who thinks more or less on similar lines? Because if you did not think so till now then this exercise has been of some benefit. But if you have already carried out your own caution-sounding and resolution making, and if this exercise only involves sharing notes about a third party which is anyway uninvolved, and uninvolvable, in this search for identity, then are we not putting a lot of precious effort in sounding aggrieved and mutual consolation which is nothing more than sharing notes in sobbing together? What is needed is the ability to make this voice heard, the determination to forward its consideration even beyond the confines of social philosophy, the ability to reach it to the average thinking citizen. Therein will lie its test, therein also its fulfilment. That shall be the true test of the viability of this and identical exercises. This may probably also be a significant step forward in search of Development.

3. The Condition of the Indian Mind Today

With our foregoing understanding of what development means we may now wish to know : Where have we moved in the development of the Indian *mānas* ?

Here , we may briefly survey the Indian scene as it exists today. The situation is not cheerful, to say the least. There has been a major bombardment of the Indian mind by foreign thought in various forms. Literature, films, cultural norms, language— all have played their role in continuously exposing the nubile Indian mind to the vagaries of an alien, notably western, influence. This is a situation that started right from the imperialist period (and should, mercifully, have ended there), but is lasting till today. In itself, this is not undesirable. An exposure to different approaches can be claimed to help expand the horizons of one's mind and develop the ability to have a world-view of things. But, for a nation in its infancy, to attempt not only to stand on its feet and recognize itself but also dedvelop the ability to differentiate between pathways and directions (without even the powers of self-scrutiny, let alone the ability of discrimination). can be a tragic situation indeed. If only there had been a breathing time- a time in which the Indian mind could have sat down to think, gone over its past and evaluated it in the light of the present. It could then have removed the chaff from the grain in the matter of its traditional beliefs and concepts, deliberated upon

and developed the ability to recognize the kernel of what is uniquely its own— the basic Indian mind. If only it could have carried this out in a situation which permitted it a total concentration within itself, with the least alien interference. If only the bombardment of outside influences had occurred after this had been achieved. Whatever acceptance and/or rejection that would have followed this would have had the best chance of being carried out in a healthy manner.⁶

As things stand today, since the ability to discriminate has not had the chance to develop (and the ability to assimilate, on the other hand, has probably over-developed), the mind flounders. When assimilation develops at the cost of discrimination, slavishness is the inevitable result. It may or may not be manifest geo-politically, but always manifests mentally. This is a ripe situation for people to become parasites forever waiting for food (literally, as well as in thought) from its host source. As Gandhi said, "At the present moment India has nothing to share with the world save her degradation, pauperism and plagues" (p.80). And, as Tagore very rightly felt, "Parasites have to pay for their ready-made victuals by losing the power of assimilating food in natural form" (p.41). He continues,

"In the history of man this same sin of laziness has always entailed degeneracy. Man becomes parasitical, not only when he fattens on others' toil, but also when he becomes rooted to a particular set of outside conditions and allows himself helplessly to drift along the stream of things as they are; for the outside is alien to the inner self, and if the former be made indispensable by sheer habit, man acquires parasitical characteristics, and becomes unable to perform his true function..." (pp.41-42). Talking further of lower animals he says something pertinent to the slavishly perfect man, "The bees, for millions of years, have been unable to get beyond the pattern of their hive. For that reason, the form of their cell has attained a certain perfection, but their mentality is confined to the age-long habits of their hive-life and cannot soar out of its limitations. Nature has developed a cautious timidity in the case of her lower types of life; she has kept them tied to her apron strings and has stunted their minds, lest they should stray into dangerous experiments" (p.42). And further, "The inertness of mind, which is the basis of all slavery, cannot be got rid of by a docile submission to being hood-winked, nor by going through the motions of a wound-up mechanical doll" (p. 55). And further still, "... the spirit of enquiry through out the whole country must be kept intact and untrammelled, its mind not made timid or inactive by compulsion, open or secret" (p. 63).

Gandhi too has voiced his views clearly on the topic of cultural influence/exchange. He says, "I want the culture of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave" (p. 34). In a preceding paragraph he says, "I hope I am as great a believer in free air as the great Poet. I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed" (p. 34).

