

CIVIL SOCIETY: A TRANSPOSITIONAL UNDERSTANDING

ASHA MUKHERJEE

Introduction

After the end of Cold War in 1989 the world scenario has changed suddenly. We are no more concerned with the tense relations of the super powers but such as family, women, rights of the persons, environment, peace and the standards of living etc. We seem to be more concerned with the quality of human life. Which life is a good life? What are the ways to achieve good life? Can we ever achieve good life? Is it not just an ideal? These questions and answers of such questions lead us to the concept of Civil Society. It is generally accepted that civil society is a social phenomena. As individual cannot be regarded as a separate entity--it has to be understood in its connectedness. Human rights cannot be taken in terms of a simple individual, unrelated to family or community. If taken, will lead to chaos and conflicts. "In contrast, solidarity is basic and indispensable social dimension of human life: people need people and thrive when they are together in communities--from family to neighborhood, to nation, religion and globe."¹ In this paper I try to draw attention to a very different way of looking at civil society than the one usually suggested by most of Euro-Americans. The Upanishads, the Hindu scriptures as interpreted by Gandhi and Tagore play an important role in Civil society in India. Their transpositional view enables us to transcend all differences and enables us to drive towards a universal goal - the goal of Humanity, the goal of civil society. The paper consists of five sections. The first section discusses the concern of civil society which is mainly - What is good life? The second section presents the concept of positional objectivity leading towards

transpositional objectivity. Marx and Rousseau's concept of 'good life' present us the positional objectivity but not transpositional. I try to look back to our traditions so as to look for models for Civil Society and I find, in recent times, Gandhi and Tagore who tried to reformulate the tradition, have tried hard, in their life time, to give a new shape to the society.

Their model may not be the only model, but the point I try to make is that they serve as the sincere guidelines towards which we should proceed--the unifying force for cosmic civil society. In the last section it is suggested that the idea of civil society is different from its practice. It may be the case that in reality there is no society which is 'civil' in the sense one would like to have--the transpositional but we can still sincerely hope and try towards approaching 'civility' by becoming 'civil society' conscious'.

I

Civil Society : Its Concern

The answer of the question 'What is good life?' would lead to concept of 'civil society'. But answering this question satisfactorily needs that we first agree with as to what would be counted as good life. We find that 'good life' has inbuilt two dimensions--the individualistic as well as social. 'Good life' issues settle in monolithic way--in favor of individual human value, or in terms of transcendental, would lead us to solidarity but that does not deny their 'differenthood'. The different approaches still remain different. This is subsidiarity. For example, knowledge, love and shared life were the main concern of Catholic thought which lead to solidarity but the pattern of subsidiarity 'the ultimate concern for the weak and the oppressed' is in-built in it. The 'weak and 'oppressed' has a special place and it has to be recognized.

Civil society may also be understood as an organization. The words "Civil Society" name the space of uncoerced human associations and also the set of relational networks--formed for the sake of family, faith, interest and ideology--that fills his place. Central and East European dissidence flourished within a highly restricted version of civil society and the first task of the new democracies by dissidents, so we are told, is to rebuild the networks: unions, churches, political parties and movements, cooperatives, neighborhoods, schools of thought, societies for promoting or preventing this or that."² At the same time, The civil society, ideally speaking would

not like to see the 'people as tools of industry but as persons informed and responsible, uniting freely in human solidarities to act responsibly and creatively each in their own field.'³

Civil society can not be understood in only anthropocentric terms but as an organization also related with the responsible citizens--responsibility towards oneself, towards other human beings and towards community of all life forms. It means that my personal freedom of willing and deciding is restricted by other human beings and other human being's by mine. The technical power of man is effectively extended in the recent times and it becomes dangerous for the world as such which extends man's responsibility for the future life on earth. Thus man's responsibility becomes for the first time cosmic. Following Hans Jonas⁴ we can talk of technological civil society and the need to discover or rediscover our solidarity with the whole world.

