

## ***Islam and Mysticism: An Analysis of the Sufi Symbolism in the Select Poetry of Omer Tarin***

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### ***Abstract***

*Mysticism is subliminally present in Islam since its inception became perspicuous during the first Islamic centuries (the seventh and eighth centuries C.E.). That, later on, influenced and permeated in nearly all walks of human life, including literature written in different languages. The present position paper explores to examine select poems of Pakistani poet and writer, Omer Tarin, in the backdrop of Islamic Mysticism/Sufism. Investigation of the theme and trope under reference is carried out while randomly selecting poems from Omer Train's two books, "A Sad Piper" and "Burnt Offering", published in 1994 and 1996, respectively. The poetic oeuvre is analysed while invoking and employing Reader Response Theory. Reader Response is a creative-critical theory which suggests that a text gains and apply (meaning and message) by the purposeful act of the reader's reading and interpreting it (Hindi, 2008). A myriad of manifestations of Islamic mysticism (symbolised and epitomised in the forms of death, ultimate truth, and the quintessence of human life, asceticism and soul's spiritual voyage) is inferred from the current research. His poetry reflects that whosoever aspires for and digs out the reality of life—its meaning and message—and have enthusiastically felt and experienced the itch for Divine Love (that inclines their hearts to a 'Larger Reality') are, far more different than those who do not do so. Thus, conclusively, the study construes that Tarin's literary work richly manifests mystical themes and theses, for which he owes much indebtedness to his Islamic mystical masters, especially Sufi poets like, Maulana Rumi, Baba Bulleh Shah, Baba Fareed, Rahman Baba and to name a few.*

*Keywords: Islam, Mysticism, Sufism, Worldly, Love, Divine love*

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Islam, Mysticism and Literature: An Overview Mysticism has been the inherent and inseparable part of Islam since its beginning that became apparent during the life of Muhammad ﷺ and the seventh and eighth centuries. That, later on, influenced and permeated in nearly all walks of human life, including literature written in different languages. That time is characterised with the emergence of the first Muslim devotees, who set up communities (based on inner beauty and outer piety—Loveliness—Ihsan), chiefly in Eastern Iran, Mesopotamia and Syria. Those devotional communities of moral aesthetes disseminated the meaning and message of Islam (though the thirteenth century), establishing social institutions (called as “tariqas”, or universal brotherhood). Those institutions had their distinguishable sacred rituals, intellectual, spiritual and moral principles, along with socio-economic and political tenets. From the twelfth century down to sixteenth century, Mysticism, prominently known as Sufism (in Islam) emerged as a prominent trait of the Islamic geosociological system. Its meaning and message of universal fraternity spread through humane sermons, altruistic writings, and its philanthropic behavioural code brought followers of Islam together from diverse cultures and geographies. Unlike the concept and practices of mysticism in Judaism and Christianity, which were cloistered in monasteries and synagogues, in the western hemisphere of the world, Islamic mysticism, continued impacting its followers and the people around, because of its holistic fruition until the advent of the twentieth century.

Sufi social order and system were severely impugned with the rise of Western-led modernism, the so-called Islamic reformers and modernists, and liberal nationalists, who spared no stone unturned to downplay the essence of Sufism. The Sufism was indicted of believing in dated values, customs and doctrines, and were said to be anti-progressive and anti-modernism, especially by those who introduced the agrarian reforms, secular education and modern economy, at the behest of the Western nationalist regimes. Anti-Sufism movements, in the 1950s, considerably reduced the grandeur of Sufism in the eyes of general Muslims of as wide and varied countries in Central Asia, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa. Thus, it appeared that the current-contemporary socio-economic makeup thwarted the very existence of centuries-old Islamic mysticism and reduced it to the cloisters of miniscule adherents. However, despite all the imminent ordeals, Sufism has not only survived but, in the recent times, has regained its erstwhile glory and grandeur, around the world, including South East Asia, the Middle East, Europe, North Africa, the United States, and in the former Soviet Union. The reason of its re-emergence and regaining its former splendour is because of its ardent belief in and practising of moral duties, spiritual awakening, socio-economic uplift, and all that is best for the service of humanity, at large.

