

The Shared Beauties of Sufi & Yogi Vision



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Table of Contents

Mysticism	03
Mysticism in Islam (Sufism)	04
The Sufi Yogi Introvert Mystical Experience	05
The Sufi Yogi Devotional Mystical Experience	09
The Sufi Yogi Extrovert Mystical Experience	12
Death as the Everlasting Life - A Sufi Yogi Approach	14
Mysticism and Global Peace	19
References	20

Mysticism

While studying any theory of religious experience, mystical experience has to be taken into account as one of the very important aspects of the religious experience of humankind. If we confine mysticism to the peak religious experience of the mankind, we shall find that it consists of the response of our entire personality; its will, intellect and devotion to the Supreme Reality of the universe, which is absolutely recognized as the source and ground of our being. Hence, mystical experience is the sense of the presence of the Supreme Reality (God) all around and within us, and also a desire to hold communion with Him. This communion develops into the unison experience in some eminent and purified mystical souls.

In its nature, mysticism is the immediate feeling of the unity of the self with the Supreme Reality (God). Nevertheless, mysticism is the fundamental feeling of Religion and religious life at its very heart and centerⁱ. As a unison experience, mysticism is a direct experience in which all distinctions are transcended, including that of the subject and the object. Mysticism has been fairly a frequent phenomenon in the history of both Philosophy and Religion. At one end, the mystical experience just intensifies the central feelings of the peak religious experience of the founder of the religion while at the other end we can regard it as the inevitable revival stage in the history of every movement of thought that loses contact with its vital founding impulse.

Since a spiritual experience is based upon the inner demand of a personality to develop communion with the Supreme Reality of the universe therefore the prime focus of such experience is the Supreme Union, not the stereotype performing of religious rituals. In that way a mystic tradition in a religion seems deviating from the fundamental scriptures and practices of the religion. On the other hand different mystical traditions in the world religions have amazing similarities of thought and shared beauties of practice despite having great differences of time and space. This characteristic of mysticism can be explained by the same genuine inner longing of different personalities in different world religions to undergo the same process of accomplishment with the same development of thought and practice. By this means mysticism can genuinely be seen as making the core of the world religions with incredible potential of peace building within diverse societies around the globe.

If we study the practical aspects of Religion, we find it imperative for human lives in two ways. Although both the aspects are different and distinctive in their nature yet they show close similarity and connection at numerous occasions. The first aspect of Religion belongs to the collective sense of society in which it provides strong basis to the unity and distinctiveness of a particular group of people. This individuality develops a collective sense of integrity for a religious group by means of the joint religious functions. It is the collective sense of distinctiveness, which in its intense examples, produces differentiation and separation and instigates religious fundamentalism and extremism.

The second aspect of Religion belongs to the inner life of the individuals, which arouses on to one's soul as a great intuitive force and dignified spiritual wisdom.

This is such a wonderful experience that it really gratifies the innermost and unconscious needs of a personality. Mysticism belongs to the second aspect of religion which demands purification and perfection of human soul and in this regard Mysticism is a common property of all religions. Apart from the more distinct cases of mystical experience, it can clearly be established that all the genuinely religious persons enjoy some kind of mystical experience (in the form of a deep consciousness of God's presence and the longing of the soul to access Him).

Mysticism in Islam (Sufism)

In Islamic terminology the word Sufi is used for a mystic, which is most likely to be derived from the Arabic word "soof", meaning wool. This is because of the Sufi habit of wearing woolen coats, a designation of their initiation into the Sufi order. The early Sufi orders considered the wearing of this coat as a resemblance to Isa Ibne Maryam (Jesus Christ). Ibne Taymiyyah quotes: "There are people who have chosen and preferred the wearing of woolen clothes, claiming that they want to resemble al-Maseeh ibne Maryam (Jesus Christ). Sufism is known as "Islamic Mysticism," in which Muslims seek to find divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of Godⁱⁱ.

Sufism is defined as the experience of mystical union or direct communion with Allah, the Ultimate Reality of the universe, with a belief that the direct knowledge of the realities of man and the universe can be attained through a subjective experience (as intuition or insight) and such an experience can establish a direct relation between the man and the Almighty which can triumph the entire human life. During the primary stages of Sufism, Sufis were characterized by their particular attachment to Zikr (remembrance of Allah) and asceticism (seclusion), as well as the beginning of innovated practices to make religious practices more productive in transcending towards the spiritual destiny. Yet even at the early stage of Sufism, before the maturity of the particular Sufi doctrines and structured orders, the orthodox Islamic scholars strictly opposed to this 'foreign' religious element in the structure of Islamⁱⁱⁱ.

By educating the masses and deepening the spiritual concerns of the Muslims, Sufism has played an important role in the formation of Muslim society. Apparently opposed to the unexciting strictness of the lawyer-divines (Shari'ah), the mystics however, carefully observed the commands of the Islamic law (Shari'ah). The introduction of the element of divine love, which changed plainness of orthodox Islamic decree into resourceful mysticism, is ascribed to Rabe'ah al-Adawiyah (died 801), a woman from Basra, who first formulated the Sufi ideal of unconditional devotion to God, without hope for paradise and without fear of hell. In the decades after Rabe'ah Basri, mystical trends grew everywhere in the Islamic world, partly through an exchange of ideas with Christian hermits^{iv}. A number of mystics in the early generations had concentrated their efforts upon *tawakkul*, absolute trust in God, which became a central concept of Sufism. At the same time the concept of divine love became more central, especially among the Iraqi Sufis. Its main representatives are Nuri, who offered his life for his brethren, and Sumnun "the Lover".

Sufi thought was, in these early centuries, transmitted in small circles. Some of the *Shaykhs* (Sufi mystical leaders or guides of such circles) were also artisans. In the tenth century, it was supposed necessary to write handbooks about the tenets of Sufism in order to ease the growing suspicions of the orthodox. The abstracts were composed in Arabic by Abu Talib Makki, Sarraj, Kalabadhi and Qushayri in the late tenth century, and in Persian by Ali Hajveri in the eleventh century reveal how these authors tried to defend Sufism and to prove its orthodox character. It should be noted that the mystics belonged to all schools of Islamic law and theology of the times^v.

The last great figure in the line of classical Sufism is Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (died 1111), who wrote, among numerous other works, the *Ehya e Uloom ud-din* ("The Revival of the Religious Sciences"), a comprehensive work that established moderate Sufism against the growing theosophical trends, which tended to compare God and the world and thus shaped the thought of millions of Muslims. His younger brother, Ahmad al-Ghazali, wrote one of the subtlest treatises (*Sawanih*; "Occurrences" [stray thoughts]) on mystical love, a subject that then became the main subject of Persian poetry^{vi}.

The Sufi Yogi Introvert Mystical Experience

The transcendence of the ultimate Reality to the world of multiplicity, as well as to the subject of experience, is more fully realized in the Sufi's introvert experience than in the unifying vision of the extrovert Sufi. At first sight it seems self-contradictory that the experience, which affirms the unity of our innermost self with the Supreme Reality, also affirms the transcendence of all else by that Reality. Here comes the basic difference between the Sufi's introvert and extrovert experience.