Man not only is considered responsible for the welfare of other human beings but it is man's peculiar distinction, his dignity that he can hold himself responsible for the welfare of all other life forms, i.e. to safeguard their being treated as ends in themselves and not as means for man's personal satisfaction and his dealing with and handling of nature. Man has the moral obligation--the duty to act as an agent for those beings who are not endowed with such a moral capacity and hence unable advocate their own cases. To put it more clearly, civil society is not merely social phenomena between interhuman behaviour but must consider the wider context of man's being a substantial part of nature: and as the destruction of nature by man is irresponsible and violent use or misues of the discoveries would be disadvantageous to the human beings and might lead of disastrous consequences, is also the concern of civil society--the well being of man. I am in agreement with Jonas on the need of a change of consciousness and the outlook of life. We need to change our thinking from a property-oriented outlook on life and world to a value-oriented one; for it is by changing our way of thought only that living conditions would be better and not by only social or economic conditions as Marx suggested. The capitalistic welfare states of the West have proved that we really need basic change in our outlook. We cannot afford to look for the success and failure of power in terms of economic gains and technological developments. The success and failure should be judged only in terms of the human values in

civil society. Duties and responsibilities would be acceptable to all-irrespective to caste, culture, religion, creed and state. These differences would be there but they are not primary; the primary basis would be the universal principles which are underlying all the principles and values. The only basic metaphysical imperative in Kantian sense-There should be civil society on earth : this can only give us moral binding not for some particular purpose but for the sake of humanity as such.

It is Rousseau, I suppose, in neoclassical version, who emphasized good life in terms of a political community, the democratic state, in which we can be citizens. He points out to the understanding of citizenship as moral agency which is the key of democratic idealism. A large part of society consisting of women, workers, blacks and new immigrants started claiming their capacity as agents in recent times. This new idea of agent as citizen took a new turn in recent times. At times we look back to the early democratic, republican Rousseauian idealism and call for a renewal of civil culture by fragmented view--only the political view. But in my view, to revive or reconstruct the civil society, in view of the developments of the technological age we need to construct a wholistic view of civil society which would include on the one hand, politics, economics, all sections of society, human values and freedom of the agents. As, Michael Walzer argues that all answers of the question 'what is a good life?' are "wrong-headed because of their singularity. They miss the complexity of human society, the inevitable conflicts of commitment and loyalty."⁵ On the other, the spiritual upwardness- may be called transcendence towards Truth and Love.

What is this wholistic view of civil society? Is it just an Utopia? Or a social reality? An utopia, as long as it is only an utopia may not help us much. 'A good life must be lived through--we must know how to live a good life. Even if it is an Utopia, an idea or a concept, it must be grounded in reality. We need ideologies and structures but we also need to look at the people in their national communities as persons, as free, responsible, creative and dignified agents. We need to suggest a mechanism, or a methodology to convert civil society into a social reality. Rousseau suggested one way--the democratic way with political emphasis, Marx suggested another way--the economic emphasis. These are independently 'a way of good life' but 'the good life' consists in transcending these ways of good

life. In this connection Amartya Sen's idea of positional objectivity may help us in understanding the social reality and consequently lead to a universal nation of civil society which is though suggested in Indian context, has a much wider application--society as a whole.

II

Positional Objectivity

The positional objectivity is an interpersonally sharable understanding--a sharing that objectivity in any form must minimally demand. But that shared understanding is specifically in terms of the view from some identified positions. But these positionally objective observations cannot be taken to be position-invariant objective truth. Moon and sun viewed from the earth as same size does not entail that they are of the same size in terms of all criteria of measurement. The objectivity of a particular perspective does not establish its epistemic status beyond that position. It is argued by Amartya Sen that objectivity of an observation of analysis can be judged from the uncompromisingly universal terms as well as with reference to identified 'positional' perspectives.⁶ He explains further that these positional features are not 'subjective' as they may not be 'having its source in the mind' and they may not 'pertain to an individual subject or his mental operations'. They are positional in the sense that they are based on actual observations and the objective interpretation of those observations. To take his example of sun and moon from the earth, the similarity of the observed sizes of sun and the moon from the earth does not originate in our mind. Nor are they peculiar to individual subjects since a normal person placed in the same position, with a standard eyesight, should be able to replicate similar observations. One may ask, is there any 'trans-positional' exercise? If there is any, what is its nature? It is defined in terms of coherence in different positional views. We can also think of evaluating or assessing the positional views in terms of the practical consequences.