Islamic Sufism has deeply influenced, and reshaped literature and arts produced globally; and, thus, fervently inspired the Islamic societies, at large. Poetry and music (being rhythmic companions), received colossal mystic flavour and profound philosophy of life. Poetry, as it is written in all human languages, is, to a greater extent, has inspired notable poets, to revive the traditional richness of Sufism and represented it as a distinct literary genre in the current-contemporary world. Dwelling upon the mystical metaphors, images and symbols, to demonstrate and interpret life here and in the hereafter, has become the prominent feature of such poetry. Terrestrial and celestial notions, concepts, and the philosophy behind these cosmic subjects has become pivotal to mystic poetry. Thus, such poetry has allegorical allusions, too, to portray the universal subjects such as that of the creator, the creation and the abode where the creation abide. Among the famous Sufi poets is Maulana Jalal Ud Din Rumi, whose works have been translated into several languages, and who inspired poets from around the world, including illustrious poets of South Asia, including Pakistan. Omar Tarin is no exception in this regard.

He was born in 1966 to the Tarin family of (Hazara region) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (former N-W.F.P.), Pakistan. The present study is carried out (in the light of mystical experiences) of Tarin's poems, randomly selected from his twin collection of poetry, namely, *A Sad Piper* and *Burnt Offerings*, published in 1994 and 1996, respectively, while employing Reader Response Theory as a theoretical and conceptual framework. Methodologically, the said corpus of literature is interpreted in the light of the theory mentioned to pinpoint the core Islamic mystical elements (symbolised and epitomised in the said works) that distinguish his works from other writers in this field.

#### Research Objective

The primary objective of the current paper is to explore and highlight Islamic mystical symbols, images, themes and theses in Tarin's poetic oeuvre.

#### Research Question

How the Islamic mystical symbols, images and themes are portrayed in Tarin's poetry?

How Tarin is influenced by and followed the footprints of his Islamic mystical predecessors (and Sufis) or otherwise?

#### Discussion and Analysis

By and large, Tarin compares the human-life with dust and nothingness. He reminds the reader of the human's origin by saying that the humankind is the offspring of Adam and Eve, who were made up of soil. On knowing one's origin, one must not be proud of his existence on this earth, because the day is not far away when the dust will become dust and the pure spirit shall flow back to the world of souls wherefrom it had come. He extrapolates that "Essentially / I am dust / As are you' (qt. in Singh, p. 3). That in effect, states that the human's roots and moorings are meek and self-effacing of which he should always be aware of and be not negligent of it.

Conventionally, clay/soil remains adhered to the ground and, hence epitomises humbleness and humility in/of human nature. Allah, too, loves meekness in/of human nature and dislikes arrogance. That is why the emphasis is laid on the humbleness of humans for the piety of soul and proximity to Allah—the Omnipotent and the Omniscient. While reminded of one’s origin, the philosophy is to create and maintain equality and equity (among human-beings), beyond any doubt. Singh (2008) comments that notable Sufi poet Baba Fareed compares “arrogant people” with sandhills as he remarks that, “Fareed, those who are very proud of their greatness, wealth and youth, shall return empty-handed from their Lord, like sandhills after the rain” (Singh 105). Thus erosion is imminent for pride, and only the righteousness (of thought and actions) shall last forever. The spirit of inner purity and its subsequent manifestation in human actions are the key components Sufism dwells on. And that, ultimately, leads humans to attain the Will of Allah. Therefore, only that will find the light of Almighty Allah who is submissive to His Divine Commandments. Supporting the current argument, Baba Fareed (as quoted by Singh) states, “Fareed, become the grass on the path, if you long for the Lord of all. One will cut you down, and another will trample you underfoot; then, you shall enter the Court of the Lord” (Singh 107). So, being subservient to the Will of Allah shall pave the way to earn His endless favour.

Endorsing the Word of Allah, the last messenger with a lasting message, Muhammad (peace be upon him) states that, “‘O people, your Rubb [the Lord] is [O]ne, and indeed your father is one. All of you were created from Adam, and Adam was created from dust. There is no excellence of an Arab over a non-Arab, a non-Arab over an Arab, a red person over a white, or a white person over a red, except in righteousness and piety’” (Abu Hisham 44). So, the only deciding factor for the redemption of humans is to follow the right path of veracity—the one sent down by Allah for the best of humankind.

