



**THE MYSTICAL AND SUFI EXPERIENCE IN  
SELECTED POEMS BY RUMI AND W.B. YEATS**

**2021  
MASTER THESIS  
Department of English Language and Literature**

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**THE MYSTICAL AND SUFI EXPERIENCE IN SELECTED POEMS BY  
RUMI AND W.B. YEATS**

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## THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Marwan Al-Doori titled “**The Mystical and Sufi Experience in Selected Poems by Rumi and W.B. Yeats**” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of Master.

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This thesis is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of English Language and Literature as a Master’s thesis. May 17, 2021

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The degree of Master of Arts by the thesis submitted is approved by the Administrative Board of the Institute of Graduate Programs, Karabuk University.

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Director of the Institute of Graduate Programs

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and all information included has been obtained and expounded in accordance with the academic rules and ethical policy specified by the institute. Besides, I declare that all the statements, results, materials, not original to this thesis have been cited and referenced literally.

Without being bound by a particular time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any detection contrary to the aforementioned statement.

**Name Surname: Marwan Al-Doori**

**Signature :**

## **Forward**

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**Didecation**

**To my son Jad**



## **ABSTRACT**

Every single religion and doctrine has its own inward spiritual element that deals with the relationship between God and the human being. Mysticism and Sufism are two terms that are attributed to describe the spiritual element of Christianity and Islam. This thesis attempts to show the common grounds between mysticism and Sufism in terms of poetry. The selected poets are Rumi as an Islamic Sufi and Yeats as a Christian mystic. The study focuses on the main sources that the poets rely on. Further, the study is divided into three chapters and a conclusion. Chapter one deals with the meaning of mysticism and its origin in Christianity and Islam. Chapter two investigates Sufism and its themes in Rumi's poetry. Chapter three is devoted to deal with the modern English poet William Butler Yeats which attempts to shed the lights on his mystical experience. The final part of the study is a conclusion that gives a brief account of the common grounds of the two religions in terms of Rumi's and Yeats's poetry. Ultimately, the study figures out that both poets speak the same language which goes beyond limitations and borders. They both refuse the materialistic world as it is the source of all corruption and destruction. Therefore, they take the spiritual world as a refuge to abandon the evilness of the lower life.

**Keywords:** Mysticism, Sufism, Poetry, Rumi, Yeats

## ÖZ

Her bir din ve öğretinin, Tanrı ile insan arasındaki ilişkiyle ilgilenen kendi içsel ruhsal ögesi vardır. Mistisizm ve Sufizm, Hıristiyanlığın ve İslam'ın manevi unsurunu tanımlamaya atfedilen iki terimdir. Bu tez şiir açısından mistisizm ve tasavvuf arasındaki ortak zemini göstermeye çalışmaktadır. Seçilen şairler, İslami Sufi olarak Rumi ve Hıristiyan mistik olarak Yeats'tir. Çalışma, şairlerin dayandıkları ana kaynaklara odaklanıyor. Ayrıca, çalışma üç bölüme ve bir sonuca ayrılmıştır. Birinci bölüm mistisizmin anlamı ve onun Hıristiyanlık ve İslam'daki kökeni ile ilgilidir. İkinci bölümde tasavvuf ve Rumi'nin şiirindeki temaları inceleniyor. Üçüncü bölüm, mistik deneyimine ışık tutmaya çalışan modern İngiliz şair William Butler Yeats ile ilgilenmeye ayrılmıştır. Çalışmanın son kısmı, Rumi'nin ve Yeats'in şiirleri açısından iki dinin ortak zeminlerinin kısa bir açıklamasını veren bir sonuçtur. Sonuçta çalışma, her iki şairin de sınırların ve sınırların ötesine geçen aynı dili konuştuğunu ortaya koyuyor. Her ikisi de materyalist dünyayı tüm yozlaşmanın ve yıkımın kaynağı olduğu için reddediyorlar. Bu nedenle, ruhsal dünyayı alt yaşamın kötülüğünü terk etmek için bir sığınak olarak alırlar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mistisizm, Tasavvuf, Şiir, Rumi, Yeats

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## ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ

<b>Tezin Adı</b>	<b>Rumi ve W.B.'nin Seçilmiş Şiirlerinde Mistisizm ve Tasavvuf Deneyimi Yeats</b>
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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**AU:** Autobiographies. London: Macmillan, 1999

**L:** Letters to Katherine Tynan. New York: McMullen Books, 2016.

**EX:** Explorations. London: Macmillan, 1962.

## **SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH**

The study mainly aims to show the common grounds between Christianity and Islam in terms of Mysticism and Sufism by selecting two poets from both religions. The selected poets are Rumi and Yeats.

## **PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of the study is to show the inner element of Christianity and Islam. Further, the study also aims to explain that the real world is beyond this world that people are deceived by. It aims to guide the readers to the world of spirituality and be away from the world of materiality and sensuality.

## **METHOD OF THE RESEARCH**

The method of the study depends mainly on investigating the sense of Mysticism and Sufism in selected poems from Rumi's and Yeats's poetry.

## **HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The study shows that both poets speak almost the same language although there is a long time spacing between them. However, the destination of both Rumi and Yeats is to unite with the Beloved.

## **SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS / DIFFICULTIES**

The limitation of the study is to explain Mysticism and Sufism in terms of poetry; the selected poets are Rumi and Yeats. The difficulties of the study are to trace the emergence of the mystical sense in Christianity and Islam and how to approve that the language of the selected poets Rumi and Yeats is alike.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 1.1. Mysticism:

The word mysticism is defined in the Oxford dictionary as the "*one who believes in the spiritual apprehension of the truths beyond the understanding*". In other words, is the one who realizes that under all the diversities there is unity related to one source. The origin of the word mysticism is derived from the Greek mysteries. It has been given to the one who gains knowledge of divinity when he must keep his mouth shut. Mysticism is a matter of temper rather than a doctrine; it is an atmosphere rather than a system of philosophy (Spurgen, 1913).

Mysticism can also be described as a state of vision that is beyond the empirical world. It is an essential element in any religion or doctrine because without this sense of meaning there would be just a form. In another word, it can be portrayed as a body with no soul. The mystical life is between the individual and the Absolute which can be attained only after overcoming the sensual desires. By doing so, a seeker comes to the awareness of God's existence literally. Underhill (1911) describes this experience as a "mystic union". James Horne (1977) explains that mysticism is not a spontaneous experience. He states that the great mystics follow some systemic exercises in order to receive the revelation as a reward. Such exercises are systemic meditation and physical discipline. The seeker who has a mystical experience is considered more than a receiver for he is presented to a transcendental view of the universe (275).

The mystical sense is found in most of the doctrines and religions starts with the civilization of Rome and Greece. Further, they are present in the religious teachings of China and India continued with the Jews and Buddhists. Lastly, this mystical sense ends with the last two religions Christianity and Islam. Mysticism is described as a religious experience in which the feeling of God is at its maximum intensity (Smith, 1995).

This experience is presented first by the authors of Upanishads over three thousand years. Svetasvatara states that he has known the spirit who is infinite and ever-one beyond time. Mundaka also declares that there is divine power that can be seen only in the silence of contemplation. After three hundred years later another young man who is later named Buddha explains his mystical experience when he is alone in the forest and suddenly as if there is a veil lifted that he says “*I have seen the Truth*”. Again, after five hundred years, a young Jew who is named Jesus, later on, is introduced to a mystical revelation when he is in deep contemplation of God. He realizes that the One whom he prays for is actually not in heaven rather He is in him as he declares “I and the Father are one”. Further, many recordings have been repeated throughout history around the world about such visions. The last one is introduced to the prophet Mohammed when he is alone in the cave praying to God. An angel tells him to read in the name of God who creates everything. This series keeps going with other mystics from varied religions and doctrines, like Rumi, Blake, Yeats, Al-Hallaj, Ibn-Arabi, and many others. (Abhayananda, 2012)

Generally, the goal of mystics is the union with the main source of existence. Nevertheless, the way of unity is different from a mystic to another. Furthermore, all mystics believe that the spirit or the soul is the only way that can lead them to know God well. According to them, as long as the intellect is given to realize the materialistic things, the spirit is also given to realize the spiritual matters. For the mystic, whatever is he, a poet, philosopher, or painter; the goal of him is to know God by using his heart and function his spirituality to recognize His existence. However, what distinguishes the mystic from a theologian, the logician, the rationalist and a man of science and scripture is that his mystical life does not depend on reason or demonstration rather it depends more on feeling and intuitive inner knowledge (James, 2002).