Sufis were confronted by strict Islamic lawyer-divines (Shari'ah) that based itself on the concrete basis of Quranic insistence on God's unity and uniqueness. But the Quran has also proclaimed the nearness of God to man, and His intimate sure knowledge of man's heart,^{vii} which could imply God's immanence therein. So, the Sufi experience transcended the meaning of the religious texts in a masterly way to suit the depth and intensity of the mystic's inner experience. Entire Sufi mysticism cannot be characterized as monistic, but there is a definite tendency in most of the eminent Sufis towards a monistic interpretation of the universe and Sufi experience.

It was left for Ibne Arabi to develop a monistic worldview of a unique combination of the testimony of mystical experience and certain texts of the Quran. However, even Ibne Arabi is not as thoroughly a monistic as appears at first. His perfect man (*Insan e Kamil*) is a connecting link between the finite and the Infinite; but at the same time the very need of a connecting link dilutes the initial monism. Also, the creature is always distinguished from the Creator, the lover from the Beloved. It is true that in the unison experience the distinction is transcended, but it seems to be more a description of an existential state, than an enunciation of any ontological truth.

This is truer of other Sufis like Mansoor al Hallaj, who died for claiming, 'I am the Truth', affirmed an initial difference between the two, which is never fully transcended, not even in the state of liberation.^{viii} Jalaludin Rumi, on the other hand, seems to affirm an actual unification. The 'I' and the 'Thou' become one spirit^{ix} in the experience of *ittihad* (oneness), says Rumi. And yet, Rumi's general philosophy and approach can hardly be called monistic in the strict sense of the term. We have seen earlier how al Farid felt himself totally one with his Beloved, so that no distinction remained between the two. The most recurring statement in his work is to the effect that in the unison state he became his Beloved, and realized that the lover and the Beloved are one in essence.^x

The experience of *ittihad* can be explained either existentially or ontologically; that is, either as a reliable report of what the Sufi felt in his unison state, or as implying the ontological oneness of the soul and God. Most of the mystical utterances of the Sufis are better understood from the existential or rather experiential point of view. Take for example, Abu Yazid (Ba-yazid) who is famous, or rather infamous, for his monistic utterances. He claimed to have realized a complete identity between himself and God, so that he could exclaim, 'Glory be to me, (*Subhani*)'. His mystical utterances confuse ignorant critics like R.C. Zachner. But all that he is claiming is an experience of being unified with, or transmuted into, God. Farid ud Din Attar in his famous poem, *Mantiq al Tayr*, describes how the birds (seekers of God) reached their destination and were confused when they found that there was no distinction between the King, they were in search of, and themselves.^{xi} Not a single of these mystical utterances is made independently of the mystical experience of unity (*ittihad*). That means, they are not meant to enunciate ontological matters, but only to express the innermost experience of Sufi mystics.

But all experience, even the every day one, is inexplicable without some pre-suppositions of an ontological nature. Most Sufis explained the unison experience on a Platonic type of theory. It was argued that the soul existed before its creation as an eternal idea in the Wisdom of God or Logos, often described as the Spirit of Muhammad (PBUH). As such, man was very near to God, a part of His Consciousness or Knowledge before he was born. His mundane existence separates him from God and the mystic goal is, therefore, to seek to regain his previous status as an idea in God's Knowledge (*ilm*). Man's existence, thus, is not outside God. God's immanence in the soul was also recognized by most of the Sufis. The necessity of introversion of consciousness in order to realize God was repeatedly asserted, thus implying that the goal or the Beloved is within us.^{xii}

Most Sufis make a distinction between the lower individual self (*nafs*) and the spirit (*Rooh*), which is of the Divine essence, or is in some way a spark of God planted in the soul.^{xiii} Sufis are not always self-consistent, as is the case with all the mystics of the world. But the recognition of this *Rooh* or spirit, as distinct from the individual soul (*nafs*), the practice of speaking of it in singular,^{xiv} coupled with the exultant expressions of the experience of oneness, would suggest that Sufism is not a mere description of unison experience, but implies an ontology which seeks to assert the essential unity of, or at least a very deep affinity between, the soul and God. The orthodox training was too strong even for the Sufis. Therefore, such

rational devices, as the theory of the soul being an idea in God's Wisdom, or the Perfect Man being the essence of all those who have realized God, were adopted. But doctrines hardly ever do full justice to the spirit of religion, much less of mystical experience. Even then, if we wanted to point out the essence of the entire Sufi theory and experience, it would seem to be that God being the only Reality, every thing else is either non-existent, or in some way a manifestation of God.^{xv}

Whatever language the Sufi chooses to speak, so long as he is true to his inner experience, the purport of all his utterances may be summed up as: (a) God's presence within the soul, (b) a certain affinity between the soul and God (variously experienced and expressed) and (c) God's being the very Essence or ground of man's being. There is a definite affinity between one's being and the Cause or Ground of one's being, that without which we would become naught. But the latter, for that very reason, can never be equated to the former. Like Islam, while studying introvert mysticism in Christianity, we come to know that God's indwelling the soul is universally recognized not only by the mystics proper,^{xvi} but also by all profounder religious souls. But the introvert mystic seeks to assert something more than this, when he proclaims the essential identity or unity between the soul and God. It was easier for Hindu mystics to do this as they were corroborated by their own texts.

When we seek introvert mysticism in Hinduism we find that the Eternal and the Infinite is often realized in contradistinction to the temporal and finite. But it is never experienced as a 'wholly other'. The mystical experience, at least of introvert mystics, proclaims, if not identifies, essential affinity or unity of the individual soul with the Divine Soul. Indian mystic philosophers are outspoken in this field. The four sentences of the Upanisads, supposed to contain their basic and highest teachings, proclaim this identity in unmistakable terms.^{xvii} The individual soul is of the essence of the *Atman* and the *Atman* is the same as *Brahman* or the ultimate Reality of the world. The way to the Salvation (*Moksa*) is through the realization of the truth of the one self in all. When the soul de-identifies itself from its limited ego-centered existence, it realizes its divinity. This unison state is described in the Upanisads as one beyond all distinctions and relations, including those of the subject and the object. In a famous passage Yajnavalkya denies all experience of diversity in the unison state because, "When every thing has become the self what should one know and through what... through what my dear should one know the Knower?"^{xviii}

The *Kena Upanisad* expresses this truth by an apparent contradiction — "He who knows *Brahman* does not know It, whereas he who does not know It knows it."^{xix} It is so, as those who are vain enough to talk of their knowledge of *Brahman* are still on the level of what Bertrand Russell has called knowledge by description. But those who have reached the level of knowledge by acquaintance know *Brahman* directly, without any mediation of conceptual categories; rather, they know it by, in some way, becoming one with It. Thus, the knower of *Brahman* himself 'becomes' *Brahman*.^{xx}

There is a suggestion of both transcendence and mystery in this conception of the ultimate Reality, as well as its correlative concept of unison experience as beyond all distinctions. But it is to be noted that the describability of the *Atman-Brahman* is denied, not because of Its wholly other character but because It is our very Self. The Self cannot be described, as it is the presupposition of all knowledge and experience. It is the basic assumption of knowledge that can neither be questioned nor proved, It being the Self of even one who would deny it.”^{xxi} At the same time, this Self is no subjective, finite, individual entity, but the universal, infinite Reality. The idea is carried to its logical conclusion by Samkara who denies the separate existence of the individual soul altogether.^{xxii} Instead of proclaiming an ontological identity of the individual finite self (*jiva*) with the Infinite, he explains this finite self as a complex, (albeit illusory), of two elements, the pure Universal Consciousness which is common to all and the individuating intellect and ego. The relation between the two elements is variously explained in Advaitic treatises, the details of which need not be gone into here. But it must be kept in mind that when the Advaitin talks of the identity of the *Atman* with *Brahman*, it is the aspect of pure Universal Consciousness within the soul that he is referring to and not finite individual soul.