Now, I think, by using the notion of positional objectivity and transpositional exercise, we may come back to understand the notion of civil society. Marx and Rousseau's answers of good life--economic and political are answers from the positional objectivity and they cannot be

taken to be position invariant objective truth. The objectivity of Marxist perspective does not establish its epistemic status beyond Marxist position. The same is true about Rousseau's position. But to have a trans-positional exercise is to have a coherence in different positional views and to evaluate or assess the positional views in terms of the practical consequences. Two very good examples could be as Gandhi's concept of civil society and Tagore's concept of civil society which are not basically different.

It is worth noting here that classical Indian formulation of nationalism which we find in Gandhi and Tagore often did emphasize the importance of broader concern that go beyond national limits. In one form or the another, references to such constraints can be clearly seen in the writings of Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru and others. The anti colonial nationalists often had strong global commitments, while invoking the unity of the nation in pursuit of demand for 'self-determination'.⁷ Thus Gandhi's and Tagore's views may also be considered as positional but their concern was the whole of humanity in trans-national, trans positional sense.

The question of our national identity is influenced by the positionally objective observation of our history and culture but we cannot stop with this positional understanding of our history and culture we have to take a transpositional view of reasoned choice by looking at the implications on society. Not in terms of economic gains or techno-developments but in terms of civil society we would like to have we look forward. The developments of the West have proved that no civil society can develop by having only techno-politico-eco developments.

III

The Unison attempt, Gandhi and Tagore : Towards Civil Society

The two India's greatest minds- Gandhi and Tagore- expressed themselves in their thoughts and actions that ran parallel and often supplemented each other by strong affinities and contrasts. They had the passion for social reform, for India's independence and growth. But more than that, their concern was much wider. They both looked for an inclusive view of civilization--they both knew the transcending values--Man's humanity. They both had concern for the dignity of the individual, for

economic and educational justice, for disciplined freedom in the enterprises of personal and social change. Both of them stood up against violence and war. They both spoke as one among countless many--everyone knew them as men, they were members of the big family and never as 'great leaders'. Yet, the gifted personality was there. They both believed in divine guidance in the pursuit and fulfillment of human service; both of them denounced violence and discrimination; they committed themselves to spreading education and enlightenment, particularly in view of the needful understanding and interdependence in the emerging world order. The decisions were made from different background; *Viśva* (the world) and *Bhāratī* (India) had to meet anew in creative community (emphasis by Tagore); *Satya* (truth) and *Āgraha* (the urge, the cohesive force) belonged together in a technique--a way of living (emphasized by Gandhi) which would replace the ruinous and ineffective methods of violence in a world that seeks radical changes. Tagore tried to explore the unfolding richness of humanity and nature. Their efforts are now seen as correlated and supplemental.

Gandhi realized as early as in the beginning of twentieth century, the need to reconstruct a civil society--"The machineries of government stood in between and hide the hearts of one people from those of another. Yet, we could see how the world is moving steadily to realize that between nation and nation as between man and man force has failed to solve problems"--the universal civil problems. Tagore too was aware of these problems which were across the state territory. The unison view of Tagore and Gandhi may be called as trans-positional view--mainly the humanist approach, would help us in solving the civil problems. Though it is true that all religions have 'humanism' built in their structure it is normally not practised. This kind of humanism may be called 'operational' or 'activistic humanism'. In this sense, a step forward towards civil society. Tagore worked for a rural reconstruction--e.g. at Sriniketan to give shape to his ideas and at his school in Shantiniketan (the place I come from). It is just a co-incident that Gandhi and Tagore both shared a number of convictions about the nature of man and civil society. There were differences between the opinions as how this can be executed. Both represent humanism by having faith in man, in his dignity and a 'free' individual. Gandhi's ideas we

get from his speeches, letters in 'Young India' and 'Harijan' and Tagore's in *Religion of Man*, *Sadhana* and other writings.