This feeling does not have a fixed name for it is varied from a mystic to a mystic and from a critic to another. It is sometimes called as “imagination”, “divine sagacity”, “ecstasy”, “cosmic consciousness”, “transcendental feeling”, or “vision”. All these meanings refer to one feeling, which is the feeling of tasting God's knowledge. Al-Halaj refers to this experience as “Joy” even if he gets executed or killed by those who do not understand his intentions. (Smith, 1995)



## 1.2. Platonism:

Plato (428-348 B.C.) is considered the father of mysticism which is known today. Though his main philosophy is politics, however, inside this philosophy, there is always a spiritual sense. The philosophy of Plato is based on duality which declares that for every object there is a real copy. From this point, Plato believes that this world is not the real one; it is just a shadow of the real one. Thus a wise person should seek Reality and not be deceived by this empirical world. However, Plato insists that the power that holds both worlds is one. The same with the body and soul, Plato considers the body as a prison to the soul because the soul is the real and the immortal whereas the body is mortal and limited (Kingsland, 1927)

Plato explains that the soul is originally in heaven or in the world of Form and Ideas as he calls it. According to him that the soul has been living in peace and comfort but once it joins to the body, it gets hurt and pain. Hence, this causes it to forget, it forgets the excellent and perfect vision of the Beauty and the Truth of heaven. Furthermore, it moves from this world to the world of illusion and change. Plato states that true knowledge is to know the main source of the soul. He believes that knowledge in the empirical world is impossible for he says knowledge must be eternal therefore this world does not satisfy such requirement because it is mortal. He believes that pure knowledge is impossible to be gained as long as the body imprisons the soul. Therefore, knowledge cannot be acquired unless the soul gets free from the body. Nevertheless, Plato says that a seeker may be near to knowledge if he ignores the demands of the body. He advises being away from the body's lusts as much as possible until God sets the soul free (Louth, 2007).

For Plato, divine power takes several names and titles. For example, In *Phaedo* is "Being", in the *Republic* is "God", in "*Symposium*" and the "*Phaedrus*" is "The One" lastly in the "*Philebus*" is the "Limit". For Plato, the realm of Forms and Ideas is beyond the heavens. This world can only be realized and comprehend by contemplation. For in contemplation, a seeker can realize the kinship of the soul with the divine. He believes the origin place of the soul is in the divine, thus, it always longs to come back home. However, the obstacles which are produced by the body sometimes prevent it to find the way. Furthermore, Plato considers this world as unreal and just like a cave. Therefore, he encourages us to come out of this cave of illusion. The first stage of coming out of this cave is being aware of the distance from the real home. This process is gradual; it requires to

have a detachment from the unreality and attachment to the true reality. The detachment here means ignoring the desires of the body and its senses as well as working on purifying the soul and make it spiritual as much as possible. Such a person will be the one who:

*“approaches each thing, so far as is possible, with the reason alone, not introducing sight into his reasoning nor dragging in any of the other senses along with his thinking, but who employs pure, absolute reason in his attempt to hunt down the pure, absolute essence of things, and who removes himself, so far as possible, from eyes and ears, and, in a word, from his whole body, because he feels that its companionship disturbs the soul and hinders it from attaining truth and wisdom”*(ibid, p. 7)

According to Plato, the process of purification has two dimensions. The first one is the moral and the second one is the intellectual. Moral purification means performing the virtues, which represent humanity and modesty. Such virtues are temperance, justice, courage, and prudence. If a person fails to fulfill these virtues, it means that he is still influenced by the body. The aim of possessing these virtues is to train the body to have tranquility and not to distract the soul. By achieving such a level a seeker can easily see the light of Truth. Therefore, just like Socrates, Plato believes that *virtue* is True knowledge (ibid).

Plato also insists that music and poetry are good reasons to purify the soul for they have moral lessons and sink deep into the recesses of the soul. He believes that music is able to educate for it makes the soul more sensitive to beauty. Further, music with moral poetry tames the body and enables it to reach the contemplation of the true reality. Moreover, the second dimension of purification is the intellectual one. This purification subsumes under the name of dialectic. For Plato, the best two dialectics are mathematic or the science of numbers and measure. They help the soul to accustom to the contemplation. By studying such sciences, a person always tries to seek a result and principles of things. However, such exercises can awake the mind of the seeker apart from the senses (ibid).

Plato states that the one who reaches the point of contemplation is able to see and taste the beauty of Love. He describes this love as eternal, indestructible, and unproduced. It is not like other material things for it neither decays nor increases. He adds that this supreme beauty can never be figured into the imagination because it is more beautiful than a

person ever imagines. It is not like anybody, discourse or science. It is more beautiful than anything whether on earth, heaven, or any other place.

All the beautiful things are through the participation of it. This Love cannot be expressed in an image or defined in simple words for it is beyond any description. The only way to see it and taste it is to be it and experience this divine realm. He adds that the state of ecstasy or revelation comes on sudden like a light that is kindled by a spark which after then nourishes. At the same time, this state happens after a good preparation therefore a master is essential in order to prepare a seeker to receive such a mystical revelation. In his *Phaedrus*, Plato states that this place beyond heaven has never been sung by the earthly poets and even if they do so, none is able to sing it worthily (Louth, 11, 15).

For Plato, the world of Form and Ideas cannot be realized by intellect or even weak spirituality. However, the only way to know Him is by training the soul to reach the state of ecstasy (the highest state of spiritual life). The process of moving from being material into spiritual is done when a seeker does not concern for the many and various; when he focuses on what is single and unique. By this means, the disciple can reach the state of ecstasy. Plato writes in his *Conviction* that those who reach this state are the ones who have the priority to be leaders and rulers of their cities. The reason is that they have gained great knowledge and wisdom so that they can govern and lead their people in the right way. Generally, those who attain the contemplation life win the divine and the worldly life. As Plato proves that

*“The society of the gods none shall join who has not sought wisdom and departed wholly pure: only the lover of knowledge may go thither”* (ibid, p. 15)

Another figure of the platonic tradition mysticism is called Plotinus. He is considered the father of European mysticism that he is the disciple of the father of Greek philosophy, Plato. Plotinus develops his master's mystical thoughts by establishing the New-Platonist school. He (A.D 204-270) is born in Egypt and travels to Alexandria where he studies philosophy which is considered the center of knowledge at that time. He studies under Ammonius Saccas then he travels to Rome and teaches philosophy there. The center of his thoughts is written in his sixth *Ennead*, “On the Good or the One”. *He said that “God is not external to anyone rather He is present in all things”* (Plotinus, 1994, p. 407). This idea is considered the root of Muslim and Christian mystics later on. He also states that

“*God is not limited to a certain place; in contrast, He is everywhere*” (SPURGEON, 1913, p. 15). He believes that it was all because of our ignorance about God's individuality that we cannot see Him. Further, he adds that "

*“We do not know ourselves if we do, we would know that the way to God lay within ourselves”* (ibid)

All Plotinus thoughts and concepts are derived from his teacher Plato. However, the difference between the teacher and the disciple that Plato is a speculative mystic whereas Plotinus is both a speculative and practical mystic. Plotinus' disciple Prohary records that for six years that he has been with his master, he witnessed and attained four times ecstatic union with the “One”. Further, Plotinus could combine the intellect of metaphysicians with the element of psychology. As a result, he is able to analyze with precise dialectic and experience the spiritual contemplation where reason and tongue have no room (ibid)

Like Plato, Plotinus also believes that the true place of the soul is in heaven however, because of the ignorant of the soul to the indwelling of God that it comes to be lost. He describes that the soul has felt delighted when it first goes away from the divine. It feels happy for getting liberty just like children who get loosed from their parents. It runs away from its source and becomes clogged with the joys and the destructive desires of the material world which is never able to satisfy it. Plotinus states that there are three stages if the soul desires to retrace the way home.

