
Advancing the Promise of Humanity

Relevance of the Thoughts and Spirit of Tagore in the 21st Century

*Keynote Speech -
Tagore Society of Houston's Fund
Raising event to celebrate the 150th
Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath
Tagore*



Partha S. Ghosh

Partha Ghosh is a Management Consultant and Policy Advisor with an impressive record of solving strategic, operational and complex organizational issues in technology-based and energy industries. As a true global citizen and as a strategist, he is trusted and respected worldwide for inspiring leaders across various cultures both at macro and micro economic levels, gained through extensive consulting engagements in the Americas, Africa, Asia, Australia, and Europe.

He is currently in an advisory role with multiple organizations worldwide, and runs his own boutique advisory firm Partha S Ghosh & Associates focused on policy and strategic issues. Both as a renowned philosopher and engineer, as a philanthropist and a thought leader in strategic and innovation management, he leads the Leadership Program at MIT Portugal Program, he teaches Globalization & Economics at the Tufts Gordon Institute, Innovation and Strategic Management at the Fletcher School and Leadership at MIT. He is the Chairman of The Boston Pledge a non-profit organization dedicated to inspire entrepreneurship at the base of the pyramid. Previously, Ghosh was a partner at McKinsey & Company.

Partha Ghosh is a captivating and motivational speaker. Over the last two decades he has delivered more than hundred key note addresses in various Leadership forums worldwide on range of subjects such as Globalization, Innovation and Creativity Management, Strategic Management, Leadership, Ethics, Entrepreneurship at the base of the Pyramid, and National Strategies in Border less Open innovation environments. Many leaders who have worked with him or participated in his leadership workshops view him as a modern day "Renaissance Man".

It is indeed a special privilege and a great honor to have this distinctive opportunity to reflect on a gigantic personality like Rabindranath Tagore; that too at a kick-off event, which I hope will turn out to be an event to inspire, trigger, and support a series of purposeful experiences & programs; - together the events must not only honor and celebrate the 150th anniversary of Tagore, but help to bring forward his thoughts and spirit at a time when the world is devoid of the kind of leadership our planet needs now. We need those **leadership qualities** that Tagore offered during the late later years of 19th century, and better part of the first half of the 20th century.

When I talk of leadership in the context of Tagore, I include all the possible dimensions of leadership – intellectual, spiritual, political, social that can transcend all types of borders – *geographical, ideological, theological, cultural, social and professional*.

Given where our civilization is today, it is indeed an **opportune time** to reflect on His personality with an open mind and with highest level of reverence to his thought processes expressed through his poems and his songs, his dialogues and his letters, his speeches and his sketches, during his moments of sorrow and happiness, hope and despair.

In that spirit I, and if I may, on the behalf of the people of the world from all nations, all professional disciplines, and all theological and political inclinations, am thankful to Tagore Society in Houston to organize this fund raising event to celebrate Tagore's 150th birth anniversary.

It is my hope, - given the depth and breadth of his thought processes, let the events this year, be not just limited to his songs and poems, not just limited to his dance dramas and plays, - for the entertainment of the people who have direct or indirect connection to India or Bengal, but I believe the 150th anniversary year should be dedicated to the **awakening of humanity** to the powerful thoughts and the enlightening spirit of the “universal man” that Tagore represented and stood for, so that present civilization from here on, - could indeed celebrate the beauty that Tagore saw in humanity, and in the process enable current and future leaders draw strength and courage from his wisdom to make the future of our planet more *equitable, sustainable and peaceful*.

A few of us who are lucky to read and speak the language Tagore used, a few of us who are lucky to be exposed to the symphony of his thoughts on spirituality and liberty, meta physics and reasoning, justice and freedom, nature and compassion, indeed have a *moral and ethical responsibility* towards current and future global civilization to ensure that world leaders – from government and corporate, academia and places of worship, could benefit from his thoughts, - so that we could together awaken and alert humanity towards more aesthetically sound, politically stable and economically vibrant world order, - fair and just, moral and innovative, equitable and sustainable.

