

# **World Peace arid Rabindranath Tagore**

*By*

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN, M.A., B.L.

**Transaction No. 8**

**THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CULTURE**

Basavangudi, Bangalore

**The Indian Institute of Culture**  
**Basavangudi, Bangalore**

**Transaction No. 8**

**WORLD PEACE AND  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

*By*  
K. CHANDRASEKHARAN M.A., B.L.

September 1951

Price: Re. 1/-

# THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CULTURE

## TRANSACTIONS

Many valuable lectures are given, papers read and discussed, and oral reviews of outstanding books presented, at the Indian Institute of Culture. Its day is still one of small beginnings, but wider dissemination of at least a few of these addresses and papers is obviously in the interest of the better intercultural understanding so important for world peace. Some of these are published in the Institute's monthly organ, *The Aryan Path*; then we have two series of occasional papers—Reprints from that journal, and Transactions. The Institute is not responsible for views expressed and does not necessarily concur in them.

### Transaction No. 8

World Peace is today the common aspiration, and many formulae for its attainment have been urged, from the spreading of mutual understanding and appreciation between cultures to an out-and-out pacifism difficult to distinguish from *laissez-faire* in theory and cowardice in practice. Gandhiji did not rule out the use of force; he recognized non-violent resistance as a powerful weapon, one which cowards were not fit to wield. He was a master of the alchemy of turning the forces of evil into good. In a world of opposites the hope of banishing violence altogether is as futile as that of banishing even physical darkness from the world. No darkness, no light; no force, no peace. The secret lies in the proper directing or transmutation of the power which each man has and all must exercise under penalty of stagnation. War must be waged by every man against his own vices and weaknesses, his own animal nature. Until all men or the majority at least, have won a measure of success in that “greatest of all wars,” they will not be men of peace, whose natural environment will be a peaceful world.

Shri K. Chandrasekharan brings out in this lecture, which he delivered at the Indian Institute of Culture's celebration of World Peace Day on August 7th, 1951, that Rabindranath Tagore, great internationalist that he was, found room in his philosophy for admiration of the spirit of fight as well as for a deep love of peace.

## WORLD PEACE AND RABINDRANATH TAGORE

It was in the January of 1946 that Mahatma Gandhi visited Madras, perhaps for the last time. The late Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri was then in the hospital during his last illness. "Big Brother," as Mahatmaji sometimes liked to address Sastri in his personal letters, was anxiously expecting the Mahatma's presence by his bedside. And not once but twice was that angelic spirit comforting Sastri, whose heart was visibly moved to serenity at sight of him.

However much personal claims should have dominated a meeting of the two kindred souls in such a context, Sastri's individuality and public spirit asserted themselves and the question easily formed itself on his lips: "Why are you here, my dear brother, when the First Assembly of the United Nations has actually met in London? Is not your place at the peace conferences of the world in this very critical juncture ? "

Without hesitation came the answer from the Mahatma: "Well, do you think, Mr. Sastri, that for exerting my influence for peace I should be there in person? If my faith in soul-force and non-violence as a panacea for all evils visiting the world is not pretence but a cardinal principle of my very existence, it can even from this distance across the seas do all it can. "

The exact words exchanged between those two great souls may not have been reproduced in the report of the conversation that has reached us. But one thing is fairly certain, that the Mahatma's belief in world peace, not through rules and regulations but in the innermost recesses of the human heart, should have influenced the delegates of the nations who met on that memorable occasion. Otherwise a well-known writer on the United Nations Organization, commenting on that First Assembly, would not have argued in this way:—

The problem of peace is quite different. Here there is no exact science which can be studied, no recognized rules of procedure, no text-books to be followed, and no conditions which will ensure success. War is recognized by all civilized communities as the greatest scourge which can affect mankind, but the perfect peace which will put an end to war has never yet been made.<sup>1</sup>

For a war to end war cannot and must not hereafter be fought. That is recognized as axiomatic. The "perfect peace"—mark the words!—must first find a home in any heart that yearns for peace for the entire community of the world.

ऋतुमयः पुरुषः

Life is shaped by previous resolve.

