



SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS OF MYSTICS

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on how spirituality connects to cultural identity of a person and how it relates to culturally responsive teaching in the society. It focuses on the development of a culturally responsive epistemology that suggests experience and teaching of a religion is both a spiritual and an intellectual pursuit. This spiritual pursuit opens up an identity for the seekers of a particular religionsay Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc. who are also called as mystics. Mysticism and Sufism, for instance, are the similar responses which are quite largely being discussed as separate from their sources i.e. Christianity and Islam. For critical multicultural teaching to have transformative power, it must engage in and help seekers explore and reclaim their cultural and religious identity. This process often touches on the spiritual, as it engages the seekers' religious imagination and spirituality. In this paper I am trying to attempt that Mysticism, Sufism, Buddhism, etc. are the responses of an individual (mystic) who verifies and testifies the essence of his particular religion. And the mystics have such a spiritual elevation that their practices and ways of life gains them a particular cultural and religious identity. In this paper by relating religion and the path of a mystic, I am trying to evaluate that being a Mystic is being a truthful follower of a religion but evolves a different spiritual and cultural identity.

Key words: Spirituality, Cultural Identity, Mysticism, Seeker, Sufism.

INTRODUCTION

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The first essential is an awakening a sense of the absence of spirituality, the realized need of giving to our lives a new and higher quality; first there must be the hunger before there can be the satisfaction. “For spirituality is not indissolubly associated with any type of religion or philosophy itself in a variety of activities and beliefs” (Adler 2014).

Since spirituality consists in keeping in mind the ultimate goal, it follows that there must be various types of spirituality, corresponding to the various ways in which the ultimate goal is conceived. For those to whom the final end of human life is union with God, the Divine Father, the thought of this Divine Father gives colour and complexion to their spiritual life. And here we are talking of the mystics whose goal of course is Communion with God.

The spiritual is the one who always thinks of the ultimate goal of his journey i.e., a moral character complete in every particular, and who is influenced by that thought at all times and in all things. Spirituality, in this conception of it, is nothing but morality realized to its highest power.

Origins of the word “spirituality”

The term spirituality has been defined in numerous ways but there seems to emerge no consensus till date. However, we can trace the root word of the term spirituality.

The origins of the word “spirituality” lie in the Latin *spiritualitas* associated with the adjective *spiritualis* (spiritual). These derive from the Greek *pneuma*, spirit, and the adjective *pneumatikos* as they appear in Paul’s letters in the New Testament. It is important to note that “spirit” and “spiritual” are not the opposite of “physical” or “material” (Greek soma, Latin corpus) but of “flesh” (Greek sarx, Latin caro) in the sense of everything contrary to the Spirit of God. The intended contrast is not therefore between body and soul but between two attitudes to life. A “spiritual person” was simply someone within whom the Spirit of God dwelt or who lived under the influence of the Spirit of God.

Spirituality involves subjective meaning derived by each individual in his own ways. However, it has been generally defined as search for ‘the sacred’, where ‘the sacred’ is broadly defined as that which is set apart from the ordinary; connected with a deity and so deserving veneration. It is also defined as a belief in a supernatural power operating the universe which is greater than oneself, a belief in supreme consciousness, a sense of interconnectedness with living and non-living, and an awareness of the purpose and meaning of life.



Religion and Spirituality have been used interchangeably since ages. Both the concepts are as old as civilizations. Earlier, spirituality was considered to be the experiential part of religion.

The generic term used to represent both was religion. Gradually, the two terms started gaining separate attention and meaning. Religion gained the connotation of being referred to as ritualistic, institutional and dogmatic, whereas spirituality was taken as a search for transcendence, primarily based on experiences rather than any kind of ritualistic compulsions. Earlier, religion and spirituality were considered as domains of study in the context of older people or moralistic values. Religion and spirituality were also considered to be rigorous theoretical concepts in the field of philosophy.

The conceptualizations and manifestations of Spirituality and Religion are inherently rooted in the culture of a society. The notions of faith, values, spiritual concerns, ultimate reality and paths to attainment of the ultimate are embedded in the cultural mesh of a particular society. According to Sinha (2004), culture reinforces the beliefs, norms, value systems of a society and thereby, also enables to maintain its continuity.

