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Influence of Diverse Mystical Systems based on Hinduism and Islam

Abstract:

Various mystical systems are due to the followers of various cultures all over the world. But the actual panorama of diverse mystical systems is love - a unity transcendent to creed or race. In the human heart, there is love; the love of one Supreme Beauty. It is in this aspect of human aspiration that the thought of different Cultures, of the East and the West, meet on common grounds, as if the human mind in longing to reach its original source, works on the fundamental and common principle of love. It is quite likely that certain similarities also occur even in the diverse mystical systems due to common psychological factors governing the human mind. While the mutual influence as a result of the mystics belonging to different creeds coming into contact with each other cannot be ruled out, it can also be said that the systems are independent of each other and rooted in the cultural beliefs applicable to them. In the present study, an attempt has been made to sum up the Mystical philosophy of two different cultures in subcontinent- the Indo-Pak, and also throw light on the similarities and differences of the Sufism and Vedantism. Common features of love; tolerance, co-existence, communal harmony and universal understanding provide a platform to use unblemished wisdom of diverse mystical systems rather than to live in Religious conflicts.

Keywords: *Mystical system, Hinduism, Vedanta, Cultures, Living, Conflicts, Influence*

MYSTICISM

Mysticism may be defined as universal urge arising in the mind of a human being to establish close relationship with God which overwhelmed all the relational and emotional aspects of his life. Mysticism represents an attitude of mind which is intensely and continuously aware of the unity of all Reality, whether that Reality be called the Divine Essence, the Eternal Wisdom, Unclouded Light, Beauty Supreme, Perfect Love, or simply, God.⁽¹⁾

The object of Mystic's life is to achieve the nearness of God. He sees His reflection in everything of the Universe. His conversation, his actions, his thinking even his whole life revolves around his endeavour for the union of God.

"If one is sincere in his intention, he will find Him". (Rumi)

"Realise your oneness with God, remaining continually intent on identifying with its nature, and joyfully drink the bliss of God within" (Shankara)

What Rumi said in Iran, Shankara expounded in India, and the same was reflected in the European mind. It was the influence of the age that worked on the same basis everywhere. According to the Indian sages each cycle has its own peculiarity, which is not restricted to one country or one Continent, but like the cloud raining on all the places without distinction, benefits all side. It is the same all over the world. The difference in quantity is due to the quality of the soil or the capacity of the people.

The human mind under the influence of each cycle, works in similar directions, which indicates the inner relationship that exists between all human beings. The cause is unknown but the effect is seen. There may be minor differences in detail and expression but the spirit is the same. The variation is due to each Nation's social, cultural, political and moral development and the standard of their intellectual progress.

SUFISM

Believers in Pakistan are divided into two groups. The people, who were overwhelmed by the wisdom, considered that it is enough to follow Shariah (Islamic laws), they took Heaven as their ultimate goal.

But the people who were indulged in Devine love (Ishq), they took Tariqat (path to reach Allah) as compulsion. They believe that If you love God along with obedience He will love you⁽²⁾. Whom He love, His attributes would be reflected in his or her's personality and the reward of this reconciliation is that you might perceive Him"

The people of second community are commonly known as Sufis. So the culture following Sufism gives the concept of Ishq or Tasawwuf. Hence Ishq is the name of extreme desire for the Divine reconciliation or the endeavor of the human soul to merge in the reality. Now the question arises:

How this spirit was developed?

The answer is given by Sufism, that when he (The human being) heard this good news from God: "If you love me I will love you". he believed that his soul is not separate from the "Reality" but infact is the part of Reality. In

other words the soul and the God are same. If there is some difference between the soul and reality the God will not order me to love Him. Thus it proved that soul was once the part of "Unique will".

"Sufism is not a system composed of rules or sciences but a moral disposition; 'Form yourselves on the moral nature of God'; and the moral nature of God cannot be attained either by means of rules or by means of sciences." (3)

After realizing this fact, when he pondered upon his interior he came to know

- 1- His soul itself is craving for the "Unique reality" who is the most beautiful and most complete (Being) in the Universe.
- 2- His soul itself want to be immortal.

Then he firmed on this belief that if God loves me my soul ultimately endeavor for Him. This is the main theme which Reality reveals to him after meditation and observation, and Ishq revolves around this conclusion. To understand this point, Sufism tells us that the animate contact with Divine is vital and the observance of Shariah is the source not the direct contact. It is the primary stage which is vital and beneficial but if a person takes these sources as a goal he could not achieve the goal of reconciliation.