Thus if we concede that everything to start with, whether for evil or for good, must necessarily be traced to a mental discipline preparatory to it, then naturally the same prescription should hold good for any one steeped in a kind of lifelong *tapas* for the dawning on the world of a higher consciousness in its international relationships. And that was what Mahakavi Rabindranath Tagore from the earliest moment of his soul-awakening tried to promote. Maybe his poetic moods sometimes weaned him away to seclusion and silence; still his earnestness for the peace of the world knew no bounds, and he came again and again into the midst of humanity to preach his ideals. One can understand the violent vicissitudes of hope and despair to which he became a prey on the outbreak of the two world wars with their untold ravages. One finds the poet's pierced heart bleeding almost to exhaustion. For he says:—

---

<sup>1</sup> *First Assembly*. Edited by The RT. HON., The Earl OF LYTTON, p. 7.

<sup>a</sup> *Chkandogya Upaniskad*, 3rd chapter, 14th *khanda*.

I long to live in the heart of peace. I have done ray work, and I hope that my Master will grant me to sit by Him, and not to talk, but to listen to His own great silence.<sup>3</sup>

But the poet was not a mere visionary, sitting idly in his easy chair and solving acute problems of everyday occurrence with a wordy recipe. Santi-niketan, under whose shade the poet conceived of a fine blossoming of the Universal Brotherhood reflected in the natural blending of the cultures of the East and the West, became the centre of his thought. Hence, wherever he roamed, his heart, untravelled, fondly turned to the product of his creation. "Day and night I dream of Santiniketan, which blossoms like a flower in the atmosphere of the unbounded freedom of simplicity," he repeated to himself. Santiniketan is the playground of his own spirit. On its soil he grew something that is made of his own dream-stuff. Its materials are not many; its regulations prove elastic; but its freedom produces the inner restraint of beauty.

In his intensest moments, the poet grieved over the idea of nationalism which, according to him, gnawed at the root of all understanding among the various countries and governments of the world. However much he deplored his own country's backwardness in politics, especially when the entire world was growing up in an atmosphere of watchfulness and self-sufficiency in order to overcome the unforeseen militant forces at work, there was an insistent drive in him towards the abolition of all the creeds and slogans artificially propping up patriotism in this country. He frequently harped on the one theme of human-

it as a whole. His abhorrence of acts of violence in the name of patriotism was unbridled, and he showered some of his sharpest missiles on those who advocated it as the best stimulus towards the emergence of a country from the bondage of years. Let us listen to his reactions to the first flush of effective nation-wide propaganda for non-co-operation in our struggle for freedom: "My soul cries out," he says; "the complete man must never be sacrificed to the patriotic man, or even to the merely moral man."<sup>5</sup> One can easily envisage, from his emphasis on the completeness of the individual, how the notions of patriotism and nationalism bring about easily, according to him, hatred of one another as well as the evils born of a blinding passion for one's own country.

To Rabindranath, humanity was rich and large and many-sided. Therefore he felt hurt when, for material gains, the personality of man got mutilated in the Western world. His mind revolted at the very idea of man becoming reduced to a mere machine. He was sore at heart to see the same process of repression and curtailment of the human personality advocated under the name of nationalism here also. He brooked the thing no longer but burst out in indignation: "Such deliberate impoverishment of our nature seems to me a crime."<sup>6</sup> For, according to his theory, which is no strange doctrine to people familiar with the teachings of the Upanishads, it is God's purpose to lead man into the perfection of growth, which is the attainment of a unity comprehending an immense manifoldness.

While decrying nationalism in the West as breeding the vicious bacilli of separateness, he was not even for one single moment against the great good possible of realization in a commingling of the cultures of the West and the East. Rather he scolds the mind of India, prone to view with cold scepticism the possibility of receiving anything of value from the West. His scorn of the egoism of the nation could not brook any further delay on the part of his countrymen in accepting the best that is in the West. He viewed certain of the ugly phases of our own national movement as dangers to be scrupulously avoided. He thus broke out:—

<sup>5</sup> *Letters from Abroad*. By RABINDRANATH TAGORE, p. 67. (Letter of 8-2-1921.)