Other thinkers, as Ramanuja and Vallabha, without going to the above extreme, proclaim an intimate relation between God and the soul. Ramanuja explains the relation as that between the soul and the body, the subject and its predicates, the whole and its parts. All these analogies are meant to enunciate (a) the immanence of God in the soul and the world, (b) the essential affinity of the two, (c) an inseparable relation between them and (d) a one way dependence of the soul on God. The Upanisadic text about the Inner Controller (*Antaryamin*)^{xxiii} expresses the entire Ramanujist approach in a nutshell.

Theoretically, Samkara’s monism is quite different from other interpretations of Vedanta but there is a basic similarity of approach; Samkara often explains the relation between *Brahman* and the individual soul on the one hand and the universe on the other, as that of inseparability (*ananyatvam*). He explains the term, *ananya*, thus—”When a thing cannot exist apart from something else, it is said to be non-separate from the latter.”^{xxiv} Not only all the mystics, but all men of religion would agree as to the truth that the finite world of things and beings has no being apart from the ‘One’. When the mystic affirms identity with, or better, non-separability (*ananyatvam*) from, the ‘One,’ he means to express the same truth that the ‘One’ is the very essence of his being and that he does not exist apart from the ‘One’. The metaphysical assertion as to one’s identity with the universal Reality must be understood in the above context.

During the Bhakti period the truth of God indwelling the soul is universally recognized. It is the constant refrain of all Kabir’s songs. Man is like the legendary deer who searches for the musk everywhere, while all the time it lies hidden within him. The path of Self-realization is as tough as a razor’s blade, says the Upanisad.^{xxv} It is indeed, as he mostly relies on his own powers to extricate himself from all falsehood and realize the Truth. This is to be sharply distinguished from the devotional mystic’s heavy reliance on God’s grace. Thus, the introvert mystic’s attitude towards the Deity is marked by a deliberate transcendence of emotions.

The Sufi Yogi Devotional Mystical Experience

In contrast, the mystics of the emotional type prefer a more intimate and personal concept of the Divine Reality. The deciding factor in their case is not philosophical consistency, but emotional satisfaction. The emotional need of the Sufi leads him to a more personal concept of God, which in turn gives rise to a more personal and intimate mystical experience. This brings us to a third type, Devotional Mysticism, commonly known as theistic mysticism in the West.^{xxvi} The name is justified by the stress laid on emotional response to God in such a mystical experience. It compares well with our other category of introvert Sufism, with its greater emphasis on introvert or intellectual cognition. The devotional or theistic mysticism upholds the existential duality of the soul and God and its corollary, the transcendence of God.

When we study devotional Sufism, we find a striking similarity of approach and emotional tone between it and Yogi - Bhakti mysticism. The same inner logic of mystical experience seems to be at work here, leading the mystic from the rational affirmation of the otherness and transcendence of God to the experience of final unity in the state of *fana*. It is important to understand that Sufis started with a more or less definite philosophy. The emotional approach of love or yearning is more primary or basic than the speculative one in Sufism, so that it is difficult to distinguish between the introvert and theistic types of mysticism within Sufism. In fact, a study of Sufism demonstrates the futility of such superficial distinctions. Sufi love is so intense, one pointed and all absorbing that it naturally undermines the distinction between the lover and the Divine Beloved, which is initially presumed in the relation of love. As the love grows intenser, the consciousness of one's separate existence fades more and more in the background, the center being occupied by the consciousness of the Divine Beloved only. Most of the Sufis, thus, prefer to describe their unison experience in terms of unity, rather than union. Unison experience, even when arrived at through the path of love, tends to transcend all distinctions of 'I' and 'Thou'.

And yet, while almost all the Sufis affirm a loss of individual consciousness in the unison state, the description is mostly in terms of experience and need not imply a denial of distinction between the Creator and the creature at the ontological level. Even the more orthodox al Ghazali explained the mystical union in terms of experiential, though not ontological identity.^{xxvii} Thus, *Sufism* like Yogi-Bhakti mysticism both affirms and yet transcends the otherness of God in mystical union. This would suggest that the otherness of God to the soul may be required for devotion or love of God, but it is very much reconcilable to the essential affinity or even unity of the two.

The supreme desire of a Sufi is meeting God and thus God is the supreme Object of desire and love, the Beloved *par excellence*. The Sufi *isqa* is very near to the Hindu *prema* of God, and seems to require both God's otherness as well as His personal Being. Sufis liberally used the terminology of conjugal love, adopted legendary love stories and freely used analogies from mundane love in order to express the love and yearning of the soul for God. Behind this free use of the analogy of mundane love lies the Sufi faith that all love is essentially one, whether directed

to God or another human being. Slowly it came to pass that Sufis were talking of the face (*rukh*) and tresses (*zulf*) of the Beloved. Attempts were made, to interpret these terms in a spiritual sense. Whatever that may be, the use of terms and analogies taken from mundane love implies that even the love of the Divine is a personal relation, needing a personal Object of love.

Allah of the *Quran* is a truly transcendent God to whom even the application of the term Father is deprecated. But at the same time, in certain passages of the *Quran* Allah is described in frankly anthropomorphic terms. Though the Quranic theologians strive hard to explain away such passages, it may well indicate the need of the human mind to conceive the Divine in terms familiar to man, so that he can establish a personal relation with Him. Sufis only expressed the same need of the human mind in a bolder form when they conceived Allah as the Beloved. Even the Sufis, like Mansoor al Hallaj and Ba Yazid, who do not use the love language of the later Sufis, report in detail their dialogue with God. God is a 'Thou' to them, a living Presence. In most of the Sufis the mystery of the Transcendent is somehow preserved along with the affirmation of Him as the Beloved.^{xxviii} That may mean that God is not personal in any determinate sense and the use of the term Beloved for Him mainly signifies God's being the supreme Object of love, the Goal of the soul's yearning, as also in some sense God's being loving or love itself.

For Ibne Arabi love expresses the Divine Essence itself. Not only God is the supreme Object of love, God is himself Love. This Love or Essence of God indwells the human heart, so that, that which turns lovingly towards God, is the Divine Essence itself. In his own words, "Were it not for love (residing in the heart), Love (God) would not be worshipped."^{xxix} Here Sufis are pointing out a profound truth of religious experience, that love of God implies a God of love. All that a man of religion means by the personality of God is the character of God as Love or Grace itself. A man can fear or obey God, but cannot love Him unless he is convinced of God's prior love for man.^{xxx}

Later Sufis, notable among them Mohammad Ibne Arabi, developed an intricate doctrine of Muhammad (PBUH) as the Word (Logos) of God. Logos is the creative, animating, rational Principle within God and contains all the ideas of existing and potential things. Logos is the Principle through which the Absolute manifests Itself. Sufi mystics identify Logos with the eternal Spirit of Muhammad (PBUH). Yet this Logos or the eternal Spirit of Muhammad (PBUH) is no separate person in God, but identical with Him. The Perfect Man combines in him the eternal Spirit of Muhammad (PBUH) and its manifestation on earth as the prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Still the Sufi concept of Perfect Man is not the same as that of Christ, the latter being a distinct person, which the former is not. Only the inner logic, the need for a supreme personal being as an object of one's love, is the same in both. The profounder religious experience of the Sufis could not always maintain a distinction between the Spirit of Muhammad (PBUH) and Allah. The Divine 'She' of the *Taiyyatul Kubra* is said to be the Spirit of Muhammad (PBUH). But the entire poem can be better appreciated if the referent of the term 'She' is understood as the ultimate Divine Being Himself. Thus, neither the Christian mystics nor the Sufis could always maintain the distinction between the Godhead and the Logos posited

in their creed. In the unison experience, wherein even the distinction between the subject and the Object is lost, the distinction between different Aspects or Persons within the one God could hardly be preserved.