Gandhi believed in mysterious power pervading everything, call it love, truth, law or inner voice or anything. Gandhi's concept of man and the dignity of man is rooted in a *priori* faith in God. It is this faith which creates a kind of optimism--a humanism which may be called an activist or operational humanism--man has to be understood in terms of acts or actions. He talks of 'renunciation', which I suppose, is a traditional value in Bhagvat Gita. This is a very complex term--which includes--to reject, to give up, to sacrifice, to surrender and to serve and to transcend. It has positive aspect and negative aspect. Rejection of untruth is an essential activity on the part of the individual man. Gandhi writes: "In my humble opinion, rejection is as much an ideal as the acceptance of a thing".⁸ 'Untruth' implies everything British, individual interests and selfish desires and the body--its limitations (not literally).⁹ Man according to Gandhi is essentially a spiritual being, the body is to him a form of untruth. Sacrificing the body connotes self-restraints--the fast. At the same time, body is a gift of God and has to be used accordingly, i.e. sacramentally: "all of us are bound to place our resources at the disposal of humanity."¹⁰ This is the positive aspect of renunciation. One form of service is 'bread labour'--the shrama. Gandhi takes this notion from Tolstoy and Ruskin which is traced back in the teachings of Gita called as 'yajna'; the third chapter of Gita that "he who eats without sacrifice eats stolen food. Sacrifice here can only mean bread labour."¹¹

What is to renounce? One's own lethargy or inertia. This would lead to struggle for mutual service. The Law of the brute will be replaced by the Law of man.¹² To renounce fruits of action--it is freeing oneself from the bounds of egoism--desireless action. But it is not indifference to results, which is again taken from the the teachings of Gita the *Karma-sannyāsa*. The *sannyāsa* of the Gita is all work and yet no work. In this sense renunciation means 'to transcend' and therefore, transpositional. This, Gandhi was aware, is a formidable task, often impossible of complete realization. But then 'a constant striving after' ought to be there, for in that way alone the human beings could be viewed as a distinct mode of being--from animals. By transcending the narrow self one can realize the infinite-

in-me, the authentic existence which is 'self-realization'--the inner possibilities present in the individual. In this sense renunciation though not directed towards any purpose is found to be purposive in nature. Renunciation takes an individual ahead and still ahead towards realizing one's inner possibilities.

The other principle is *Ahiṃsā*--non-violence, which is not seen as distinct but a constitutive of renunciation. It is "the law of our species". The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law (than of the law of the physical might, characterizing the beasts)--the strength of the spirit. The strength of the spirit is *Ahimsa* and as the law of our species it has universal significance and applicability: "I am not a visionary, I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of violence is not meant for Rishis and Saints. It is meant for the common people as well."¹³ It has no spirit of withdrawal or resignation, just like renunciation. He says "My creed of non-violence is an extremely active force".¹⁴ *Ahiṃsā* is normally taken as non-killing or refraining from taking vengeance etc. But Gandhi is using it in much wider sense: "The principle of *Ahiṃsā* is hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody".¹⁵ Thus, the positive meaning of *Ahiṃsā*, consists in the cultivation of good will and love towards all life. *Ahiṃsā*--as love expressed through, forgiveness, fearlessness, the feeling of sympathy, mutuality, unity - it leads to complete sacrifice and humility. I feel, this may be the influence of Christianity and Buddhism (Mahayana). This is the basis of social solidarity--non--violence as Love turns into a social virtue and necessary social activity and helps one to realize the possible unity of oneself with the Supreme One-Truth or God. Gandhi says"... truth and non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) are, to me, faces of the same coin."

Ahiṃsā, renunciation are also functions of man as opposed to walking, breathing and sleeping which brings out the possible meaning of being of the man. These functions are potential ones. Gandhi's ideas are the outcome of his firm faith in man, in his dignity and his capability to realize his own intrinsic nature--self realization is the result of the realization of one's potentialities. It is a kind of directedness to realize certain potentialities. They may be called "*Sātvika* qualities". Gandhi will agree that *rajas* and *taṃas* are also qualities of man but *sattva* is the true potentiality--if properly

cultivated it would transcend the qualities all together (guna-atita). Sattva-goodness, raja-passion, and tamas-ignorance. To be free means (i) not to be bound to the work (ii) to see, recognize, realize and live up to the essential unity lying at the roots of things--man is free since he is the ground of meaning conferring activity. His humanism is an emanation from his faith in man's potentialities. If we agree with his assertion that man is to strive forward to realize his potentialities we may justifiably call Gandhian humanism a kind of activistic or operational humanism which is required to convert civil society into a reality.