Tarin (in *A Sad Piper*) sneeringly mocks on his existential nothingness and impels us to do so when he puts forth, “I laugh at my own insignificance / As should you” (Tarin 4). Contrary to the said philosophy of existential “dust”, Tarin, on the other hand, invites the reader’s attention towards the invaluable existence of the human soul and its perennial prowess in the whole universe. Hence, all that is visible as “dust” is, (inherently) priceless and incomparable. We should laugh at our insignificance because of our dustiness, but the ‘Dust Collector’ (The Lord) does not laugh at us. It is because He knows our reality that we are the things of great value. Though our essence is dust, physically; spiritually, our soul is the soul of God. The poet ( in the same collection of poems) intuitively realises our reality as he says:

Yet, somehow, I feel too,

That something there is that laughs not at our

Dustiness-

Perhaps the Dust Collector? (Tarin 4)

We, the humans, are given higher pedestal in the universe. We are created with and for a great purpose that is to recognise, to worship and to feel Allah's presence in us. In "The Secret Meaning: Rumi's Spiritual Lessons on Sufism" (2012), Rumi extrapolates that "God" says: "Cleanse your thoughts, O human, / for they are My abode and dwelling place":

God is within us in both the Great soul and the Human soul. God has been part of us from time immemorial—His original splendor and brightness is ancient—His original light was altogether purer and brighter and more humble than what we are. God is reflected in our grace, love, forgiveness, compassion, humility, intuition, esoteric knowledge. He is all-knowing and is the source of our wisdom. (Azam 23)

Humans are born with, and for a particular purpose, that is to seek and to know the Truth in and of life. During our lifespan, we go through different stages. In childhood, we are supposed to learn from our parents. In a young age, we do what we are supposed to do in a 'conscious' manner. In old age, we do nothing because of the inability to do something, the eventual loss of consciousness. Same is the case with birds. They are born to fly. Newly born birds follow their parents to fly. They do whatever their parents want them or teach them to do. They do not wait for any right moment but continue with their struggle. Thus, in the poem 'Fledgling Wings in Summer', Tarin (in A Sad Piper) says: "there was the bird that flew because its wings were young, / For it knew it could fly, no matter if its young wings were untried-/ Fledging wings of violet-blue, deep, deep wings" (Tarin 2-3).

They (the birds) know that there may be hurdles while flying high in the sky. They may face a dangerous storm, the strong wind and heavy rain. Moreover, they also learn how to overcome all those hurdles too. As the poet remarks that "they flew against the waves, flew against the sky (Tarin 3). Birds fly until their wings lose the ability to work; when their wings are unable to move, and so they are not able to fly anymore. As poet mentions in the poem: "[they] Fly, before winter froze their wings / And chafed their hearts with longing / For some seasons of flight (Tarin 3).

The central idea of the poem is life. The word 'birds' is a metaphor representing us—the humans. These birds can be compared to humans because they both seek and attempt to fly to the sky. We, the humans, are born to seek the Truth, the Ultimate One. To express that we had known the Truth in life and the ultimate reality, we do what the Creator of life wants from us. The colour of the sky and the colour of the feathers of the birds are blue in the poem, "violet blue" suggesting that there is compatibility between human and the sky, that is, a metaphor for Allah. If humans spiritually soar high, their flight is accepted, and they can attain transcendence. The word "summer" in the poem suggests that when the humans' spiritual strength is on the peak, that is the best age to fly towards the sky, to be united with the Lord. We, the humans, are born to do something that must be remembered and in order to achieve lofty heights. We have been given this life for a definite purpose and for a specified time. Recognising and fulfilling the purpose of life on the earth is the

principal objective humans should pursue. They are created to worship Allah and obey His commandments and the teachings of His Prophet—Muhammad (ﷺ). Humans need to seek a lesson from these birds because humans pass through different stages in life just as birds do. In childhood they learn; in adulthood, they practice what they have learnt before, and when they have grown old, they are incapable of doing as much as they did in their youth. Thus, doing great deeds seem to be a far cry at this stage of life.