Within Hinduism, Bhakti movement expresses the theistic or devotional mysticism at its best. Though it was divided into different schools or sects, purporting to follow different interpretations of Vedanta, (Advaita, Visisthadvaita etc.), basically the general ontology, as well as devotional approach, are the same in all the sects. The Bhakti mystics never bothered about ontological intricacies, their sole concern being the love of God. Their approach was existential and emotional and above all direct. They wanted to 'meet' God not only without intermediary, but also without any encumbering ontological or theological beliefs. Very generally speaking, their ontology includes the otherness and transcendence of God, the concept of a personal God Who is an object of love and devotion, the concept of union with God as the aim of mystical path and its natural corollary, the affinity between the soul and God.

Also generally speaking, we may say that the general ontology of the Bhakti mystics is more or less the same as that of the *Bhagavadgita*. Its simple ontology, with its concept of a personal God and that of the soul as an aspect (*amsa*) of God, is best suited to the development of an attitude of devotion and love towards God. A part is existentially distinct from the whole and yet derives its being from, and is thoroughly dependent upon, the whole. The whole, being more primary, basic and even transcendent, can be an adequate object of love and devotion of the part. Ramanuja's philosophy is more or less a development of this basic idea of the existential distinction between the soul and God and the basic dependence of the former on the latter. All the Bhakti saints of medieval India almost universally accept the ontological scheme of the *Bhagavadgita* and Ramanuja with minor variations.

Generally, there was no attempt at speculation about the ontological nature of the soul. The soul was referred to mostly from an existential or psychological point of view, that is, as a subject of experience, the devotee's main interest being God and God alone. Whether the devotee loved God in the spirit of *dasa bhakti* (the devotion of a slave), or that of *prema* (conjugal love), the otherness of God was implicitly accepted. In the former case not only the otherness of God, but even a gulf between the two was recognized. The experience and agony of separation from God is the recurring theme of Bhakti mysticism. The mythological stories of *gopis* (milk maids) and their frustrated love for Krisna were appropriated to express the love and yearning of the soul for God. The emphasis on *viraha* (separation) in Bhakti literature would seem to point to the gulf between the soul and God, which the devotee seeks to overcome, but does not always succeed to do so. At the same time, *bhakti* or love of God, which essentially consists in a hankering for God, implies a certain affinity between the two, as one can hardly wish to be united with a 'wholly other' God.

Different schools or traditions differently conceived the union. Often there was a preference for the continuation of duality, that is, preservation of the individuality of the soul during both the states of unison experience and *Moksa* or Liberation. Caitanya, one of the most passionate of medieval mystics, conceived the final goal

as a state wherein the soul would enjoy the company of God as a friend and servant. The goal of mystical life was usually understood to be union (*Milan*) with God, which was variously explained as being near God, or becoming like Him etc. Love seems to need two, the lover and the Beloved. Mira is another instance of such love. She loved Krishna with the passionate and one pointed love of a devoted spouse and repeatedly called Him to come to her. It was union, and not identification, with her Beloved that she hankered after. Tukarama rejected the idea of identity. He quipped, "What shall I do of *Moksa* wherein all distinction between the soul and God is obliterated and hence all joy of loving one's Beloved?"^{xxxii} A distinction was often made between *Moksa* (Liberation) as Self-realization, as conceived in Advaita, and *Moksa* as union with God. For the devotee mystic, the latter was more desirable. Tukarama says at another place that for the sake of one glimpse of his Beloved, he would readily 'kick' (abandon) *Moksa*.^{xxxiii}

This distinction seems to correspond well with the division between introvert and theistic mysticism by some Western thinkers. But in the case of Indian mystics this may not be taken as final. True, a devotee at first wants only the vision of God (*darsan*), which is quite a dualistic term. But as it happens, once the vision of God is achieved, the soul is overwhelmed by it and is so absorbed in what it encounters, that it loses itself therein completely. Once the experience of union is realized, the same Tukarama is baffled, for he finds now that all old relations have become meaningless. Even worship is impossible, as all means of worship have become identical with Him. In another very expressive *abhang*a Tukarama expresses union experience as follows: "Deep has called unto deep and all things have vanished into unity. The waves and the ocean have become one."^{xxxiv} Though expressed in a typical mystical language, the idea is very clear. It is not ontological identity that is being affirmed, but experiential unity. As far as this union experience is concerned, they do not mince words in affirming the total loss of one's individuality therein. A popular legend tells us how Mira was absorbed bodily into the image of Lord Krishna. The legend itself may be untrue, but it is significant, as it tells us how even in the popular imagination the culmination of mystical path consists in one's absorption into the Unity.

The Sufi Yogi Extrovert Mystical Experience

Sufism emphasized early its freedom against a relatively strict theology. That's why it could spontaneously affirm the universal presence of God in every being and everything. The mystic's unifying vision is to be distinguished from the seemingly similar vision of a poet or an artist. The former not only sees the multiplicity as somehow one, he connects it up with the one spiritual reality; the unity of the multiple world being due to the fact of its being derived form, and dependent upon, the 'One':

"She appeared in phenomena. They supposed that these (phenomena) were other than She, whilst it was She that displayed herself therein."

"She showed herself by veiling herself in them and She was hidden by the objects in which she was manifested, assuming tints of diverse hues in every appearance."^{xxxv}

There is no need to negate the world of multiplicity in order to reach the 'One'. The 'One' does not deny the many, but is both veiled and manifested therein. In a rather rare passage the Quran tells us, "Wherever ye turn, there is the face of Allah".^{xxxv} For the Sufi mystic this becomes a self-evident truth, verified by his innermost experience. So he exclaims:

"There is naught but Thee in the whole world. Everywhere in the universe it is Thy Face that we see. In whatever direction I turn my eyes, there art Thou. Without Thee there is nothing that there is".^{xxxvi}

The unity is achieved here neither by transcending the diversity, nor by deifying it. That's why; the Sufi's unifying vision is no more pantheism, as there is always a definite reference to the transcendent Being, without whom there would not be any multiplicity.^{xxxvii} The Sufi comprehends the 'One', the multiplicity and himself into one unifying vision. Or rather, this unifying vision presupposes the Sufi's oneness (*Ittihad*) with the Divine being. At the experiential level this oneness may be so intense and overpowering that all distinctions of 'I and Thou' are transcendent, so that the Sufi not only finds himself unified with God, but feels that he himself is God. Some such experience led the Sufis to utterances, which appear shockingly blasphemous to the non-mystic, such as the '*subhani*' of *Abu Yazid* and '*Anal Haqq*' of *Mansoor*. R. C. Zaehner has called such an experience as megalomania, whereas in fact it is just the opposite, as we shall see in the last part of this article. The Sufi, who is identified with the ultimate Reality, finds himself united with the whole creation. Or rather he 'becomes' the moving Spirit (or Self in the Vedantic language) of the entire creation:

"There was nothing in the world except myself besides me and no thought of besidesness occurred to me."^{xxxviii}

Such statements seem confusing and even irritating to the orthodox but if one could understand first that the unifying vision is a consequence and not prior to the unison experience and secondly, that it presupposes the negation of the lower self and does not magnify it, then it would be easier to understand those.

