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Knowing God's Immanence through the English Mystic and the Kashmiri Sufi Poetry

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Abstract:

“God” is the most majestic and profound theme in mystic doctrines and to talk about God and discuss his attributes is what mystic poetry holds about in its bosom. And all important mystical writings give pre-eminence to God, who he is, and what he is like. Here I want to focus on just one aspect of this, namely God's immanence. The present paper deals with the very idea of God being immanent. I have taken references from both; English mystical poetry as well as Kashmiri Sufi poetry and analysed them to bring on the front an idea—an attitude, rather I should say a similarity of an intense feeling about God's immanence that exists in both.

Keywords: *God, Immanence, Absolute self, mortal self, creator, creation*

The English mystic poetry and the Kashmiri Sufi poetry, both, emphasize on the immanence of God. Both project God as the Ultimate Reality of the Universe who stands manifested in his creation. All the God's creation is to be taken as a mirror that reflects the God's Being manifested through its essence.

In English mystical poetry, we have ample references of poetic pieces that bear testimony to this fact. For example, in Francis Thompson's poetry, God exists everywhere; the presence of the Divine in all things is the one overwhelming fact. As a result of this sense, the consciousness that everything is closely related, closely linked together, is ever present in his poetry. In *‘The Mistress of Vision’*, Thompson says;

*When to the new eyes of thee
All things by immortal power,
Near or far,
Hiddenly
To each other linked are,
That thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling of a star. (F.E. Spurgeon 81)*

For, Francis Thompson, God's grandeur and God's essence is manifested through all his creation and this is shown by the interdependence of creatures of nature on each other. The stanzas provide a vision of Reality embracing what is here and now and what is beyond the immanent and the transcendental are harmonized in it. God's 'creation' is a testimony of fact that shows "Unity of God" through "Unity of Creation", The "Divine thread" runs through each of God's creation and hence we find God everywhere. Thomson says, in the concluding lines of "Orient ode;"

*'By this, O singer; know we if thou see.
When men shall say to thee; Lo! Christ is here,
When men shall say to thee; Lo! Christ is there,
Believe them; Yea, and this – then art thou seer,
When all thy crying clear
Is but: Lo here! Lo there! Ah me, lo everywhere? (Connolly 169)*

William Blake too has a clear stance over the concept of Immanence when he says,

*To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour. (Sampson 171)*

Blake, through his verses tries to open one's deep sight and broad vision wherefrom one can plunge deep into the soul of a mortal entity and deep beneath locates the very source of its soul. Only a mystic has that inward sense and vision via which he can scale down the whole world's nerve attached to the germinating seed. Only a mystic can visualize a world in a minute grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower---for only a mystic knows the value of creation---the aim of the nature around. It's only a mystic who could smell the essence of a bigger entity in the bosom of a lower self because he possesses the eye which can relate the essence of Absolute Self of God running through the very course of each of the entity present around in nature. When such a thing happens, all the world and nature around a mystic runs and projects itself in a coherence---in a synchronized manner and the lower self of each of the God's creation splashes a color and together all such colors representing the multitude of God's creation create the very image of the colorful image of God that is grasped only by a mystic's eye.

In the Kashmiri Sufi Poetry, as well, this theme of Immanence, finds a wide and vibrant expression. In this regard Shamas Faqir---a renowned Sufi poet of 19th Century Kashmir says;

Wanay yo seer I asraar yeno aasakh wubaeli
Wutchum har shaa yi su yaar chu no kahn zar ti khaeli (Aziz 298)

*Be in senses and I would reveal to you the hidden secret.
I witnessed my beloved everywhere, there isn't a minute object left without his trace.*

Shamas Faqir requires for a seeker a pure and a conscious sense that only can reveal to him the secret mystery of God----the secret of Absolute self. When a Sufi remains vigilant enough---when he closely monitors the world around, he comes to see God's essence everywhere. He witnesses the Being of God in the nature around. The creator stands manifested in his creation. Yet another Sufi poet of Kashmir, Wahab Khar deliberates on the concept of immanent Being of God as;

Qoadrath chui bay shumaar
Daryaaw e wahdat koota chamnye (Ramzan 77)

*The nature knows no boundaries
How much would I drink the River of God's Unity*

Wahab through his verses brings forth the God's Unity. The concept of Unity of God, understands the one who visualizes the whole of the world and nature around as being linked together by a Divine thread. This thread turns visible to only a few. Sufis understand and comprehend well, the mystic undertones of this Divine thread for it's the God's divinity that runs across all the nature which has no boundaries. A limitless entity i.e. the nature depicts and mirrors the infinite essence and Self of God. A Sufi holds the very string of this thread and visualizes God's presence everywhere. He feels his self to be a part of a bigger whole. He visualizes God's presence everywhere. Wahab further says;

Parwardigaaran paede kor har kehn
Aenthas bae koor pilay
Hudo laa hud chu laa nihaayat (Ramzan 93)

*The God has created every being (thing)
How could I achieve the end of the Universe?
The All-Pervading God knows no boundaries*

Accordingly, God (Allah in Islamic terminology) is the creator. And Wahab says that it is the creator who gets mirrored in his creation. And as such the whole universe stands out reflecting God's essence. For Wahab, God pervades all.

To conclude, I would say that the concept of God's immanence flows in both, the English mystic poetry as well as in the Kashmiri Sufi poetry. In the poetic tradition of both the mystic doctrines, God is understood to be very close to us and in order to grasp his essence one needs to open his inward eye---the soul's eye. Thereupon we can see God reflected in his own creation.

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