

PACIFISM IN RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S POEMS: DENOUNCING WAR WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO AFRICA, SPAIN AND JAPAN

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Abstract

Popularly known as a humanist who emphasised freedom for all human beings, Rabindranath Tagore, Asia's first Nobel Laureate, was an enlightened soul who believed in peaceful coexistence across the world irrespective of race, class, culture, religion and nationality. He wrote poems denouncing wars, destruction of nations and human beings; expressing the futility of wars and his wish to bring peace in the world. This paper portrays Tagore's philosophy of wars and universalism. His poem on Africa depicts its origin and colonisation, sufferings of native Africans and Tagore's sentiments on it. It also expresses Tagore's pacifist sentiments on civil war in Spain, failure of the world to stop the destruction; denounces Japan's aggression on China and shows juxtaposition of war and peace. It also depicts Tagore's appreciation for Japan for its progress and criticism when Japan started its expansion in China, which resulted in the second Sino-Japanese war (1937–1945). Tagore's message for peace is still relevant and the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia validates the same and revives the memories of past wars in Spain, China, Japan and Africa, and loss of innocent human lives.

Keywords: war, aggression, humanity, peace, civilisation, universalism.

Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore was a humanist and a staunch believer in peace. He believed in the freedom of people across nations. His war and peace concepts were initially limited to his

writings within the borders of his native country, but after being awarded the Nobel Prize in 1913, he gradually emerged as a pacifist and peacemaker on the international stage as a literary figure (Kundu, 2010, p. 79). He felt deep emotions upon learning of the carnival of the dead taking place in the country of the so-called most civilized and advanced continent of the time-Europe (Sharma, 2016, p. 243). According to him, war is a wound in the breast of humanity, and all its members should share its pain and terror. It does not matter who may have been responsible for the war; all humankind should share the guilt and punishment of the war. The suffering and loss of life during the war aroused his feelings, which led to him writing poetry denouncing the war. He was an anti-imperialist and fiercely patriotic, but he was also a religious poet and mystic. He believed in open-minded reasoning and the celebration of human freedom (Sen, 2011, p. n.p.). His poems and songs inspired the Indians in their struggle against foreign rule, his poems and short stories actually breathed a universal spirit (Thampi, 2017, p. 88).

According to Ghosh, Tagore has always sought to incorporate different types of ideas, practices, and perspectives, and to acknowledge and accommodate the hopes and pains of people of different races, nations, cultures, and religions (n.d., p. 18). Through his works, he profoundly opposed to the imposition of local beliefs and customs over all others. Instead, he had an unwavering support for an empathetic universalism, a universalism that did not impose dogma but encouraged a sense of shared humanity across the many particularisms that define our daily lives. Tagore believed that the ultimate nature of the world does not depend on a single person's understanding; rather, understanding is linked to the universal human mind, which has the power to comprehend greater possibilities of meaning.

Born and raised in Bengal in the late 19th century, Tagore lived through turbulent times. On the one hand, when British imperialism tried to carve up Bengal along religious lines in 1905, British imperialism became increasingly aggressive. On the other hand, nationalistic sentiments increased among Indians to counter British imperial power. There were strong contrasts between East and West, between tradition and modernity, between past and present. However, Tagore chose the most difficult middle path in these troubled times. Tagore's unprecedented thinking about the philosophical underpinnings of cosmopolitanism resonates with great power in a world enveloped simultaneously by opposing attitudes of globalization and various forms of particularism. In fact, the future of the planet depends on how well we can mediate between these two opposing polarities. In this regard, Rabindranath Tagore's cosmopolitan thinking, expressed in his works with epic grandeur, is a friend and guide for people (Mukherjee, 2020, p. 54).

War and Human Civilisation

Violent conflict and aggression have remained part of human and animal behaviour throughout millions of years of evolution. According to Gat, during the initial phase of human evolution, humans practiced this aggressive behaviour as hunter-gatherers for survival (2008, p. 7). Subsequently, they turned to agriculture and animal husbandry. After this evolution, violence and aggression was not a necessity for survival, but it continued for the possession of resources and resulted in conflicts among human groups. These conflicts evolved into primitive wars. Further, human civilisation developed into various religions, cultures and nations, and conflict among them resulted in wars.