As things stand today, everything that appears attractive, new, exciting, is immediately, nay, hungrily imbibed. The mind, already conditioned to think and appreciate particular modes of thought, behaviour and living, just plods from one fashion wave to another. This has been made possible by the various means of communication so efficiently handled by those interested in influencing the minds and intellect of individuals at other places, especially in developing countries (reflecting clearly the imperialist designs of both democrats and Marxists — and what a paradox that groups that espouse causes such as these should have expansionist designs, both political and conceptual).⁷ Influencing the Indian mind can have a special flavour because India at least boasts of an ancient, probably unparalleled cultural heritage, which it claims has helped sustain it down the ages. This state of affairs cannot be glossed over. It must be first realised and then rejected, for as Gandhi said clearly, "In my humble opinion, rejection is as much an ideal as the acceptance of a thing. It is as necessary to reject untruth as it is to accept truth... Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as cooperation with good" (p. 39).

Under such efficient conditioning procedures, every attempt at thinking in a different light than the one accepted by the thinking majority at a certain point in time appears alien. (Ofcourse, this is liable to change, for the better as it is for the worse. But till such time, the majority thinkers are likely to consider it alien to their perception of the situation.) What can be more paradoxical than the fact that of all his belongings (and we use the word *belonging*, because we consider you have to belong in this situation), the Indian today is least proud of his Indian-ness. And the one who is, appears either a reactionary, a fundamentalist or a fascist to the thinking majority which prides itself on a certain secular and democratic image which is often a subterfuge to avoid commitment, to continue clever intellectual fence-sitting. Many a times, the two issues of democracy and secularism are confusingly intertwined. Ofcourse the practice of true democracy involves the ability to respect the other individual's right to religion. But a secularism which stresses this right to such levels that it looks askance at performance of

duties as a proper citizen in a democracy, is a poor intellectual exercise indeed. And, more important, it can have far-reaching and dangerous ramifications, as much for each community as for national consciousness as a whole. As of now attempts to think in a manner that may preserve this pattern of thought and integrate it into the prevailing system fails to strike a responsive cord amongst peers. They perceive this as out of step with the general trend of thought and event as they seem to progress in this country. Tagore has already said "... we must win our country, not from some foreigner, but from our own inertia, our own indifference" (p. 47). He warned that a mere collection of jointed logs without wholeness and with contrary pulls may be dragged a few steps by the temporary pull of some common greed or anger, but can never be called political progress: "Therefore, is it not, in our case, wiser to keep for the moment our horse in the stable and begin to manufacture a real carriage?" (p. 53) And leave behind our methods of urgency, ad-hocism or expediency? for, "Human nature has its elasticity; and in the name of urgency, it can be forced towards a particular direction far beyond its normal and wholesome limits. But the rebound is sure to follow, and the consequent disillusionment will leave behind it a desert track of demoralization" (p. 58). "... the foundation of Swaraj cannot be based on any external conformity, but only on the internal union of hearts," (p. 96). This Tagore thought was not possible by piece-meal measures like homespun thread, or religion, even political platform: "the religion of economics is where we should above all try to bring about this union of ours. It is certainly the largest field available to us; for here high and low, learned and ignorant, all have their scope ... if there we can prove that not competition, but co-operation is the real truth, then indeed we can reclaim from the hands of the evil one an immense territory for the reign of peace and goodwill" (p. 96-97). And further, elaborating on co-operation, he said "... politics for a particular people ... (is) a field for the exercise of their business instincts of patriotism. All this time, just as business has implied antagonism, so has politics been concerned with the self-interest of a pugnacious nationalism. The forging of arms and of false documents has been its main activity ... In the cooperation of nations lies the true interest of each ... then only can politics become a field of true endeavour" (p. 97). He sums up, "Co-operation is an ideal, not a mere system and therefore it can give rise to innumerable methods of its application. It leads us into no blind alley; for at every step it communes with our spirit" (p. 99).

3. The Controversy and the Indian Mind

Now, you may think, we have moved far from the main burden of the Gandhi-Tagore controversy itself. But we are not that far and will

come to it presently. The significance, in the present day, of the Gandhi-Tagore controversy is not only that it reflects the conflict between dependance and selfreliance, between keeping up with the West and the concomitant exploitation,⁸ between pride in the traditional and change toward the modern, as these situations come face to face with each other. This is what any developing society must undergo. But much more important is the way these concepts have to be synthesized in our minds.