I am not an expert on Tagore, but as person born in the same city, on the same day of the month, I had the privilege to celebrate his birthday along with mine from my very first birthday. My understanding and appreciation of Tagore developed not only because he was the first noble prize winner from Asia, not only because I as a Bengali enjoy listening to Rabindra sangeet and reciting his poems, but because of the diversity of thought processes he was involved in, and the creative reasoning he offered in various debates and discussions, and the spirit of enquiry he displayed in his dialogues on a full range of complex scientific, philosophical and political issues, which I as a management consultant and more recently as a member of the academic community has always aspired to and will continue hoping to master.

*Who Tagore was perhaps is best captured in his **Telegram to President Franklin D Roosevelt on fall of Paris during World War II** in June 1940, one year before he left this world:*

“ Today we stand in awe before the fearfully destructive force that has so suddenly swept the world. Every moment I deplore the smallness of our means and the feebleness of our voice in India so utterly inadequate to stem in the least, the tide of evil that had menaced the permanence of civilization.

All our individual problems of politics today have merged into one supreme world politics which I believe is seeking the help of the United States of America as the last refuge of the spiritual man, and these few lines of mine merely convey my hope, even if unnecessary, that she will not fail on her mission to stand against this universal disaster that appears so imminent.”

In this note one could clearly sense the breadth and depth of his mind: - his concern for the world and the survival of the European civilization in view of “*Hitlerian aggression*”, his appreciation for the US and the global role and responsibility he expected the US to assume are clearly apparent; and at the same breadth one could sense his deep sorrow and frustration about the inadequacy, inability and fragility of his and his motherland’s position under foreign domination, that too a country, whose heritage he had always been proud of.

Indeed as one follows through his **dialogues and the exchange of the letters and telegrams** with world leaders, one could sense how he had consistently expressed himself with courage and firmness, with simplicity and humility, in range of different situations he indulged himself in different regions of the world, - *from east to west, from north to south*, in multiple disciplines - *from philosophy to politics, from theology to technology, from science to sociology, and of course as he expressed in his poetries & proses, his paintings and performances.*

Given this backdrop, I will like to discuss with you 5 critical questions:

1. *What did Tagore really represent?*
2. *What were the dimensions of his personality?*
3. *How relevant are his thoughts today?*
4. *Why I believe we should commit best of our resources to enable a sequence of events on him, so that we could begin a global movement around his thoughts?*
5. *What are the kind outcomes should Tagore society must consider shaping?*

1. Most pure and perfect expression of the Intellectual, Spiritual and Political Ferment of his time

No discussion on Tagore will ever be complete, if we do not fully appreciate the age, and the local(Bengal/India) and the global environment that he represented. In fact he was a perfect and comprehensive expression of the literary and philosophical ferment the world was in middle of, - as exhibited in his own environment in Bengal and India, and the Western and Eastern thought processes in Philosophy, Self determination and Nationalism, and expressed in the struggles between the colonizers and the colonized, in the politics of the world wars, and the multiple interpretations of economic choices and natural sciences.

(i) Tagore – as a full expression and upholder of Bengal Renaissance and India’s freedom movement

In his own country and in his own state Bengal, he grew up under the shadows of great personalities like Rama Krishna Paramansha a Spiritual leader of the highest order, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar a true renaissance person, Michael Madhusudhan Dutt a global Literary figure, his own father Debendranath Tagore a social reformer and a spiritual leader and several others with equally compelling stature; their

thoughts and activities in turn were shaped under the shadows of social reformers and educationists, like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, his own Grandfather Dwaraknath Tagore who because of their influence on multiplicity of social and political issues towered as global figures.

Rabindranth had tremendous respect for their contributions they made in enriching literary activities and enabling social reforms in a society which remained trapped by the long years of intellectual and social stagnancy, further constrained by colonization and foreign rule; for example talking about Michael Madhusudan's literary contributions he shared:

"The Epic Meghnad-Badh is really a rare treasure in Bengali literature. Through his writings, the richness of Bengali literature has been proclaimed to the wide world."

