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A STUDY OF MYSTICISM IN WILLIAM WORDSWORTH POETRY

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Abstract

William Wordsworth is a remarkable mystic poet. He believes in pantheistic conception of nature. Nature is the means through which a man can come into contact of with God. Wordsworth maintains that a divine spirit pervades through all the objects of nature. As a pantheist, Wordsworth says that all is God and God is all. He was essentially the poet of nature and his vision of human life was concerned by his appreciation of nature. Wordsworth confidently averred that man could enjoy peace and joy when he lived in the harmony with nature and considered nature as his friend and teacher, and not as hostile force to be governed and subdued. Wordsworth stated that if human beings sought happiness in life, they should allow the operation of the spirit of republicanism, of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity in their lives as it prevailed in Nature and governed the life of the different object of nature. He sees the Almighty in every aspect of nature which is his mysticism.

Keywords: Mystic, Nature, Hostile force, Divine spirit, Pantheistic conception

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Mysticism is a temper not a doctrine; it is an atmosphere not a system of philosophy. The basic base of mysticism is grounded in the belief of the mystic. It is an essential unity, oneness or likeness in all the objects of nature and human nature is created by God. The divine spirit permeates through all the objects of creation. It unites the object of creation in an indissoluble bound of spiritual affinity. The mystic sees one undivided and changeless life in all the lives, and sees the one Inseparable in the separate. He believes confidently that "all things in the visible world are but forms and manifestations of the divine life, and that these phenomena are changing and temporary; while the soul that inform them is eternal." The mystic believes that human beings have a Godly vision not through their physical

perception, but by the inner eyes of the soul that alone can have the privilege of the beautiful vision. Intellect cannot apprehend the supreme reality, for its scope is limited to the apprehension of material external objects of creation. The divine reality can be felt by developing the soul-force in human life. This soul-force can develop through meditation. The mystic keeps away the meddling intellect from his faith that at the bottom of things there is a divine life linking all objects of creation into a harmonious of love and sympathy. He has the experience of this spiritual unity and its realization throws him into a trance. The transcendental feeling of ecstasy comes to the mystic at intervals, and in such moments he becomes a loving soul and he forgets the external existence. His experiences with divine life become

the supreme reality. He does not share experiences with anyone else nor is there any urge in him to discuss and argue about them with rationalists believing in nothing else except the supremacy of reason and argument. Mystic's faith in divine life is the sheet anchor of his earthly existence and it is by this faith that he seeks to overstep the bound of earthly limitations and become one day united with the divine soul.

Wordsworth was a great mystic poet of his time. Mysticism was his great claim to be recognized as a poet of eminence and fame. He was not satisfied with the peaceful aspects of nature. He tried to achieve something higher and leave behind a record of his mystical experiences in nature and human life in his poetry. Thus his poetry is not only a joyous record of happy objects of nature, but also a full experience of his mystical experience.

Wordsworth believed that God and His divine Spirit pervaded the entire universe. 'It is in the thought of God that the universe exists, and its life in God's thought'. The one divine spirit that permeated through nature and man bound them together in the spirit of harmony and joy. Life in every flower, bud, insect, and the mossy stone in the hill side was a part of the Divine life. The faith of Divine Spirit present both in Nature and Man is expressed mystically by Wordsworth in his poetry. It was because of the presence of one spirit permeating through all the objects of nature and human life that there could be communion between Man and Nature. After all they were bound together by ties of divine love, and as such between human life and life of nature there could be a healthy understanding and mutual dependence. Wordsworth believes in harmony between the spirit in nature and the mind of man. It was his belief that nature teaches human beings. It was on the strength of this mystic faith of the union between the life of nature and human beings that Wordsworth could write: "One impulse from a vernal wood..... It reminded the lasting faith of Wordsworth that an unbroken chain binds all things in the outward world, and that the spirit of man can commune with God through nature. Like a true mystic, Wordsworth gave a life to all the objects of nature and made inter- communication between them. He witnessed

the presence of sentient life in nature. He had a belief that each object of nature had a life of its own, and this belief of the poet found in his poem Tintern Abbey.

Another aspect of Wordsworth's mysticism lies in his emphasis on the unity of the spirit of man with the Divine Spirit. He believes that man's spirit is a part and parcel of divine spirit and that the salvation of the human spirit can be affected.

As a mystic, Wordsworth honoured even the ordinary objects of nature and human life. Each and everything which is present in the universe is touched by divine life, for him. For him there is nothing petty and trivial. "The commonest thing of nature shares in this universal life as much as the grandest phenomenon of nature; the meanest flower becomes as important as the setting sun. The daisy and the cuckoo, the flower and the grass we tread underfoot, the humblest worm- they all have a place in the scheme of the universe; in fact Wordsworth looks at the shepherd and dales man and the beggar acquire in his eyes an eternal significance. The commonest things in nature and human are thus not common and trivial- they are symbols of eternity.

Mysticism becomes an echo in his poetry. He has mystic vision all his life. When Wordsworth was young, he was highly attracted by the wandering voice of cuckoo, and often fell into a kind of trance from which he emerged lost in mystical rapture. In such moments the material world seemed to fall away and he felt:

"The gross and visible frame of things
Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
Yea, almost on the mind itself, and seems
All unsubstantialised."

Such as the poet's conviction, but he can give no rational explanation for it. It is through contemplation that he has vision of the divine reality and this divine world is open to the spiritual faculty in man. Indeed, the poet has a thorough distrust of all intellectual and scientific processes. He says that scientists are unfeeling creatures who "murder to dissect".

These are the different aspects of Wordsworth which makes him a mystic poet. Indeed, he is not only a poet; he is also a seer and a practical psychologist with an amazingly subtle mind and a great capacity for feeling. It is not the beauty of Nature which brings peace and joy for him, but the life in Nature. He himself has caught a vision of that life. He knows it and feels it, and it transforms the whole of the existence for him. He believes that everyone can attain this vision and his whole life's work takes a form of minute and careful analysis of the process of feeling in his own Nature.

William Wordsworth believes that beneath the form and shape of external nature, there is a soul, a living principal colouring all things and communicating itself to him:

“In all things, in all natures, in the stars, This active principle abides, from link to link, It circulates the soul of all the world,”

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