If Tagore rejects Gandhi's contention to burn foreign cloth or study English, it is not because he is enamoured of either. If Gandhi advises them to be abandoned, it is not because he hates them or considers them inferior or unsuitable for the Indian.⁹ Far from it. Rather, they reflect attempts, which have to be seriously forwarded today, of how utilization of things foreign to oneself-physical or mental-have to be understood and assimilated. No right thinking Indian should be expected to shun total use of the English language or the English dress. That would be too naive a solution to any difficulty and such taking of sides in a controversy can never be encouraged. But we should honestly search into ourselves, and others, to know whether this use is at the expense of something indigenous which should also develop parallel, if not earlier, to this. If, as Gandhi felt, meaning of education has been reduced or knowledge of English and vernaculars are crushed and starved, it becomes essential to change such a concept of education. Learning a language has a definite value: it is a vehicle, a means of communication. But it cannot become an end.¹⁰ As Gandhi said, "Our Non-Co-operation is neither with the English nor with the West. Our Non-Co-operation is with the system the English have established, with the material civilization and its attendant greed and exploitation of the weak ... we say to them, 'Come and co-operate with us on our terms, and it will be well for us, for you and the world' ... (But) in order to be fit to save others, we must try to save ourselves. Indian nationalism is not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive. It is health-giving, religious and therefore humanitarian" (pp. 80-81).

If use of the English language, or the English dress, makes us incapable of appreciating or accepting the worth or need for use of the Indian dress, or expression of the Indian language, then we are, no doubt, fully propagating in ourselves (and helping propagate in all those others whose thoughts and actions we can, by our example, shape), the slavishness we should have long abandoned with the attainment of freedom and self-rule.

4. Love - Truth, Reason

The controversy, again, should help the Indian mind distinguish between the different values that should be given to love on the one hand and truth and reason on the other. As Tagore said, "Our mind must acknowledge the truth of the intellect, just as our heart does the truth of love" (p. 61). He thought Gandhi's advocacy of Charkha may be born out of love, but it went against truth and reason.¹¹ Gandhian thinkers may probably be averse to differentiation of things in this manner, but we shall risk elaborating it nonetheless. By love here we mean adopting certain procedures purely out of liking. We like a certain individual, house, commodity: therefore, we love it. We like a certain way of living; therefore, we love living in that manner.¹² As opposed to this (sometimes, though not always) may be the voice of truth and reason. We may love to do a certain thing, but the voice of truth and reason may guide differently. We may like (and love) the neighbour's wife or his dog, but reason guides us to beware of the complications of indulging in either.¹³ Apart from the lighter side of this remark, this difference between love on one side and truth and reason on the other has implications a little more serious and we shall come to it presently.

In achieving our national or communal ethos, there are certain things we love or like spontaneously. The Hindus' love or liking for the Vedas or the Bhagwad-gita, the Christians' for his Bible, or the Muslims' for his Quran or the Shariat are some such. However, the voice of truth or reason may guide us differently. Thus, reason may demand that although the Hindu loves his Vedas or his Bhagwad-gita, he should not attempt to practice it in a way that comes in any major conflict with or causes a feeling of alienation in his fellow-beings who may not so believe. Truth and reason may demand that although the Christian loves his Bible and Jesus, he should make active attempts to interpret and utilize these teachings not only for in the Christian community or as per papal injunctions, but in the context of the heterogeneity of the Indian community, echoing in the bargain the wishes and aspirations of the people as a whole. Similarly, if the Muslim wishes to love his Quran and seeks protection of his personal law, he is also obliged, by the voice of truth and reason, to abandon any attempts to organize himself in isolation of the norms or modes that prevail in society as a whole. And, finally, if the Sikh wishes to love his Golden Temple and wants the sanctity of its holy precincts to be respected, he is also duty-bound, by the voice of truth and reason, to keep its precincts *holy*. For in this, as Tagore said in another context, "to give undue value to the comparatively

unimportant, lowers the value of the important ... If the small be put on an equal footing with the big, it is not content to rest there, but needs push its way higher up". It is not that the objects of our love are not important. It is that the fetish which we embellish them with are. And this differentiation can only be made if we ascend in our thinking from the emotional to the critical level.