The first stage is to purify the soul from its animal desires. It must be detached from the sensual things and be instead attached to spiritual ones. The next step is to be conscious of the world of pure thoughts which is mainly related to everything divine; this stage is called the illuminative life. The last stage is the unitive life when the soul is attached only to the Divine where there is no place to the material world. By achieving this stage, the soul is no longer conscious of the body's desires for it is in the place that it has desired to be in. Plotinus explains that this stage is beyond words because it is the stage of tasting God's knowledge that the language is paralyzed when comes to describe it thus it is a stage of experience rather than reason. He states that *“it is a mode of vision which is Ecstasy”* (ibid 17). He adds, the soul “Nous” is the link between man and God. It has two levels; the lowest one is the animal or the sensual soul which is trapped with the body. The highest one is the soul that recognizes God and the way to Him. Therefore, whenever the man purifies his soul, he can know the way home. Hence, these thoughts have a great influence on both

Islamic Sufism and Christian mysticism later. For Christianity, Plotinus has influenced them indirectly. His thoughts are merely present in the writings of the two Christian monks, St Augustine (345-450) and the Syrian monk as well. Moreover, no one can deny the influence of Plotinus' thoughts upon Islamic mysticism; they call him as *al-Sheykh al-Yunani* or the Greek master. These elements are discussed in the following sections (Nasr, 2007, p. 72).

### **1.3. Christian mysticism:**

Christian mysticism firstly started with the teachings of Jesus which have been told in the Gospels. In this account, it was better to write down the story of Jesus to trace the beginning of Mysticism in Christianity. Nevertheless, before the emergence of Christianity, there were Roman, Greek, and Jewish cultures which were very influential at that time. The philosophy of unity was widespread in Greece, Roman, and Alexandria, especially Brahmin and Buddhist ones. However, in the days of Roman rule, a young man who was called Jesus by the Greeks became a saint. He was a carpenter and a normal man from the people's perspective. He felt a strong enthusiasm to understand the mysteries of life. He started reading many books about different fields like Hebrew Scriptures and others. By the age of twenty-eight, Jesus devoted himself to worship God and imitate nature. He started testing the sweet love of God. While the people of that time were busy with the liberation of the tyranny of the Roman state, Jesus was more consternated on the liberation of worldly diseases and desires. For him, this kind of liberation cannot be attained without contemplation and love in the heart of an individual man. Additionally, this liberation according to Jesus can be achieved in the transformation of the mind and the heart and make them exposed to the love of the main source of existence (Happold, 1970)

As it was mentioned, by this time, there was a kind of revolution against the tyranny of Romanian. At the same time, there was also an understanding like Jesus' one. The best example of this likeness was those people who used to live in the contemplative life who were more interested in the service, study, and prayer and were trying to engage in the inner connection with their soul to be purified and perfect. They were known as "Gnostics" or Essences who abandoned everything materialistic and went away living in the wilderness outside the cities (Castillo, 2015).

They tried to follow the spiritual life and were keen on living in peace and love without bloodshed and destruction. Consequently, they chose to live their contemplative life

that was interested in connecting with God. One of the most well-known Gnostics was a saint called *John*. He used to baptize those who would like to transform into spiritual life. This process of baptism was taken place in the river of Jordan. Additionally, he used preaching to people the importance of baptism in order to move from the world of materialism and selfishness into the world of love and spirituality. This matter should be preceded by repentance as he said (Abhayananda, 2012).

Jesus met John while he was preaching on the banks of the river. He was so attracted and admired by the words that he was uttering. He recognized how powerful John's spirituality was. Furthermore, John was telling the people that one day a person will come who will be more spiritual than he. By this time Jesus was still standing there and listening, he then went to John to be baptized. John recognized that he was the missionary one. Then after, Jesus had been baptized and felt a great joy and thrill. He felt that his consciousness of God's presence was closer than any other time. He felt that the love and the light of God started flooding into his body and heart (ibid).

After this, Jesus tried to enter what it was called later "The Kingdom of God". He started favoring solitude and being alone with God. So, he withdrew outside the city in order to know Him well and the vision of spirituality would become clearer. He ignored all bodily desires and went by himself to the *Rocky Wastelands* to worship God and imitate the whole existence. One night, Jesus was deeply drawn into his prayer and longing for God. He was alone trying to feel the existence of God. Suddenly, he felt that his consciousness of God became much clearer than ever before. He felt that all the hindrances and the obstacles were gone at that moment. Thus, this state meant that he had entered what was mentioned above as "The Kingdom of God". This stage is the highest in the experiences of the mystics. It is called in Sufism also as the state of annihilation " *Maqqam al-Fanna*". The one who enters this stage becomes conscious and aware of God's existence and presence. This stage can be reached with high meditation and contemplation of the greatness of God. However, when Jesus returned to his mind, he wondered " *Had anyone before I experienced such this?*" (ibid, 117). He tried to remember if any of the ancient Israel prophets had such an experience but there was nothing.

Jesus then realized that he was the *Messiah* and his mission on earth was to guide people to realize the existence of God spiritually rather than reading about him in the scriptures. Jesus was hesitated first to reveal that he was the missionary one. Then, he came

back to *Jerusalem* and went directly to the temple of the city. He climbed to the top of the temple by the stairs and looked at all the people moving on the streets. He spoke out that he was the Messiah and he would guide those who follow him to the right path of God. He told them that he had experienced the Kingdom of God and he had received the knowledge by seeing the lights of the Ultimate. He already had a belief that not all of them would believe him. He continued his sermon that the "*kingdom of God is not far away near the heavens, instead, it is within everyone who seeks for it*" (ibid, 119). Then he said, those who love him would sorrow for him and the kingdom of God belongs to the pure ones who are just like children before God.

The purification should be preceded by repentance and regret about all the wrongs that have been done in the past. Furthermore, the follower should have the determination to be righteous and ambition for attending the lights of God's existence. At the same time, Jesus warned them that do not think such a task is easy rather they may face persecution or some may not understand them but endure and be happy to endure such persecution because they will be rewarded by God's himself later on. Moreover, he said that this path is narrow as the edge of the sword. Not everyone can reach the kingdom of God, only those who are patient and honest with their worship.

He told them that if they love God, their mind and heart will be always with god only. On the other hand, if they love the world and its desires and lusts, their mind and heart will be with the materialistic world only because they cannot go in two directions at the same time. He inspired them by telling them that if a man reaches the divinity and the knowledge of knowing Him, no harm can come to him. He will neither harm nor starve or even go naked. However, Jesus taught them how to pray and that this prayer is not for men's approval instead it is for God only, and for Him is the goal. The way of prayer is to keep reciting God's name within your heart and in the moments of silence and solitude, he told them to ask God to open his kingdom to them. Further, he also taught them this prayer:

Our Father, who is beyond the earth and the heavens, holy is Thy name. Let me enter into Thy kingdom if it is Thy will, for Thy will is done here on earth as well as in heaven. Grant us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our past sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us. Lead us, not into temptation, but to freedom from all evil thoughts, so we may enter into Thy eternal kingdom and know Thy power and Thy glory (Abhayananda, 2012, p. 120).