When we search out the corresponding characteristics of Extrovert Sufism, we find amazing similarities of experience in Hinduism. When we study extrovert mysticism in Hinduism, like Sufism, we find that the central vision of such mysticism is the same 'unity'. The unity is realized as the expression of the one Reality within, behind and prior, or basic, to the multiplicity. Curiously, we find the most explicit expression of the unifying vision in *Vedanta*, commonly known for its negative methodology. That all things have their source or ground in *Brahman*, or that all this is *Brahman*, mean one and the same thing for the Upanisadic seer. For him, "The Infinite is indeed below. It is behind...It is every where."^{xxxix} Often the term *Isvara*, implying the personal God, is substituted by the Lord.^{xl} Every creature, every object of the world is the self, the same Divine Being in different forms.^{xli} It is the vision of the immanence of *Brahman Atman* in the universe, as well as in the soul. It is also the vision of *Brahman* as the Cause, Substance or Ground of all existence.^{xlii}

The declaration of a substantial identity of *Brahman* and the world does not mean their identification, as the cause belongs to a higher degree of reality in *Vedanta* than the effect. Whatever the context, the Vedantic thinker is always conscious of the basic, rather the only reality of the cause *Brahman*.^{xliii} The perception of unity

may occur in an intenser mystical state wherein the multiplicity disappears, as it were; or it may become a permanent state of mind which sees the one Real in everything and sees everything as permanent but the one Real. This vision of the one Real in all was a permanent state of experience with Sri Ramakrishna. In his words,

“I do see the Supreme Being as the veritable Reality with my very eyes. Why then should I reason? I do actually see that it is the Absolute Who has become all things around us. It is He Who appears as the finite soul and the phenomenal world.”
...“Now I see that it is He Who is moving about in different forms, now as an honest man, now as a cheat and again as a villain. So I say, Narayan in the form of an honest man, Narayan in the form of a swindler.”^{xliv}

We could not do justice to the mysticism of the unifying vision, if we understood it entirely in term of the extrovert’s search for unity outside himself. The mystic not only finds the ‘One’ behind and within the external universe, but also within himself. Then there comes a moment of realization when he finds that the ‘One’ experienced within his soul, is the same as the ‘One’, arrived at in the external search for unity.^{xlv} This leads to a further experience of unification with the entire universe. In the Upanisads we have very graphic description of such a unison state: “Whoever knows the self as, ‘I am *Brahman*’, becomes all this universe. Even the gods cannot prevent his becoming this (universe), for he has become their Self”.^{xlvi}

Death as the Everlasting Life - A Sufi Yogi Approach

It is true, that the two approaches of devotional (theistic) mysticism and introvert mysticism are quite different at the start of the way. But somewhere at the end of the journey they meet and then the question of their difference becomes a matter of purely theoretical interest. Both ways seem to reach a stage, which can be described as unity or union wherein the seeker is somehow changed into the Object of the search. The theistic mystic may well start with the duality of the two, but his intense love for God bridges the gulf between the subject and the Object of love,^{xlvii} so much so that at the end the subject appears to be transformed into the Object. The theistic mystic at once affirms and then seeks to overcome the gulf between the soul and God through love. The introvert mystic recognizes the same gulf, not between the soul and God, but between the lower and higher souls, the higher soul being in some way continuous with God. He seeks to bridge the gulf between himself and God by transcending the lower soul or empirical self. For both, the mystical experience is a unison experience, realized through going beyond the experiences of the empirical self.

It is a simple principle that the more completely a man dies to the self; the more he begins to live in God.^{xlviii} This fact has been more or less recognized by all the mystics of the world. There seems to be an inner necessity about this need for self-negation in order to realize one’s unity with God. In the words of Swami Rama Tirtha, “The lamp must burn in order that it may shine. So in order that it may live in God, the little ego, the outgoing tendency must stop”. He explains the same idea by the simile of the reed; it has to be hollowed before the Divine breath can be breathed into it.^{xlix} Kabir expresses the same truth when he observes that when his ego (I) was there, then God was not; and now when God has come (to reside in

his heart), then his ego is no more. All I-consciousness is lost in the one overwhelming consciousness of God.

Psychologically this experience may be explained as a shifting of the center of consciousness away from the narrow egoistic consciousness. And it is true for both kinds of mysticism. The introvert mystic experiences this change of consciousness from egoistic to an impersonal and universal consciousness and calls it deification. The introvert mystics in terms of Self-realization sometimes express the same experience. But though the terminology may be different, the basic experience is the same, as it is never the empirical self that is thus deified. The devotional mystic has more or less the same experience and he explains it by such concepts as the birth of Christ in the soul or the visitation of God to it and so on. You give your self to God and you get God in return, says the theist, or better, the devotional mystic. You deny or transcend yourself and what remains is God himself, says the introvert.

A.J. Arberry refers to an incident in Abu Yazid's life. Some visitor knocked at his door and called him by his name. The retort came from within, "Pass on, there is no one in this house but God." Does it mean that he called himself God? Not at all. He did not call himself anything, for his little self was not there, only God was there, (as he is there in every other place and in every other heart, only we are not conscious of the truth). Another characteristic utterance of Abu Yazid makes the above clear. "I am not I, I, because I am He, I am He, He."^l Far from such utterances being expressions of megalomania or insanity, as accused by R.C. Zaehner, they express the most profound truth about mystical experience. None of the above mystics claims any identity between the individual soul and God. The unison experience is better explained by the relation of either, or. Till the ego is there at the center of consciousness, God consciousness cannot arise. When the ego is negated God consciousness becomes the central and basic fact of one's mental life.

This truth is further expressed in the Sufi view of mystical experience as *fana*. *Fana* literally means annihilation or passing away. In fact, it is anything but a negative experience. The Sufis were well aware of the psychological truth that, "When thou art occupied with thyself, thou remainst away from God"^{li}. Therefore the Sufi deliberately sets himself to get rid of his ego or lower self. A respected means thereof was the constant repetition of God's name—Allah—till one lost all consciousness of one's individual existence. For more lasting results, a much more severe and well-directed process of self-discipline was undertaken. The purpose of the entire discipline was utter self-naughting, a complete negation or transcendence of even the slightest trace of the ego.

