

THE CODE OF ECOMYSTICISM IN RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S WORKS: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

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Abstract. Religion was our first attempt at literature, cosmology, ecology, making sense of where we are in the universe. All religions are inherently predisposed to mystical experience – a harmonious and balanced existence and substantiation of Nature and man – man, who is conscious of his existence both in the material and the spiritual realm, as man is the highest spirit and the lowest matter linked by mind. Ecomysticism embraces the idea that all life is sacred and hence revered. This paper discusses the ecological philosophy which enunciates God's presence in every being that surround us and tries to evaluate the holistic spiritual ecology launched by Tagore. The unity of being in his works teaches that everything in the universe arises from the One, emanates from Him; deduces that the Supreme, humans and the environment form one ecosystem and recognizes the mutually augmenting relationships with the natural world – an understanding of the unity and interdependence of the bio-network. It elicits that the manifest is on voyage to the Unmanifest together with our pilgrim souls.

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1. Prologue to ecomysticism

'Ecology' is defined as "the science of interrelationships between living organisms and their environment (both physical and biotic), emphasizing inter-specific and intra-specific relations" (Allee 1949:1). 'Mysticism' connects us to God and to our inner space and peace. Between utterance and experience falls the shadow of mysticism. Ecomysticism – implying spiritual ecology – may be considered as an arena at the interfaces of religions (or beliefs/ faiths) and spiritualities on the one side, and environment and ecology on the other. Spiritual ecology does not advocate any single religion; instead those who are spiritual are encouraged to examine their own beliefs and values to see how they relate to

nature. They have had experiences in nature that may be recognized as mystical. We may quote the mystic perceptions of some writers apropos of Blake and Wordsworth.

*To see a world in a grain of sand
And heaven in a wild flower
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour* (Auguries of Innocence 1967:118)

To William Blake (who is a visionary and a mystic) every spot is a holy ground. He sees the Ultimate Reality behind the visible reality. Both the naturalism and mysticism of the Romantic Revival found expression in him (Compton-Rickett 1950:44). He enjoys the most spontaneous communion with nature. His *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794) give an entirely new turn to the pastoral convention by casting a mystical amusement over the landscape. He employs all the pastoral properties as symbols of divine innocence. Blake says: "Everything that lives is holy; life delights in life" (Blake 2000:239).

Talking of the sacra-mentality of all reality, the Victorian poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, in the poem 'Aurora Leigh' (Book VII) writes:

*Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God* (Browning 1882:134).

St. Francis of Assisi embraced the sanctity of nature; to him the entire environment deserved the same loving kindness that Christ advocated for the brotherhood of humanity. William Wordsworth too had a direct awareness of the divine in the immanence of nature. In *The Tables Turned* he illustrates the doctrine that Nature is the best teacher. The poet observes:

*One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.* (lines 21–24)

Or better still in a variant perspicuity *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* by Wordsworth (lines 37–50).

*To them I may have owed another gift,
.....
We see into the life of things.*

The poem is a spiritual autobiography in as much as it shows how he was influenced by Nature at various stages in his life. His poetry expresses a potent and cogent connection and feeling for Nature and simple country life in what he considered to be 'the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation' which speaks nothing less of ecomysticism. The burden of life, and of the world, which remains inexorable, becomes lighter as a result of our direct communion with Nature, remembering the beauty of Nature, man forgets his body and is aware only of his soul.

Thomas Traherne in his poem *The Salutation* attests Nature as 'a gift from God'. Further, in his poem *Dumbness* he has said that it is the most paramount duty of man to meditate on things of God and Nature for 'the Earth undertakes the office of a priest'. A few lines from the poem *Wonder* bear ample testimony to this observation:

*The world resembled His Eternity
In which my soul did walk:
And everything that I did see
Did with me talk.* (Wonder, verse 1)

A similar sentiment is articulated by Francis Thompson, the Victorian Poet who writes in *The Mistress of Vision*:

*All things by immortal power
Near or far
Hiddenly
To each other linked are,
That thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling of a star.*