The Christen mysticism was summed up in this verse that "*if any man would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.*" (Mark 8:34). Consequently,

there are two sides to the life of the Christian person that consists of both negative and positive ones. The negative includes renunciation and abnegation. On the other hand, the positive side interests in developing the Christ-life and his instructions in the Holy Bible. Furthermore, this kind of development cannot come with comfort and ease rather it requires discipline and determination. As well as it requires punishment for the soul if it tries to attach to worldly sins. Examples of these punishments are fasting and manual labor. This train may make the body tired, as a result, it leaves the soul alone with no temptation. Moreover, such training requires patience and enthusiasm in order to reach the aimed goal. The reward of such experience is to perceive the light of Reality or at least tickles the spiritual side of the seeker. (Merton, 2017)

### **1.3.1. Gnosticism:**

The word "Gnosis" means experiential knowledge and the "Gnostic" stands for a mystic or "arif" in Sufism. They are more interested in actual communion or experience of God than a belief system or doctrine. For Christians, their reliable sources are to follow the spiritual life of Jesus Christ and understand the scripture and practice its instructions by activating their imagination. They are mostly dealing with spiritual aspects more than sensual ones. They consider the Orthodox Catholic Church is a corrupt and cynical establishment because it focuses only on temporal power and population control and has no interest in providing spiritual enlightenment to the masses. They claim that they are the true representative of Jesus and his sayings. However, many books have been written by those *Gnostics* such as *Mark*, *John*, *Luke*, and *The Gospel of Thomas*. All these books have been adopted by the church later on. (Abhayananda, 2012).

Many of Jesus's mystical sayings have been found in the Gospel of Thomas. These sayings are considered secret according to some scholars because they are written to Jesus's sincere disciples as he declares "It is to those who are worthy of mysteries that I tell my mysteries" (131). These mysteries consist of the vision that Jesus has seen about divine knowledge. He tells that this knowledge can only be seen through the eternal soul. This experience is known in Christian mysticism as "mystical marriage", "the vision of God" or "Enlightenment" (ibid).

Nevertheless, the Gnostics have a great sense of dualism, which emphasizes that all people within them there are two distinctive selves. The first one is called the temporary



personal self whereas the second one is called the eternal spiritual self. For Gnostics, they believe that most people do not practice their spiritual self and they pay more attention to their temporary body. However, according to the Gnostics that if the personal self is the dominant one, the spiritual self will be in darkness and there will be no light enter that person's soul. Therefore, they always encourage symbolically killing the personal temporary self and born again with a new soul. By doing so, the soul would be able to receive the light of divinity and shine again. This process of rebirth has several names in other cultures. For example, for the Greeks, it is called "*apotheosis*" which means "a human becoming a god". The same with Hindus, they refer to this rebirth as being "Twice born". This rebirth is preceded by "baptism" in Christianity and "repentance" in Islam (Gandy and Freke, 1999).

*"I am telling you the truth: no one can see the Kingdom of God without being Born Again." How can a grown man be born again?" Nicodemus asked. "He certainly cannot enter his mother's womb and be born a second time!" "I am telling you the truth," replied Jesus, "that no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and pneuma. A person is born physically of human parents but is born spiritually of pneuma" (John 3:3-6).*

Jesus here refers to two main things which may lead a person to the gate of the kingdom of God; they are water and breath or air. Furthermore, the initiation for the Gnostics moves through three stages. It starts with the novice and apprentice and the second one is being accepted as a member and receives the secret oral teachings. The final stage is achieving the enlightened stage and become a master.

Besides the three stages of Gnostics initiation, there are also four levels of human existence according to Christian Gnosticism which includes: Physical, Psychological, Spiritual, and Gnostic. The physical level refers to those who receive no baptism and being overwhelmed by the body's desires. They are called "*hylics*" which refers to those who are unconscious about intellectual and spiritual matters. The second level is called *Psychics* or mind which refers to those who have received the first baptism and identify it with their mind or ego so that they do not go beyond their intellect. The third level refers to those who have received the second baptism by air and breath which is called *Pneumatics*. This baptism would allow them to trance the mind and experience their divine spiritual selves.

The final level refers to those who receive the third baptism by fire. This group is known as Gnostics who have achieved the direct experience of divinity. Their baptism is by fire because their soul is "burn up" longing for tasting the knowledge of God. This longing may face so many obstacles so that it is called symbolically baptism by fire (Castillo, 2015)

#### **1.4. Mysticism in English Poetry:**

Mystics are considered the true devotional and the purest religious, however, if a poet can be a mystic and a poet at the same time, he then reaches the ultimate realization of God's existence. William Blake is one of the greatest mystical poets in the world that he has lived in the world of vision, glory, and spirit which for him is the only real world. At the age of four, Blake claims that he has seen God looking at him from the window. From then on, he starts his mystical journey until he welcomes death with songs of joy. He believes that everything is related to God and in its essence is God. He also adopts the Christian doctrine of self-sacrifice that one should die for another in order to be eternal. Like all mystics, Blake is rich spiritually in the midst of the poverty of lower life. The stage that Blake has reached leads him to be misunderstood even by his close acquaintance. He writes a letter to Haylen on (October 23, 1804) at the time of "Divine Intoxication" as follows:

Dear Sir, excuse my enthusiasm or rather madness, for I am really drunk with intellectual vision whenever I take a pencil or graver into my hand." This is the "divine madness" of which Plato speaks, the "inebriation of Reality," the ecstasy which makes the poet "drunk with life (Spurgeon, 1913, p. 94)

Blake claims all that he has written is under direct inspiration. He states that he has written his *Milton* from an immediate dictation that he may write thirty lines at a time. He adds that all he has written is without labor or study instead is a matter of inspiration and imagination. Though Blake does not express frankly the exact source of his inspiration still his poems carry mystical thought and symbolic expression. This is apparent in his *Songs of Innocence* and his Prophetic books. Blake's unique philosophy is that he finds unity and diversity in the heart of things. For instance, he states, "*God is in the lowest effects as in the highest causes*" (Gilchrist & Gilchrist, 1863, p. 66).

Furthermore, Blake agrees with Plotinus that man had fallen from heaven and the world of unity into division. This fall comes because of the man's ignorance and his seeking separation. Nevertheless, Blake considers that every materialistic thing that could be realized by the five senses is not a perfect vision of reality. He states that the only way to get out of this illusion is by imagination which is for him the true mere reality. The language of this imagination is Art and its branches. However, such kind of imagination would get out all the saved knowledge and wisdom from the man's inward. It would shut up his selfhoods and ignorance by using suitable symbols

*“To open the eternal worlds, to open the immortal eyes Of man inwards into the worlds of thought, into eternity, Ever-expanding in the bosom of God, the human imagination” (ibid 185)*

In Blake's perspective, the man needs two important things to reach a perfect sense of imagination. These things are love and understanding. He says that these are more important than discipline, restraint, obedience, and a sense of duty. The reason is that love can only be understood by imagination. The lack of imagination is the root of all the selfishness and ignorance in this world. To examine our imagination, Blake says that if a man can feel happy for others' happiness and sad for others' sadness in that time his imagination works perfectly, and the opposite means that the man's imagination is dull and incomplete. The one who reaches such a stage would help any needed person regardless of religion or for any reason; It comes just because of love. However, when the heart is full of love and the soul is purified without any selfishness and ignorance, all the energies and good deeds would kneel to serve. Blake shares this idea with the Christian theologies Origen and Clement that the mystical sense and imagination are the absolute reality. (ibid)

In the *Latter to Flaccus*, Plotinus states that there are different roads to reach the stage of apprehension of the infinite. One of these roads is the Love of Beauty. This is present in William Wordsworth's poetry for he believes the divinity lies in nature. The philosophy of him is based on the interpretation and meditation of nature. He is interested in simple elements like hills, clouds, and flowers that he comes to live a simple life and be away from the cruelty of the materialistic world. The beauty of nature makes Wordsworth live in it and be a part of it that he knows and feels it. This involvement and sincerity to

nature lead him to the stage of being visionary. He believes that anyone can attain this stage if he works on the analysis of the power that controls nature. (Ouspensky, 2005).