According to Waaijman, the traditional meaning of spirituality is a process of re-formation which "aims to recover the original shape of man, the image of God. To accomplish this, the re-formation is oriented at a mould, which represents the original shape: in Judaism the Torah, in Christianity Christ, in Buddhism Buddha, in the Islam Muhammad (PBUH)" (Waaijman 2000).

Spiritual experience:

"Spiritual experience" plays a central role in modern spirituality. This notion has been popularised by both western and Asian authors.

William James popularized the use of the term "religious experience" in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. It has also influenced the understanding of mysticism as a distinctive experience which supplies knowledge.

Spiritual experiences can include being connected to a larger reality, yielding a more comprehensive self; joining with other individuals or the human community; with nature or the cosmos; or with the divine realm (Waaijman 2000).

Spiritual practices:

Waaijman discerns four forms of spiritual practices:



1. Somatic practices, especially deprivation and diminishment. The deprivation purifies the body. Diminishment concerns the repulcement of ego-oriented impulses. Examples are fasting and poverty.
2. Psychological practices, for example meditation.
3. Social practices. Examples are the practice of obedience and communal ownership reform ego-orientedness into other-orientedness.
4. Spiritual. All practices aim at purifying the ego-centeredness, and direct the abilities at the divine reality (ibid.)

Spiritual practices may include meditation, mindfulness, prayer, the contemplation of sacred texts, ethical development, (Dalai Lama 1999) and the use of psychoactive substances. Love and/or compassion are often described as the mainstay of spiritual development.

Who are Mystics?

According to definition mystics are a person who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender to attain unity with the Deity or the absolute, and so reach truths beyond human understanding.

Mystics are the pioneers of the spiritual world. A mystic tends to produce a curious and definite type of personality — a type which refuses to be satisfied with that which other men call experience and is inclined to “deny the world in order that it may find reality” (Underhill 1911: 9).

Mystics are free but passionate. Their one passion appears to be the prosecution of certain spiritual and tangible quest. The finding of a “way out” or a “way back” to some desirable state in which alone they can satisfy their craving for absolute truth. This quest, for them, has constituted the whole meaning of life. That whatever the place or period in which they have arisen, their aims, doctrines and methods have been substantially the same. All men, at one time or another, have fallen in love with the veiled Isis whom they call Truth.

The mystics say that the spirit of god is within you. They part company with Vitalism. They think it is half a truth. To know Reality in this way, to know it in its dynamic aspect, enter into the great life of the All: this is indeed, in the last resort, to know it supremely from the point of view of man—to liberate from selfhood the human consciousness.

Mystic is intensely aware of, and knows himself to be at one with that active World of Becoming, that immanent Life, from which his own life takes its rise. Hence, though he has broken for ever with the bondage of the senses, he perceives in every manifestation of life a



sacramental meaning; a loveliness, a wonder, a heightened significance, which is hidden from other men.

Mysticism:

Mysticism is often accepted as a spiritual quest for the hidden truth or wisdom, the goal of which is union with the transcendental realities. Mystic experiences are said to be unique for each individual and we find that there is a marked resemblance between the experiences of mystics whether it be Islamic mystics, /Hindu mystics or Christian mystics, and that commonality is the quest for “Communion with the One”.

Encyclopaedia Britannica defines Mysticism as “the sense of some form of contact with the divine or transcendent, frequently understood in its higher forms as involving union with God”. Oxford dictionary gives two definitions of Mysticism (1) “belief that union with or absorption into the Deity or the absolute, or the spiritual apprehension of knowledge inaccessible to the intellect, may be attained through contemplation and self-surrender”. (2) “vague or ill-defined religious or spiritual belief, especially as associated with a belief in the occult”.

Mysticism is that point of view which claims as its basis an intimate knowledge of the one source and substratum of all existence, a knowledge, which is obtained through a revelatory experience during a rare moment of clarity in contemplation. Those who claim to have actually experienced this direct revelation constitute an elite tradition, which transcends the boundary lines of individual religions, cultures and languages, and which has existed, uninterrupted, since the beginning of time. It is, as Aldous Huxley points out, the “perennial philosophy” that resurfaces again and again throughout history in the teachings of the great prophets and founders of all religions (Huxley 1941).