\**Ibid.*, p. 35, {Letter of 13-12-1920.}

If in the spirit of national vaingloriousness, we shout from our housetops that the West has produced nothing that has an infinite value for man, then we only create a serious cause of doubt about the worth of any product of the Eastern mind. For it is the mind of Man in the East and West which is ever approaching Truth in her different aspects from different angles of vision. . . . Let us be rid of all false pride and rejoice at any lamp being lit in any corner of the world, knowing it is a part of the common, illumination of our own house.<sup>7</sup>

The dignity of Man, in other words, cannot be cancelled by the united efforts of men. The dignity to which Man is born a legitimate heir will reject the political Swaraj that is furiously acclaimed today as his birthright. The poet pooh-poohs the Swaraj of the mere politician: " What is Swaraj ? It is *May a*. It is like a mist that will vanish, leaving no stain on the radiance of the Eternal." <sup>2</sup> His Swaraj is the idea of a spiritual fight for Man: " We are to emancipate Man from the meshes that he himself has woven round him—these organizations of National Egoism." <sup>3</sup>

Now look at the enticing analogy the poet in him pictures to us! "The butterfly will have to be persuaded that the freedom of the sky is of a higher value than the shelter of the cocoon."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps in this light even the United Nations Organization as a body will meet with his disapproval if it is devoid of a real desire for peace in the hearts of its component members, however much the Preamble of the Charter might assure the world of its mission " to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person."<sup>5</sup> For, without earnestness of a superior kind the dignity of man so greatly pictured as a desideratum for the preservation of the peace of the world will sound like mere attractive phraseology.

श्रद्धमयोयं पुरुषः यो यत्च्छ्रद्धः स एव सः !

Man is of the nature of his faith; what his faith is, that verily he is.

So says the *Bhagavad Gita* (xvii. 3), dismissing any other thought from having reign over a heart determined to work for a particular thing.

How can we achieve peace and that too in the face of the many conflicts of cultures and ideologies prevailing the world over? Well, if the one aim of every seeker of harmony among races and countries is not to belittle Man in this attempt as a potential instrument for universal peace, then probably every obstacle in the way of its realization will easily disappear. The first essential for the step in the right direction will be to regain the consciousness that Man has living bonds with society which should not yield place to mechanical organization or regimentation.

Even the divergence of interests that sometimes alienates man and woman happens because

that natural thread is snapping which holds them together in harmony; because man is driven to

---

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55. (Letter of 14-1-1921.)

\* *Ibid.*, p. 56. (Letter of 14-1-1921.)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83-4. (Letter of 13-3-1921.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73. (Letter of 2-3-1921.)

\* *Ibid.*, p. 73. (Letter of 2-3-1921.)

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*,

Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations.

professionalism, producing wealth for himself and others, continually turning the wheel of power for his own sake or for the sake of the universal officialdom, leaving woman alone to wither and to die or to fight her own battle unaided.<sup>1</sup>

Thus competition takes the place of co-operation, which should be the natural inclination of every human being. Bertrand Russell, in his recent articles on "Living in an Atomic Age," gave expression to the need for the spirit of co-operation dwelling in everybody's heart, giving no room hereafter for competition, which throughout has been the one potent cause of strife among nations. The satisfaction which we derive, no doubt, from this changed outlook of the Western philosopher need not be examined more than is necessary for our purpose.

There was a time when people thought of the two representatives of the two civilizations, the one a dreamer transcending the reality of earthly things and the other personifying the urge of the West for dynamic action and analysis, as never capable of meeting without tension. Indeed, a clash of civilizations at its very climax was what people would have looked for from such a meeting of the two master-minds. But today, fortunately, the Western philosopher too inclines towards the Eastern way of thinking. Dynamism in peace is not a paradox in thought. Otherwise the very idea of the United Nations Organization will have to be re-examined and placed on a surer basis. Again, without the vitality of growth embedded in the idea of peace, most of what our ancestors conceived of on the plane of *Shanti* (Peace), as leading to *Sivam* (Good) and *Advaitam* (Oneness) must be a mere fantasy and a dream.