It can be noticed that all of Wordsworth's poetry is a kind of notes series and investigation that aims to find a way to reach a stage of ecstasy and contemplation. Besides, he explains that when the mind is freed from disturbing objects and animal desires, it can achieve this condition of tranquility that he calls a "happy stillness of mind". This condition requires purification and discipline that he says if a man can habitually train himself to this condition, he may come across a vision that changes his whole life. For this reason, Wordsworth's poetry is considered misleading because a reader cannot absorb it fully without experience. For instance, he believes that everything in this universe has a soul therefore people need to purify themselves in order to feel and meditate.

To every natural form, rock, fruits, or flower,  
Even the loose stones that cover the highway,  
I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,  
Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass  
Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all  
That I beheld respired with inward meaning (ibid 46)

As the Platonists and Christian mystics have mentioned above that the soul cannot rest in this lower life because this life is imperfect and mortal therefore, the only rest is in heaven. For this reason, Wordsworth states in his poem "*My heart leaps up*" that "*Child is Father of all Men*" because when the child is born he is still pure and innocent. However, once he grows up, he turns to be cruel and evil because of his attachment to the world and be detached from the real home. Therefore, the soul should always be pure like the child's one in order to realize home. He expresses that there is one law that controls everything:

Gently did my soul  
Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood  
Naked, as in the presence of her God ( ibid 48)

Tennyson (1809-1892) is considered another mystic figure in English poetry. He is different from Blake and Wordsworth for he is not born with a mystical temperament. He struggles for many years in order to find answers to his questions and doubts. Therefore, his mystical sense comes as a result of ecstasy that he has from time to time as he mentions in his *Memories* and the *Holy Grail*. His interest in Eastern Sufism is regarded as a major factor behind his interest in mysticism. The rich library of his father provides him with many books about eastern Sufism (Landela, 1975). Like Wordsworth, Tennyson believes that the only way to gain knowledge is to listen to the soul:

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with  
Spirit can meet—  
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands  
and feet (Jackson, 2019).

In many of Tennyson's poems, he expresses his love for God and yearning to union with Him. In his poem *Crossing the Bar*, he reveals his passion for union with the Pilot face to face after the sunset which stands for death. Tennyson's son expresses that his father uses the Pilot as a reference to the Divine who always guides people though they do not see Him. He also declares in his *The Ancient Sage* that he experiences his mystical life just like a boy that he always repeats his name silently when he is alone. This state resembles *dhikr* (remembrance) in Sufism to some extent (AL-DOURI, 1999).

### **1.5. Sufism:**

Sufism is widely recognized as Islamic mysticism. The main sources of Sufism are the sayings of the prophet Muhammad and the verses of the Holy Quran. They always try to make these sources practical in their daily life. A saying (*hadith*) is reported from the prophet Mohammed says that " *there are three eyes that will never be burnt by the fire: an eye that has wept from the fear of God, an eye that has stayed awake at night with the Book of God, and an eye that has kept watch on the path of God*". (Melchert, 2017, p:7) . Abd Allah ibn Amr states "the recollection of God morning and evening is better than breaking swords in the path of God and pouring out wealth"(ibid 10). It means that the private spiritual struggle is much more important than the physical one. Sufyan ibn Uyayna also strengthens this debate by saying that "Spiritual Jihad was worth ten times as much as the

*war on the infidels*" (ibid). Therefore, including the fight physically on the battlefield for the sake of God, Sufis always try to prioritize the fighting against the *nefs- al amarrah* ( the ordering soul) more than anything else. Because they believe, once they overcome the carnal soul, they can get freedom from all worldly weaknesses. (Nurbakhsh, 2015).

Some describe the true Sufi as the one who can see beyond reality, which normal people cannot see, this is called *Karama* which means favor from God to this person for his true obedience. However, Sufis say that any Muslim can reach this stage if that person frees himself from the bounds and the chains that make him in prison and prevent him from the Truth. Therefore, they encourage to free the soul from the prison which is the body and its animal desires. However, this process can be done by observing the rules of religion. Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, an American-Egyptian Sufi states that:

[Sufism] is nothing more than the spiritual dimension . . . It is Islam, but we focus on meditation, on chanting sessions, which enable the Muslim to have his or her heart open. The myths people have about Sufis are analogous to the myths people have about Muslims. (Rachidi, 2019)

The goal of Sufism is to reach the highest destination of knowledge which is called "*Irfan*" or illumination. This knowledge is far different from other kinds of knowledge that may depend on logic or demonstration. On the contrary, this knowledge can only be attained by the insight of the heart, through contemplation and meditation. However, this stage is not accessible for all, once a man being able to get rid of the illness of the soul and the worldly desires, he may reach this state. Allah says "*Are those who know and those who do not know equal*" (Quran, az-Zumar, 39).

According to the Sufis that Islam is divided into three parts which are: the *Shari'at*, which means jurisprudence, and the *Tariqat*, which is the deed, and the *Haqiqat* which means reaching the divine love. However, the first and the second are just like a chain which without one of them, the third cannot be reached. Jurisprudence is considered the knowledge of the exterior whereas; (*Tariqat*) is considered the knowledge of the interior. However, if a Muslim keeps these two aspects of knowledge altogether, he can reach the aimed goal which is being loved by Allah. This stage is the highest stage in Islam which is called the stage of "*Ihsan*" when a Sufi is always conscious of the presence of God. (Fauzi,

2013).

Furthermore, the original word of Sufism is an Arabic one *Tasawwuf* which is preferred to be called Sufism in the Western culture. The etymological roots of Sufism can be attributed to four sources. The first "*Safa*", which is an Arabic word that means purity as it is one of the main goals for Sufism. This process is mentioned in the instructions of Islam as "*Tazkia*" which means that the Muslim should purify himself from worldly desires and let the light of God access him. Further, another root of this word is the Greek one "*Sophia*" which means wisdom. Another root is "*Ashap alsafa*" which attributes to the companions of the prophet Mohammed who are considered the seekers of spirituality. The last root of Sufism is *Suf* which means wool, and this term has acceptance more than any previous terms (Fauzi, 2013).

However, there are two main factors behind the emergence of Sufism as a movement with its followers. The first factor is the increasing wealth of Muslims; the second one is the formalization and canonization of the religion. Nevertheless, as it is known that the Islamic empire has spread rapidly across the world, which resulted in, conquer of many countries in the west and the east. This increase makes the Muslims live a luxurious life and wear the finest clothes so that they become materialistic more than spiritual worshipers (ibid)

*Whoever desires the reward of the world, We will give him some of it; and whoever desires the reward of the Hereafter, We will give him some of it; and We will reward the appreciative (Ali 'Imran, 145).*

Consequently, a group of devotionals start to wear wool as a sign of rejection for the behavior of the worldly Muslims and have returned to focus on the spiritual side of their personality therefore they are called Sufis. The second factor is that Muslims start to focus on the form of Islam rather than the essence of Islam which means that they have looked at the sayings of the prophet Mohammed and verses of the Quran from an external angle which makes them read without experience. *Will they not ponder the Quran? Or are there locks upon their hearts? (Quran, Muhammad, 24)* Therefore, this movement emerges as an objection against those who adopt Islam just as a form not as a way of life. The rejection here is not to fight instead they just withdraw away and come back to the pure religion and practice it as a part of their daily life.