(Poems of Francis Thompson, verse XXI, 2002:101)

The prime concern of all these writers is the soul's union with everything created by the Creator Immaculate. Presently, the entire humankind is reeling under hatred, envy, fear and conceit. Humans are deprived of their natural state of joy. Only by transformation humankind could be at peace. Mysticism advocates humanism. Nations ought to be conscious of the environmental degradation and depletion which eventually has an effect on the progress of mind, body, and intellect. Technological and scientific investigative explorations are required to be synchronized with prime human needs and noble desires. "Humanity is an ember of the ecological system, but humanity is not the master of the system. Humanity has the duty to refrain from careless and destructive use of the environment... Otherwise it would endanger its fate.... The world needs to be in balance" (Oruka 1996:253).

In the book *Human Ecology: Basic Concepts for Sustainable Development*, Gerald Marten while discussing mysticism, ecosystem and social transformation points out that "human-ecosystem interaction is sustainable when social system and ecosystem are co-adapted" (Marten 2001:136). The way to achieve environmental sustainability and ecological living is ultimately through spiritual wisdom. Ecomysticism implies the realization of the underlying mysteries of nature and to feel oneself as a part of it which leads to the union with the Ultimate Reality that inspires one to live ecologically like a mystic's way of life. The notion of ecomysticism can be tracked in all world religions and spiritual teachings which reflect on nature and the Cosmos as a fundamental part of God and reverence for nature and life as sacred. Father Loren Kerkof in his article 'Eco-spirituality and Lenten Practice' opines:

Eco-spirituality realizes that the earth is a reflection of the divine; it sees the universe as a sacrament of God, an incarnation of God. Contemplating the

beauty and presence of God in all things can lead us to metanoia, a conversion that moves us to respond to the crisis faced by our planet, our home, God's creation...Humans are not somehow separate from the rest of creation... Every offense against the integrity and sustainability of the earth is an offense against the Creator. (<http://www.cscsisters.org/justice/issues/climate/Churches/ecospirituality.pdf>)

Mysticism and ecology seem to belong to two diverse fields - mysticism is associated with spirituality as well as religious tradition, and philosophical quest for meaning, whereas ecology may be delineated as a scientific discipline fighting for the safety and security of the environment. Yet, ecology and mysticism have been visibly drawing closer to each other through fertile intellectual exchanges and through various social practices. This concept gives humankind a universal focus, by uniting humanity's efforts in saving the earth. Concern for ecological balance is not simply of pragmatic interest, it also has a distinct ethical impact. We should not forget that all the elements of the environment are the glories of God and everything constitutes the whole. The sense of wholeness is perturbed through ecological imbalance. Hossein Elahi Ghomshei, the Iranian Sufi philosopher says that:

The knowledge of universal harmony is science, the expression and communication of that harmony is the arts and the practice of that harmony in our daily life is religion. Thus there is no conflict between science, the arts and religion; they complement each other. Many of our environmental problems arise because we have put the sciences, the arts and religious practices into different compartments. If we wish to create a sustainable future and mitigate problems of resource depletion, the population explosion and the demise of biodiversity, then we need to create a coherence between the sciences, the arts and religions (Satish Kumar 2013:135).

Humans need to realize that harmony is the prime principle of ecology. If harmony is retained amid the physical and the spiritual realms, then those who dwell on earth experience amity, enlightenment, and peace. More and more we are coming to understand the interdependence of all life in the universe. As human beings we at times spontaneously project our good feeling onto these kingdoms of Nature. If we are interested in the meaning and purpose of life, we will become more keenly aware of it. If we observe the unfoldment of Nature we might as well find ourselves at one with it and experience its 'Naturalness', its pristine glory and grandeur; its virginity. And so our growth, the revelation of our joyful nature, begins with curiosity, leading to participation, and culminating in awe and wonder at the mysteries of creation. We need to be metamorphosed, come out of the cocoon to discover the butterfly in us. Man, in order to fill rightly his place in the world, should seek to understand Nature and work with her laws, quickening indeed their action by the co-operation of his intelligence, but not quickening to the point whereat growth is made unhealthy and its product frail and 'out of season' (Besant 2016:97).