The Beloved of al Farid tells him that his love is not acceptable to Her so long as he has not completely passed away from himself.^{lii} Al Farid then explains to his disciples how he sought to approach the Beloved by sacrificing himself, then how with entire insouciance he gave up any regard for the merit of that self-sacrifice, (lest it should strengthen his ego). As if that was not enough, he sacrificed even his desire for the Beloved and then he found that She, his Beloved, was his reward and that She loved and desired him.^{liii} He adds that once he went forth from himself to

her, he did not come back to himself.^{liv} In al Farid we find an impressive first hand account of the experience of *fana*. The value of the Sufi concept of *fana* lies in the fact that very few ontological or theological beliefs are used in the description or even explanation of the experience of *fana*. Most of the Sufi descriptions of *fana* seem to be purely from the existential point of view and have a universal appeal, which is lacking in these experiences, which come to us heavily clothed in some determinate theology.

Though the main stress in the Sufi concept of *fana* is on the need of self-naughting^{lv}, there is a definite reference to God as a transcendent Reality, even as an 'Other' to the soul. The mystic seeks annihilation of his individual self or ego (*nafs*), not as an end in itself, but as a means to be united with God. Many of the modern Muslim scholars deprecate any attempt at equating the concept of *fana* with that of *Nirvana*. They argue that while the latter seems to be an annihilation of the transmigratory self, without reference to any eternal Divine Reality, the Sufi concept of *fana* affirms not only God, but also a distinct essence of the soul. Sufis differ among themselves as to the status of the soul in *fana*, the majority believing that the soul's individual existence is not destroyed therein. According to the orthodox version, *fana* is a state, in which the soul is purified of all attachment to worldly things and the ego. It is further stated that *fana* does not mean loss of the essence, but only of the attributes of the ego. It means the annihilation of one's will before the will of God.^{lvi}

But the above must not lead us to the opposite error of interpreting *fana* in the dualistic terminology of orthodox writers. The concept of *fana* does imply annihilation or transcendence of the ego. Sufis, like the Vedantins, distinguished the empirical self (*nafs*) from the spiritual essence of the individual (*Rooh*). While the Vedanta boldly affirmed the identity of this spiritual principle (*Atman*) with the Absolute (*Brahman*), the Sufi position on this issue is rather vague. But the profounder or we may say more advanced, of the Sufis are very clear as to the nature of the mystical experience itself. "I said", tells Abu Yazid of his dialogue with Allah, "Adorn me in Thy unity and clothe me in Thy selfhood and raise me up to Thine oneness, so that when Thy creatures see me, they will say we have seen Thee and Thou wilt be that and I shall not be there at all".^{lvii} And—"I said, 'I am through Thee'. He said, 'if thou art through Me, then I am thou and thou art I'. I said, 'No indeed, Thou art Thou, there is no good except Thee'. "^{lviii}

R.C. Zaehner sees in these utterances signs of Abu Yazid's insanity. But any unprejudiced reader would see in them what we have found to be the core of mystical experience. We can note here firstly, the description of mystical experience in dialogue form suggests the taking for granted of the existential duality of the soul and God. Secondly, the duality seems to be transcended in the unison experience. And thirdly, this unity is realized by a definite act of self-negation. The last seems to be the most important. In both the passages, and such passages can be multiplied at random, Abu Yazid affirms, 'Thou wilt be there and I shall not be there at all.' He even denies God's suggestion as to their identity. It is not that Abu Yazid is God, but he is not there, only God is. In fact there is no good (real) except Him.

The Sufi doctrine of *fana* expresses the truth about mystical experience of every possible variety in a nutshell. It consists in self-naughting, not as a negative experience, but as a step to, or rather as an integral part of, unison experience. When the ego and its attributes are naughted, the individual does not cease to exist, instead, he exists in and through God.^{lix} The experience of *fana*, thus, is closely associated with, or is one side of the medal of which *baqa* is the other side.^{lxx} The two together make one rich whole of unison experience. '*Baqa*' means subsistence, that is, the mystic who has naughted himself subsists in and through God, or even 'as' God. Making allowance for the variety of interpretation, the experience itself seems to be clear enough. It is a state in which the mystic is lost to himself, (forgets himself), and is conscious of God alone. Abu Yazid describes the mystic life after the highest realization as—"When a man's desire is united with the will of the Creator, then he wills with God's will, he sees in accord with God and his soul is moved by God's omnipotence."^{lxi}

Bhakti mysticism fully recognizes self-surrender as the means par excellence of unison experience. *Bhakti* treatises further developed the idea of the *Bhagavadgita* as to the need of self-surrender to God into the concept of *prapatti*. *Prapatti* is complete resignation to God, coupled with the fullest trust in His saving grace. For the *Bhakti* mystic devotion to God consisted in a complete absorption in God, thinking of Him, talking of Him, working His works. And he found that a stage is reached when, "whatever he sees is God, and whatever he speaks is God. The whole body becomes filled with God."^{lxii} The mystic may realize that the self-reliance implicit in the introvert way is self defeating, as it feeds the ego which must be transcended and that transcendence can best be achieved through self surrender.

Sometimes these saints speak a language strikingly similar to the one familiar to the West. Tukarama tells us how when God comes to live in a man, he deprives him of everything, (all desires and affections).^{lxiii} As against the Advaitic view of self-realization, all the medieval mystics use such terms as union with God or God's coming to reside in the soul, terms familiar to the Western world. But even here Hindu mysticism remains distinctive. The unison vision is described in close association with the vision of God as all:

"I see Thy feet everywhere. The whole universe is filled by Thee...Thou hast become everything to us, says Tuka... When I walk, I turn round about Thee, when I sleep, I prostrate before Thee."^{lxiv}

The above has the merit of being completely free of any ontological or theological benefits. It is a clear and simple statement of how the soul's unison experience, (soul's being transformed into God) has resulted into the entire world becoming suffused with God. The soul is so united with or transformed into God that it can see and experience nothing but God. Here we learn how Sri Ramakrishna not only experienced each single living being as *Narayana* (Divine) himself, he felt all rationalization of it superfluous, as it was a matter of direct experience for him. It is also noteworthy that almost all the mystics we have discussed above would be called theistic in the Western sense of the term, that is, they are the mystics who explain their experience with a definite reference to God. Yet, these mystics did

experience their God not only within their heart, but also all around them. The living presence of God within and around them was an indubitable fact of experience to them which hardly needed any explanation in theological terms. The same is true of Sufi mysticism, which is quite near to Hindu mysticism in its approach, vision and spirit:

“In the market, in the cloister only God I saw.
In the valley, on the mountain only God I saw.
I opened my eyes and by the Light of His Face around me,
In all the eye discovered only God I saw.
Like a candle I was melting in His fire,
I passed away in nothingness, I vanished,
And lo, I was the All-living, only God I saw.”^{lxv}

The above presents two visions, one of God ‘as’ all that the eye discovered, another of one’s identity with the All-living, as a result of the mystic’s prior passing away into nothingness. But these two visions are presented as integral parts of one unison experience, which can be described by a single phrase, ‘only God I saw’. A man, who transcends his ego, sees God within his soul and is unified with Him, and also sees Him within all that the eye discerns. Rather, he sees only God, whether he sees inside or outside himself. The vision is susceptible to an extreme monistic interpretation, as well as a simple theistic one. The above experience is strictly comparable to the experience of God in the Hindu tradition as described by Kabir, Tukarama, Ekanath etc. The unifying vision may be only a first glimmering of the mystical truth in certain cases and then it would be the lowest stage of mystical path. But this should be strictly distinguished from the vision that sees God wherever the eye befalls, which is not the first stage, but the culmination of unison experience.