By many of the Christian tradition, this experience is referred to as “the vision of God”; yet it must be stated that such a vision is not really a “vision” at all in the sense in which we use the word to mean the perception of some ‘thing’ extraneous to ourselves. Nothing at all is perceived in “the vision of God”; rather, it is a sudden expansion, or delimitation, of one’s own awareness which experiences itself as the ultimate Ground, the primal Source and Godhead of all being. In that “vision,” all existence is experienced as Identity.

Throughout history, this unusual experience of unity has occurred time and again; in India, in Rome, in Persia, in China, pious young men and women, reflecting on the truth of their own existence, experienced this amazing transcendence of the mind, and announced to everyone who would listen that they had realized the truth of man and the universe, “that they had



known their own Self, and known it to be the All, the Eternal” (Abhayananda 1938). And throughout succeeding ages, these announcements were echoed by others who had experienced the same realization: “I am the Truth!” exclaimed the Muslim, Mansur Bin al-Hallaj; “My Me is God, nor do I recognize any other Me except my God Himself,” (qtd. in Lang) said the Christian saint, Catherine of Genoa. And Rumi, Kabir and Basho from the East, and Eckhart, Boehme and Emerson from the West, said the same.

These proclamations by the great mystics of the world were not made as mere philosophical assumptions; they were based on experience- an experience so convincing, so real, that all those to whom it has occurred attest unanimously that it is the unique realization of the ultimate Truth of existence. In this experience, says Abhayananda, “called *Samadhi* by the Hindus, *Nirvana* by the Buddhists, *Fana* by the Muslims, and “the mystic union” by Christians, the consciousness of the individual suddenly becomes the consciousness of the entire vast universe” (Abhayananda 1938).

In this paper, I want to take readers on excursion to probe the issue of mysticism beyond the bounds of Christianity. In this paper, we will explore the mystical traditions of Islam by focusing on the Sufi mystic- Mowlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–1273).

Tasawwuf:

Tasawwuf or Sufism (the translation usually preferred in the West) is the name of the ways Sufis follow to reach God, the Truth. While the term tasawwuf usually expresses the theoretical or philosophical aspect of the search for truth, its practical aspect is usually referred to as 'being a dervish.' It is in fact, the science and art of developing the spiritual faculties of man and trying to understand, as far as possible, the Deity, the Divine Work, and the Divine Mysteries. It works under Metaphysical principles. Hence a Sufi may be called a Super-Scientist.

The Sufi Path

Jalal al-Din Rumi was a Sufi and founded one of Islam’s major Sufi orders, the Mevlevi, known in popular parlance as the “whirling dervishes.” To appreciate his religious and mystical background, we need to sketch out a few basics on Sufism.

The word Sufi derives, it seems, from the word for wool (*suf*) and refers to the woollen garment (*khirqah*), often blue, worn by early Sufi ascetics. Medieval Sufi theorists acknowledged this as one likely origin for the term. But some, such as Abu Bakr al-



Kalabadhi (d. 995), opened their treatises on Sufism with long lists of definitions that used wordplay to tease out spiritual meanings of the term:

Some say: ‘The Sufis were only named Sufis because of the purity (safa) of their hearts and the cleanliness of their acts’ . . . Another said: ‘The Sufi is he whose conduct towards God is sincere (safa), and towards whom God’s blessing is sincere.’ Certain of them have said: ‘They were only called Sufis because they are in the first rank (saff) before God through the elevation of their desires toward Him’’ (qtd. in Arberry 1942).

Al-Kalabadhi spoke of early Sufi ascetics in terms that may remind Western readers of early Christian monks:

They were people who had left this world, departed from their homes, fled from their companions. They wandered about the land, mortifying the carnal desires, and . . . they took of this world’s goods only so much as is indispensable for covering the nakedness and allaying hunger. For departing from their homes they were called ‘strangers’; for their many journeyings they were called ‘travelers’; for their travelling in deserts, and taking refuge in caves at times of necessity (ibid. 5).

Despite similarities to monks, Sufis noted a traditional saying (hadith) attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). What defined Sufism was not simply outward asceticism, but inner detachment. When asked, “Who is a Sufi?” one early master replied: “He who neither possesses (material things) nor is possessed (by them).” Rumi once offered his own spiritualized definition: “what is Sufism? To find joy in the heart at the coming of sorrow.”