We do not wish by these remarks to antagonize groups and are fully aware of the anger and hurt that people experience when they are thus chastised. We do not wish to chastise, either. We only wish to present the unpalatable facts which, nevertheless, have to be ingested into our system. And not only ingested, but well ruminated upon and digested—imbibing thereby what is useful for the national mainstream and eliminating the residue. And sometimes plain talk is unavoidable for, as Tagore believed, "Strategem is ... a barren policy ... (and) reliance on tactics is so ingrained in the cowardly and the weak, that in order to eradicate it, the very skin must be sloughed off" (p. 56). We must be guided by an abiding faith in the ability of our people to engage in a reasoned dialogue on matters that appear at present to be held emotionally, and aggressively, dear, and which apparently shut the door to a critical enquiry. This is only to carry forward Tagore's questioning of blind faith, of shibboleth and totem-worship; and the refusal to abandon independent thought that he stressed when Gandhi's followers accepted his views without enquiry. It is the very antithesis of that parasitism that basks in the unhealthy sunshine of dogma and blind belief. And by putting things in perspective, the worth of such faith as is essential to constructiveness is brought into bold relief, as it is sifted from the chaff of obscurantism. Dogma itself, thereby, cannot but be the richer.

II THE IMPORTANCE FOR THE FUTURE

The Search for Swadeshi

Tagore felt, "The present age has powerfully been possessed by the West; it has only become possible because to her is given some great mission for man. We from the East have to come to her to learn whatever she has to teach us; for by doing so, we hasten the fulfilment of this age" (p.23). He further felt, "Our present struggle to alienate our heart and mind from those of the West is an attempt at spiritual suicide" (p.22).

At the same time, however, he also said, "You know that I do not believe in the material civilization of the West just as I do not believe in the physical body to be the highest truth in man" (p.21). Also, "... they (the West)

are waiting for the day-break after the orgies of night, and they have their expectation of light from the East" (p.30). To this probably Gandhi's rejoinder would be "Before ... I can think of sharing with the world, I must possess" (p.80); and for this, "India must learn to live, before she can aspire to die for humanity" (p.81).]

Communication with the West is necessary, but it is equally essential to possess first what is ours. This possession cannot involve an isolated view of one's country because, as Tagore felt, "this ... will run counter to the spirit of the New Age and know no peace" (p.70), as "... response is the only true sign of life" (p.72). And "... India, in order to find herself, must give herself. But this power of giving can only be perfected when it is accompanied by the power of receiving" (p.27). We cannot be "... content with telling the beads of negation, harping on others' faults and proceeding with the erection of Swaraj on a foundation of quarrelsomeness..." (p.73). He asks, "the West has misunderstood the East which is at the root of the disharmony that prevails between them. But will it mend the matter if the East in her turn tries to misunderstand the West?" (p.23). Subsequently, he, as though, offers as answer, "If we can come into real touch with the West through the disinterested medium of intellectual co-operation, we shall gain a true perspective of the human world, realize our own position in it, and have faith in the possibility of widening and deepening our association with it. We ought to know that a perfect isolation of life and culture is not a thing of which any nation can be proud" (p.27):

Hence the Indian-ness that we espouse should not boil down to fanaticism, to 'my country right or wrong' to misplaced pride in the past or its indiscriminate glorification, to apportioning blame on others for our ills; or shutting off the cognitive apparatus to external input. Rather, it will have to be steeped in the considerations of the troubled times in which we exist today. It is not for us to offer here what this will be. That can only crystallize over a period of time, as a result of a national debate. A point by point careful dissection of all aspects of our social, political, economic and religious lives must proceed in an atmosphere of open and honest enquiry, of give and take, and with the mind ready to accept, indeed welcome, a change of outlook that is vitalizing; all with the bare minimum of mulishness or obstinacy or misdirected sensitiveness that only fans emotions of pique and requital, encourages alienation, isolated world-viewing and anomie; and resultant fissiparous tendencies, and regional and sectarian parochialism.

We are aware that though we consider it worth carrying out, we have till now only spoken about what should be thought of as un-Indian. We have discussed what is not Swadeshi and what anti-Swadeshi, as well

as what is improper or false Swadeshi. We have not considered what is proper Swadeshi, nor what is false anti-Swadeshi. While the former can only materialise in the national debate we talked about, we will briefly touch upon the latter in the paragraphs to follow. We feel justified in discussing non-Swadeshim in its various aspects because unless we first know what is anti-Swadeshi or false-Swadeshi in us, how can we attempt to counter these, or actualize what indeed is Swadeshi?