Sufism has taken different shapes with different actions. There are many parties of Sufism, each one of them has its ways and practices but the goal of all of them is to achieve the Truth, which is to know Allah. Additionally, Sufism is not specified with certain places or people, it is found with the educated and uneducated people as well as with the urban and the rural and amongst rich and poor folks.

Nevertheless, not all of those who wear the wool are considered Sufis, rather, the true Sufis who purify themselves from the inward than the outward. Al-Hassan al-Basri states "*piety is not one's clothing, it settles in the heart and is confirmed by the one's work and deed*" (Melchert, 2017, p. 12) . Moreover, some Sufis may be seen as Sufis at first sight but they are not true ones, because sometimes they exaggerate in their worshiping and their isolation. Hence, the true Sufi who controls himself, so he can achieve that in many ways and isolation is one of them, but this does not mean to escape from society. The true Sufi is the one who corrects himself and tries to correct his society by his good deeds. Sufyan ibn Uyana states:

Renunciation concerns what God has forbidden, as for what God has made it licit, God has made it allowable. The prophet married, rode dressed, and ate, but when God forbade them something, they avoided it and were renunciates concerning it (ibid,10)

Moreover, the journey of Sufism is fully spiritual backed with the knowledge of the Islamic instructions. Allah says " *The heavens, the earth and between the two*". These divisions of the three parts can be respectively considered as "the world of spirits, the world of bodies and the world of images". However, the world of images is considered the world of spirituality which allows the consciousness of realizing Reality. Allah creates the human being as the Quran states to serve Him and to become conscious of Him. Therefore only mankind creature has the ability to recognize the creator perfectly. This is proved in the *hadith qudsi* reported by the Prophet " *I was a Hidden Treasure and I desired to be known, so I created the creatures that they might know Me, among all of the created beings, only the human beings have the ability to recognize Me fully*" (Chittick, 1989, pp. 77-96)

This journey of realization cannot be done without a *murshid* "master". The master should be the one who has finished the journey of realization, achieved the last stage of self-realization through hard discipline and strives. This master is just like a guide in the path, without this master, the traveler cannot reach the right destination. Therefore, anyone who



decides to take this path without a master is just like the one who tries to make a surgical operation on him. Sufis believe that the one who has no master will have the devil as his master. (Abdul-Hamid, 2013)

The master in this path is the supporter and the mediator between the traveler and the Reality who gives him the instructions and tries always to observe him. If he commits any mistake, he tries to correct him until he reaches the stage that the master himself has reached before. Furthermore, there must be a strong bond between the master and the disciple. This relationship is called in Sufism *rabita* and *murabita* which can be translated as observing the borders or fulfilling an order accurately. Nevertheless, without this relationship, there is no process of transformation. After this realization journey of consciousness, a traveler will reach the reward of his efforts, which is the love between the traveler and Allah himself. “*God will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him*” (al-Ma'idah, 54)

*Hadith qudsi* is reported by the prophet Muhammed “*He who becomes conscious of himself becomes conscious of his lord*”. However, the Sufis insist on the matter of knowing and being conscious of themselves. The reason is that, once a person is conscious of himself, it means he will realize his mistakes and bad behaviors. Nevertheless, there are some rules that the disciple should be bound with, just like follow the master's instructions (Chittick, 1989). The story of Moses and Khizr is the best example of the relationship between the master and the disciple. The story begins with Moses's proposal to be Khizr's disciple, the answer of Khizr was “He said, “*If you follow me, do not ask me about anything until I myself make mention of it to you*” (al-Kahf, 70).

For Sufis, there are two times of birth. The first is the normal and the common one. The second is more difficult which consists of being dead in the world of materiality and multiplicity and born again into the world of love and devotion. Jesus states in the testimony that “*unless one is born again anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God*” (John 3:3). On this account, the story of Yunus Emra is a good example. This story talks about a judge who is a very arrogant person, one day he sees an old man who seems to him an awkward one at the first sight but once he speaks with him he feels shocked about his wisdom and his indescribable knowledge. He admires him and after a while, he discovers that he is Master *Tabtuk Emre* who is really respectable master in his town. Later on, Yunus decides to be his discipline. When he meets his master, the first thing *Tabtuk* asks him that “*where is judge*

*Yunus?*" Yunus replies, " *he is dead, your excellency*". It can be concluded from this story that death is metaphorical and symbolic which means that the first Yunus who is arrogant and proud of himself is no longer alive. He is born again with a new soul and looking forward to starting his path to God. (Bozdog, 2015.)

### **1.5.1. The Soul in Sufism:**

Sufis believe that the heart holds the focal point in the consciousness of the human being. When this heart becomes loaded with worldly desires and personal emotions that it becomes just like a stone in the chest, in another word it becomes "blind". Thus, this blindness leads to forgetfulness and ignorance of the (Absolute Reality). Therefore, the true Sufi tries to awaken this blind heart to see the light of the Supreme Reality, which is Allah. This process of awakening can be done by purifying the heart from all the diseases, which may corrupt it. Those who can achieve this rank are being told in the *hadith Qudsi* "My heavens and My earth cannot embrace Me, but the heart of My believing servant embraces Me" (Chittick, 2007, p: 23-75).

According to Al-Gazali, the heart is the king of the body and the soul. Therefore, all other organs externally and internally are considered servants to the heart. Further, Al-Ghazali believes that the mind and the soul are subordinates of the heart. He believes that the mind is like a horseman; if the horseman can tame and train his horse then he can achieve success. However, if he is clumsy, the horse will be disobedient which makes his rider drawn to lose. This clumsiness of the horseman represents his lack of wisdom and insight. On the other hand, the disobedient of the horse stands for the superiority of the animal appetite like sex and food (Ghazali, p. 7)

Briefly, Al-Ghazali insists that the heart is the king and the mind and the other organs are just ministers and soldiers. The proof for this is the saying of the prophet Mohammed "There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart" (Al-Bukhari, 1997, p. 1.50) Additionally, the main aim of the traveler in the path of Sufism or is to keep his heart fixed and protected from the continuous changes. In this account, the prophet Mohammed always prays for God to fixate his heart upon the religion. Once a Sufi reaches this stage of stability, he is become loved by God that he is under his protection and observation:

*“My servant keeps coming closer to me through performing extra deeds till I love him, when I love him I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks me, I give him, and if he asks my refuge, I protect him.... For he hates death, and I hate to disappoint him”.* (Chittick, 1989, p: 333-380.)

Consequently, achieving such a position requires extreme efforts. The Sufi should take an act of transformation of his soul, which is called in Sufism a journey. This journey has seven stages; the first one is the *al-nafs al-ammara* (the soul that commands). At this stage, the heart is blind and the bad side of the soul is the dominant one. The heart is blinded by many dark sentiments like anger, wrath, envy, pride, lust, and self-righteousness. Once a traveler realizes his weaknesses and his inability to defeat time and death, then he will blame himself for his bad deeds and habits. By then, he moves to the next stage of *al-nafs aluammah* ( the soul that blames itself for its shortcomings). The battle here becomes fiercer because many tasks should be passed. The third stage is *al-nafs al-mulhama* (inspiring soul) which is mentioned in the Holy Quran *“And inspired it with its wickedness and its righteousness .Successful is he who purifies it. Failing is he who corrupts it”* (*ash-Shams*, 8-10). However, in this stage, the traveler faces two choices, whether he follows the bad side or the good side. This stage is the same which "*Doctor Faustus*" has faced, he has a struggle between the evil and the angel, in the end, he follows the evil one. Thus, he struggles and has been condemned by God.