2. Unity of being and peace of mind

The divine oneness of life is within and all around us. Ecology studies our environs in totality and all the living as well as non-living creatures that dwell in the midst of humans in this cosmic home. Mysticism draws attention to the cosmos as a place of God's self-revelation. Ecomysticism believes that beneath the wonders and beauties of nature, there lies a greater meaning – the Ultimate Reality. Since each and every creature of the entire ecosphere is the creation of the Ultimate Reality, every creature has the equal right to live in the environment. In this context, spirituality provides guidance and motivation to work on environmental causes. Making peace with ourselves is a precondition for making peace with the earth. Many of the world's faiths share common views of the interdependence of the divine, humans and nature, and lay out an ethic of harmony with the natural world.

Mysticism does not trust rational knowledge and human intellect – it seeks something beyond reason. An ecomystical perspective sees God in all creation and views the natural world and its interconnectedness as inherently sacred. Divine life extends to all reality, as per the concept of ecomysticism, and the cosmos is a reflection of God's self-revelation. In ecomysticism, we usually inquest our connection with God from the viewpoint of our relationship with the entire cosmos, with God in the core as creator, whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere. Ecological mysticism “is shaped by a distinctive way of thinking and feeling: one that emphasizes the interconnectedness of all things, the intrinsic value of all life, the continuity of human with nonhuman life, and the compassion of God for all life” (McDaniel 1990:182). Ecology and mysticism are not ahistorical or value-neutral. The inherent unity of all phenomena, or oneness, is a central concept of mysticism, both oriental and occidental. Ecomysticism is rooted in age-old rituals, texts and teachings of the saints, sages and savants of the yore eons ago.

The locus of spirituality may be inherent in the individual human being and/or the forces in nature, depending on one's belief system. Jesus made allusion to the nature to explicate the mystery of the kingdom of God. St. Francis of Assisi saw the intimate connection between humans and the natural world long before there was an environmental movement. Eastern religions like Hinduism and Buddhism have tended to highlight the spiritual oneness of nature and humans. Some of the Indian thinkers like Dr. S. Radhakrishnan experienced the interconnectedness of environment and spirituality. Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo considered the presence of God is in all beings; they also believed in the manifestation of divine perfection in humans. For Rabindranath Tagore “*advaitam is anandam*; the infinite One is infinite Love” (1994:109). He felt that unity between humans and environment must have a spiritual basis.

Coming to the Greek philosopher Socrates, it was the same gown that covered Socrates' body in winter and summer, and Gandhi in his loin-cloth was called ‘a half-naked fakir’. He learnt voluntary simplicity from Tolstoy and austere life by

Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-worship and Heroic in History* where the greatest hero is the prophet who exemplifies by austere living. Simplicity is the hallmark of such people as those who left indelible footprints on the sands of time that remain timeless truth for the whole of humanity which speaks of quintessence ecomysticism loud and clear. No wonder it was Tagore who called Mohandas the 'Mahatma' for he was the spokesmen of the conscience of humankind. Tagore and Gandhi both were unequivocal in asserting that 'Morality is the basis of things and truth is the substance of morality'. Both were evolutionary scientists, yet mystics, practical and pragmatic mystics – one a legendary mystical litterateur and the other a legendary mystical leader – one a literary genius and the other a moral genius, both beholding the future in the present and visualizing the shape of things that obviously entails nonviolence towards Nature. Tagore is the epitome.