Mystics repent before Allah. They never forget the sole purpose of life. As Umaruddin (1988) states while referring to the mystic Imam Al-Ghazzali:

Al-Ghazzali thinks that the sole aim of man on this earth is to intensify his love for God. He must realize that this world is only a stage where he has to make the necessary preparation for his journey to the next world. From this world only as much should be taken as is indispensable for cultivating the love of God through good conduct. (Umaruddin 191)

While Sharif (1983) comments that:

A nobler kind of fear is aroused by the feeling of separation from God who is the ultimate goal of all our aspirations. Hope, on the other hand, is a pleasant tendency. And this is the expectation of God's vision in the hereafter. Fear is the result of knowledge and hope is the result of assured faith in the loving-kindness of our Lord in acceding to our request and prayers. It leads towards reliance (Tawakkul) on God.” (Sharif 635)

Though God is invisible and we cannot see Him with our naked, physical eyes but He can be seen through the inner eyes, through the eyes of the heart. We do not recognise this fact, thus cannot reach Him until we avoid our worldly wishes and desires and replace the 'inner' darkness (ignorance) with true knowledge. Tarin, as a practising mystic, has sensed the existence of divinity and aspires to outreach but the worldly temptations stop him. He has realised the ultimate reality. “A plum ready” is suggestive of the 'attainment' of God. As one tries to have a ripe and ready plum that is surrounded by bushes, he needs to avoid those thorny bushes; then one will be able to reach the plum and gets hold of that. He sees what the ordinary people cannot see. Thus, recollecting his experiences, he states in A Sad Piper:

Rock of ages, furry with mossy fingers

halt my paces

I have seen the plums

ready in the orchard (Tarin 3)

In the light of the ongoing discussion, Ahmad bin Khazruvaih (1976) says that “God is clearly visible but if one fails to see Him, he or she is blind by worldly desires” (Shushtery 371). In this connection, Hanifullah (2009) quotes the famous Pashto Sufi poet, Rahman Baba, when he mentions that: “The marifat [recognition] of God is evident in everything; / May the one without this insight lose his eyes” (Hanifullah 98). The presence of Allah (in every object of nature) invites the human-beings so

that they might seek His perennial mercy and forgiveness. That, in turn, is the eventual purport of and most significant source of happiness for all mystics.

While participating in the preceding discourse, Shushtery (1976), is of the view that: Sufism is neither performing religious rituals nor is it knowledge of science and philosophy. It means moral perfection and purification. It means freedom, manliness, non-attachment to worldly desires and generosity (self-sacrifice). Sufism means enmity to world and friendship of God.” (Shushtery 371)

Mystics commonly believe that God is present everywhere and in every object of nature. The idea has been mentioned in the poem when the poet points out as: “They say “God is everywhere”. God can be felt and experienced in isolation when a person thinks of nothing but God, and he will find Him within himself. In the same poem, the poet affirms to be very close to God and expresses it (in *Burnt Offerings*) as:

I say here—in the Desert

I feel Him near;

The desert within

Cried out, to the desert without;

Gaunt, wind-tortured void;

Ascetic beauty! (Tarin 4)

Tarin states that God is here in the desert where there is nothing. “Desert” is symbolised as loneliness and nothingness. God exists everywhere even where there is nothing at all. Poet compares his inner self with a desert. He says that the inner-self (which is symbolic of the desolate desert) brightens and beautifies with unparalleled light when it sees the Ultimate Light of God. Its nothingness turns into everything when it adheres to the Eternal God. In the present scenario, Coleman Barks et al. (2002), while translating Maulana Rumi’s words, says in a similar vein:

If the beloved is everywhere,

the lover is a veil,

but when living itself becomes the Friend,

lovers disappear. (Bark et al. 112)

During the various phases of ascetic life, mystics go out in search of God; they pass through rigorous ordeals. However, having found the glimpse of Him, they genuinely become excited and ecstatic, because that was their ultimate goal to achieve. Although it is little of what the reality of Allah is, however, they are contented with what they have obtained and experienced. The climax of that pure delight has been mentioned in the *Burnt Offerings* as:

Amidst a sea of sand I found solace.