Further more, his own contemporaries such as *Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Bankim Chatterjee, Mahatma Gandhi* also were *spiritual, political and literary giants, - who must have directly and indirectly shaped his views of the world, in turn he inspired and influenced their views as well.* During this period, Bengal and India witnessed an intellectual and social awakening that is in some ways similar to the Renaissance in Europe during the 16th century, although Europeans of that age were not confronted with the challenge and influence of alien colonialism. This movement questioned existing orthodoxies, particularly with respect to women, marriage, the dowry system, the caste system and a full range of prejudices and superstitions, often justified under the practice of religion.

In the process Tagore, indeed emerged as a modern spokesperson of the intellectual and spiritual depth of Indian Philosophy, - as represented by the Vedas and Upanishads, Hindu Epics Ramayana and Mahabharata; more importantly he represented the intellectual, political, social and political ferment that he inherited, he enriched and was indeed part of.

(ii) Tagore as global thought leader as expressed in the Debates with Western & Eastern intellectual thought processes

As much the multidimensional ferment in Bengal and India influenced his perspectives on humanity, he was equally open to the thought processes in the West – the Americas and Europe, and in the East - in Japan and China. His debates and dialogues with individuals like Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, H. G Wells, Romain Rolland, Yeats on one-hand helped him to understand the depth of western reasoning, and on the other hand he consistently became conscious of the richness of Indian philosophy relative to Western reasoning particularly in metaphysics, natural sciences and mathematics. As well his analyses of the US constitution, his appreciation of the fundamentals of French revolution, and the socio economic advancement made possible by the Industrial revolution in Europe in general, shaped his views on the development of India and in general the challenges of securing economic freedom of colonized and/or economically challenged nations of the world.

(iii) Views shaped by the Frictions between the colonizer and the colonized:

India and as a result Tagore, being the direct victim of British Imperialism, many of his thoughts on Nature of Human and Nature, in general were shaped by his observations on the struggles of those societies who were under foreign domination. He particularly emphasized how the constraints put on the natural free flowing spirit and thoughts of common people in the colonized societies act as the most fundamental impediments to socio-economic progress. He particularly put freedom above nationalism, put quality and content of governance over the nationalities of the governor(s) and those governed.

Indeed all these three powerful streams of inquiry and reasoning, with each having their unique twists and turns, triumphs and turbulences came together in different forms of expressions in his writings and speeches, paintings and sketches in multiple ways. So powerful were his ways of expression, - that he could touch the hearts and minds of the common person, while challenging the perspectives and decisions of world leaders across nations. Indeed he was a perfect embodiment of the best thoughts the world had to offer during his time, - together expressing the beauty of nature, - both the artistic and scientific aspects. In turn Tagore inspired individuals and societies to unshackle the divine potential of humanity from the tortures of constrained mindset of the myopic rulers, and the short sighted power and wealth seekers in the higher echelons of various societies.

2. Multi- Dimensional Expression of “Diversity of Being”: A True Renaissance man

Indeed as a perfect and full expression of his time in different situations he celebrated his own poetry (which perhaps the most popular of all the poems he wrote) to the fullest:

*“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
by narrow domestic walls; ...
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Into that heaven of freedom,
my Father, let my country awake.”*

It is with the spirit he engaged himself with various world leaders on range of issues; in order to appreciate the multiplicity of his personality, the renaissance spirit that he exhibited I will share with you a little sampling of the range of different discussions he had with world leaders across nations on different complex issues and subjects

Tagore on the Global Stage

Tagore in addition to his early college education in England, spent significant amount of time between 1912 to 1930 travelling around the world between the Asia, Middle East, Europe (East & West), and the Americas(North and South) talking about his book Gitanjali (which earned him Nobel Prize in 1913), his views and philosophy on the Universal man, coexistence of religions and faiths, Global Politics and the negative aspects of Imperialism in various leadership forums.