Sufis drew their deepest inspiration from and fashioned their distinctive self-understanding and practices out of Islam’s own unique spiritual resources. We need to remember that ascetic practices and devotions lie at the very heart of Islam. One of Islam’s “five pillars” is the five-times-per-day practice of prayer (*salat*); another is the rigorous thirty-day fast of Ramadan. Sufis presumed, drew upon, and expanded upon both. They also drew inspiration from the life of Muhammad (PBUH), especially His ascent (*mi’raj*) through the seven heavens to the throne of God. For the core of their mystical theology, they drew on that most central of Islamic affirmations, the *shahada* (“there is no god but God”), and on the core doctrine that flows from it, the absolute oneness of God (*tawhi:d*). This doctrine, as we will see, inspired the Sufi search for mystical union. And for that search, Sufis turned to the Qur’an, which—for Sufis as for all Muslims—is understood, quite literally, as God’s word. As Michael Sells has noted, “Sufis view their thought and way of life as Qur’anic in every



sense . . . Any passage in the Qur'an could be—and was—integrated into the Sufi view of life—or, conversely, the Sufi view of life was grounded in the Qur'an as a whole.”

Knowledge of God:

The way how Christian theorists such as Jean Gerson defined mystical theology as an “experiential knowledge of God” and how Evagrius spoke of this experiential knowledge as “gnosis” and of the advanced monk as a “gnostic.” Sufis adopted similar terminology. They spoke of the advanced Sufi as a “knower” or “gnostic” (*arif*) and stressed that the mystic's goal is “experiential knowledge” or “gnosis” (*ma'rifa*).

The earliest systematic treatise on Sufism, *The Book of Flashes* (Kitab al-Luma') by Abu Nasr as-Sarraj (d. 988), explores the nature of this mystical knowledge. He acknowledged two other traditional types of religious knowledge (*ilm*) within Islam: the expertise of the traditionists, scholars who master the sayings traditions (*hadith*) of the Prophet (PBUH); and the expertise of the jurists, scholars who master the intricate legal traditions of Islamic morality (*shari'a*). The Sufis, he claimed, possess a third, but no less essential, type of knowledge: knowledge of the heart (Renard 2004: 83). This was the Sufis' unique expertise. Whereas other experts focused (legitimately) on religious externals, Sufis were specialists in the interior life. They possessed experiential knowledge of “manifestations, movements of spirit, gifts, and blessings, which its practitioners harvest from the ocean of divine largesse.” (ibid. 79) Just as one would not go to a layman for an expert legal opinion, so neither should one go to someone ignorant of this “science of the heart” for spiritual direction. (ibid. 80)

Sufi Teachings:

Sufis speak of this quest for an experiential knowledge of God as travelling “the path” (*tariqa*) (Schimmel 1975). They developed intricate maps to chart this path of the spirit. Sufis traditionally distinguish between “stations” (*maqamat*) and “states” (*ahwal*). Stations are the stages in the journey to God through which the mystic progresses stepwise. Sarraj, in his *Book of Flashes*, outlined seven stations: (1) repentance, (2) watchfulness, (3) renunciation, (4) poverty, (5) patience, (6) trust, and (7) acceptance.

The most controversial of the Sufi states is “annihilation” or “passing away” (*fana*). In annihilation, the Sufi mystic loses all sense of himself. He experiences his very being swallowed up within God's infinite being. God becomes, during this ephemeral state, his very existence. In such moments, Sufi mystics could shock hearers with ecstatic outbursts. Bayezid Bistami (d. 875) once proclaimed, “Glory be to me,” while al-Hallaj (d. 922) scandalously announced: “I am the Real.” (The term “the Real” [al-Haq] is a Qur'anic



synonym for God.) Both men sounded as though they were claiming to be God. Al-Hallaj ended up being charged with incarnationism (*shirk*), imprisoned, tortured, and brutally executed. Later Sufi hagiography treated him as a Jesus like figure, and Rumi revered him as a mystical saint.