If we take note of the Vedic exposition of ecomysticism, *Yajur Veda* declaims *Prithvi* as a guardian spirit, approbated for being munificent to humankind. In the *Rig Veda*, percipients and seers seek benedictions of the sun and supplicate every part of the earth to abound with wealth and abundance; the rivers and mountains and all such water-bodies to be propitious. The significance of the vital air, clean unpolluted waters and rich flora and fauna was discerned and prayed for in the hymns of the *Atharva Veda*. Nature and its seasonal changes or ruled by cosmic inalienable laws of integration and balance called '*Rit*'. Ancient Indic Philosophy always wished everyone to be joyous and free from mental illness and implored for an all-inclusive holistic development on the planet for amity and harmony in the '*Bhumi Sukta*' of *Atharva Veda*. In Vedic cosmology *Prithvi* symbolizes the material base as mother and the '*Dyaus*', the upper sky delineates the unmanifest immortal source as father, which together and between them provides ecosphere in a mystical ambience. Supplications in all the Vedas refer to water as nectar, protector of earth, life and environment, cleanser of sins, and ambrosia. Rivers were considered divine and invoked as goddesses, and people were ordained to use their life-sustaining waters most economically and with deep reverence.

3. Tagore as a mystic

Mysticism hinges on the notion that God is immanent – dwelling within all creation. God can only be realized; glimpses of God can be had in any kind of spiritual experience: aesthetic, moral or religious. The Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) desired to establish concord or unity between humans and the creation. Gurudev was nurtured on the Upanishads which express wisdom on the theme of the immanent *Brahman* – the Supreme Reality endowed with all permeating power and energy, transcending comprehension and any type of description. In Indian mystic cerebration, Tagore proffers "a system in which the theism of the Bhagavad Gita, the metaphysics of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the mysticism of the *Bauls* and the philosophical principles of Sufism exist in synthesis" (Samantaray 2013:41). Furthermore, Tagore was motivated by the ardor

of the *Bauls* – the saints who eulogize the Almighty. The Vaishnava literature also had a deep impact on him, where Radha's ardent affection for Lord Krishna is the emblem of man's eternal longing for God. He has maintained that the ultimate reality is *Brahman* and that the Absolute has no meaning at all – the finite gives it meaning. In other words, the Infinite expresses Himself through the finite.

Tagore the poet, painter and composer's later poetry was a spiritual eye-opener to the West in *Gitanjali* that made him the Nobel Laureate in 1913 much of which encodes the inevitability of ecological equilibrium for an aesthetically sustainable life. Tagore experienced the living touch of God's love in the beauties of Nature. Nature, with its flora and fauna is ontologically one with the human being as both man and nature are the manifestations of the Absolute spirit. Nature's function, according to Tagore, is "to impart the peace of the eternal to human emotions" (*Creative Unity* 1962:51). Radhakrishnan's assertion (in *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*) that, "Earth is crammed with heaven; all existence is suffused with God", explains his nature poems (1992: xxv).

At the heart of mystical consciousness is love. Rabindranath considers love to be an ennobling experience – like Donne, he finds in love a mode of self-transcendence from body to soul. He deems love to be an alternative name of the joy from which all beings are born, by which they are sustained. He wants that all men should develop the religion of love and friendship for the whole of humanity:

"In love all the contradictions of existence merge themselves and are lost. Only in love are unity and duality not at variance... In love, loss and gain are harmonized... Love is what brings together and inseparably connects both the act of abandoning and that of receiving" (Tagore, *Sadhana* 2006:90).

He believes love to be the meeting point or confluence of the finite and the Infinite:

*"God kisses the finite in His love
and man the Infinite".*

(*Stray Birds*, poem no. 303, 431:1916)

If God is love, then what we love may be regarded as the embodiment of God. Through the technique of ecological living we can attain environmental sustainability; and the technique to accomplish ecological living is perceptibly through spirituality. Tagore's art and poetry touch on ultimate truth – he sings about the truth of harmony and synergy in the cosmos. To W. B. Yeats, whose acclamation of Tagore's poetry is noteworthy, spoke of it as a revelation of a hidden life.

It is through the spiritual that humans face the great mysteries like life, death and God. When we actively seek to experience and express the divine within ourselves, we make our lives in this world heavenly. Mysticism (which is a personal approach to connecting with the divine and experiencing the realms that exist beyond the sensory world) may be considered as a tool to deepen our peace of mind. Peace in the world cannot be achieved unless there is peace within individuals. Genuine spiritual growth will help us to honour our individual differences.