The poem "SINCE THE FIRST day-break of human age misted with myths" is about wars and the destruction of nations and human beings. Tagore denounces wars and explains the reasons behind wars, their consequences and the futility of wars in detail. It conveys a message to bring peace in the world and to avoid conflicts for temporary gains, which are ephemeral and depicts Tagore's philosophy of wars. It describes that during the initial phase

of human civilisation, there were many myths about unknown natural landscapes and events. Explorers travelled far away distances by sea and land, some travelled in search of treasures whereas expansionists went to faraway places and waged wars to quench their greed. Most of the time, these expeditions of war were given religious sanction. These circumstances changed the world into “an endless stretch of battle-fields” (Lewis & Sisson, 2020, p. 375) which happened throughout human civilisation.

These ceaseless deadly pursuits terrified people and did not allow them to sleep peacefully. It embittered people's lives. During these pursuits, misconceptions were formed about death and it was glorified to motivate people for joining such pursuits. With this, Tagore addresses the ideology behind the warmongering. The next stanza of the poem expresses the situation of the people at the turning point of the war. Those who joined the war or left the place suffered a tragic fate and most of them died. Those who stayed in their homeland and did not take part in the war were also affected. Their lives changed and they were treated like slaves. The world seemed cruel and heartless to them. The wars destroyed the cities and turned them into cemeteries. The cities turned into a “a realm of ghosts”, which describes the intensity of the damage (Lewis & Sisson, 2020, p. 375).

The next stanza mentions how people struggled to survive in the early stages of the development of human civilization. Their journey was in search of food, and they often got it at the cost of their lives. Their only goal was to get something for a living. This search determined their path. The next stanza is about the phase when human civilization was fairly well established. People have overcome their problem as a means of survival. New developments took place and people began to make new inventions and infrastructures. They tried to touch the sky by building tall structures and to control nature by building dams on rivers to stop the flow of water into the sea. However, it was impossible to control nature and natural disasters destroyed man-made structures. This cycle of construction and destruction continued. People tried to protect themselves from natural disasters, but they could not stop death. This cycle of life and death and the struggle with the forces of nature continued throughout human evolution.

The last stanza is about the spiritual awakening of the people. For centuries before the spiritual awakening, material things were fought over. This awakening was beyond the horizon of physical greed. People realized that possession of material things is not real success and that this attachment to worldly things has bound them like slaves to comfort and fear. Many magnificent structures that were considered symbols of success and victory became ruins. The names of their builders were also forgotten. Down the centuries, men have fought for these things, taking the trouble to cross the hills, break down the walls of castles and the iron gates of cities in order to occupy them. However, none of these last. They realized that the only thing that is constant is nature. Through this poem, Tagore conveys the message that greed for empire expansion is futile. Wars between peoples are devastating for the winners as well as for the losers. Victory through war is not real victory. The spread of war and the ideology of inciting people to fight is wrong. The glorification of death in war is also wrong. The ruins of the past are an example of all of these being temporary things. Originally, people's basic needs were all for subsistence. With the passage of time and as civilization progressed, they learned to deal with these things, but that didn't solve the problem of people based on their greed. Expansionist greed led to war among themselves. This attachment to physical things and victory as a false symbol of success destroyed peace. The spiritual awakening showed people the reality, and the awakened recognized the futility of wars. Tagore suggests that there is no point in the expansion of empires and war between people and that these are not eternal and will disappear in time. Victory in war is not real success; it not only ends in death for both sides, but also turns the cities into cemeteries.

Through the poem, Tagore conveys a message about the futility of war and seeks to awaken people's souls to stop it.

Africa: Origin, Colonisation and Suffering

Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in 1935. Tagore wrote the poem "IN THAT EARLY dusk of a distracted age" in response to the invasion. He wrote it at the urging of Amiya Chakravorthy who was Tagore's literary secretary from 1924 to 1933. In 1937, he studied at Balliol College, Oxford. Tagore wrote the poem in Bengali and mailed it to him along with a letter dated February 9, 1937. Amiya Chakravorthy translated it into English and forwarded it to a Ugandan prince, Akiki Nyabongo. The prince asked Tagore to translate the original into English. At his request, Tagore himself translated the poem into English. Tagore's English translation of the poem was published in the *Spectator* in May 1937, entitled To Africa (Roysinha et al., 1998, p. 477).