The silence got to me-

Silence outside

Flowed through to inner;

The wind’s whispering vespers

Attended only by myself... (Tarin 4-5)

In the above stanza of the poem, “Spiritus Sancti,” Tarin expresses his felicitation after the realisation of that feeling what the others did not feel. To that, he says that he felt comfort in loneliness when he kept silence and contemplated deeply; and, thus, he realised the ultimate reality within him. Though there is silence all around him, still, he hears the unheard; and sees the unseeable. Though there is loneliness, still he has a soothing companion. The dullness and nothingness around him reflect pure brilliance that he would not feel anywhere else. The feeling of such spiritual loftiness can be compared with Maulana Rumi, as is pointed out by Barks et al. (2002) while referring to Rumi’s poem:

Which is worth more, a crowd of thousands,  
Or your own genuine solitude?  
Freedom or power over an entire nation?  
A little while alone in your room will  
prove more valuable than anything else  
That could ever be given you. (Barks et al. 36)

Barks et al. (2002) comment on such a hair-raising situation as: “close the language-door (the mouth). Open the love-window (the eyes). The moon (the reflected light of the divine) won’t use the door, only the window. Moving into silence with a friend, and with what comes through the eyes and both presences then, we may become those escapees Rumi calls those who associate in the heart” (p. 32). Thus, allowing the divine light entering through the “love-window” is indicative of divine vision permeating through the entire body and soul.

All mystics aspire for and move (spiritually) to seek and secure the divine truth. Khanam (2009) highlights that the Sufi masters believe that every person has the inherent ability to achieve a release from the self (body) and obtain a union with God (p. 201). The mystic (Sufi) goes through various stages in his spiritual journey. Khanam further pinpoints that:

The Sufi who sets out to seek God calls himself a traveler (salik). He advances by slow stages (maqamat) along a path (tariqa) towards union with Reality (Fana’fil Haqq) and then Subsistence in that Reality (Baqah). This path, according to al-Sarraj, author of *Kitab al-Luma’ fi’ITasawwuf*, one of the oldest comprehensive treatises on Sufi teaching, consists of the following seven “stages”:

1. Repentance (tawbah) 2. Fear of the Lord (wara’) 3. Renunciation (zuhd)
4. Poverty (faqr) 5. Patience or endurance (sabr) 6. Trust in God (tawakkul)
7. Satisfaction/contentment (rida). (Khanam 202)

A mystic, while on his spiritual journey, invites the aspirants to join him and to observe and experience the purpose of that celestial voyage. During his spiritual journey, Tarin, too, calls upon the seekers to accompany him in that sacred journey. The aim is to hear the unheard and see the unseen/unseeable. That holy landscape, he describes in the following lines of *Burnt Offerings* as:

Come with me



and see my world  
come and see what I do  
and what I see, too. (Tarin 8)

Mystics experience vision; or, precisely, a sense of higher 'union' after they purify themselves. That helps one in the spiritual journey towards Allah. As Maghmoom (2007) remarks that "Rahman Baba is of the opinion that a person can meet God any time when he wishes, but for this purpose, he will have to purify his heart in such a manner that God starts to live in it permanently." Tarin also talks about such a situation when he states that: "The clearing sky after last night's shower / and hills, green hills, that rise far / and where the deer are, and peace is" (Tarin 9). Here clear the sky suggests God's revelation and night's shower suggests purifying one's self by spiritual exercises like fasting, praying, remembering God (dhik'r) and so on; it is an inward cooperation or development for the souls (deer) to be in peace.

Conventionally, all great Sufis recommend and guide that one should perform mystic/Sufi deeds experientially to attain divinity or divine union. In the same way, Tarin also advises his readers to be experiential and interactive. He wants to make his readers know that the world he sees is not like that as people can see it. It is entirely different; everyone cannot see the reality of it; if one wants to see the real face of it, he must purify his inner self first. In the following stanza, Tarin states that everyone cannot see the world as he sees it, but one who is of inoculating intention and boasting a pure heart.