4. Tagore's views on eco-ethical living

Nature and literature have always shared a close relationship as is evidenced in the works of Tagore – or we may say, Nature runs as a persistent idea in whole of Tagore's oeuvre. His views pertaining to eco-ethical human living, as scattered in various works, is embedded in the Upanishads. He realized that Nature and humankind, that is *prakriti* and *purusha*, form an inseparable life support system which is interdependent and have co-evolved.

“He finds in the world of nature and in the universe an undying primal motion. The mad rush of the wind, the swift currents of the sea and river, the rotation of the earth, the seasonal changes are the explicit examples of dynamism in external nature. And in keeping with the change and motion in nature man's life has a definite movement from birth through different physical and psychological phases to the eternity” (Ray 2004:90–91).

The poet enjoys a perfect unity with the world of nature surrounding him and this has been exemplified in *Gitanjali*, LXIX (received the Nobel prize for Literature 1913):

The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.

It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.

It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-cradle of birth and of death, in ebb and in flow.

I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life.

And my pride is from the life-throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.

Tagore wrote broadly on man's bond with his surroundings and also put the concept into practice by building Santiniketan. He created a unique model for the whole world – presently Visva Bharati is considered to be an international university where the motto is '*yatra visvam bhavati eka nidam*' meaning, the entire world is regarded to be a single nest. His educational program emphasized the harmony between nature and humans and was derived from his consciousness of the unity that underlies all being. Tagore's views on ecological symbiosis between humans and all other aspects of the mundane world and between man and the world beyond has been celebrated in his essay *Tapoban* in 1909. He writes: “The forest, unlike the desert or rock or sea, is living: it gives shelter and nourishment to life. In such surroundings, the ancient forest-dwellers of India realized the spirit of harmony with the universe and emphasized in their minds the monistic aspects of truth. They sought the realization of their soul through union with all” (*Letters from Abroad*, 110). As an eco-poet, Tagore refers to the leaves, flowers, trees and gardens, which in their full regalia symbolize green dreams of human beings thereby giving us the message: “Hidden in the heart of things thou art nourishing seeds into sprouts, buds into blossoms, and ripening flowers into fruitfulness” (*Gitanjali*, LXXXI). Nature in her different moods sways the poet's

mind; her different facets thrill him. Nature is not the collection of inanimate objects, but it is spiritual in nature. Tagore states about Indian natural landscape in *Sadhana* thus:

The earth, water and light, fruits and flowers, to her were not merely physical phenomena to be turned to use and left aside. They were necessary to her in the attainment of her ideal of perfection, as every note is necessary to the completeness of the symphony (6-7).

His play *The Cycle of Spring* also celebrates nature's plenty and beauty. Tagore has a deep interest in Nature, not as a centre of beautiful scenes, but as an informing and spiritual influence on life. 'The earth and sky', says Tagore in *The Religion of Man*, 'are woven with the fibers of man's mind', and 'the sun seeks its own reflection in the human face' (1932:162).

Rabindranath was aware of the obligation to recognize and reiterate the Natural as the inexhaustible source of power that sustained humans. He was also sensitive of the fact that to create this consciousness he requires the language of divinity and deification that would formalize with sense of aestheticism to inculcate the sense and magnitude of ecomysticism. For him, Nature is the arena on which the play of humans is enacted; it is the context in which human beings come to value their place in this world. Nature is the transforming agent which harmonizes the individual soul with what the transcendentalists call the 'Over-Soul'. He was the follower of the romantic philosophy which holds that the natural world is a vast analogue of the spiritual. Nature like man is the manifestation of the *Brahman*. Through its variegated forms, colours and rhythms *Brahman* reveals Himself diversely.

The Tagorean aviary houses birds like dove, cuckoo, hawk, sparrows. In the poem *Bird-Man* the poet writes: "Wings are God's gift to birds" to "play in the peace that floods the heavens". The images of sun, moon, stars, earth, sea, ocean, river permeate his mystical works - aspects of nature which have often been personified in Hindu myth as divine beings to be worshipped and cared for. Referring to the river, he writes:

*The river – messenger of the universe
That brings near the Far,
And brings, even to one's door,
The welcome of the Unknown (Poems of Wonder 2007:39).*

The Absolute Reality or the Supreme Person manifests Himself in the elements of Nature as well as in the consciousness of humans:

This great world, where it is a creation, an expression of the infinite ... has its call for us (Creative Unity 2007:567).