The opening verse is about the creation of Africa. The separation of Africa and India is described in poetic form. Millions of years ago, Africa was part of a large area of land called Gondwana in Earth's southern hemisphere. Among them were Arabia, South America, Antarctica, Australia and India. Africa's secession from that country and drifting away from the East has been described as an act of God. Tagore mentions that God was not satisfied with his creation and shook his head, creating powerful waves that blew Africa away. After this separation, the continent became mysterious to other countries. Lack of awareness has established many rituals in the minds of the indigenous people. Africans started wearing strange things to look different to scare off dangerous animals. The harsh conditions there and the dangerous animals made them imitate wild creatures to adapt to the environment. To overcome their fear, they became fearful. Lack of information about Africans led to many prejudices about them. The natives were looked upon with contempt by the so-called civilized nations. They started catching them like hunters catch animals for the slave trade. The colonizers and slave traders treated the Africans like African wolves hunting animals. The pride of the colonizers blinded them, worse than the darkness of the African forests. The colonizers who presented themselves as civilized were very greedy and shameless and they deprived themselves of humanity. The poem reflect the bestial and inhumane treatment of Africans by the colonizers.

The next stanza of the poem portrays the hypocrisy of the colonizers. They killed innocent Africans and silenced their voices. The torture by the colonisers was so brutal that the forest paths of Africa became muddy with tears and blood of the Africans (Lewis & Sisson, 2020, p. 377). In Africa, the colonizers destroyed the dignity of native women, killed the Africans while they prayed in churches and sang hymns for peace in their own country. The two images juxtapose the brutality and hypocrisy of the colonisers. The children of the colonizers relaxed in their mothers' arms while the Africans were mercilessly killed. The colonisers ring the church bells, which symbolize love and peace for humanity whereas they did the opposite to the Africans. On the one hand, the colonizers projected themselves as flag-bearers of peace and humanity, and on the other, they killed innocent people, ravaged the dignity of Africans, and ravished their women. Amsterdam and Irvine mentioned the loss and atrocities on Africans by colonisers in *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*. According to them, a reasonable estimate is that ten million enslaved Africans perished in the Middle Passage. Life of the enslaved was worse than death. Starved, worked, beaten, suffocated, sickened to death. Systemically, brutally worked, beaten, saddened or insanely put to death. Tens of millions were beaten to death by Leopold's vicious regime in the Congo between 1885 and 1908, half the region's population castrated and boned and sickened in a brutality matched only by the six million Jews and unnamed others whom they gassed, shot and tortured to death in the 1940s (2020, p. vi).

In the final stanza of the poem, Tagore condemns the colonisers to suffer the same fate for their inhuman acts in Africa. He foresees their downfall beyond redemption and suggests them to ask for forgiveness from the ravished African women as the last step from the people who made the entire continent suffer and left it in a degraded state to the extent of delirium.

Civil war in Spain and Tagore's Pacifist Sentiments

Tagore fell ill in 1937 and was in a state of comatose and near death. When he regained consciousness, he heard about the civil war in Spain and the barbaric killing of people. He wrote the poem "WHEN MY mind was released" to express his sensibility towards humanity (2020, p. 381). He was a pacifist and he expressed his feelings about the incident through this poem. He "often spoke of abstract human values" and "there was always a considerable amount of vitality and dynamic spirit in his writings" (Press, 2014, p. 106). The opening lines mention Tagore's recovery from an illness and speak of his regaining consciousness. The news of the civil war in Spain came as a painful surprise to him. Tagore felt as if humanity were standing near a volcanic crater, and the volcano's fumes and fire made the place seem hellish.

The brutalities of the Spanish Civil War shamed humanity. It shocked and brought uproar in Spain. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum about the Spanish Civil War, about 5,00,000 people lost their lives in the conflict, about 2,00,000 died as a result of systematic killings, torture or other brutalities, more than 5,00,000 people were rounded up and sent to concentration camps, and about 5,00,000 Spaniards fled to France (G.M.D., 1984). Tagore describes the situation as defiant ferocity and the snarl of murderous drunkenness. Other countries around the world remained mute spectators. Even the League of Nations failed to stop the destruction in Spain. Spain was divided into two ideological groups, nationalists and republicans. General Francisco was the leader of the right-wing politicians called nationalists. Both sides, nationalists and republicans, committed brutal atrocities against their opponents. It seemed as if the civil war in Spain would spread across Europe. To avoid this escalation of the war outside of Spain, a non-interference agreement with Spain was signed by more than two dozen countries. Tagore mentions about this agreement as timid forces, bound by the burden of their carefully guarded treasures, humbly alight to silently assure their assent after miscalculated outbursts of impatience.