We shall take up two points here :

1. We find it fit to distinguish between *non*-Swadeshim and *anti*-Swadeshim. Non-Swadeshim is a wider term which embraces both anti-Swadeshim and all other attitudes which cannot be considered Swadeshi at the present point in time. *Anti*-Swadeshim, on the other hand, is against Swadeshi, that is, it *oppose* Swadeshi. Thus, whatever is anti-Swadeshi is non-Swadeshi, (if not in person atleast in thought and action) but the converse is not necessarily true. Whatever is non-Swadeshi may not be anti-Swadeshi. In fact it may be necessary, may act as an adjunct to and may need to be incorporated into what is Swadeshi. Hence, only anti-Swadeshim need be imposed. In fact, some non-Swadeshim may have to be encouraged. For example, non-Swadeshim which is likely to be pro-Swadeshi is what we have in mind here e.g. the Indiophiles. The confusion over non-Swadeshi and anti-Swadeshim probably results because many individuals with non-Swadeshi attitudes are those with anti-Swadeshi ones as well. How we wish the strength of the genuinely constructive non-Swadeshi could increase. How we also wish that just as false or improper Swadeshim, viz. fanaticism, misplaced pride etc. disappear, false and improper non-Swadeshim (or anti-Swadeshim) e.g. making a fetish of Secularism, of rights that side-track duties, of privileges to certain sections of society that appear inviolable, sacred etc. also get removed. "Not only can there be false Swadeshim, there can also be a false anti-Swadeshim. Those interested in the genuine philosophical health of the country, cannot avoid distinguishing true Swadeshim from false Swadeshim".¹⁴ And they also cannot avoid the task of distinguishing between anti-Swadeshim, which has to be weeded out, and pro-Swadeshi non-Swadeshim which, as we earlier said, will have to be both encouraged and incorporated, atleast in some measure.

We must also comment here on a non-Swadeshism which professes to be *neutral*, i.e., which is neither Swadeshi, nor anti-Swadeshi. This type of non-Swadeshism is not only useless, it is dangerous. Those who profess it are unaware of the perils inherent in sitting over such a precariously poised fence - a fall from which can only dismember.

Non-Swadeshism, therefore, can be of three types :

- i) *anti*-Swadeshism
- ii) *neutral* non-Swadeshism
- iii) *pro*-Swadeshi non-Swadeshism

The first needs to be combated, the second converted, and the third actively considered.

We know by this exercise we have left the field wide open for definitions as to the types of attitudes and personalities that belong to each group. We are also aware that varied definitions can be put forward by varied groups and this can become as much a soul searching as a mud-slinging exercise. We have resisted the temptation of offering a ready made solution however. This is not because we may be unable to do so, but because we consider it immature at the present moment. We believe this also should materialise as a part of the national debate we contemplated earlier.

2. We must further qualify that for our purpose, we have considered *Indian* as equivalent to Swadeshi. This need not be so. The word '*Swadeshi*' means '*Of my country*'. It is synonymous with *Indian-ness* in the present context only because we are talking about India here. Swadeshi, we feel, is a much wider concept and, indeed, is a message to the world, to all peoples anywhere engaged in a struggle to gain self-identity, especially after suffering the ravages of colonialisation. Further, this concept need not at all be contrary to a constructive world-view or a healthy universalism.

In this context, consider for example some pointers which both Tagore and Gandhi offered and are relevant to the present thesis. Tagore said, "India still cherishes in her heart the immortal mantram of Peace, of Goodness, of Unity : "*Śāntam, Śivam, Advaitam*" (p.31). Gandhi emphasized, "My modesty has prevented me from declaring from the house-top that the message of Non-cooperation, Non-violence and

Swadeshi is a message to the world", (p.80) (to be adopted by all nations according to their own national ethos). Non-cooperation is an unsuitable translation of the Gandhian concept of *Satyagraha* which means the 'appeal of truth'. Non-cooperation means non-compliance while the Gandhian concept is refusal to comply with or cooperate with activities contrary to one's understanding of what is truthful. It requires as great a moral courage as needed in a rebellion, war or revolution, if not greater. It is a means as much of gaining personal freedom as freedom for nations under subjugation, of whatever form. However 'Non-cooperation ... (went) against the very grain of Rabindranath Tagore .. he regarded (it) as a policy of negation and a policy betraying lack of faith in humanity" (p.x.). This ofcourse was the commonest form of understanding, or rather misunderstanding to which Gandhi was, and still is, subjected.¹⁵ This is the misfortune of both the populace unaware of how best to benefit therefrom, not only to gain independence but further consolidate its gain. What *Satyagraha* has often been construed to mean in its present form is a convenient weapon to forward one's monetary and other parochial interests, and as a potent tool of trade-unionism, often without consideration for the moral legitimacy of the ends to be achieved.