Nature is not to be exploited. Understanding the secrets of nature will help us to realize greater partnership, and therefore development:

Tagore's ideal was to draw sustenance from nature, but sustain it too, replenish it in a spirit of mutual co-operation and respect (Mitra 2016:86).

Tagore is concordant with the following notion:

All is sacred; all is one. Man must love all things equally, and when he does, he will no longer feel that he needs to rule or possess (Cochrane 2013:5).

Ecomysticism in its fullest potential orients individuals to a more honoured role in the cosmos, in Earth's bionetworks, and in human societies. This concept helps human beings see themselves not as isolated beings in a vast and indifferent universe but as embedded in the cosmic and earth communities from which they draw nurturance.

Nature thus has a profound effect on Tagore's spiritual life. It nourishes his soul. Trees have played a great variety of roles in the religious lives of human beings worldwide. In Hungary, near the Balaton Lake, Tagore planted a sapling of a linden tree on 8 November 1926, and noted down the following words in the guest book:

*When I am no longer on this earth, my tree,
Let the ever renewed leaves of thy spring
murmur to the wayfarers,
'The poet did love while he lived' (The Jewel that is Best 21).*

The above stanza reveals that he was forever bothered regarding the environment and went ahead to promote ceremonies to create ecological consciousness. One such ceremony 'Briksha Ropana' or tree planting was introduced in 1928 as a part of the Rain Festival. As a part of this observance, Rabindranath planted saplings and inspired each and every one to adopt a tree. The planting of new trees every year signifies new life and vitality in agriculture and vegetation. Tagore celebrated the harvest cycle with the villagers known as *Hala-karshana* (a ritual commemorating the agronomy of the land) and the crop harvest ceremony – 'Nabanna', which welcomed the new rice crop. A equitable relationship between human beings and environment must be the basis of our understanding of the worth of life. Tagore's works evince that Nature is not an entity of "inexhaustible consumption at our arbitrary disposal, but it is, on the contrary, our own house, a house to be preserved for the survival of the ecosystem and of our own species... The eco poet, as a matter of fact, is not the chorister of the Nature of Arcadia or of the bucolic poetry, but is one who picks and underlines, besides its beauty, the problems that upset Nature" (Ivana s.a.).

The precept of green thinking is that the source of the existing ecological disaster is human egotism and insolence towards the natural world which legitimates its exploitation in order to gratify human interests. Tagore is supportive of life and Nature. The play, 'Muktadhara' (*The Waterfall*, 1922), depicts the account of a human being's unlimited greediness and retaliation from nature. The plot spins round a monstrous machine constructed by a king to obstruct the natural flow of a huge river and how a prince joins commoners to protect nature by revolting against the king. Tagore's disapproval of the negative aspect of scientific achievement is emphasized here. The rivalry between Uttarkut and Shiv-terai people for the exclusive possession of water teaches humanity that water is life – it is for everyone. Life on earth is an interconnected web, not a hierarchy. Skye Alexander's views may be quoted here:

If we honour the sacredness in all things and in each other... we can heal the earth and the earth will heal us (Alexander 2014:20).

Tagore mentions in *Fruit Gathering*, poem no. XVIII that nobody is supposed to impede the activities of nature: "Ah! It is not for you to open the bud into a blossom". He emphatically says, "... it is beyond your power to make it blossom/ your touch soils it, you tear its petals to pieces and strew them in the dust". This attitude of human arrogance towards nature is rooted in anthropocentrism which "regards human beings as separate from the rest of creation rather than connected to it; it fosters an attitude of arrogance rather than one of humility before the natural world; and it leads to senseless exploitation and domination rather than wise acceptance of limitation and compliance with natural laws" (Selvamony 2007:6). According to Tagore, humanity is an aspect of the fabric of life on earth. Nature is also a co-inhabitant and not a subordinate.