The nationalist forces under General Franco overthrew the democratically elected government of Spain. There was no room for protests against the warlike Franco forces. Tagore mentions that in the council chambers of ancient nation's plans and protests are crushed between closed, wise lips. Aircrafts were used and coordinated airstrikes were carried out in this civil war. Bombs were dropped on cities, killing many innocent people. Tagore describes how the soulless swarms of vulture machines roar across the sky with their blazing blasphemy and carry their missiles with an unbridled passion for human guts. The inaction of other countries in the world to stop the massacre in Spain made Tagore sad and angry. In the last stanza, he seeks the power to destroy the tormentor, calling him a cannibal. The indiscriminate killings of people, even children and women, were not spared by rival groups, leading Tagore to predict the downfall of human civilization as this age, suffocated and chained, finds its final resting place in its ashes.

In March 1937, in an appeal "To the Conscience of Humanity", Tagore wrote that in Spain, world civilization is being threatened and trampled underfoot. Franco raised the standard of revolt against the democratic government of the Spanish people. International fascism is pouring out men and money to support the rebels. The devastating tide of international fascism must be stemmed. In this hour of supreme trial and suffering of the Spanish people, I appeal to the conscience of humanity. Help the people's Front in Spain,

help the People's Government, shout stop with a million votes. Join millions to help democracy, helping civilization and culture (1994, p. 819).

Sino-Japanese war (1937–1945) and juxtaposition of War and Peace

Beijing Lecture Society (BLS) invited Rabindranath Tagore and he visited China in 1924 and delivered lectures in English on themes such as tradition, friendship, belief, and materialism (Zhao, 2021, p. 1). It was the time when China was facing the threat of Japanese invasion. He was not confident that many in war-torn Europe, China and Japan would heed his call. In one of his most bitter attacks on modern European civilization and its imitators in Asia, in his essay “The Spirit of Japan”, delivered in Japan in 1915, he says that everything vital in Europe is in the devil's exclusive possession. He blames Japan for its militant nationalism. He tells his audience that the erupting inflammation of nationalism's aggressiveness first led Europe into violent colonial adventures around the world, and then so permeated it with an abnormal vanity of its own superiority that it began to pride itself on its moral callousness and its illegitimate to be wealth. First, in a spirit of caution about Japan's new ambitions, Tagore renews his attack on the degrading violence of colonialism that has perpetuated Europe's insatiable hunger for the earth and the inherent spirit of hatred, half-truths and narcissism of nationalism that can only lead to moral death. Immediately afterwards, forebodings of catastrophe ruin his vision, for he knows the sources of pain and understands that they have tainted the human self so deeply that they can neither be erased nor avoided. As he finishes his lecture, he hears the hounding wolves of modern times, smelling human blood and howling at the sky.

Tagore wrote the poem “THE WAR drums are sounded” at the time of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). It is a poem that shows the juxtaposition of war and peace and vehemently condemns the brutalities of the war. The poem contains three stanzas. The first half of each stanza is about the cruel hunger for war. In the second half, the Japanese march to the temple of Buddha to receive his blessings to win the war. Buddha is a symbol of peace. These two things, their march to war and their pursuit of the blessings of the Buddha, who is an archetype of peace, show the juxtaposition of war and peace. In 1915 Rabindranath Tagore wrote an essay “The Spirit of Japan”, praising Japan's progress in a short time. He was very impressed with Japan's transformation and described it as a change of clothes rather than the slow construction of a new structure. He appreciated Japan's progress as a nation as a civilization of human relations. Your duty to your state has, of course, taken on the character of a filial duty, your nation has become a family with your Emperor as its head. Your national unity has not evolved from companionship in arms to defend and attack, or from partnership in raiding adventures where the danger and spoils of a heist are shared among each member (1994, pp. 364–368). Aware of the nation's security, Tagore was aware of the need for arms to do so. He was not against the use of weapons for national security, but critical of their misuse. He made the same point as an advice to Japan that he does not suggest for a moment that Japan should not think about acquiring modern weapons for self-defense, but this must never go beyond their instinct of self-preservation.