It is true, Gandhi is an idealist in some sense, but his idealism is grounded in practice. At the same time he is optimist too. "Why can we not see that if the sum total of the world's activities was destructive, it would have come to an end long ago? Love, otherwise, *Ahimsā*, sustains this planet of ours."¹⁶ Further, he says "Whether mankind will consciously follow the law of love, I do not know. But that need not perturb us. The law will work, just as the law of gravitation will work whether we accept it or not."¹⁷ So, should we do nothing? That would be *Hiṃsā*.

Tagore: Dharma--the source of civil society :

Civil society cannot be understood in terms of totality of happenings around us, by chance. It must be the expression of some guiding moral force which we have evolved as human beings and is the object of attaining by a method agreed upon by the humanity as a whole. What could be the guiding moral force? Since man is a complex being and always at the path of transforming and transcending himself, the guiding moral force cannot be crystallized by one answer. But whatever the particular form it has--it has to be something which holds us firm together and something following which would lead us to our best welfare--a *dharma*--a quality of life. A civil society as an ideal should be an expression of 'man's *dharma* in his corporate life'. The simplicity of life, which is the product of centuries of culture should be the source of civil society, which cannot be imitated, it takes no account of its own value and does not claim any wages but it is highest product of any civil society. Development cannot be measured by the speed with which materials are multiplying. The 'horse-power' though drives does not sustain--only the spirit power sustains--the one which sustains is called '*dharma*'--the source which would lead to civil society.

A society would be healthy and strong; civil, if it centers on some ideal that binds its members in a relationship. It is the relationship which is beautiful and not merely utilitarian. The immense value this relationship has with the other and the inner ideal; the spirit of the unit, leading to co-operation and to a common sharing of life. Tagore talks of our living society which should follow its natural rhythm the grace of self-control--without being extravagance.

For civil society giving a shape, he started a school in Shantiniketan where the children from any background would come and see themselves as a part of the unit in sharing the common life (seeking to realize the spiritual meaning of their life). Yet, to find their freedom in Nature by being able to love it. For Tagore, "Love is freedom.; it gives us that fullness of existence which saves us from paying with our soul for objects that are immensely cheap."¹⁸ The children enjoy the freshness of their feeling for Nature, a sensitiveness of soul in their relationship with their human surroundings with the help of literature, festivals, ceremonies and also religious teachings. It is a real 'homecoming' for the children. They learn in the open air under the shade of trees, they have their music and picture making, drama performances and other activities which are the expressions of life. Tagore, along with this also realizes the need to give the education which would give them the ability to clear the path towards a definite end or practical good. He emphasizes that for children the atmosphere is more important than the rules and methods, buildings, appliances, class teachings and text books. The education system should be like a 'tiller of the soil, whose work is in perfect collaboration with the nature'....For atmosphere there must be for developing the sensitiveness of soul, for affording mind its true freedom of sympathy. Apathy and ignorance are the worst forms of bondage for man; they are the invisible walls of confinements that we carry around us when we are in their grip. "In educational organizations our reasoning faculties have to be nourished in order to allow our mind its freedom in the world of truth, our imagination for the world which belongs to art, and our sympathy for the world of human relationship. This last is even more important than learning the geography of foreign lands."¹⁹ The mind of children is full of natural human love and its only by preserving this natural human love and sympathetic understanding, we may reach civil society.