At the same time, the Sufi always has a war with the bad side of his soul and hopes to follow the angel one. However, once the traveler passes this task successfully, he reaches a higher rank which is *al-nafs al-mutmainna*( the satisfied soul). The stage when the heart starts to see the lights of the Absolute Reality like, the light of forgiveness, trustworthiness, thankfulness, patience, and gentleness. Subsequently, in the next two levels there are two kinds of the soul; *al-nafs alradhiya* (the content soul) and *al-nafs almardhiya* ( the gratified soul) "*O tranquil soul, Return to your Lord, pleased and accepted”* (*al-Balad*, 27-28). Finally, if the traveler completes his journey and reaches this stage, he achieves the stage of the perfect human.

This journey of the soul is difficult at the beginning because it is still trapped in the physical multiplicity. Therefore, to make this journey a successful one, the soul needs to be fully detached from its diseases. This operation may face furious resistance because the soul tends to the material comforts, deceit, greed, and selfishness. So, this process needs patience and perseverance, and more all of these it needs trust in the master to overcome this bad side of the soul. Consequently, the result of this war is the disappearance of the veils as it is called in the terminology of Sufism. This veil represents the hindrance that prevents the traveler from seeing Reality (Nurbakhsh, 1993)

### **1.5.2. Philosophical Sufism:**

Sufism has two distinct varied generations; the first one includes *Abdu Alkadar Al-Ghailani, Hassan al-Basri, and Junayd al-Baghdadi*, and others. Those Sufis are clear in their statements and ideas so that the opposite party in Salafism does not have any problem with them. The misunderstanding starts with the second generation due to their paradox and using symbols in their speech. They come with some philosophical ideas which discuss the relationship between the creator and the created. The famous debatable Sufis are *ibn al-Arabi, Abu Yazid Bastami, al-Hallaj, and Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi* (Woodward et al., 2013).

Ibn Arabi is considered one of the most debatable figures in the history of Islam; some consider him as a philosopher, *Shakyh al-Akbar* the master, and the Red Sulfur. The opposite side considers him as an infidel and out of the Islamic denomination. (Akbar, 2016). Ibn Arabi's theory the "Unity of Existence" in the other words the "Oneness of Being" insisting that the absolute reality " God" is the source of all existence. All the creatures are considered reflections of his being. He summarizes this idea by saying "*He is I but I am not He*" *Haq is Khalq and Khalq is not Haq*. Further, ibn Arabi proposes that human beings would have not been found without a certain source. Therefore he believes that the main source of the human being existence and all the creation is Allah so that existence is one and united but with different places. (Ansari, 1999). Ibn Arabi writes "*His prophet is He and his sending is He, and his world is He, He sent Himself with Himself to Himself*". (Akbar, 2016)

Ibn Arabi does not admit the theory of *Hulul* "incarnations", he just believes that all the creation and universe as general are the manifestation of God. He states that "*the two*

*are always there and there is no sense of saying that the one becomes the other". Nevertheless, this kind of imaginable unity can be achieved in one way according to him which is the intuition or the super mental state. To make this idea clearer, sometimes a lover may be sitting with his friends or family but his mentality and heart are in another place, the place when he can imagine his beloved and feel it. (Ansari, 1999). He states that " creation is the self-manifestation of the Truth and the cosmos is a mirror image of the creator. Divinity and humanity are only superficially distinct". However, the divine is the inward aspect of the Truth, while the human form is the outward aspect of it. Humans are microcosms of the whole creation. An individual attaining the highest level of mystical consciousness becomes the Perfect Human (*al-insan al-kamil*) (Hasan, 2018)*

Ibn Arabi rejects the Christian belief that Christ is God himself. He states that it is infidelity to say so because according to his theory it makes sense to say that God is Christ but it is not acceptable to say that Christ is God. The reason is, Christ has been created by God so that Christ is a branch of the absolute Reality (Ansari, 1999). Ibn Arabi believes that without the living things God would have not been known as the creator. Therefore, his theory insists that not all creatures are God, rather he states that the essence of everything in this universe is signs of his existence (Akbar, 2016). "*To God belongs the East and the West .Whichever way you turn, there is God's presence*" (al-Baqarah, 115)

Furthermore, Ibn Arabi's theory proposes that God is not limited to a fixed direction or limited people. He believes that you can pray wherever you want and which direction you would like to pray as long as you intend to pray and return the favor. God is everywhere, in the church, temple, and mosque. Moreover, God is for all not for Muslims and Christians or any other group, God is the creator of all human beings and non-human beings, therefore all creatures are belong to Him. (Akbar, 2016).

The philosophy of Ibn Arabi claims that there two kinds of existence; the first one is the " Necessary Being" which stands for God's existence. The second one is "Contingent Being" which stands for everything in this universe. However, as God is the source of every tiny aspect of this world then the existence of all creatures is found by the "Necessary Being". These two terms can be clarified more clearly by the verses of the Persian poet Mohamud Shabistari:

In God's Presence, there is no duality  
in that Presence, there is no "I," "we," or "you."

“I,” “we,” “you,” and “it,” are one thing,  
for in Oneness, there are no distinctions at all (Rustom, 2016).

Moreover, another figure in the field of philosophical Sufism along with *Ibn-Arabi* is *Husayn Al-Mansur* well-known in his nickname as *Al-Hallaj*. He has been executed in the view of the public for the case of blasphemy in Baghdad by the order of the Abbasid caliphate. He has been first hanged then his head is cut off and finally burns and his ashes are thrown in the Tigris River. (Laghars, 2017). He is accused of uttering some words which seem abnormal like “*I am the Truth*”. However, Truth is one of God’s names. Consequently, he has been accused to name himself God. Nevertheless, some critics justify that his words were symbolic, metaphoric, and literal, so that, they seem ambiguous for normal people. He may not mean that he is Allah Himself, rather, he may mean that he is the true Muslim on the path of Allah, not you " people". Some others insist that his words are obvious and there must be a kind of blasphemy. (Abdul-Hamid, 2013).

Some Salafi critics say that Al-Hallaj believes in the theory of *Hulul* or incarnation which is unacceptable to their school. They state, his theory claims that God can be united with all the creatures. However, he may be eating, talk, and behave instead of a human being. They attribute to him the story of the meeting between Muses and God to enforce their offense. The story tells how God transcends to the mountain that He asks Muses to look at the mountain till it stables if it does then He is there. For this reason, they state that Al-Hallaj claims, if God can be united with inanimate then he can be united with the animates too and do whatever in the shape of the human being. However, such a statement is considered blasphemy according to the school of Salafism. (Hasan, 2018)

Another statement that Al-Hallaj is accused of “*There is nothing under this cloak but Allah*”. The Sufi critics interpret this statement as Al-Hallaj has reached the highest stage of knowledge “*Irfan*” therefore, he believes that he is unreal and Allah is the absolute reality. He considers himself a mortal one and Allah is the immortal and the latest one. According to some Sufis, he means that Allah is the creator of that body and he is nothing but a sign of Allah's existence. Nevertheless, according to them, these thoughts have been not interpreted perfectly by Al-Hallaj so that most of the people at that time could not understand his phrases. (ibid).