The major objective of Sufism culture is to make contact with God and 'Tariqat' is the path for achieving this goal. With the help of Ishq man finds a way for establishing relations with God to whom he prostrate and worship. Faqih (expert in Islamic Law) says O'Muslim say there is no god but Allah⁽⁴⁾ but the Sufi says that change yourself according to will of Allah in a way that every share of your life should encircled by his will and every strive of yours should be for Him. Your words, your liking, your disliking every action of yours will show your submission before Him. The result of this submission will be that you will find His attributes in yourself His fragrance will come from you. The verbal recitation is not enough the memorization of heart is also necessary. Although man is the combination of material body and self but in reality it is the name of spirit. If the spirit is not purified the verbal co-memorization will be in vain.

In its initial stages Sufism was primarily quietist, rather than a definitely mystical, movement. It represented a reaction against the worldliness and luxury and the external piety of the period which followed the great Muslim conquests. With the passage of time many new tendencies include in Sufi conception yet the main body of Sufi teachings adheres closely to the traditions of Islam. Today Sufism has not stood for a single, uniform mode of thought; it includes many differing shades of belief. In the

passages that follow an attempt will be made to sum up the main trends of Sufi culture in relation to the nature of God and His relation to the universe, the nature of man, the mystic way and the goal to which the way is held to lead.

God for the Sufis is always transcendent as Ghazali declares,
"He oppresses (human) hearts and makes them heavy by revealing to them how unconcerned, exalted and majestic He is, and (then) He delights them by His charitable gifts, kindness and beauty that He brings near to them". (5)

About the way of life, followers of Sufism say:

"Love one another for God's sake, the love of God is the supreme actuating force of Sufi and their burning desire is to be united, or rather reunited with him". (6)

According to Al Muhasibi,

"The sign of love to God is love of all that he loves, and it must find its expression in dealing with his creatures in that spirit of compassion in which he himself with them". God only desires their hearts from His servants (7)

Ghazzali emphasize the same fact as define,

"It is the essential nature of Sufism to abide continuously in God and to live at peace with men;" kindness is the quality of a Sufi..."in your dealings with others, treat them as you would wish them to treat you".

As ghazali said,

"We say- and in God is our trust Praise be-longeth unto God, the Beginner, the Bringer-back, the Doer of what He willeth, the Lord of the Glorious Throne and of Mighty Grasp, the Guider of His chosen creatures to the right path and to the true way, the Granter of benefits to them after the witness to the Unity (tawhid) by guarding their articles of belief from obscurities of doubt and op position."(8)

Union with God is both a present fact of experience and the goal of life for all mystics. And so it is the true way of life for the mystic to find God in all things, and to manifest the divine in sharing the life of his fellows. In the words of Abu said,

"The true saint goes in and out amongst the people, and eats and sleeps with them and sells in the market, and marries and takes part in social inter course, and never forgets God for a single moment"

VEDANTISM

For in Indian culture, Mystical experience holds a central place. According to C.F Andrew,

"When I went deep into the heart of India I found the whole emphasis to be laid on the realization of God within the soul."

The content of the Vedic scriptures is regarded by the adepts of the Indian cultures as the fruit of a direct verbalization, or sruti, in the form of words embodying the eternal Truth. This eternal Truth cannot change; it is the sacred knowledge (Veda means "Knowledge") that was to dominate the whole cultural, religious, moral, and social life of India from the beginning of time until today by the permanence of its tradition throughout the development of different communities to which it was to give birth and by whatever name it might be given. It is a rare occurrence in the history of mankind to find such a continuity underlying the development of a civilization.

Vedas represent the mystical insight of Rishis (whom the Vedas supposedly were revealed) who sought ultimate Reality through their meditations. Many people consider them the cream of Indian mystical thought as Prof. Royce wrote in his book , " The man and the Universe"

"It is the highest spiritual literature ever written"

All the thought of the Vedantisim move around two fundamental ideas. These are the Brahman (the Supreme Power) and the Atman (Self). The main purport of Vedanta is that Brahman alone is real and the whole world of appearance is unreal.⁽⁹⁾ Brahman signifies the ultimate Reality which we call God, the power , manifested in the whole universe . Atman came to mean spirit or self the ultimate essence in men. Vedantism sole fundamental thought consists in this, Truly the Brahman is the Atman.