Thus, we seem to arrive at an overwhelming consciousness of God being the All in all as the universal core of all mystical experience. It necessarily implies a negation of, or at least a shifting of the center of consciousness away from the ego consciousness (*fana*). The experience of *fana* can be regarded either as a stepping-stone to the unison experience, or as an integral part thereof. In fact, the universal core of all mystical experience can be understood without any reference to the supra-rational unison experience, or even without reference to the mystical terminology of *fana* etc. It is just that the intenser the consciousness of the Divine presence, the vaguer the consciousness of oneself, or the more one succeeds in subduing or getting rid of one’s ego, the intenser, and profounder is the experience of the Divine.

In so far as the ‘One’ is realized after transcending the ego and all its associations and relations, the ‘One’ can be affirmed to be transcended, but the ‘One’ is also realized within the soul and at least in the case of many introvert mystics as the very essence or Self of the soul. Those who have the courage of their convictions see the ‘One’ around them also, even as they have experienced it within. The core of mystical experience, we have tried to reach, cannot be explained in terms of transcendence or immanence. It is simply the overwhelming, all sweeping, intense consciousness of God as the only living Reality within and without. Some may go up

to the end of the road; most prefer to stop midway, afraid to penetrate the dark abyss of oneness. But even they acknowledge that the overwhelming sense of God's living Presence within and without is the core, as well as the culmination, of their mystico-religious experience.

Mysticism and Global Peace

The most important aspect of mysticism is the expression of global unity of the mankind without the divisions of race, color, creed or nation. In this regard, mysticism is just an expression of unconditional love to all of humankind. Mystical experience charges human potentials to establish open and free thought in experiencing life and the universe as live and healthy encounters. Such a natural religious experience transcends humans in observing the universal scheme of check and balance by positioning the everlasting human objective outside the human life. Transcendence as the goal and model of human activity, guarantees the full development of the human personality to reveal the natural phenomena in their realistic forms.

The philosophies drawn out of the mystical experiences encapsulate the world view in realistic way by describing the universe as being composed of both virtue and evil. In this regard the darkness and the light are woven inextricably and necessarily together in any society or community of the world. The relation of humans with the nature/ universe is individual not collective and thereby the response of one community or society to outside world is the sum of the individuals' response. The worldview formed of a mystical experience positively get along human psyche and presents practical exercises and devotional techniques to the individuals in converting their dark into light. In this regard such experiences and philosophies provide the individuals with the opportunities of seeing the societies and people around as their parts and ingredients of the grand universal system, which is established on supreme balance and extreme harmony. Diversity in this regard is a natural order which gives the universe beauty and balance.

The earlier mystic movements of the history had produced the profound effects in their times and had swept across the ancient world from age to age. These popular mystic devotional movements shared some core doctrines and practices due to their great similarities of thought, creeds and devotion to humanity. Those great devotional movements swept like waves across North Africa, Europe and Asia. Some of these were the great Mysticism and Caroling Religious Fairs of the Middle Ages Catholic Europe, the Catholic Rosary Devotion to Jesus through Mary, and the popular Eastern Rite Catholic and Orthodox Christian practice of constantly reciting 'The Jesus Prayer'.

Later there was a great revival of the Rosary devotion to 'Jesus living in Mary', led by Saint Louis de Montfort in France, which spread like wildfire across Europe. Beside the great Catholic revivals led by Saint Francis of Assisi and other Christian Mystics of the 11th and 12th centuries, during the same era, was the rise of the Sufi Divine Love Tradition of Rumi, al Ghazali, Suharwardi and the Woman Saint Rabe'ah al-'Adawiyya (Basri). A central practice of this devotion was the invocation

of the 99 Beautiful Names of Allah. In Japan the Pure Land Bhakti Buddhist Saints Honen, Shinran, Ippen and Nicherin eventually popularized the constant repetition of Amitabha Buddha's (HRIH's) Name as the 'Nembutsu', 'Namu Amida Butsu'. In Judaism Bridal Mysticism flourished from time-to-time in the form of devotion to Hashem, The Holy Name, and the Kabbalistic study of Shekinah (Peace). There was also a revival of related Jewish Spirituality in the 11th and 12th centuries, with the rise of Hasidic and Mediterranean Neo-Platonic Jewish Mysticism.

All of these Movements were actually historically related to mysticism, and had an inner or esoteric core of peace and humanity. All of these mystic Movements tended to unite the various lineages and sectarian offshoots of these Great Religions. Thus from its very beginning, the Mission of mysticism was far more than the mere continuation of a single specific sectarian lineage within a particular religion. Nor was it merely a mission to unite all of the orthodox doctrines. Rather, the complete Mission of Mysticism was nothing less than the global mystic unity of all humanity...a unity transcendent to race, class, gender, language, education, occupation and even lineage, or creed...

So, in today's world, when Religion is escalating as a primary cause of conflict and dilemma, the world needs once again the unblemished wisdom of mysticism. Thus, the differences in theology today need not be a barrier to our seeking to build pious human alliances with members of the historically related Great Religions and other sincere devotees of Divine Reality.

Reference:

ⁱ *Mysticism in Religion*, (Rider and Co., London, 1969), page 31

ⁱⁱ Encyclopaedia Britannica

ⁱⁱⁱ History of Philosophy in Islam, (1903), page 93-94

"Moslem Philosophy" in Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.

^{iv} 'Ikhwan as-Safa,' in Der Islam Vol. I, page 22

^v Mysticism in Islam by Underhill, page 114-15

^{vi} Religious Attitude and Life in Islam, by D.B. Macdonald's (1909), page 159

^{vii} Sura II. 186, 1.16; vi. 60. etc.

^{viii} "I am whom I love and He whom I love is I.

We are two spirits dwelling in one body.

If though seest me though seest Him."

Mansoor al Hallaj, quoted in Reynold A. Nicholson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism, p. 80.

^{ix} Happy the moment when we are seated in the parlour with two forms and with two figures, but with one soul, Thou and I." Jalaluddin Rumi, *ibid.*, p. 80

^x "Both of us are in a single worshipper who in respect of the united state bows himself to his essence in every act of bowing."

"My greeting to her is metaphorical; in reality my salvation is from me to myself".

"For truly I and She are one essence."

Taiyyatul Kubra 152-3, 333, 339, *ibid.*, p. 231-32

^{xi} "And in the centre of the Glory there
Beheld the figure of themselves as it were,
Transfigured looking to themselves beheld
The figure on the Throne enmiracled,
Until their eyes themselves and That between
Did hesitate which sees, which was seen,
This That, That they, another, yet the same."

Mantiq al Tayr or The Conference of Birds, in F. C. Happold, *Mysticism: a Study and an Anthology*, (penguin Books, Middlesex, England, Baltimore, U.S.A., 1963, p. 242.)

^{xii} "Seek for the Reality within thine on heart, for Reality in truth is hidden within thee. The heart is the dwelling place of that which is the essence of the universe. Within the heart the soul is very essence of God. Like a saint make journey into thyself." Attar, in Margaret Smith, cite., p. 94.

^{xiii} "Thou has a treasure within thy soul, a treasure hidden there by thy Friend." Attar, in Margaret Smith, cite., p. 94.