The letters written by Tagore (between 1885 to 1895) to Indira Devi, his niece, were published in 1912 under the title *Chinna Patra* (Torn Letters). In these letters "Rabindranath has given us a clear picture of his oneness with nature ... The realization of his intimate relationship with his natural surroundings came to him with singular vividness in the course of his sojourn in the villages, when he was managing the family estates" (Maitra 164). The litterateur is of the view that human beings have to realize their kinship with everything, and they should cultivate a universal feeling of love. Being an environmentalist with a strong sense of aesthetics, he feels that human beings are supposed to be aware of the responsibilities allocated to them at a macrocosmic level. Environment is a set of relationships between humans, nature and all the other surrounding elements and the environment disequilibrium is the product of neglectful activities of human beings.

The formless is always transcendental. As we know, the expression of mystical verse is mostly symbolic. In the poem '*Ahalya Prati*' (from the verse '*Manasi*', which was published in 1891), the metamorphosis of Ahalya from stone to a woman is a symbolic interpretation of the evolution of life out of matter. The sense of self-effacement and of complete identity with Nature is the distinct attribute of Rabindranath as a poet of Nature. The Darwinian theory of evolution has been colored with poetic vision in the poem '*The Fugitive*'.

How often, great Earth, have I felt my being yearn to flow over you, sharing in the happiness of each green blade that raises its signal banner in answer to the beckoning blue of the sky! I feel as if I had belonged to you ages before I was born (125).

The poet thinks that he was one with Nature in the beginning of creation. The joy and wonder of that unity still cling to his memory. He yearns to go back to the bosom of mother Earth. He requests to mother Earth to take him back to the inmost source of life and joy, a transcendental appeal nonetheless. It is appropriate to quote the following lines of Barry McDonald here:

First of all, we must consider in the things around us... it is through existence that things are, so to speak, separated from nothingness; the gap between them

and nothingness is infinite, and seen from this angle the least speck of dust possesses something of the absolute, and thus of the 'Divine'. To say that one must see God everywhere means above all that one must see Him in the existence of beings and of things, our own included (Seeing God Everywhere 2003:1).

The poet is of the notion that God creates nature and man in and through whom He manifests Himself:

O Nature, so long as I did not love you, Your light, failed to find its wealth (Tagore, Balaka 1942:7).

Ecomysticism stretches humankind to be all-inclusive and recognize our mutually enhancing relationships with the natural world and with all its component members. Everything is a part of the All that makes up reality – the total cosmos. As Barry Commoner's law of ecology states: "Everything is connected to everything else" (Commoner 1971:33). Everything that exists contains the spark of universal consciousness. When we understand that we share this eternal spark with every other creature in the universe we know it is time to go beyond the visible realms to experience our true spiritual nature. Everything composes the whole. The cosmic soul is whole and complete; and the individual soul is also whole and complete but encircled by a veil of illusion and ignorance. Self-transcendence removes the veil of ignorance. Transcendentalism is a regulating element of mystical experience. Mystic experiences are generally considered to be advanced states of self-transcendence. The self is to be transcended as it is believed to hinder the mystic from the divine influx and poses difficulty in achieving the objective of union with the divine. Self-transcendence is a pure personal journey of self-discovery; it is moving beyond the orbit of our ego into our soul. As Radhakamal Mukerjee writes:

"...the self finds or identifies itself with a Larger Self, the Absolute, the Supreme Reality, the Whole; and in this discovery or identification the self, indeed, attains its profoundest depths, and personality reaches its supreme realization. The mystic does not lose himself in the abyss of nonentity; on the other hand, he attains the depth and summit of his being, discovers his True Being or Essence in its perfection: in brief, he transcends all the limitations of anthropomorphism, all human percepts or scales of values" (Theory and Art of Mysticism 1960: 294–295).