Come with me  
to the world  
and see it, for it may  
not be there to see  
the way things are  
and will be. (Tarin, "Burnt Offerings; Part B: Symphonies" 9)

Khwaja (1999) comments on Tarin's experiential evidence as: "this is his invitation to us, to join him on his travels into the human soul and that of the Universal Soul, itself, as a whole intricate and yet simple, direct and profoundly-conceived carpet is unrolled before us" (Khwaja para-5). That is to encourage and summon the desirous seekers towards achieving the Will of Allah. Abbas (1995) states that "for Tarin, in the end, balance, is a practising Sufi mystic and seeker, and all his art springs from this fact" (Abbas 1). Hence, maintaining balance and observing moderateness in everything is key to success in life.

Tarin tries to convince the seekers of truth to join him on his journey. In the same poem, he urges the readers by stating that the said spiritual flight is not much longer, but needs one's unremitting will and his attachment to exploring the reality of the Universe, and that of its Creator. The real delight is achieved when a mystic reaches

the desired goal. His love for the vision obtained is limitless. Of that process and achievement, Tarin (in the ongoing collection of poems) says: “Come with me—/ It won’t take long / And you will love it” (Tarin 9).

Mystics endure and embrace the miseries of this existential life and willingly accept the advent of death (which they call as a wedding night). It is because of the reason that they believe that Allah’s Supreme Will sends all ordeals and being patient amid such sufferings is tantamount to achieving the Will of Allah as a divine gift. Tarin like other mystics is not scared of death; instead, he welcomes it. Since Christians believe that Christ’s crucifixion caused their sins to wash away, Tarin is equally repentant over his sins and wants to be crucified for himself alone if that can cleanse his inner self. Metaphorically, crucifixion (for Tarin) is the sole source of redemption from the sins of this world. Thus, he versifies it (in A Sad Piper) in the following manner:

Crucify me  
that my all too fond flesh  
may feel pain;  
then alone may I redeem myself  
and absolve my impure blood of all  
its sins. (Tarin 2)

On the one hand, most people believe that Christ’s crucifixion was wretched, but on the other hand, it caused him to ‘come’ back for redemption. Tarin longs for such sacrifice too. Tarin’s fervour for sacrifice can be compared to a mystic Pashto poet, Rahman Baba’s notion of suffering and sacrifice. Hanifullah (2009) cites that as: “At last Rahman will find you (God), after the sacrifice of his life” (Hanifullah 91).

Of the connection between sacrifice and love, Rahman Baba states:

All the pains of love is relief for the lover,  
There is no remedy for such a disease.

Love is rare experience in the world,

There is no need of love for any other than God. (Sampson and Khan 505)

Tarin goes even a step forward (to the belief of crucifixion in Christianity) by saying that now someone else might be crucified as he had been through that experience already. He has paid the cost of his sins. Now, he needs a redeemer for absolving his unpardoned sins for which he is likely to suffer. That he puts in A Sad Piper as:

It’s only that, at times,  
I am afraid  
I am past redemption  
And I would, rather, that somewhere,  
In my stead, some Christ  
Suffer for my salvation. (Tarin 2)

This idea is also inspired by the famous Urdu poet Mirza Asadullah Ghalib, who yearns that “Ibne Maryam huwa kare koī” (I wish there were some Christ/son of

Hazrat Maryam, to take my place (see ‘Diwan e Ghalib’, V-IX, Reprint 2003). Mystics believe that life is meaningless and redundant if one is not in alliance with the Will of Allah and subsequently united with Him—the Beloved. Life beautifies when a mystic becomes one with the Supreme Soul. Continuing the argument, Rahman Baba is of the view that “If the sufferings of the whole world are heaped on my head, it will all be easy if my friend is a friend to me” (Khan and Sampson 837). Furthermore, in his intense love for Allah, he puts forth that: “I love Him so much that I would have sacrificed my body a thousand times for my Beloved If I had a thousand bodies like this one.”

Thus, he says:

They cannot be called lovers,

Who are concerned with their life and honor.