Certain inevitable facts have to be taken into consideration at this juncture. They are, that the world is not the same today as it was thousands of years back. Much of a change in outlook has overtaken us too in India, who hitherto were generally not prone to be drawn into world politics. Then the vital fact that the East and the West have met cannot be passed over without deeper reflection than people generally allow it. It is a historical fact. Maybe this meeting of the two has so far produced only pitiful politics. Yet a closer analysis will tell us that this fact of history has not yet been turned into truth, and that alone accounts for the burden which we have to carry, whether of gain or loss, from such a contact of the East with the West. The appalling reality is that, in spite of 200 years since the coming together of the West and the East, all our approach has been on the surface—it is all external.

Tagore knew of this superficial contact, which left Indians dissatisfied when they expected material profits alone to be derived from such a circumstance. Well, he could not imitate the politician protesting against everything of the West in the attempt to aggravate the political issue. On the contrary, he saw with his powerful vision that deep in the heart of the meeting of the East and the West was laying the seed of a great future of Union. Being a poet, his detachment taught him to view with equanimity the painful tension of the present and the hysterical convulsions born of sheer exasperation under a foreign rule. His mind, bound as it was to the message of our Rishis, who had perceived no real separateness at all existing in the Great Life, began to anticipate with satisfaction the outcome of closer bonds between the West and the East. Says he:—

We have learnt from our ancestors that the *Advaitam* is the eternal significance of all passing events—which is the principle of unity in the heart of dualism. The dualism of East and West contains that unity, and therefore it is sure to be fulfilled in Union.<sup>6</sup>

This kind of mental attunement with the Real behind all appearances is the well-known

---

<sup>6</sup> *Letters from Abroad*, p. 120. { Letter of 6-5-1921.)

Upanishadic plan for world understanding and a peaceful life. And Tagore was truly imbued with this spiritual outlook from his childhood. It accounts for his genuine love of humanity as a whole. His authentic poetic traditions also supplied him with the spirit of the total negation of passion from his outlook. For passion is darkness. It only exaggerates facts and isolates them in the process, making our minds stumble against them at every little movement. Love is the light that reveals to us the unity that is in life and saves us from the oppressive factual existence of things of the immediate present. We hope that no one in our midst today will wish for a repetition of the global wars, plunging the world in utter selfishness and misery. Everyone, in this country at any rate, loves peace and longs for the establishment of that stage in human evolution which shall ensure future human differences being settled by other methods than resort to arms.

Peace with the entire world of creation, whether of man or animal or nature can alone give the seeker of peace the stamina to work for its perfection. Otherwise his striving for a noble purpose will not be complete. The *Aranyaka* ( Fourth *Prasna* ) says :—

तया अहं शान्त्या सर्वशान्त्या मह्यं द्विपदे चतुष्पदे च शान्तिं करोमि शान्तिः!!

I will endeavour in such a way as to bring about peace through striving for perfect peace in myself and with every biped and quadruped man, as well as animal.

This comprehensive view of life as embracing all creation cannot be surpassed either for its grandeur of concept or its practical efficacy. For, once the segregation of man from the other animals or from nature is effected, there will lurk in man's heart the fear and a desire to control others and keep them in bondage. In India, the message of the forest where the Rishis dwelt has been to liberate not only mankind from bonds but also the entire universe, composed of every unit of life. Hence for us the highest purpose of this world is not merely living in it, knowing it and making use of it, but realizing our own selves in it through expansion of sympathy; not alienating ourselves from it and dominating it, but comprehending and uniting it with ourselves in perfect union.<sup>7</sup>

Every masterpiece of Sanskrit literature will have running through it a message like this one. For instance, if we turn to the drama of *sakuntalam*, the hermitage, which prominently engages our attention even to the extent of throwing into the shadow the Court of the King, has the same idea running through it—the recognition of the kinship of man with conscious and unconscious creation alike.

In *Kadambari* too, through its maze of imageries and factual improbabilities, we cannot fail to see the flowering lianas bowing like courtiers, the trees showering flowers like sacrificial offerings, the parrots chanting mantrams, etc., —all combining to produce the single total impression of the bridging of the chasm between man and the rest of creation.