Tagore and the West

Tagore visited the US five times during the period 1912 to 1930; in every occasion he had very meaningful and intense interactions with the intellectual, political and business leaders of the US both to appreciate the US for its scientific and technological progress based on the principles of its constitution, and also to remind the US leaders of their responsibility toward the people who are in ghettos and/or oppressed due to the continuation of imperialism, and how in absence of spiritualism, materialism alone could endanger the advancement and enlightenment of society.

His remarks at a dinner in New York (organized in his honor, in the presence of Franklin Roosevelt, the governor of New York, Sinclair Lewis, the latest Nobel laureate in literature and several hundred important business, academic and political leaders) during his final visit in 1930, best captures the spirit with which he engaged with the US .

“The age belongs to the West and humanity must be grateful to you for your science. But you have exploited those who are helpless and humiliated those who are unfortunate with this gift. A great portion of the world suffers from your civilization.”

At Carnegie Hall a week later, he went even further. As always he expressed admiration for the ideals of liberty and self-expression of the West at the close of the nineteenth century, but he deplored its failure to live up to them in the East, in particular the failure of Americans to recognize the appeal of India to be free. In his speech he did add:

“Our appeal does not reach you, because you respond only to the appeal of power Japan appealed to you and you answered because she was able to prove she would make herself as obnoxious as you can.”

In the same spirit, in his visits to Europe and South America he continued to appeal to leaders and common people alike the importance of Liberty, Freedom and Justice, Dignity and Creativity, and how through spread of education for the common person these objectives must be met in every society.

Tagore and the East

Tagore and Japan

Tagore like many of Indian leaders such as Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghosh, Rashbehari Bose, Subhas Chandra Bose, had highest level of respect for how Japan as the only nation from the East had made scientific and industrial advancement similar to that of the West, while retaining its own identity rooted in its ancient heritage.

However Tagore saw Japanese militarism as exhibited in East Asia illustrating the way nationalism can mislead even a nation of great achievement and promise. In 1938 Yone Noguchi, the distinguished poet and friend of Tagore (as well as of Yeats and Pound), wrote to Tagore, pleading with him to change his mind about Japan. Rabindranath's reply, written on September 12th, 1938, was altogether uncompromising:

“ It seems to me that it is futile for either of us to try to convince the other, since your faith in the infallible right of Japan to bully other Asiatic nations into line with your Government's policy is not shared by me.... Believe me, it is sorrow and shame, not anger that prompt me to write to you. I suffer intensely not only because the reports of Chinese suffering batter against my heart, but because I can no longer point out with pride the example of a great Japan”

Tagore and China

Tagore visited China three times in the 1920s and he is the most widely translated foreign author in Chinese after Shakespeare. His first visit to China in 1924 attracted mixed reactions. New-wave poets such as Xu Zhimo (1897-1931), with whom Tagore forged a lasting bond, were moved by the music and clarity of his poetry, while others just viewed him as an oriental mystic and their emotions on Tagore were shaped by how the Western thinkers accepted or criticized him in different stages of their impressions in different forums. Particularly the neo-rationalists, who favored science over metaphysics, viewed Tagore as a spiritual guru in his special Bengali attire, trying to preach traditional values.

Tagore's vision of India –China relationship and their positioning on the global stage were perhaps driven by the similar philosophies on which these two ancient civilizations were built on the model for sustenance of the Asian way of harmony and coexistence, and the common suffering the two civilizations had to endure because of the imperialistic inclinations of the West and Japan.

Through his lectures in various Universities in China he truly hoped to revive the millennium-long cultural contacts between India and China, and spread the philosophical teachings of both the civilizations. In fact in Viswa Bharati, the University that he gave birth to, he did attach lot of importance to the studies on the advancement of Chinese and Indian thought and cultural processes.

Tagore and Art

Tagore exhibited his artistic talent relatively late in his life. He held the first public and international exhibition of his paintings in Paris in May 1930, at the Gallerie Pigalle. After the conclusion of Paris exhibition, exhibitions were held in England, Denmark, Sweden, Rome, Germany and Russia in Europe. Later exhibitions were also held in USA and Canada.

