



## Rabindranath's Concept of Religion

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*'Closing eyes alone to whom you are finding,  
Open your eyes and see, He is not there.  
He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground  
And where the path-maker is breaking stone....'- Rabindranath Tagore (Gitanjali)*

### **Abstract:**

Rabindranath Tagore is one of the great personalities of India. His multifaceted personality was evolved by the influence of Upanishads, Brahma Samaj, Bhagavad Gita, Buddhism etc. According to him, religion is the realization of own's nature. He was against any religious institution and religious practices. For him, religion is not renunciation, not an escape from the worldly duties and responsibilities. According to Rabindranath true religion is a rhythm of life, joy, action, and existence.

**Keywords:** Religion, God, Rites, Spirituality, man and humanity

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### **I. Introduction:**

Rabindranath Tagore is regarded as one of the very eminent initiators to drag the idea of Universal religion in the philosophy of modern India. He brought the concept of philosophy through his impactful work "Religion of man". His religious philosophy is completely man-centric. He always thought good for people and tried to make people free from superstitions constructed taking one's religion. He put effort into people think logically and demonstrated distinctive ways in contemporary Indian philosophy. Tagore stated in his well-known book Religion of man that my nation of religion is the religion of a poet. In his word, "my religion essentially a poet's religion. Its touch comes to me through some unseen and track less channels as does the inspiration of my music. My religious life has followed the same mysterious line of growth as has my poetic life. Some how they are wedded to each other, and through their betrothal had a long period of the ceremony, it was kept secret for me.

Tagore was born at a time when India was in transition from the mediaeval to the modern age. He was brought up in an atmosphere charged with religious fervor. A critical outlook on the past and new aspirations for the future. Actually, it was a time when there were three movements in Bengal were germinating of all the three movements the religious movement introduced by Raja Ram Mohan Roy was revolutionary in its own way. Tagore was greatly influenced by liberation of Brahma Samaj founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy based on the synthesis of all religion of the world.

Rabindranath Tagore's outlook on religion was also influenced by the Upanishads and Bhagavad-Gita. Tagore himself wrote in preface of 'Sadhana' that he has been brought up in a family where texts of the Upanishads were used in daily worship. "To me the verses of the Upanishads and the teachings of Buddha have ever been things of the spirit and there fore endowed with boundless vital growth, and I have used them, both in my own life and in my preaching as being instinct with special meaning for me".

Tagore was also very much impressed by the Baul singers of Bengal in particular. They are the wandering saints in India who do not believe in any religious institution nor do they enter any place of worship. They were liberal thinkers simply believe in the love of mankind and selfless work. Next to Bauls, Vaisnavism Sufism the hymns of Mirabai, Tulsidas, the lyrics of Chandidas, mystic songs of Kabir have influenced Tagore.

Religion for Tagore is no renunciation, not an escape from the worldly duties and responsibilities. According to Tagore true religion is a rhythm of life, Joy, action, and existence. Tagore's method of realisation is

also humanistic. The Vedantic Conception of the divinity in man- Nara- Nārāyana is developed in Tagore's Philosophy of Philosophy. According to true religion means man's humanity: basically, the service of mankind.

According to Rabindranath Tagore religion is the realizing of man's true nature. Here Tagore talks about different ways of self-realization i.e., realization through love, action, and beauty of nature lead to the realization of the infinite. To him man gets God only in love as he believes that God is inherent in true love. Tagore says that Upanishads never forbid us to work because freedom of Joy lies in the work. Just as the Joy of poet in his poem, of the brave man in the output of his Courage, of the wise man in his discernment of truths. So, the Joy of the Brahma in the whole of the every day work.

One more important aspect of Tagore's religion is that he is against institutional religious which he believes false and dogmatic. True religion must not be confused with its external expressions like rites and rituals. Tagore says in dogmatic religion all questions are answered, all doubts are finally led to rest. He believes that when religion must make way for religious organisation it is like the river being dominated by sand beds the current stagnant and its aspect became desert like.

We can see that Tagore never followed any religious system blindly just because it is followed by most of the people in his surroundings. He himself says in the Religion of man "It was through idiosyncrasy of my temperament that I refused to accept any religious teaching morely because people in my surroundings believed it to be true.....my mind was brought up in an atmosphere by freedom.... freedom from the domination of any Reed that had its sanction in the definite authority of some organized body of worshippers".

According to Rabindranath Tagore love is the central theme of religious philosophy. He believes in the concept of spiritual realization of Vaishnavism, which is possible by the virtue of love and devotion. For him love is the key to attain everything in life. He asserted that essentially man is not a slave either of himself or of the world, but he is a lover.

He says that love is the highest bliss that man can attain for through it alone he truly knows that he is more than himself and he is at one with all." For him with out the love of God human life is full of suffering misery, and so on ultimate desire of man.

Tagore's whole religious philosophy is rooted in the conception of man. One of the most famous and unique terms Tagore used in his Philosophy is "Jivana Devota" by the word "Jivana Devota", he means the God of like, who resides in the heart of man. Through his religious philosophy Tagore describes a very clear and auspicious relationship between the Absolute or Brahma and man as well as nature and man. He was a philosopher of humanism. Tagore main direction to personal God is gratified to the Philosophy of Gita. He again followed the basic thought of Vaishnavism that love is the key to connect both finite and infinite ceaselessly. They are both dependent on each other and are bound up eternally.

Tagore did not incarcerate religion in any group, any caste, and any Instruction. He says that being Hindu, Muslim or Christian is a subject of opportunity. It is a fact that every man takes birth in a particular family and bringing up in that way by family and bringing up in that way by practicing some specific traditions and standard of living in society. For instance, a Hindu follows the rules and regulations of a Hindu family. However, it is not the factual religion of that person because practicing those rules and regulations that person may not be able to do self-realization. The man of true religion is recognising the supremacy of self, generate self revival in our country of a religion based upon the utterance of Indian sages in the Upanishads. The nature of man is creative power is called the true religion of that man. Man expresses his intrinsic truth of life through his religion.

Tagore was a universal in many ways and at many levels. He opposed the militant and hierarchizing Dharma of his Hindu tradition and his own nationalist compatriots, involving instead the Universal, egalitarian Dharma of truth and ahimsa. He opposed the sectarian identities of nation, religion, caste, race, religion, and ethnicity, implicitly invoking a" politics of otherness" against this politics identity.

## **II. Conclusion: -**

From the above discussion it can be concluded that Tagore's conception of Religion is not the religion of one group of people but the religion of whole mankind. It is the essence of man and the appearance of man's intrinsic nature. Tagore was against religious fanaticism asceticism and blind adherence to convention in which there is no conflict between science and religion.

Tagore was a universalist philosopher but his philosophy of religion is completely personal and man centric. For him religion is the exercise to realize the absolute and provides power to bring peace for all. In his view man must realize the wholeness of his existence, his place in the infinite. Tagore's conception of humanism is reflected in his religious philosophy chiefly grounded by the teaching of Vaisnavism. He wanted people to understand the worth of nature and to be a better human being. According to him religion is a method of Joyful acceptance of life in touch with the glory of nature in all activities. In the words of Tagore, religion is not renunciation, not escapism nor is complete absorption with God or even dogmatism. In his astonishing version

religion has reached some what a deeper meaning that is the religion of man. To him man is the highest of all categories of God's creation.

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