Those girls will be famous like Leila,

Who have Rahman, like Majnun in their country (Sampson and Khan 837)

‘Requiem’ is a title of one of Tarin’s poem that suggests a funeral song sung on the death of a departed soul in order to pay a tribute and pray for the dead. In the poem, Tarin speaks of death as a departure from this transient world of discomforts to eternal peace. He reminds the contemplating mystics of their longing for death when they are lost in meditation. Tarin (in Burnt Offerings) addresses the fellow mystics as: You draw your breath

Yearning

A sadness infinite

In its contemplation; (Tarin 20)

All mystics yearn for death, both symbolically (as ‘dying in life’) and physically (final and real union with the Divine). Sahin (2014) continues the argument by stating that “Sufis do not see death as an end; they find it meaningful for a reunion, and they find life important as a path to making a meaningful death” (Sahin 1833). Rumi counts death as a wedding because it is a natural source of unification with Allah. He mentions it in one of his poems, the title of which is “Our death is our wedding with eternity”, that best reflects his belief in the coalescing with Allah. Khan (2009), too, quotes that the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.S.) has said that “one cannot see God in this world with physical eyes. So he will have to die for seeing God.” That is, endorsed by Rahman Baba, too, when he says that: “the wine of your lips is forbidden for Rahman; / Until I give a bowl of my blood in exchange” (Khan 24).

Death is the sole source for all mystics that causes fusion with Allah. Such fusion had been the desperate desire of every mystic throughout his lifetime. They embrace temporal death in the mid of an astonishing ecstasy because it is the happiest moment for them. They consider death as a rebirth after which there is no death again. Tarin (vicariously) through the mouth of a departed mystic unveils the reality of death and affirms his rebirth into eternity in Burnt Offerings. He thus concludes as:

I, who embraced death in dumbfounded rapture, am reborn in the eternal question imprisoned in your eyes; (Tarin 20)

Here the meaning and message of physical death is essential because that is not only a means of releasing oneself from the worldly trials and tribulations, but that becomes the perennial channel for merging with eternity. All the spatio-temporal discomforts pave the way for eternal love and peace that a mystic aspires for all his life. The poem ends with Tarin's invocation to Allah for perpetual togetherness by saying: "Let's be buried together" (Tarin 20). Symbolically, burial is solemnised as a wedding festival for mystics.

Theme and thesis of the above poem resonates in Rumi's title, "Death is a Wedding Day", translated by Lee (2012). Rumi expresses as:

On the day I die, don't weep.

Don't say she's gone/he's gone.

Death has nothing to do with going away.

The moon sets and the sun sets,

but they're not gone.

Death is a coming together.

The human seed goes down into the ground

like a bucket,

and come up with some unimaginable beauty!

Your mouth closes here

and immediately opens

with a shout of joy there! (Lee 2012)

#### Findings

Islam has got an inseparably inherent relationship with mysticism that, in turn, influenced Literature, especially poetry— as an aesthetic and rhythmic genre.

Tarin's poetry signals certain essential traits such as mystical veneration for Nature, the universe and life, and a sense of the frailty of human life and a constant concern with the core concepts of life, death and immortality.

Tarin's poetry is influenced by other great Sufi poets of the South Asian subcontinent and the Middle East, such as Baba Fareed, Rahman Baba and Maulana Rumi.

Tarin's poetry brings man closer to Allah and provides him with an opportunity to live a pure and pristine life in this fading world and attains success in the eternal hereafter.

Tarin's poetry necessitates main mystical themes. That was one of the objectives of the current research study to find out mystical elements and themes in his poetry.

He seems to be practising mysticism in the Islamic Sufi way, and various forms of meditation, with connection to higher spiritual realities, are regular parts of such practice. At times, these experiences, which are not expressible in other forms, find their expression in his poetry.

## Conclusion

After studying few poems, randomly selected from Tarin's two books *A Sad Piper* and *Burnt Offerings* published in 1994 and 1996, respectively, the researchers came across certain mystical elements and themes. They also observed the profound influence of mystic poets on his poetry. They inferred that Islamic mysticism is, indeed, the core subject matter of Tarin's poetic oeuvre. He dresses in an Islamic mystical garb to his poems and, especially, to those selected for the current research study; therefore, he is an Islamic mystic poet.

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