India and his home town Calcutta had the honor of hosting it only in 1931, a year after the Paris exhibition. In his sketches and paintings one could sense his deep compassion and deep emotions on nature. His global citizenry and as well his love and sensitivities for Bengal & India.

Tagore and Science

Tagore's interest in natural science was as intense as was his interest in liberal arts. In a dialogue with Einstein, Tagore utilized the language of music, as a metaphor, to establish a dynamic bridge between science & spirituality. Let me share with you a short dialogue between the two personalities to highlight how their minds worked:

“TAGORE: I was discussing with Dr Mendel [mutual friend] today the new mathematical discoveries which tell us that in the realm of infinitesimal atoms chance has its play; the drama of existence is not absolutely predestined in character.

EINSTEIN: The facts that make science tend toward this view do not say good-bye to causality.

TAGORE: Maybe not, yet it appears that the idea of causality is not in the elements, but that some other force builds up with them an organized universe.

EINSTEIN: One tries to understand in the higher plane how the order is. The order is there, where the big elements combine and guide existence, but in the minute elements this order is not perceptible.

TAGORE: Thus duality is in the depths of existence, the contradiction of free impulse and the directive will which works upon it and evolves an orderly scheme of things.”

In the same spirit in another discussion Tagore and Einstein on Music, Science and Humanity, Tagore emphasized how extreme *phenomena/situations or perspectives could co-exist, implying the duality of being:*

“TAGORE: Otherwise, the drama of existence would be too desultory. It is the constant harmony of chance and determination, which makes it eternally new and living.

EINSTEIN: I believe that whatever we do or live for has its causality; it is good, however, that we cannot see through to it.

TAGORE: There is in human affairs an element of elasticity also, some freedom within a small range which is for the expression of our personality. It is like the musical system in India, which is not so rigidly fixed as western music. Our composers give a certain definite outline, a system of melody and rhythmic arrangement, and within a certain limit the player can improvise upon it. He must be one with the law of that particular melody, and then he can give spontaneous expression to his musical feeling within the prescribed regulation. We praise the composer for his genius in creating a foundation along with a superstructure of melodies, but we expect from the player his own skill in the creation of variations of melodic flourish and ornamentation. In creation we follow the central law of existence, but if we do not cut ourselves adrift from it, we can have sufficient freedom within the limits of our personality for the fullest self-expression.”.

This scientific mind of the Poet had been also appreciated by his friend, Jagadish Chandra, as Tagore himself said: "I remember often having been assured by my friend that I only lacked the opportunity of training to be a scientist but not the temperament."

Tagore on the importance of cultivating of the global mind without losing local linguistic and cultural identity

During a discussion between Tagore and H. G Wells on Universal Man and the Power Self expression, one could sense how intensely Tagore believed that through the preservation of local languages, while developing a holistic appreciation of the global challenges one could seek true enlightenment:

TAGORE: The tendency in modern civilization is to make the world uniform. Calcutta, Bombay, Hong Kong, and other cities are more or less alike, wearing big masks, which represent no country in particular.

WELLS: Yet don't you think that this very fact is an indication that we are reaching out for a new world-wide human order which refuses to be localized?

TAGORE: Our individual physiognomy need not be the same. Let the mind be universal. The individual should not be sacrificed.

WELLS: We are gradually thinking now of one human civilization on the foundation of which individualities will have great chance of fulfillment. The individual, as we take him, has suffered from the fact that civilization has been split up into separate units, instead of being merged into a universal whole, which seems to be the natural destiny of mankind.

TAGORE: I believe the unity of human civilization can be better maintained by linking up in fellowship and cooperation of the different civilizations of the world. Do you think there is a tendency to have one common language for humanity?

WELLS: One common language will probably be forced upon mankind whether we like it or not. Previously, a community of fine minds created a new dialect. Now it is necessity that will compel us to adopt a universal language.