Tagore's idea of Universalism

Rabindranath Tagore's global interpretation of the world does not differentiate between the West and the rest based on their current positions on the sliding scale of global power. He saw the East as the bearer of a spiritual message for the West, and the West as the bearer of technical and scientific advances that could benefit the East (Mehta, 2012, p. 8). What is striking in his works is a form of political dissent that predicts the loopholes of nationalism and suggests an anticipation of the nation-state in favour of a dynamic movement for global justice. To understand Tagore's views on the pressing political issues of his time, it

is necessary to rethink the context, politics, and reception of Tagore's critiques of nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism. The characterization of Tagore's political views as internationalist or universally humanistic is not wrong (2012, p. 173).

Violence has become the new normal in the world, so that even where there are no major social conflicts, people resort to violence in everyday life. Violence among youth, whether in the form of school shootings in the United States or more explicitly in the form of youth recruitment into extremist militias in countries in Africa and South Asia, points to the challenge for societies to build cultures of peace rather than cultures of violence (Mehta, 2012, p. 1). A strong foundation for a new culture of peace can be laid by creating inner peace in people's hearts. According to Mehta, Tagore's ideas can be examined to understand how to promote peace at different levels. It could help transform different types of conflicts: peace on a global scale, peace within society, peace between people, peace with nature and peace within oneself (2012, p. 2). If conflicts affect people on different levels, then peace is also a process that has to be built on several levels. In his essay "The Way to Unity", Tagore discusses the problem of unity at these different levels. He begins with a discussion of the problem of unity at the international level and then moves on to the problem of unity within the country, particularly in relation to the issues of religion and caste. Interestingly, he finds the solution in the development of individuality and the development of a universal consciousness in the individual, leading to a harmony between different people based on mutual respect for diversity (2012, p. 7). Inner peace was at the heart of his philosophy and radiated peace not only between people but also on a global scale. The outer planes, in turn, gently nourish the inner planes, creating an environment in which peace can flourish.

This became his central concern as he formed an institution named Visva-Bharati that would not inculcate blind chauvinistic nationalism in students and would be the place to spread a new consciousness around the world. It is this idea that became the core of Visva-Bharati. The idea was reflected in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize, in which he urged those around him to bring about reconciliation and peace by upholding the unity of all races. Tagore therefore envisioned the establishment of a university that could transcend hatred of other nations and send a message of love, peace and harmony across borders. Rabindranath's dream was to develop his institution into a single nest for humanity, as explained by the university's Sanskrit motto: *yatra visvam bhavati eka nidam* (Mehta, 2012, p. 8). He was an international man of the Renaissance and an icon of modernity who traversed many spaces and was involved in literature, art, rural development and reconstruction, socio-economic well-being, the nationalist movement and the dissemination of knowledge (Chatterji, 2021, p. 2).

As a prophet of free inquiry, he demanded sympathy, a connection, a reciprocity that would successfully contribute to a consortium of cultures and constitutions of knowledge. Knowledge inherited at birth is not the gift of any nation. Knowledge makes us strong, but sympathy helps us attain abundance. Tagore's transnationalism was a natural and logical manifestation of his humanistic philosophy, his philosophy of secular humanism, which emerged from his distinct and nuanced understanding of the Upanishad. Shaken by the horrors of the world wars, he recognized that in history, catastrophes have always arisen from the unavailability for the other, the "traffic deficit"; Tagore's philosophy was committed to a moral dynamic that brought elements of reverence and order into our structures of existence (Ghosh, n.d., p. 153).

Tagore shared his idea of pacifism and universalism with Einstein, his contemporary and great scientist, who advocated peace in a world headed for war, remained sane in a mad world, and remained liberal in a world of fanatics (Calaprice, 2011, p. 530). Einstein

expressed his preference of universal humanity over nationalism in a letter to Professor Dr. Hellpach. He said, "If we did not have to live among intolerant, narrow-minded, and violent people, I should be the first to throw over all nationalism in favour of universal humanity"(Einstein, 2016, p. n.p.). According to Greco, Einstein was not a naïve pacifist but a militant pacifist, personally committed and endowed with a great and worldly ability to interpret his time and fight to build a desirable future (2016, p. 32).