Firstly, therefore, the Indian has to understand fully what he, and others, mean when they use these (and such other) concepts, or expect their Indian interpretation. This is the duty not only of those who consider themselves experts on Indian thought, but also of the average Indian thinker, as well as the Indian thinker who specializes in other disciplines. All of them will have to be proficient in its exposition, atleast as to essentials. And they will also have some conviction as to its basic worth.

III FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The implications for the future should follow as an offshoot of whatever we have discussed up till now. Firstly, the controversy (and also other such divergent, but honestly so, and essentially constructive systems of thought) have to be carefully read, discussed and dissected. All the possible ways in which these concepts can be understood have

to be explored. The maximum that each trend of thought can be justifiably stretched, to test its resilience - and, therefore, also its strength - should be attempted. While a debate of this type rages between people (and also in the minds of each one of them), there will crystallize sometime in the future - may not be the near but definitely in the reasonably foreseeable future - a thought and approach that is robustly Indian. Only then would we be anywhere near fulfilling the wish of the sages of yore (and the words of the politicians and thinkers of India today - and how one hopes these words were also genuine wishes): India has a message for the world. Only then would such a message be delivered by a vibrant, living Indian mind.

Probably, there is less need today for a modern Vivekananda, a Gandhi or a Tagore. At least they are not indispensable. There is, however, every need today for a kindling of the spark that lies dormant in each one of us, which could envelop a whole people in a fire of self-purification, and *ātma-yajña*.

A lot of things will have to be offered to this sacrificial fire before the fruits that result from propitiation of the dieties can be enjoyed. "Nothing great can be got cheap. We only cheat ourselves when we try to acquire things that are precious with a price that is inadequate ... though it takes time to start a fire, once alight it spreads rapidly ... each seed, in its tiny spark, brings divine authority to conquer the whole world." (Tagore, p 100-101). But he taunts, "the difficulty ... is that you can never get all these millions even to spit in unison" (p. 100-101).

So there we are. The die is cast by this upstart remark that must shake us out of our affected urbanity. And its twin, somnolence. For, to offset the soporifics efficiently administered by the gallons all around, the tiny spokes of many lilliputians must be marshalled to awaken this slumbering Gulliver. And though no one can deny he is a giant, no one cannot but accept that he is a sleepy, lethargic, indolent one at present, whose size itself has demented its intellect. And whose tentacles have started showing the fibrillatory twitches of damaged neural pathways, for they no longer connect the centre with the periphery in a healthy manner. To overcome this, let there first be a restoration of dialogue amongst the disparate elements, then a common meeting ground, and a collective search in an atmosphere of free enquiry and a careful, even ruthless, cultural sifting, in which it is as essential to chop the dead-wood to preserve the delicate core, as to tender to it. If at this stage, we go back and recapitulate the essence of the Tagore-

Gandhi controversy that we have tried to capture in these two papers, we would have laid a proper foundation for the national debate that must follow.