On the importance of individuality and on freedom of choice:

In a different discussion with H.G.Wells, talking about Japan, he emphasized how interactions between various cultures could work very positively when the playing field is level for both the cultures:

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TAGORE: Our difficulty is that our contact with the great civilizations of the West has not been a natural one. Japan has absorbed more of the western culture because she has been free to accept or reject according to her needs.

WELLS: It is a very bad story indeed, because there have been such great opportunities for knowing each other.

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As a problem solver and as a management consultant I particularly appreciate the unique capability Tagore possessed to connect different extreme thoughts, often contradictory or un-connectable on the surface, to evolve unique meanings and in the process uncover the beauty of duality; the most impressive part of his personality was his ability to see the *coexistence* of extremes. In order to illustrate this point I will just quote a few lines in Bengali from his two different poems:

“Shimar majhe ashim tumi”

Talking about the God, he describes of him as “the infinite within the limits”.

“Janar majhe ajanare korechi sandhan”. In a separate poetry he talks about the search of the unknown within the known.

In my interactions with Country heads and CEOs of large organizations, I have observed that the ability to observe dots which are not obvious to the ordinary eyes, and then connect the arguments which on the surface appear conflicting, to find new patterns and new organizational models, will be increasingly essential and challenging to resolve complex issues of our times. It is only my hope that we could increasingly promote “Tagore like” thought leadership qualities in Boardrooms of companies, and Parliaments and Senates of national and international governments.

3. Taking his thoughts forward for a better world: Towards Universal and Enlightened Civilization

In his last message delivered on his 80th birthday, a few months before his death, he wrote his immortal essay, still relevant to this day, “Crisis in Civilization,” in which he condemned the West saying:

“ The failure of humanity in the West to preserve the worth of their civilization and the dignity of man which they had taken centuries to build up weighs like a nightmare on my mind. It seems clear to me that this failure is due to men’s repudiation of moral values in the guidance of their national affairs and to their belief that everything is determined by a mere physical chain of events which could be manipulated by man’s cunning or might. The consequences of this belief are proving terrible to man.” (The Manchester Guardian)

When we analyze where we are today, in an era of knowledge explosion, in spite of technological marvels of the last 500 years, it is indeed surprising that we seem to be increasingly drawn into the viscous dynamics of meltdowns – *meltdown of snowcaps on mountains, meltdown of ethics in terms of choices we make, and meltdown of economic opportunities*. We have been slow in our response; we have not paid heed to the words of wisdom from our ancient scriptures to Malthus and many other modern-day thought leaders and activists, who have repeatedly alerted us on the fragility of our planet, and the importance of morality of our being.

Increasing imbalances of energy, ecology and equity are more apparent today than ever before; seriousness of such an imbalance cannot be overemphasized¹. Nothing short of a Renaissance in our imaginative capacity along multiple dimensions, - aesthetics, economic, infrastructure, social, scientific technological, could save us from the “*dynamics of the viscous meltdown*”.

Developed economies along with the developing regions worldwide, must view regions/communities behind in the development curve, with a new perspective -as platforms of innovation. These economies could perhaps more easily disconnect from the inertia of the consumption habits of the developed societies, and evolve new business models, which are conservation-centric, sustainable, and enable equitable opportunities. Such a process is only possible if we could uncover the old habits, which were more eco-friendly, and enable convergence of new technologies, which can capture renewable sources better, and of course by facilitating the fusion of the old with the new.

¹ Vice President’s Al Gore’s **An Inconvenient Truth**, and **Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit** make compelling arguments of how seriously and rapidly the ecological balance of the earth has deteriorated, and in turn how such decadence might hurt the survival of humanity.

As we look forward there is no doubt that the world is experiencing unprecedented change in applications of knowledge, technology and know-how in every society. The demands and opportunities of our increasingly interdependent global economy have implications for private and public decision-making by enterprises and communities, whether local, national, regional or global.

Cultures are changing – for worse or better we do not know?

What we know for sure we now live in an age of - (i) “heightened uncertainty”, (ii) enhanced distrust in Governments, and (iii) enhanced doubts and suspicion in the global economic and financial system, to name a few.