Rabindranath Tagore was an outstanding and influential literary figure. In 1924, he undertook a seven-week lecture tour through Shanghai, Hangzhou, Nanjing and Beijing. Some students protested against him, calling his pacifism and spiritualism useless. The student protests worried him so much that he decided not to go to Canton and cancelled the last three of seven lectures at Peking University (Thampi, 2017, p. 229). Zheng Zhenduo, the editor of *Xiaoshuo Yuebao* (The Fiction Monthly), who had translated Tagore since 1920, published two special issues of the magazine dedicated to Tagore in 1923. In September of the same year, he wrote a highly emotional editorial about Tagore:

"The West, if not the whole world, is engulfed today by blood-red clouds and is under the grip of a tornado of fierce envy. Each nation, each country, each political group looks at the other in anger, each sings the songs of revenge and dances wildly with the music of steel and guns. Each in greed like that of a poisonous dragon wants to swallow the whole world. How many lives have been lost, how many homes destroyed, how many fountains of jades and pearls dried up, how many green fields turned red in blood and how many woodlands consumed by fire! Only one man—Tagore—stands like a colossus, his one foot rests on the crest of the Himalayas and other on the Alps. In a voice as powerful as thunder he spreads the message of peace and love." (Thampi, 2017, p. 97)

Tagore raised his voice in warning of a machine-made peace through wars that he believed would continue to feed injustice. Traveling through Bengal, and then through war-torn and hungry Europe and Asia, he inevitably found himself confronted with a world alien, menaced, viciously cruel and so stubbornly tribal that it could only leave a legacy of ruin (Bhalla, 2013, p. 94). In his essay *A Cry for Peace*, he confessed his despair at the preparations for war. He believed that the goals of a true life must always be freedom and a sense of responsibility towards all things, in reality he was tormented by nightmares of a dead Europe and Asia where everything seemed to smoulder with decay, even when cloaked most in luminous forms. According to Tagore, the cause of the present evil is the cowardice of the weak, the arrogance of the strong, the lust for fateful wealth, the resentment of the disadvantaged, the pride of the race, and the insult to man (2013, p. 98).

A rooted cosmopolitan, Tagore emphasized the role of living in harmony with the universe and surrounding nature, rather than controlling the external environment and attempting to erect walls. In addition, hospitality and dialogue between cultures are the basis of Tagore's cosmopolitan thinking and ideals. Tagore's thirst for help was not limited to his countrymen. His longing extended to his fellow citizens of the world as he urged them to take an active part in the fight against blind nationalism and religious fanaticism. The India that Tagore envisioned was more than just freedom from British rule. He envisioned a society organized around an ideology radically different from British imperialism. His vehement criticism of nationalism, orientalism and imperialism makes his writings valuable to this day. Tagore's vision for India was not just a future without British rule; it proposed an India organized as a developed, open society based on humanity rather than patriotism. Tagore's thinking seems to be able to make a valuable contribution to the imagination of cosmopolitanism (Mukherjee, 2020, p. 49). Indeed, according to Mukherjee, Tagore's

cosmopolitan ideals were rooted in his love for his country's impoverished people and the rich traditions of the past. While most freedom fighters sought freedom from British colonial rule, Tagore sought freedom through East-West collaboration to educate and empower the most marginalized, left behind in the rural community as much of rural India was impoverished and decayed. Tagore vividly saw the challenges of nationalism and narrow-mindedness in what was going on in the world of his day. Although he loved his country and its people, he was opposed to the Western concept of nation-state and nationalism, which he felt was increasingly gaining ground in India in response to the struggle against British nationalism and imperialism (Mukherjee, 2020, p. 55).