The Christian mystics we studied belonged to a variety of religious orders, and within those orders they received their spiritual apprenticeship. A similar trend appears among Sufis. By Rumi's time, Sufism had spread about the Islamic world through dozens of orders. In its origins, Sufism centred on revered spiritual masters (*shaykhs* in Arabic, *Pi:r* in Persian) who guided circles of devoted disciples. Sufis insisted that to travel the spiritual path without a teacher was madness; according to an often-cited proverb, "When someone has no shaykh, Satan becomes his shaykh." Rumi also warned of its hazards: "Though you be a lion, if you travel the Path without a guide, you will be a self-seer, astray and contemptible" (Chittick 2000). Sufi teachings were handed down, usually orally, generation to generation, and it became traditional for an order to trace its chain of mystical teaching from Muhammad (PBUH) down to the order's founder and from the founder down to the presiding *shaykhs*. As we shall see, such transmission chains or lineages (known as *silsila*) also figure prominently in Zen Buddhist spirituality (Schimmel 1975: 234).

Discipleship within Sufism became formalized and carefully graded. An aspirant in Rumi's order, for example, spent three years working in the kitchen before gaining admittance. Rituals developed around formal initiation—for example, shaving one's head and receiving the Sufi cloak. Disciples also periodically undertook, under a *shaykh's* guidance, forty-day retreats (*chilla*). These included rigorous fasting and intense prayer, often in a secluded and darkened room. Sufi orders eventually acquired lodges (*khaniqah*), where they met for discussions, study, and prayer. These might have meeting areas for the study of the Qur'an, quarters for lodging visitors, and well-stocked libraries.

Sufis practiced what all observant Muslims practice:

daily prayers, the yearly fast of Ramadan, the once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca, and so on. They also developed unique devotional practices. I mentioned their retreats. Sufis also more routinely gathered for late-night vigils, pointing to the Qur'an's admonition: "Keep vigil all night, save for a few hours . . . and with measured tone recite the Qur'an . . . Remember the name of the Lord and dedicate yourself to Him utterly" (73:2–8). Sufis, in their vigils, recited the sacred names of God. This form of prayer, the dhikr (literally, "remembrance"), is repeated like a mantra and, as the term suggests, is meant as a way to keep God quite literally always in mind.



William Chittick has stressed that this ‘remembrance or invocation is the central spiritual technique of Sufism, but always under the guidance of a shaykh, who alone can grant the disciple the right and spiritual receptivity to invoke the Name of God in a systematic fashion’ (Chittick 2000:167). Another fundamental—and controversial—practice was the sama’ (literally, ‘intense concentration’). This included instrumental music and ecstatic ritual dancing. The sama’ not only served as the setting and inspiration for much of Rumi’s poetry; it also became the setting and mode of his mystical prayer.

At the outset, I noted a commonplace claim, articulated by James, Underhill, and others: that mystics form a sort of worldwide confraternity, that the mystical experience is the same worldwide. And Underhill specifically cited Rumi as an exemplar of this claim. Well, is it true? Rumi himself seems, at first glimpse, a good candidate and spokesman for the thesis. In the Masnavi, he proclaims: “Every prophet, every saint has his path, but as they return to God, all are one” (qtd. in Lewis 1908: 406)

And so the question: What does the Sufi mystical tradition and Rumi’s own mysticism illuminate about mysticism in a general sense? Or, more modestly, can one track convergences between Sufism and Christian mysticism? Well, there are convergences, often striking ones. Both traditions claim that God can be experienced, that the experience of God provides gnosis, and that gives the mystic—the gnostic—a measure of legitimate theological expertise. In Rumi’s case, as in Bernard of Clairvaux’s, that experiential knowledge comes from a heart-ravishing experience of God’s love.

Rumi, like Bernard, blended the mystical and the erotic in often flamboyant ways. Sufism shares with Christian mysticism a fondness for mystical mapmaking. Not all Christian mystics make much of such things; and, as we saw, Rumi knew of Sufi maps, but made little use of them. The Sufi tradition wedded the mystical with the ascetic. Sufis, much like Evagrius and the desert fathers, valued ascetic practices of fasting and vigils and unceasing prayer. Of course, Sufis knew Christian monks firsthand and disagreed with elements of Christian asceticism. Rumi and many other Sufis were not celibates, but married men with families and all the practical responsibilities that came with being husbands and fathers. Finally, the Sufi tradition in general and Rumi in particular deeply valued the ecstatic and embraced the often scandalous language of intoxication.