King Dushyanta on his return from heaven, sighting Hemakuta, the abode of Marichi, appreciates its tranquility in the words.

स्वर्गात् अधिकतरं निर्वतिस्थानं

Certainly this place of peace is more enduring than heaven itself.

The heart of ancient India pinned its faith on the efficacy of 5PT (control) even in one single individual, as conducive to the reign of peace all around him. Otherwise Parvatl, whom Kalidasa describes as having taken up the severest form of discipline, could not have radiated her influence in such a manner as to make wild animals, previously turbulent, leave

<sup>11</sup> "The Religion of the Forest," in *Creative Unity*. By Rabindranath Tagore.

off their hatred of one another. Perhaps the same freedom from the jungle-law prevailed in the vicinity of Kanva's Ashrama, so as to evoke the ready response of King Dushyanta to it after a hot chase. He exclaims: "Look at this quietness pervading the entire hermitage!" signifying the radiating influence of a great soul whose control of the senses had made his entire surroundings in the forest pervaded by a calm wherein no longer persecution of the weaker by the stronger existed. The *Yoga Sutra* (II 35 ) places it beyond all doubt thus :—

अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठायां तत्सन्निधौ वैरत्यागः ।

Non-violence once established, there will be immediate surrender of all misgivings and hatred.

Rabindranath, throughout his frequent wanderings in the world, marked the bellicose tendencies which overtook the nations of the West and the East and sadly reflected on the potential harm done to the East by the political civilization expanding from the soil of Europe. He characterized it as a civilization that was scientific and not human. He took no time to prophesy that this enshrining by the West of the gigantic idols of greed in its temples and calling the costly ceremonial of its worship "patriotism" could not go on for long; for there is a moral law in the world, having application to both individuals and organized bodies of men, which must soon bring culprits to book. He reiterated his hope in the saving hand of India and China, because of the spiritual ideal of man still cherished by them.

The poet's hope of China's share in the spiritual ideal has perhaps not been totally borne out by her very recent history, but there is no end to the series of rich imageries he could give us of the spiritual ideal of India surviving every instance of scientific advance leading to inhuman aggression from outside. His fancy pictured Europe, speeding busily as in a train to her engagements, disdainfully casting her glance from her carriage window at the solitary reaper, reaping his harvest in the field, and in the intoxication of her speed she cannot but think of him as slow and receding ever backwards. Tagore sums up the situation in aphoristic sentences:—

The East with her ideals, in whose bosom are stored the ages of sunlight and silence of stars, can patiently wait till the West, hurrying after the expedient, loses breath and stops.

No doubt it may be asked, "Pleasing as may be these dreams of peace, are they ever likely to come true?" For one despairs because even after the formation of a world organization like the United Nations, the clouds of war are gathering on the horizon and threatening to move in a mass at a wink's notice and to bewilder the world with their driving storm and thunderclaps.

Even on his death-bed the poet's mind showed no trace of weakening; for, just before his passing away in August 1941, he wrote:—

The wheels of Fate will some day compel the English to give up their Indian Empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery?<sup>18</sup>

Every word of his prognosis has turned out to be correct to the letter. We, who are the inheritors of a legacy of misfortunes and miseries from the dramatic departure of the British, are sensible of the accuracy of the prophecy. Indeed, sadness choked the breath of the poet as he concluded the passage with the words:—

I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. But today when I am about to quit the world that faith has gone bankrupt altogether.<sup>8</sup>

It may appear a contradiction in ideas when in some of the poet's own writings passages

---

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

are found defending the existence of war. For instance, he speaks of the Western nations having kept up the spirit of fight in the heart of their civilization. Nature is treated by them as an antagonist and this aspect has deepened their faith in the eternal conflict between good and evil. They therefore seek victory and cultivate power. On the other hand, the environment in which the early Aryan immigrants in India found themselves made them realize the spirit of harmony with the Universe and influenced their minds towards the monistic aspect of Truth. The realization of the Soul through union with all chiefly attracted the progenitors of the Indian race. The poet, instead of stopping with a mere description of the two conflicting cultures, mentions that the spirit of fight as well as the spirit of harmony both have their place and importance in the scheme of life. Mark his imagery:—

