

Why Man is estranged from God? Tagore's Poem "Ami" Explains

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[Translator's note: Whether 'mind' is dependent on 'matter' or 'matter' is dependent on 'mind', or whether they are mutually dependent, will ever remain man's enigma. Tagore's inclination was on 'mind'. His difference of opinion with Einstein on this question made history in metaphysics. However, Tagore had a conviction that the Creation comprises a 'Universal Mind' which manifests itself through every individual human being as his 'ego' with which we perceive Creation. That Creation would be inane without this 'self', has been marvelously upheld in this poem, not as a fundamentalist's dogma, but with a poet's deep love and piety for the marvels of Creation around us. - R.D.G.]

The apprehension haunts the poet if this 'ego' self will be wiped out one day by some stellar disaster. The following item (*The Hindu*) on the 8 Aug. 2000 was quite reassuring that human 'ego' will have an escape route even if the Earth were to perish – *[Nine new planets have been discovered orbiting a distant star, bringing the number of known planets outside our solar system to 51 and raising prospects that alien life may be found to exist.*

The discovery, announced at a major astronomy conference in Manchester, England, includes only the second solar system to be found outside our own. Astronomers now believe that planetary systems may be relatively common throughout the galaxy, and that some might eventually be capable of supporting human colonists. The planets orbit a bright star, slightly smaller than the Sun which lies on the constellation Vela. The system was found by a team led by Prof. Michael Mayor, from the Geneva observatory, who studied 'wobbles' in the star caused by the planets' gravitational pull. "We're now at a stage where we are finding planets faster than we can investigate them and write up the results", said Dr. Geoffrey Marcy of the Berkeley team, "Planet hunting has morphed from the marvelous to the mundane".]

Before the ink on this gratifying news was dry, the following news in *The Statesman* of 6 September, 2K passed a shiver down the spine of Mankind – *[Asteroid just misses the Earth: The Earth has had a cosmic near miss with an asteroid half a kilometer wide. Had it hit this planet, a fourth of human population could have been wiped out, say scientists.]*

So, are we back to 'square' one as regards Tagore's apprehension about the doom of human 'ego'?

With my senses' hues
Emerald as green I muse
And the coral as red;
As my sight I spread
The sky is luminous
East to West with light glorious;
To rose I said, "Bonny is thee"
And so did she be!
Esoteric it is, you'd say;
Words of a poet, nay.
I'd say, 'tis truth and poetry so;

For the mankind, my ego;
On which canvas
The Creator's artistry does pass.
The hermit breaths "no, no, no;
Mere myths are these that go;
No emerald, no coral, no light, no rose,
Neither 'you' nor 'me' you should suppose."

On the other hand, He the Infinite
Self divulges in His delight;
Within 'I', the Man's confine
Light and shade combine –
To shape images there
Emotions to flare,
Beguiles 'nay'
Unwittingly, into 'yea';
In colour and sketches
In emotional stretches
On weal and woe
As we go.

Call it not a conjecture;
My mind had the pleasure
To appear on the creative stage
Of the Universal 'I' of all age,
With brush in hand, colour in pot,
My freaks to jot.

Says the erudite,
That ancient Moon, don't slight;
Sly is its smile
Cruelly to beguile;
A Death's harbinger,
Stealing its crawl every hour
To the heart of this Earth
Since its birth;
For its final pull one day
To cast doomsday
To its oceans and mountains
And leave all lifeless remains.

In Eternity's fresh book a zero to drop
Upon mortal world's flop.
The debits and credits of days and nights
Man's all euphoria and blights;
All its feats grand

To lose feigned immortality, nowhere to stand,
All these his history no more to smack
Blotted by an eternal black;
The departing human eye
On last glimpse of colour will sigh;
Will perceive his last emotion
While from this world passing on.

The Cosmic energy's play will not stint
Yet, a life's spark never will hint;
The Artist's finger will dance
No more a music to chance
In that court without a lute
A lone seat of the Absolute;
Without His poesy
Devoid of personality;
Left with the mathematics of Existence
Beauty nowhere to sense;
None to say, "Bonny is thee"

With admiration to see.
Will the Creator sit in meditation
Again over ages for incantation –
"Speak up, speak up, say thou art bonny
I love thee, honey!"