Tagore talks of universal love, universal man, universal person and universal vision for the world consciousness. He talks of the process in which an individual can become universal person. Its only through the creativity in language. The transcendent beauty cannot be expressed in language. He says : 'Where my language cannot take me, my songs can take me'. He talks of love and devotion. The love relation is between the individual and the universal. Without the individual the universal is not complete. Universal remains essentially incomplete without the individual. The divine love would remain unfulfilled if it is not for individual. So, there is no contradiction in solidarity and subsidiarity. These are two sides of the same coin. The main idea is to find universal principles to understand the universe. The reality is an abstract reality--an unified reality. But there is also difference. Just as in science there is a difference in individual and universal and to get universal principles one has to eliminate individual-individual is not important but from the other level without individuals no universal can be formed. Tagore asks Einstein "Do you believe in divine as isolated from the universe? Unity deeper than humanity? Einstein answers, "I can not prove but I believe--that truth is independent of human beings."²⁰ It is *avidiyā*, the ignorance, which causes our disunion with our surroundings. It is *Vidyā*, the knowledge of the *Brahma* manifested in the material universe that makes us realize *advaitam*, the spirit of unity in the world of matter. Those who have been brought in a misunderstanding of the world's process, not knowing that it is his, by his right of intelligence, are trained as cowards by hopeless faith in the ordinance of a destiny, offering no room for appeal. They submit without struggle when human rights are denied to them.

In social and political field the lack of freedom is based upon the spirit of alienation on the imperfect realization of *advaitam*. One may imagine that an individual who succeeds in dissociating himself from his fellows attain real freedom in as much as all ties of relationship imply obligation to others. But we know, though it may sound paradoxical, it is true that in the human world only perfect arrangement of inter-dependence gives rise to freedom. The most individualistic of human beings, who own no responsibility, are the savages who fail to attain their fullness of manifestation. They live immersed in obscurity, like an ill-lighted fire that

cannot liberate itself from its envelope of smoke. Only those may attain their freedom from the segregation of an eclipsed life, who have the power to cultivate mutual understanding and co-operation. The history of the growth of freedom is the history of the perfection of human relationship.

IV

Democracy as Practice

As being concerned with the welfare of the human beings as well as with the equal rights and justice to all human beings, civil society may have a democracy which would make the qualitative development of the citizens and this would be the central concern, which would lead us to a 'socialist' society. In this sense, socialism would mean two things: first, a system of economic relation which would stop the exploitation of one section of the people by another and second, the gross inequalities among person would be absent, as regards their necessities of life and material comforts. A perfect democracy should be able to provide equal opportunity for self-development and progress to every citizen. Though, it seems difficult to see how provisions for such equality can be made unless there is a democratic control at the state level, over the material resources, employment, education etc.

In a society, where material goods are considered to be source for pleasure, such goods come in a competitive spirit. This accounts for the fact that even in such a rich country as United States most people are not happy, as the spirit of competition keeps them perpetually worried. Thus, in my view, socialist, humanist outlook along with democracy could be a solution to many national and international problems of the modern man. But they only supply an external framework, wherein the spirit of man has a chance of being regenerated. The regeneration itself, however is a different process, an inner discipline; the adjustment of the external environment, may assist man in discipline, but one can never substitute the other. The necessary outer conditions for the spiritual development of modern man are not part of the development itself. We may be interested in politics but there is something higher than the politics. Politics is not a substitute for philosophy. In present times, man must reassert that man is exclusively a social animal and that an ideal man is identical with ideal

citizen. Modern man cannot solve his problems unless he learns to appreciate the significance of the emphasis on self knowledge and self-transformation laid by Buddha, Socrates, Christ, The Upanishads and in modern times by Gnadhi and Tagore. They appear to be far superior than any wealthiest of modern west. The essence of man as a man consists in his creativity, and as a creative being he must constantly transcend the limits set by his bio-social-economic needs. A person guided by a creative companionship finds other person interesting, not because they are potential source of material gain to him or his nation but because they are potential centers of creative awareness and potential sharers in his or his nations's spiritual life. This creative companionship can enrich and contribute to the cultural unity of mankind and share and enrich the spiritual heritage of one another.

Man's real potentiality is his creativity. He creates not only for himself but also for sharing his feelings with others. No poet writes only for himself, no philosopher writes only for his pleasure. In this sharing and in being spiritually creative one person can sacrifice for other person. The person who constantly sacrifices his own comfort for the sake of others is a virtuous person. For him there is no suffering in service--it is not a 'sacrifice' in the sense of 'sacrifice', it is a joy. True virtue is an attribute of a morally creative individual. He feels creative joy in promotion of other person's and other living being's good.

V

Civil Society : An Idea and/or reality?