For making a musical instrument the obduracy of materials has to be forced to yield to the purpose of the instrument-maker....the musical instrument and the music both have their own importance for humanity.<sup>9</sup>

This is a statement requiring more explanation from him. If peace is the one goal of all humanity, according to him, how can he speak of war in these justifying terms? Perhaps no one can say affirmatively that war will no longer menace humanity. Only the ideal can be invoked with the best of intentions and every attempt towards realization of the ideal will send one more nail into the coffin of hostility. The UNO may not once for all extinguish the embers of hatred. There are moments when a sudden chill assails our hearts on reading some of the current news. If, in the *Gita*, the Lord whose message from beginning to end has dwelt on striving and striving alone, with detachment in thought, word and action, is deemed to wind up his harangue with the exhortation to Arjuna to engage rigorously in battle, (तस्मात् युद्धयस्व भारत), then perhaps Tagore also can be said to have justified war and induced men to fight and conquer. The fighting civilization and the civilization realizing fundamental unity in the depth of existence cannot but be reconciled as complementary to each other. The poet only wants the two civilizations to join hands so that human nature can discover a truer balance in course of time. He cannot totally efface facts by imagination. Hence his showing a way only out of the difficulty.

In his concluding talk on "Living in an Atomic Age" Bertrand Russell echoes the same sentiments; wishing for peace and security at any cost, he suggests as a compromise reducing the armed forces to a single unit for the entire world.

Tagore's appreciation of the dignity of man necessitated his reconciling existing divergences in the most beneficial light. His lifelong insistence on universal sympathy made him attribute the evils of lack of freedom among men to an imperfect realization of the One. Generally, he argued, one thinks that dissociating one self from one's fellows aids the attainment of real freedom inasmuch as the ties of relationship involve obligations towards others. But it may seem paradoxical to find that in human life only a perfect arrangement of interdependence among people can give rise to freedom. In this view, perhaps the most individualistic of human beings, who own no responsibility to others, may be the savages who fail to attain to the full manifestation of human dignity. They will be immersed in obscurity, like an ill-lighted fire that cannot liberate itself from its enshrouding smoke. Only individuals who attain freedom from the segregation of an eclipsed life discover the power to cultivate mutual understanding and co-operation. The history of the growth of freedom is, then, the history of the perfection of human dignity.

---

<sup>9</sup> *Letters from Abroad*, p. Jio. (Letter of 18-4-1921.)

Some may feel that Tagore was not qualified to discuss problems that were beyond his ken as a poet. Such a criticism will restrict the poet's function. is an old Sanskrit adage; it shows how the reformer and the seer are rolled into one, called the poet. Tagore was not without misgivings about organizations generally, on whatever scale, and particularly about such an organization as that of his own Visva-Bharati University. At one single stroke the poet expected to train the East as well as the West to take from each other of their best and to assimilate it to the greatest advantage from the point of view of cultural growth. Still, in the midst of his work, he became harassed by doubts of his own Santiniketan's peaceful life getting enmeshed in projects of a wider and bigger organization. Even the very name "University" proved distasteful to him, though it was chosen for want of a more appropriate appellation to signify the scheme of education experimented with there. Even then, the poet's heart missed a beat as he scanned his own creation and felt that there was no need for the small unit he had reared up as a place for the growth of the personality of Man to expand to bigger proportions, so as to prove a Brobdignagian nightmare. Santiniketan was Santiniketan so long it was not manufactured by a machine. In a letter to a foreign friend he reassured himself :—

It is truth itself, the truth which loves to be simple, because it is great. Truth is beautiful like a woman in our own country. She never strains to add to her inches by carrying extravagances under her feet.<sup>19</sup>

Not reconciled to his own constructive work, he makes a confession in one of his long letters:—

The poet who is true to his mission, reaps his harvest of love ; but the poet who strays into the path of the good is dismissed with applause. So I am to found my International University—a great work! But I lose my little song—which loss can never be made up to me.