On the other hand with increasing intensity of knowledge and technology in our ways of living, the speed of change is accelerating often not allowing us enough time to think through whether the direction of humankind is moving towards is good for society or not. It is not necessarily the speed of change of one variable, nor the speed of change of multiple variables. There is a compounding effect of the speed of change of multiple variables in interactions (*thanks to virtual enterprises and collaborative technology*) with each other causing leadership landscape to become significantly more complex and demanding.

In view of the various viscous dynamics at work, achieving improved sustainability, harmony and equitable wealth-creation thoughts embedded in Tagore’s writings – poetries and proses could provide us the wisdom with which leaders have to make choices and design and deliver processes that will create a more enlightened, non violent, economically and technologically vibrant social and international orders, which are adaptive with each other.

4. Historic Opportunity for those who believe in Tagore’s greatness

I do believe in view of – (i) the analyses I have shared with you on Tagore however incomplete they may be, and (ii) my thoughts on where the global civilization is tonight, it is indeed an historic opportunity for those who are knowledgeable on Tagore and are believers of his thoughts, to celebrate him by beginning a movement which enable current and future leaders truly connect with his philosophies. It should not be with the purpose to singularly promote his poems and songs, but to enable today’s leaders understand the importance of creativity to see possibilities in midst of adversity, to appreciate unity in the midst of diversity, to make duality of “being” possible as opposed to rejecting one view over the other, most importantly to rekindle and reclaim the search process for truth at the center of “our being”.

Tagore society’s leadership to organize tonight’s session is indeed a *bold step* in the right direction. We have to now find ways to influence philosophical principles with which organizations such as United Nations, World bank, and national governments are run, while ensuring that business leaders develop those leadership qualities which are transcendental in nature to be able to observe opportunities that are sustainable, harmonious and equitable in terms of wealth-creation.

5. Towards Eternity of his thoughts

It is my firm conviction that the most befitting honor we could extend to Rabindranath Tagore is to resurrect his total personality for the global community today, and bring his thoughts to the attention of the world leaders as they navigate through difficult issues on equity, ecology, and energy while developing “plus sum” relationships between nations, between communities, across cultures, across colors and faiths.

In India particularly, country being consumed by lower level instincts of consumerism and corruption we need to resurrect the vision and values Tagore, Vivekananda, and Aurobindo represented to uncover the hidden treasures of Vedic Philosophy, I do believe today is the only route India could travel, a journey forward which is respectable, in the process once again secure the stature perhaps it enjoyed during the Vedic Era.

In that spirit, may I propose that we commit to-night to:

1. *Organize a series of discussions and debates with global community to resurrect the thoughts of Tagore in leadership forums around the world*
2. *Raise funds to revive Vishwa Bharati in Shantiniketan*
3. *Help Vishwa Bharati build a network of school's in India to promote his thoughts on education, and help the University build relationships with Universities worldwide.*

Let me end by sharing with you what Einstein had to say to describe Tagore:

"He has been for us the living symbol of the spirit, of light and of harmony – the great free bird which soars in the mist of tempests – the song of eternity which Ariel strikes on his golden harp, rising above the sea of unloosened passions. But his art never remained in different to human misery and struggle. He is the great Sentinel. For all that we are and we have created have had their roots and their branches in that Great Ganges of Poetry and Love."

In the spirit of his first short poem: " Jol porai, Pata norai" (English translation: "as a drop of water falls, the leaf shivers") which Rabindranth wrote at the age of six, he captured the essential spirit with which he viewed nature all through his life. The cause-effect relationship between different events as the drop of water falls on a leaf, it shiver or its physical move, is not only beautiful, but the phenomenon exhibits the sprit of harmony that he celebrated all through his life. Indeed when we could express complex thoughts in simple fashion, and when simple mind could connect with complex events with ease, perhaps we find the real meaning of life.

Could we pledge tonight to spread Tagore's thoughts worldwide, for ushering an enlightened era for our civilization ahead?

Thank you very much indeed, Houston.