Our consciousness and all our senses exist as part of an infinite pool of universal consciousness. The following words of Chief Seattle of Duwamish tribe (1780–1866) is a potent reminder of the interrelatedness of all beings:

*We belong to the Earth...
All things are connected like the blood that unites us all.
Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it.
Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself...
The earth is precious to Him and to harm the earth is to heap as contempt on its Creator (Based on Chief Seattle's 1854 oration 'The Great Ecology' which appeared in the Seattle Sunday Star, October 29, 1887).*

Eventually, what we find in Tagore's poems is an endlessly progressive search in his being and his environment for Reality. As he integrates by a ceaseless process of mental adjustment the boundless multiplicity and variety of parts of the universe into a single and singular whole, he apprehends *Sat-Chit-Anand*. *Sat* is existence or truth, so everything that exists (whether animate or inanimate) is part of God. *Chit* is consciousness, and hence *Sat-Chit* refers to existence plus consciousness. *Anand* refers to bliss and is found within the consciousness of human beings. Therefore, *Sat-Chit-Anand* is existence-consciousness-bliss that can be experienced by humans through self-realization. "Sat-Chit-Anand ... is one unit cosmic orgasmic experience. It is a subjective radiance of the utter blissful joy of existence" (Tzu 2014:146). Knowing the world to consist of consciousness, the mind of the wise man is rapt in the thought of his universality and soars high and free, seeing the cosmos, the space, the firmament and the ecosphere in his own consciousness. The moon has given us the astral body, and the sun has given us the mind. Self-consciousness begins its evolution journey in and through the physical body and has its earliest nucleus in the brain with no peripheral bounds. Once our consciousness is aware of the creation as sacramental, as manifesting and leading us to the Ultimate, we embolden ourselves to improve our kinship with other beings from one of 'dominance' and 'power' to one of 'reverence' and 'respect'. Care for the environment is at the end of the day a clarion call to respect the entire creation and to reassure that human activities, while transforming the earth, does not destroy the dynamic balance. All Tagore's Nature poems continually challenge and invite new readings and will therefore continue to fascinate as long as there are sensitive readers of his poetry, to interlink with the entire ecosphere. In fine to attain tranquility, harmony and peace, one requires "a comprehensive spiritual humanism that is capable of integrating the four inseparable dimensions of human flourishing: self, community, Earth and Heaven" (Weiming, 81).

5. Conclusion

Despite the dishearteningly prevailing structure of education today we need to protect, preserve, and augment the resources of the biosphere. Eco-spiritual values ought to be the cry of the day. Conscientiousness about eco-ethical tenets would be imperative in fostering a more diverse, more aesthetic, vibrant, coherent and sustainable world. The rampant sense of consumerism needs to be done away with forthwith in order to solicit the golden-old human values. Eco-philosophy only can guide us to desirable progress toward 'Ecological Age' that would change our behavioral pattern towards Nature and set in an ecological renaissance sharpening our eco-values and eco-wisdom. Tagore, the poet of man, feels interconnected with the creation. As a Litterateur he feels that humans should treat themselves as part of nature, practice the symbiosis and establish a harmonious and peaceful relationship. He advocates an ethical way of living with universal responsibility

and environmental compassion and empathy. The society of late is inflicted with the incurable ailment of consumerism from which there is no seeming escape in near future unless otherwise people by and large become aware of the import and significance of eco-philosophy to save this Mother Earth from an impending catastrophe along with all forms of life in it. The purport of this write up is to gently remind that we are the messengers who have just about forgot the message. Humans must develop into cognizant beings and be aware that all of creation is on the voyage to God who aspires for a smooth sailing across. Our thoughtlessly rampaging, and jeopardizing act of disengaging the individual from the Earth being the devil devours synergetic and symbiotic existence. This paper is a sincere endeavour to bring home the much-needed awareness of the threat of ecological imbalance to humanity and the fact of fast depletion of the natural resources and Nature's bounty that had been the perennial source of our prime existence since creation. The old environmental question – “Are we going to leave a better world for our children?” be better rephrased with a sense of mysticism: “Are we going to leave better children to our world?”

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