"Abiding firmly in the experience of pure Brahman-Self, one finds that the mind and all its confabulations are lost for ever."⁽¹⁰⁾

This is to say, the power which presents itself to us materialized in all existing things, which creates, sustains, preserves, this eternal infinite divine power is identical with the individual self. We discover in ourselves as our real most essential being, our individual self, the soul. This identity of the Brahman and the Atman, of God and the soul is the fundamental thought of the entire doctrine of Indian Culture.

Rishis explain this relationship in this way

" In the beginning there was existence alone one only, without a second. He, the one thought to himself: Let me be many, let

me grow forth. Thus out of himself he projected the universe, and having projected out of himself the universe, he entered into every being. All that is has its self in him alone. Of all things he is the subtle essence He is the truth he is the self."

Yet for the Indian mysticism followers God is essentially transcendent, He is eternal without beginning or end, greater than the great, changeless (Katha Upanishad). It is for this reason He is ineffable no words or thoughts are adequate to express the supreme mystery of His being. Words and thoughts turn back from Him, and find Him not.

The central teachings of Vedantism are summarize in these verses.

- ☆ Truth is one; Sages call it in various names.
- ☆ In this universe the Brahman is the only reality and he is one only without a second.
- ☆ Salutation to the ultimate Reality Para Brahamn from whom has sprung all that is, in whom all things have their being and to whom everything returns in the end to be one with him.
- ☆ Truth or God is one our real nature is divine the purpose of our life is to realize the one in our own soul There are innumerable spiritual paths, All leading to this realization of divinity.
- ☆ He is the light of lights, His radiance illuminate all this world.
- ☆ The one God is hidden in all beings, he is the all pervading, all filling inner self of all beings, the overseer of all activities.

The goal of Vedantism is not to lose our individuality, but to find it in the eternal life of God.

While discussing the way which leads men to the goal, It offers a synthesis which speaks of three paths the path of knowledge (jnana-marga), the path of work (karma-marga), and the path of love and devotion (bhakti-marga). As a mean to this attainment Vedantism recommends the practice of yoga method of mental training.

"The method is self mastery and concentration of the mind on God. Motionless like the light of a lamp in a windless place is the controlled consciousness of the yogis, who practices union with the self ... When the mind is thoroughly quieted, then there comes upon the yogis, in whom passion is appeased, the bliss of the soul that has become Brahman. Thus freed from the stain of passion, and putting himself constantly in to yoga, the yogi easily and happily enjoys the touch of Brahman, which is an exceeding bliss".

According to Indian Mysticism not only the actions that bind us to

rebirth but the desires also and a true sannyasy (life stage of renunciation) is he who neither hates nor desire. The right way of life lies in the spirit of detachment and disinterestedness, and in the surrender of ourselves and all our actions to God. Such surrender is the outcome of devotion. Devotion may exist on different levels, but it purify the soul, and prepares the way for the union.

In short Indian Mysticism teaches to its followers that the whole act of living is to be turned in to a continuous union-a continuous offering of the self to God

"To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me"⁽¹¹⁾

They dwell in God by the whole endeavour of their lives, and God dwells in them as the ruling power of all their actions.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN SUFISM AND VEDANTISM

The Sufism and vedantism both have similarities on the following points.

- ☆ Sufism and Vedantism both observe the restraining of breath, Meditation and Zikr or recitation of sacred words. {12} They all are stations of the purgative life and led a mystic finally towards the ecstatic contemplation of God. Practice of meditation has great importance which drawn a mystic near to God, and recollection or Zikr is considered as the gravest duty and this duty is fulfilled by the repetition of the names of God. At this stage a mystic forget his self. Thus recollection merges into contemplation, or absorption in the consciousness of God.
- ☆ Both observe service and submission to a pir or Guru: A Novice must treat his spiritual teacher with great respect and obey him like corpse in the hands of corpse bearers. This spiritual teacher is called guru in Hindi language means "the venerable" or the one who leads the disciple out of the darkness of ignorance. He or She does so not by academic teaching but by enlightened, According to Rama Krishna "Anyone and everyone can not be a guru. A huge timber floats on the water and can carry animals as well. But a piece of worthless wood Sinks, if a man sits on it, and drowns him" In Sufism, also the path of Tariqat can achieve with the help of pir or Sheikh. The seeker receives instruction from him on conduct, control over passion and inner purity. It is the duty of a seeker to observe the rules of his pir such as service, humility, and vigils in vacations and occasional fasts as directed by his

pir without any argument, doubt or hesitation.