The concept of unity in diversity which is inbuilt in Indian structure is the best example of exercising universality or approaching solidarity. Many religions, many cultures many languages, many casts etc. form the subsidiarities. To come back to our discussion of transpositional objectivity which is the essence of civil society. Hinduism from the beginning is based on some overreaching values which transcends sectarianism and which provides a cultural basis for tolerance. Mahatma Gandhi thought that truth might be this uniting factor. "The essential spirit seems to be : live and let live. Mahatma Gandhi has attempted to define it: 'If I were asked to define the Hindu creed, I should simply say: search after truth through non-violent

means....Hinduism is the religion of truth. Truth is God. Denial of God we have known. Denial of truth we have not known.”²¹

There has been a unitary impulse prevalent in Indian culture. Was this really special feature of India, which is not present elsewhere? It is hard to answer here. But it is true that despite all diversities, invasions there has been a tolerant culture and it has successfully given rise to a new synthesis by way of absorption.

It is often suggested that inspite of this absorption there has been a national perspective prevalent, internal diversities-divisiveness was always present which later on led to divided India. This was largely the imperial view. “The very fact that India chose to have a secular constitution and inspite of the fact that Pakistan chose to have an Islamic Republic shows that indeed there was much unity in India inspite of the undoubted presence of many religions, diverse languages and other differences on which the imperial theory is based. This unity lived in India over the millennia.”²² The ideal universality would be ideal without diversity and thus void of any unity, as unity by definition has to unite something. On the other hand, if there is only diversity without unity then too diversities would not be ‘diversities’ as, it has to ‘diversify’ something. Thus to make sense of ‘unity’ and ‘diversity’ we need to have both as real entities.

By way of concluding, we look forward to a civil society, where we have all democratic rights protected and practised, providing justice to every individual all persons are responsible citizens implying the moral and legal duties with economic freedom and political freedom and development. This may be an over all development of all. But whether this is achieved or can ever be achieved in reality is another question. The circle of violence must be broken somewhere, and it can only be broken by non-violence. To quote Tagore about Gandhi, “Perhaps he will not succeed. Perhaps he will fail as Buddha failed and as Christ failed to wean man from their inequalities, but he will always be remembered as one who made his life lesson for all ages to come.”²³

NOTES

1. Maldonado, C.E., *Human Rights Solidarity and Subsidiarity* (The Council for Research in Value and Philosophy, 1997).
2. Michael Walze, *The Civil Society Argument*, p. 153.

3. Mclean, G. F., *Solidarity as the Social Exercise of Human Freedom*, p.1.
4. Jonas, Hans, *The Imperative of Responsibility : Foundation of An. Ethics for the Technological Age*, Chicago Press, 1984.
5. Michael Walzer, *The Civil Society Argument*, p. 162
6. Sen, Amartya, "Positional Objectivity", *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1993.
7. Sen, Amartya "On Interpreting India's Past", p.3.
8. *Young India*, 1919-'22, p. 611.
9. Renunciation of anything foreign or British meant 'of titles, councils, law courts, schools...'
10. *Harijan*, My Religion, p.56.
11. *In Search of the Supreme* (Navajivan Publishing House, 1962), VI. III, p. 113.
12. *Harijan*, 29. 6. '35.p. 156, pp. 56-57.
13. *Young India*, 1919-'22, p.260.
14. *Ibid.*, 16. 6. '35. 1927, p. 196.
15. *In Search of the Supreme*, p. 26.
16. *Harijan*, 14. 12 '47, p. 468.
17. *In Search of the Supreme*, II, p. 59.
18. Tagore, R., "A Poet's School", *Boundless Sky* (Visva Bharti, Calcutta, 1964), p. 243.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
20. Confluence of Minds, Tagore, Einstein Colloquium Visva Bharati. Tagore-Einstein Council Berlin and Shantiniketan, 1997. p,15-17.
21. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Calcutta: Signet Press, 1946, 1989), p. 75.
22. Sen, Amartya, "The Idea of India", Nehru Lecture , Trinity College, Cambridge on 5 Feb. 1993.
23. Tagore, R. *Mahatma Gandhi* (Visva Bharti, Calcutta, 1963), pp. 16-17.