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REFERENCES & NOTES

1. "The Tagore-Gandhi Controversy Revisited - Or, Further. In Search of Development -I." *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, XIX-3, July, 1992, pp.
2. Or, rather, it has. Because we shall have occasion to talk about it in the sequel to this paper (Part III). We are tempted here to list some other ideological conflicts which have been noticed, but need more extensive and critical scrutiny. At least one, the Ranade-Tilak controversy, has been dealt with in the columns of this very journal in the near past (cf. "Purity and Power : A Study in Two Renaissance Profiles", by Diptee Gangavane, *Indian Philosophical Quarterly—Students' Supplement*, Vol. XII, No. 1, Jan-March 1985, pp. 1-12).
3. *Truth Called Them Differently* (Tagore-Gandhi Controversy) hereafter called (TGC). Compiled and Edited by R.K. Prabhu and Ravindra Kelekar, Navjivan, Ahmedabad, 1961.
4. Cf. K.J. Shah's, "In Search of Development", *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XI, No. 1, Jan-1984, pp. 5-13, who differentiates between *change* and *growth*. He says, "Growth means change, but change does not necessarily mean growth; it may mean disruption and disintegration". In the present context we may say that while growth and change are essential for development, change, by itself, can never lead to development, however. And that progress which involves both change and growth is the type of progress worth seeking, because it alone can come anywhere near development.
5. All quotations to follow are from (TGC) above; parentheses, if any, added. The page numbers of TGC appear in parenthesis.
6. Of course this 'if only' is a futile exercise in itself and should if possible always be replaced by 'next time'. Thus, rather than wistfully proclaim, 'If only I had done so and so ...' etc., one should rather think, 'Next time, I will do so and so ...' etc.

Unfortunately, in this situation, there is no next time. So we seek amnesty from this otherwise excellent rule. *If only* there had been a *next time*. We will grant it to you if you feel inclined to think this whole 'if only' exercise indulged in here is redundant in the absence of a 'next time'. But let that not be mistaken for granting that the argument itself is faulty. An inward looking self-contemplation is an essential prerequisite to development; in fact it can become an important precursor of a healthy open-ness that can follow it. If you want a recent instance of this, see what Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* (restructuring) is attempting to do to the Stalinist Iron Curtain by *glasnost* (open-ness).

7. And we think the learning theorists and behaviourists, Watson, Pavlov and dear Old Skinner of recent times amongst them, would be happy at the mastery of their principles that these agencies have attained; or probably, hang their heads in shame at the weapons of potential danger they have placed in the hands of these uncompromising expansionists by expounding their theories of conditioning to such great lengths. We would much rather they do the latter, of-course. But who knows. If you read B.F. Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, (Pelican Books, Penguin, Harmondsworth, Reprinted 1976), you may appreciate much better the levels to which learning theories and conditioning can be used to influence others not only as individual minds but as groups, as nations. (For a basic discourse on the Skinnerian deterministic model of man, see T. Bandopadhyay's, "Man and Machine", *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XII, No.1, Jan. 1985, pp. 51-54. The implications for the present argument will be brought into sharp focus). But let that not disturb us too much here; there is enough to disturb in what is to follow, and we wish you conserve your resources, as much as we wish to conserve ours.
8. Shah, *op. cit.*, p 11.
9. No pun intended when we use the word un-*suit*-able.
10. Ofcourse, except for the linguists.
11. Cf. Shah, *op. cit.*, p 7, Where he interprets Tagore thus.
12. We realise we are stirring up a hornet's nest by such an exercise, but will attempt it nevertheless. Firstly, equating love with liking itself can be open to question. Further, we refer to only that type of liking which is important for the feeling of love; or that type of love which is mainly dependent on liking. We have neglected all other viewpoints in the bargain. But we may still be allowed this argument from the common sense point of view.

We are well aware that Love or Liking (and, more so, its companion emotion - Happiness), has had a long and chequered career of conflict with Reason in the history of philosophical thought. However there have also been attempts at resolution such that "a genuinely humanistic theory of impulse and desire ... (results, in which there is) room for a psychology of emotions which will be adequate to the demands of epistemology and moral and social theory" (vide R. Sundara Rajan History and Nature: Some Reflections on the Ecological Perspective of the Marxian Theory of History'. *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XI, No. 1, Jan. 1984, pp. 47-48. Parenthesis added). And has not Gandhi himself said "... blind surrender to love is often more mischievous than a forced surrender to the lash of the tyrant. There is hope for the slave of the brute, none for that of love. Love is

needed to strengthen the weak, love becomes tyrannical when it extracts obedience from an unbeliever" (*TGC*, p. 75).

13. For the dog can only bark; but she can do worse. She can bitch.
14. Shah, *op. cit.*, p 12-13.
15. This should become immediately obvious when we realize that on the eve of India's independence the champion of 'Non-Co-operation' with British Imperialism warned the leaders of Asian countries gathered in Delhi not to organise Asia against Europe or the white races. He was again firmly of the view that India accept the British invitation to join the Common-wealth : "He was pining for the day when the East and the West would accept co-existence as a law of life and work as equals for world brother-hood, and multi-racial co-operation" (*TGC*, p. xi).