- ☆ Both observe fast and penance: Penance or repentance is considered as the first step in the way that leads to God {13}. Both Vedantism and Sufism observe fast and penance. Penance is the act of returning it comprises three things.

1. Remorse for disobedience
2. Immediate abandonment of sin
3. Determination not to sin again.

- ☆ Both believe in the toleration of other beliefs and universal love. A Sindhi Sufi, named Shah Abdul Latif, says: "When the truth is one and the beloved is the same why should men light over the means?" In the words of Ibn-Arabi "My heart has become capable of every form. It is a pasture for guzzle and a Convent for Christian monks, And a temple for idols and the Pilgrims Kaba.

- ☆ Both believe in the two aspects of the Supreme Being. Both recognize the immanence and the transcendence of God at one and the same time, and express this in their doctrine.

The mystical morality is based in universal love. According to a mystic "It is the outcome of the Unity which binds man to his fellow-creatures.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUFISM VEDANTISM

- ☆ Yougi and Sufis both believe in ascetic life But Sufis ascetics with few exceptions, do not live celibacy; In Vedantism the ideal Sannyasi is he, who cuts himself adrift from the world but the Sufism feels that man's life in society and the family has a rightful place in spiritual growth.
- ☆ Sufism is based on Islamic teaching and its Principles are supported by Passages from the Quran, while Vedantism is connected with earlier Indian thought and teaching of the great Rishis of India.
- ☆ The knowable and unknowable aspects of deity are divided in India into Murta and Amurta of Saguna and Nirguna; among the Sufis, it is called the Utter darkness and Tayyunai, limitation of emanation, the manifested aspect of the Supreme Being.
- ☆ Though both Sufis and Yogis have recourse to devotional exercise and Asan or postures, the postures are different in form and practice.
- ☆ Sufism is a mixture of Aryan-Semitic spiritual ideals, while the Vedanitsm is purely Aryan.

CONCLUSION

The Sufi passes through several states of mind (ahwal), and halts at many stations of disposition (maqmat), including enraptures mental

phenomena at times leading to paradoxes and deranged utterance enable him to qualify himself with the qualities of God. It is true that certain Sufi practices like the world denial, meditation involving physical austerity, holding of breath in contemplation etc., resemble the mystical activity of the Christian ascetics and Hindu yogis.; and the doctrine of divine love, self annihilation and subsistence in God advocated by Rabia (1801 A.D.) and Abu Yazid (1874 A.D.) bear resemblance with the Vedantic philosophy.

The major teachings of the Vedanta is a true doctrine of pure metaphysics, one of the most tremendous philosophical conceptions to which the mind of man has risen, the Vedanta opens unlimited possibilities for the speculations of the spirit. It is not a closed system; quite the contrary. Its perspective range through the Universal and the Infinite. The basis of the doctrine is still the concept of Unity, the Unity of spiritual reality, and the relations between the Supreme Self, or Brahman, and the individual self, or atman.

While quoting instances of similarity in the two systems S.A.A.Rizvi has cited a most pertinent passage from the Sanskrit philosophical work namely "Yoga Vashista":

"Salutations to the ultimate Reality Brahama from whom has Sprung all that is, in whom all things have their being and to whom everything Returns in the end to be one with Him. Salutation to Brahama whose essence is Knowledge eternal, the substratum that Lies under the knowledge, the process of Knowing and the knower, the visible the Vision and the seer doing the final cause And the doer". (14)

In the writer's view the similarities between the doctrine of the Unity of being of Ibne Arabi and the Vedantic philosophy were so conspicuous that a staunch critic of Ibne Arabi like Mujaddid Alfethani was of the opinion that the doctrine was introduced by Greek philosophers and yogis. The two mystical systems tend the individuals to unite the various sectarians with the concept of being the part of one universal system by giving the message of unity, peace and harmony transcendent to creed, lineage or religion. There may be some differences in detail, in language, in expression, in description, but in the main principle, all are united as drops of one Ocean. All are seekers of God and the ways leading to Him are Many. Resemblances in diverse Mystical systems prove that the ultimate impact of Mysticism is the unconditional love to all mankind. Whether its Sufism or Vedantism, it was never about the preaching and escalating of single religion or belief, it is the message of mystic unity of all humanity.

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