So this constant conflict was going on in his soul, whether at all he was justified in transgressing the confines of a seer by entering into fields of constructive action, however much blessed they might be with material success.

In many of his wanderings the poet had plenty of opportunities to meet human nature at its highest as well as its lowest. While he joined his own countrymen in wishing for the earliest opportunity of freeing his country from the British rule, he at no moment failed to find some of the noblest friendships of his lifetime formed with individual Englishmen. Indeed, he confesses in some of his letters from abroad of his achieving great satisfaction from friends he had made outside India. They impress us with the truth that as a first step for lasting peace among mankind more and more intimate contacts have to be formed both among individuals and nations.

In spite of his poetic life throughout and his own disinclination to be anything else than a pure poet, Tagore's mind was not unfamiliar with the world movements. If he had lived today he would have easily welcomed the idea of world security from wars, whether through the establishment of a Security Council such as the one that has been brought into existence by the United Nations or otherwise. He would have been gratified considerably to see India's share in such a responsibility for world security and untrammelled freedom. For the aspiration which he once expressed for his country was that the mind of India should join forces with the great movement of mind going on in the present-day world. Every step that we might take in this effort would at once lead India to feel the unity of Man. Whether any organization for world peace could acknowledge this unity or not, he stressed that this unity was the same to India. "We have to realize it through our own creative mind, \*,"<sup>10</sup> was his

---

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151. (Letter of July 1921.)

final resolve.

If he had been living today he would have received satisfaction in no small measure from the laudable part played by India in the UNO. We know that India has frequently asserted her faith in the United Nations. This is not a mere platitude. The trust and confidence of India in the ability and capacity of the United Nations to deal with problems of peace and security have led her to practical action in respect both of questions which concern herself and of other problems—the question of Kashmir, for instance, the treatment of Indians in South Africa and her determination not to join any of the power blocs on the question of the Korean conflict.

When all is said, the poet's real joy is not in this or that thing succeeding. It is not even in his art reclaiming a world utterly indifferent to the ways of love. It is not, again, in the sense of security he achieved in his own Santiniketan from a storm-beaten world. It is not even true to call him a piper, all along pouring music into the reed given to him from the day he came into the world. No, none of these. The poet gives us a clue to what he feels he has secured which alone can be the ultimate goal for him:—

Ever in my life have I sought Thee with my songs? It was they who led me from door to door, and with them have I felt about me, searching and touching my world.

It was my songs that taught me all the lessons I ever learnt; they showed me secret paths; they brought before my sight many a star on the horizon of my heart.

They guided me all the day long to the mysteries of the country of pleasure and pain, and, at last, to what palace gate have they brought me in the evening at the end of my journey?

The serenity of soul that surpasses all other experiences is the palace gate reached by him, which the poet recalls with genuine humility. Need we then labour more to convince a world in the throes of ever-growing conflicts, that peace, if at all it should succeed in its mission, starts from the individual who clings to it himself and not merely believes in it for the sake of others?

In closing this inadequate but sincere attempt at making out Tagore's attitude towards World Peace, let me be forgiven for impressing upon my countrymen how much was the poet's master-bias leaning to love of God as the fulfilment of all humanity. Needless to remind ourselves of the poet's meeting in a hotel in Hamburg in the year 1921 with two shy and sweet-looking German girls who greeted him with a bunch of roses. One of them in her broken English said to him, "I love India."

Then the poet asked her, "Why do you love India?"

She answered, "Because you love God!"

Whether the "you" in the context meant the poet alone or the country from which he hailed, the poet was inwardly happy that the statement contained a truth generally forgotten by us, his own countrymen. For he knew this, that the nations love their own countries, and that national love has only given rise to hatred and suspicion of one another. The world is waiting for a country that loves God and not herself. Only that country will have the claim to be loved by men of all countries."

This praise may be too much for us to accept with any degree of complaisance. But let us hope that its meaning is in the expectation from us which it carries and that it therefore is a Blessing, having in it the ultimate solution of all problems and difficulties.