Sufism is often a ritualized mysticism, or at least takes place within a ritual setting. This is obvious in Rumi’s case, with his emphasis on sama’ – with its recitations of the Qur’an, its prayers and poems, its music and dance. Modern theoreticians of mysticism have too often ignored or denied the role of scripture and of doctrine. We saw that ignoring or denying such



fundamentals grossly distorts Christian mysticism; so too with Rumi and the whole Sufi tradition. If one cuts them off from the Qur'an and the broader Islamic theological tradition, one renders their religious experience unintelligible.

Christian mystical theologians tend to speak in terms of a mystic's "union" with God. Sufis, as we saw, sometimes adopted this same terminology in their systematic works. Rumi gives the impression—mainly, through his choice of metaphors—that he too worked from such a conception.

Odysseys, including spiritual ones, seek a homecoming. Modern theorists often speak of "mystical union" (*unio mystica*) as the endpoint, Evelyn Underhill, for example, saw it as the defining issue: "Mysticism, in its pure form, is . . . the science of union with the Absolute, and nothing else, and . . . the mystic is the person who attains to this union, not the person who talks about it" (Underhill 1901: 72). This assertion is not without its difficulties. The term "mystical union" appears rather late in the Christian tradition, only becoming prominent in seventeenth-century treatises (McGinn 1949: 183). While this joining of the adjective "mystical" with the noun "union," is late, the noun "union" or adjective "unitive" or metaphors of oneness appear much, much earlier.

The Sufi tradition also emphasized union. The Islamic doctrine of *tawhid*, of the oneness of God, both fuelled that language of union and put a brake on it. Rumi spoke of mystical unity in an erotic language more flamboyant than, but not unlike that of, Bernard. He also, like other Sufis, embraced the language of *fana*, "annihilation," and invoked the metaphors of the ocean, of the faint drops of individuality vanishing into an oceanic vastness, and of moths plunging into and burning up in the firelight.

CONCLUSION:

How are we to interpret this variety of mystical experiences? What about the varied conceptions of mystical union? William James may have called his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, but he embraced not mystical variety, but mystical unanimity. He held the thesis that mystics, however diverse their reports, are experiencing the same thing. And Evelyn Underhill, whose *Mysticism* remains one of the most widely read classic studies, agreed. They are but two of a long line of theorists to embrace this "common core" hypothesis. Other theorists include Aldous Huxley, Rudolph Otto, Joseph Marechal, William Johnston, Mircea Eliade, and Ninian Smart (Huxley 1941).

The most often cited defender of the common-core view is Walter T. Stace (1886–1967), whose influential *Mysticism and Philosophy* (1961) claims to offer a systematic study of the



issue. Stace argues, as his central hypothesis, “that the experience of all [mystics] are basically the same . . . but that each puts upon his experiences the intellectual interpretations which he has derived from the peculiarities of his own culture” (Stace 1961).

Mysticism and traditional Religions:

Mystic traditions form sub-currents within larger religious traditions—such as Kabbalah within Judaism, Sufism within Islam, Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism within Hinduism, Christian mysticism within Christianity—but are often treated skeptically and sometimes held separately, by more orthodox or mainstream groups within the given religion, due to the emphasis of the mystics on direct experience and living realization over doctrine. Mysticism is sometimes taken by skeptics or mainstream adherents as mere obfuscation, though mystics suggest they are offering clarity of a different order or kind. In fact, a basic premise of nearly every mystical path, regardless of religious affiliation, is that the experiences of divine consciousness, enlightenment and union with God that are made possible via mystical paths, are available to everyone who is willing to follow the practice of a given mystical system. Within a given mystical school, or path, it is much more likely for the mystical approach to be seen as a divine science, because of the direct, replicable elevation of consciousness the mystical approach can offer to anyone, regardless of previous spiritual or religious training.

Generally to comprehend the intricacies of this much talked term Mysticism, one needs open and wide nerves as it demands a deep and an intimate involvement cum entailment from the participant side to serve its true purpose. The seeker is demanded an efficient and ingenious sense usage to experience the inexperienced - the world of ideas and thus finding a novel identity which is later endorsed by the social consciousness and thereby the repercussions on the respective culture.

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