^{xiv} "The faithful are many, but their faith is one, their bodies are numerous, but their soul is one." Rumi, *Mathanvi* iv. 408, in R. A. Nicholson, *Rumi, Poet and Mystic*, (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1956), p.51.

^{xv} "To think oneself as an other to God is polytheism." *Taiyyatul Kubra* 277, in R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, p.220.

^{xvi} "I am as certain as I live that nothing is so near to me as God. God is nearer to me than I am to myself." Eckhart, quoted in J. B. Pratt, op. cite., p. 475

"God is more inward to us than we are to ourselves." Ruysbroeck, *Adornment of Spiritual Marriage* II.3, in F. C. Happold, op. cit., p. 254

^{xvii} "Ayamatma Brahma" (The Self is the Absolute), *Bhahdaranyaka Upanisad* IV, 4.5.

"Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman), *ibid.* I. 4.10.

"Tattvamasi" (Thou art That), *Chhandogya Upanisad* IV. 8.1.

"Vijnanam Brahma" (Consciousness is Brahman), *Taittiriya Upanisad* III. 5.1.

^{xviii} *Bhahdaranyaka Upanisad* II. 4.1

^{xix} *Kena Upanisad* II.3.

^{xx} *Mundaka Upanisad* III. 2.9.

^{xxi} "He is never seen, but is the Seer, He is never known, but is the Knower. There is no other Knower than He. He is your Self, the Inner Controller." *Bhahdaranyaka Upanisad* III. 7.23.

^{xxii} *Samkara, bhasya on Bhahdaranyaka Upanisad* II. 1.20.

^{xxiii} *Bhahdaranyaka Upanisad* III. 7.3 ff.

^{xxiv} *Samkara, bhasya on Brahma Sutras*. II. 1.14

^{xxv} *Katha Upanisad* I.3.14

^{xxvi} See R. C. Zaehner, op cit., p.111ff., 135ff., 146ff.

^{xxvii} "The key to it is the sinking of the heart completely in the recollection of God and the end of it is complete absorption (*fana*) in God." Al Ghazali, quoted in W. Montgomery Watt, *The Faith and Practic of al Ghazali*, (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1953, p.60-61)

^{xxviii} "Though for me gaze profound, deep awe hath hid Thy face,

In wonderous and ecstatic grace, I feel Thee touch my inmost ground."

Al Junaid, *Al Luma*, quoted in A. J. Arberry, *Sufism*, p. 59.

^{xxix} Seem Rom Landau, *The Philosophy of Ibne Arabi*, (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1956, p.62ff.)

^{xxx} God saith, 'Allah of thine is my, 'here am I'; and supplication and grief and ardour of thine is my message to thee. Beneath every, 'O Lord', of thine is many, 'Here am I', from Me." Rumi, *Mathanwi*, ii. 189, in R. a. Nicholson, *Rumi - poet and Mystic*, p. 91.

^{xxxi} Tukarama, abhanga 2709, quoted in S. K. Belvalker and R. D. Ranade, *History of Indian Philosophy*, (Poona, 1933), vol. VII., p.33.

^{xxxii} *Ibid.*, 1128, p.305; Cf. abhanga 2884, 1116, 3308, 1589, p.330-31

^{xxxiii} *Ibid.*, 1815, p.303.

^{xxxiv} Ibnul Farid, *Taiyyat ul Kubra*, p. 245-46.

^{xxxv} *The Holy Quran*, Surah ii, Verse 115

^{xxxvi} Farid ud Din Attar, *Jawahar al Dhat* p. 99

^{xxxvii} Thou art the breath of life in both body and soul. In every form Thou dost manifest Thyself according to Thy will... Though, the Creator, art seen in the creatures, Spirit shining through gross matter... Though art the Divine Essence dwelling in the midst of each one of us... Though art the Sought and the seeker". Attar *Jawahar al Dhat* p. 99

^{xxxviii} Ibnul Farid, *Taiyyat ul Kubra* p. 264

^{xxxix} *Chhandogya Upanisad* VII. 25, from *The Upanisads*, translated by Nikhilanand, (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1963). All further references from the Upanisads are from the same edition.

^{xl} *Isa Upanisad* I.

^{xli} "Thou art woman, Thou art man, Thou art youth and maiden too. Though as an old man totterest along on a staff. It is Thou alone when born assumest diverse form. "Svetasvatara Upanisad IV. 5.

^{xlii} *Bhahdaranyaka Upanisad* II.1.20, *Mundaka Upanisad* II.1.1; *Taittiriya Upanisad* III.1.1.

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- ^{xliii} “Everything springs from the self, is dissolved in It and remains imbued with It during continuance. As it cannot be perceived apart from the Self, therefore everything is the Self.” *Samkara, bhasya on Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* II. 4.6, translated by Madhvananda, (Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 1965).
- ^{xliiv} *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1975, p. 316-17).
- ^{xlv} “I am indeed He, the *purusa*, who dwells there (in the sun).” *Isa Upanisads* 16.
- ^{xlvi} Brhadaranyaka Upanisad II.1.20; Mundaka Upanisad II.1.1; Taittiriya Upanisad III.1.1.
- ^{xlvii} John of Cross, *The Living Flame of Love*, Stanza1, in F. C. Happold, op cit., p. 331-32.
- ^{xlviii} *Imitation of Christ* II. 12, in F. C. Happold, op. cit., p.274.
- ^{xlix} *In Woods of God Realization-The complete works of Swami Ram Tirtha* (Ram Tirtha Pratishthan, Varanasi, 1946, part, IV, lecture 12 & 14.
- ^l *Kitab al Nur*, quoted in A. J. Arberry, *Revelation and Reason in Islam*, p. 98.
- ^{li} Abu Said Ibn E Abi Khayar, quoted in R. A. Nicholson, op cit., p.49.
- ^{lii} *Taiyyatul Kubra*, 98, 102, in *ibid.*, p.210.
- ^{liiii} *Ibid.* 168 to 173, pp. 215-16.
- ^{liv} *Ibid.*, 206, p. 217.
- ^{lv} “Divest thyself first of self...clothe thyself with the garment of nothingness and drink the cup of self-annihilation until at last thou shall reach the world where thou art lost altogether to the self.” Attar, *Mantaq al Tayr* p. 234.
- ^{lvi} See article on *Fana* in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, (E. J. Brill, Leiden; Luzac & Co., London, 1960, vol.2, p.52.
- ^{lvii} *Kitab al Nur*, quoted in A. J. Arberry, op. cit., p.95.
- ^{lviii} *Ibid.*, p.101.
- ^{lix} “Annihilate yourself in Me and then enter the glory of eternal bliss. So shall you find yourself again in Me.” Attar, in Margaret Smith, op. cit., p.57.
- ^{lx} *Taiyyatul Kubra* 490, in R. A. Nicholson, *op.cit.*,245.
- ^{lxi} *Kitab al Nur*, in A. J. Arberry, op. cit., p.93.
- ^{lxii} Tukarama, *abhangas* 3942, in *History*, p. 306.
- ^{lxiii} Tukarama, *abhangas*, 2583, *ibid.*, p.306
- ^{lxiv} *Ibid.*, 1228, p.305
- ^{lxv} Baba Kuhi of Shiraj, quoted in R. A. Nicholson, *Mystics of Islam*, (G. Bell and Sons, London 1914, p.59).