Tagore's poem "The Sunset of the Century" (2015, pp. 117–118) vividly describes the havoc that nationalism's narrow view is wreaking on the world. The last sun of the century sets between the blood red clouds of the west and the hurricane of hatred of vengeance. The nation's hungry self will burst in a fury of anger from its own shameless feeding. For it has made the world its food, and it licks, gnashes, and gulps, it swells and swells, till in the midst of its unholy feast descends suddenly the ray of heaven, piercing its heart of rudeness. The crimson light on the horizon is not the light of your dawn of peace, my motherland. It is the gleam of the pyre burning to ashes vast flesh, the nation's self-love dead beneath its own excess. Your morning awaits behind the patient darkness of the East, meek and still. Stand guard, India. Bring your offerings of worship for this holy sunrise. Come, you are your treasure of contentment, the sword of valour, and meekness crowns your brow. Let your crown be humility, your liberty the liberty of the soul. Establish God's throne daily upon the vast bareness of your poverty and know that greatness is not great, and pride is not eternal. According to Tagore, a solution to this problem of rising nationalism lay in international education. In a letter to his son Rathindranath in 1916, Tagore expressed the desire to set up a centre for international education that would counteract aggressive nationalism and spread cosmopolitan ideals (Dutta & Robinson, 1997, p. 179). He intended to make Shantiniketan the connecting thread between India and the world. He wanted to establish a world centre for the study of mankind there. Thinking the days of petty nationalism were numbered, he took the first step towards world union in the fields of Bolpur. He wanted to create that place somewhere beyond national and geographic borders and raise there the first flag of victorious universal humanism. He wanted the task of his remaining years to rid the world of the suffocating coils of national pride.

Conclusion

Tagore firmly believed that world peace could never be achieved until the great and powerful nations, aided by their superiority and tremendous technological advances, gave up their desire for territorial expansion and control over the smaller nations. He insisted that peace was not just a no-war scenario. War is the consequence of the necessary logic of aggressive Western materialism, the science separate from spirituality, through which nations will conquer most of the world. He focused on freedom of the mind and "emphasised peaceful co-existence of people for community development, irrespective of racial and other divides" (Mukherjee & Agrawal, 2021, p. 4). He viewed the world as home in his lecture *Visva Sahitya* when contemporary world leaders were engaged in a game of power and self-interest with a deeper ethico-ontological game of politics (Radhakrishnan, 2020, p. 2). Humans differentiated the world based on separate identities as self and other, while Tagore viewed each identity unit as a microcosm of the world, reflecting the ethos of love and attachment (2020, p. 5). He believed that the world should not be viewed as an autonomous category, but as an endlessly devoid of jurisdiction, open and boundless field, an arena for free, unhindered, just, multilateral, inclusive, heterogeneous and non-hierarchical with equal coexistence and a manifesto for a future based on radical redress for the injustices of the past.

His public lectures speak of the human soul as a tortured victim walking a bloodstained path of violence and crime. His manuscripts are filled with acrid smoke that eats through words and strange, bestial shapes that leave trails of blood and slime (Bhalla, 2013, p. 99). Despite the constant tones of despair heard in his works, Tagore is a visionary who, like a righteous man of wisdom and love, struggles to shake off the nightmares of his time and place and become the advocate for all created things.

Rabindranath Tagore, Asia's first Nobel Laureate, was a "polymath" and he thought across cultural and geographical boundaries (Chakravarty, 2021, p. 1). He urged us to remember our humanity and forget the rest, and for him the best way to forget our differences is to restore trust in ourselves, to reach for the goodness and love within us, in our divinity and to believe in one identity as human beings, and keep the mind free from all kinds and dogmas of a social, political, or religious nature (Quayum, 2017, p. 11). We can avoid war and violence and bring peace back to the world by following Tagore's instructions, since peace cannot be achieved through hatred or violence. Rabindranath Tagore was skeptical of organized peace in any form, arguing that peace could only be achieved if science would embrace humanity and shed its ugly and disastrous face. Tagore's philosophy of loving humanity and denouncing wars for material gains is still relevant. The civil wars in Syria and Afghanistan share similarities with the Spanish civil war. The ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia revives the images of destruction and loss of innocent human lives depicted by Tagore in his poems. A closer look at the current state of these lands and its comparison to the Spanish Civil War reveals similarities of destruction of innocent lives and peace to gain power. Through his poems, he reflected love for people regardless of their nationality and beliefs and his dislike of war. He believed in the advancement of human civilization, not its destruction. Atrocities against people in all parts of the world moved him. He expressed these feelings through his poems. The existence of people in a free and peaceful environment without any discrimination was his idea of a civilized world. He did not condone confrontation or war based on any ideology. He also condemned interference, aggression or conflict based on nationalism. Above all, he believed in pacifism.

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