Furthermore, the story of the statement “*I am the Truth*” has more than one historical

event. Some write that Al-Hallaj has knocked on the door of another Sufi who is senior to him, Junayd Al-Baghdadi. He asks “*who is he*”, Al-Hallaj replies “*I am the Truth*”. On the other side, Al-Baghdadi warns him: “*Do not say I am the Truth but say I am on behalf of the Truth*”. The second event is reported that he walks in the street and screaming that “*I am the Truth*”. More than that, Al-Baghdadi has warned Al-Hallaj for such statements; he tells him that he would get executed if he keeps saying so. Al-Hallaj replies that “*if you do not know God, recognize Him in His sign; I am His sign and I am the truth and I have never stopped being true to Truth. And even if I am killed or hung on the gibbet or have my hands and feet cut off, I will not retract*”. (Abdul-Hamid, 2013)

In Sufism, there are some stations that a Sufi must pass, like *Tawakkul* (Trust in God), *Faqr* (Poverty) *Sabr* (Patience), *Shukur* (Gratitude), and the last one is *Fana* (annihilation) when his consciousness is totally with God only. Therefore, according to Sufis the one who reaches this stage may see many things so that he should keep them private and not telling anyone because he would be in trouble. Some Sufis say that Al-Hallaj starts saying the things that he must have kept as a secret because such statements cannot be understood by the ones who do not even know what the path means. Consequently, before some moments of Al-Hallaj's death, he prays:

*“See these people; your worshippers. They have assembled to kill me, out of zeal for you to draw near to you...forgive them. If you had revealed to them what you have revealed to me, they will not do what they are doing; and if you had concealed from me what you have concealed from them, I would not be able to undergo the ordeal that I am enduring. Praise be to you in whatsoever you do, praise is to you whatsoever you will”. In another account, he told the public that “if you do not understand our signs, you will never understand our phrases. (Abdul-Hamid, 2013)*

Lastly, Suhrawardi is another philosophical figure in the field of Sufism. He is considered one of the most significant characters in the history of Islamic philosophy due to his great contributions. He is considered the founder of the Illumination school; he comes up with this theory at the age of thirty-three and soon after he has been killed by the order of *Salah-Aldin* for a blasphemy cause. This theory discusses the role of light in achieving the Light of Light through passing some stages. The illumination theory has more than one origin in the history of philosophy. It could be found in the philosophy of Plato (d. 322

B.C.E), the philosophy of Ibn Sina (d. 1037) as well as in Al-Ghazali's one (d. 1111). Additionally, it is motioned in the Quran and the sayings of the prophet Mohammed. The theory of Suhrawardi's central aspect is the light (the sun), he believes that everything in this world regarding the light is just a manifestation of the Light of Light (God).

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The allegory of His light is that of a pillar on which is a lamp. The lamp is within a glass. The glass is like a brilliant planet, fueled by a blessed tree, an olive tree, neither eastern nor western. Its oil would almost illuminate, even if no fire has touched it. Light upon Light. God guides to His light whomever He wills. (Nur, 35)

According to Suhrawardi, a traveler on the path of Sufism should have a sight to realize the creator of the light to enlighten himself too. Suhrawardi divides the lights into many levels depending on their perfection. However, the lowest level is darkness; at the same time, he states that a man has two parts, the body, and the soul. Hence, the body without a soul receives no light so it will be dark forever. On the other hand, the more a Muslim purifies his soul from worldly diseases, the more he will be able to receive the light from God (Nasr, 1964). A Sufi should be far away from the darkness of materialism and worldly selfishness to reach the Light of Truth. Devotion, contemplation, and prayer are the actions that are taken by the Sufi to enlighten his soul. Suhrawardi insists that this process of purification cannot be done without a guide or a master whose life is for Allah's sake. Nevertheless, he states that the one who wins the spiritual battle will receive secret knowledge from Allah and this may do miracles. These miracles are different from a Sufi to another, depending on his devotion. (Yahya al-Suhrawardi, 1998).



## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.1. Rumi as a Sufi:

*“Fall in love in such a way that it frees you from any connecting”*

Jalal-ud-din (1207- 1273) was born in the ancient Persian empire in the Eastern part which is known today as Afghanistan. Rumi was grown up with a religious atmosphere that his father, Baha-al-din was a Sufi, jurisprudent, and preacher. Rumi’s father left a great text, The *Ma’arif* (Divine Sciences) that later on became an important source to Rumi after his death. Rumi studied this treasured text with his father’s former disciple, Burhan-uddin. Rumi was introduced by his father in his childhood to the works of the medieval scholar, Abu-Hamid al-Ghazali (d-1111) which influenced him and showed him the religion of the heart.

He also was introduced to some spiritual leaders in his age however, the most notable one was Farid ud-din Attar ( d- 1220), the author of the most famous poem in the Eastern world “ The Conference of the Birds”. (Sheikh, 2005). When Attar saw Rumi and his father walking as they were immigrating because of the Mongol invasion, Attar predicted “Here comes a sea followed by an ocean” (Barks, 1995, p. 355). On the same occasion, Attar told Baha-al-din when Rumi was still a child that his son will kindle the world with the fire of love. He also gave the little Rumi a book named *Asranama* (The Book of Mysteries), which was about the entanglement of the soul in the material world. (Chittick, 1983).

In addition, Sanai Ghaznavi ( d. 1131) was another influential person in Rumi’s mystical journey. Sanai was the first poet who used the *Mathnawi* form as well as the mystical and the didactic themes. Rumi was influenced greatly in Sanai’s text *Hadiqat al-haqiqa* (The Orchard of Truth). This work is considered the first mystical epic of Sufism that expressed Sanai’s ideas about God, love, philosophy, and reason. Rumi borrowed many images and phrases from this text. He also was influenced by the style of *Sanai* especially of using jokes in order to instruct which are found mainly in the Book V of the *Mathnawi*. Furthermore, Rumi used Sanai’s story of the blind man and the elephant in his poetry and prose. For Sanai “*greed, lust and emotional excitement stood between humankind and the*

*divine knowledge*” (Adel, 2016). Therefore he taught that the common religion is just a habit and a ritual. For him, the real religion is the one that consisted of *Ishq* (love) and the realizing of the *Haqq* (reality). These are the foundations of Sanai’s real religion that Rumi admired of. Rumi described “*Attar as the soul and Sanai its two eyes*” (Bruijn, 2002).

Consequently, these meetings contributed so much to Rumi’s later transformation. By the time Rumi’s father died, he started studying the exoteric sciences which included Koran commentary, Hadith, mathematic, prosody, Jurisprudence, philosophy, and other sorts of science that were familiar in Rumi’s age. He became a master of these exoteric sciences that he became a preacher and a jurisprudent of the *Hanafi* school. Rumi gained great fame at that time as he became an expert in the *Shari’ah* or the law science of Islam. Though he was raised and introduced to some Sufi leaders, Rumi was exposed more to the outer science of Islam more than the inner spiritual vision. However, the meeting with Shams in October of 1244 turned Rumi completely from being a preacher into a poet of love.

In their first meeting, Shams pushed the books of Rumi including his father’s soul notes into the fountain. Then, Shams passed him these books one after one and they were dry. Rumi stood shocked that Shams told him “*Now you must live what you have been reading and talking about*”. This statement referred to a very important point in every religion that to worship God is not just to read and talk rather, the real devotion is to practice what a person read and talked about. This meeting continued for forty days which made Rumi’s disciples angry about this strange visitor (Barks,2003). Nasr (1974) commented as follow:

*“It seems that Shams al-Din was a divinely sent spiritual influence which in a sense "exteriorized" Rumi's inner contemplative states in the form of poetry and set the ocean of his being into a motion which resulted in vast waves that transformed the history of Persian literature (23).*

This meeting is considered the most mysterious one because no one knew what happened between these two men in this isolation. However, it was known that after this meeting Rumi generated ecstatic verses and thematic stories. Some critics said that without Shams there would have been no Rumi. After few years, Shams left Rumi because of the anger of Rumi’s disciples whom Rumi neglected after Shams’ arrival. Shams left Rumi twice, the first time, he was gone to Damascus but Rumi could persuade him to come back

as he sent his son *Sultan Valid* to look for him. The second separation was the last one as Shams was murdered by Rumi's son *Ala'uddin* and some other angry disciples because of their jealousy. Franklin Lewis argued that "*The rumor Shams was murdered by jealous disciples of Rumi arrives late, circulates in an oral context, and is almost certainly groundless*" (Barks, 2003).

When Shams was questioned by a companion of his level that "what will you give?" Shams replied "my head". Therefore, the mission of Shams was to give the secret of the divine when Rumi was ready to receive this secret. However, though it seemed that Shams was higher than Rumi in terms of spirituality. The recordings stated that "one could not tell who was the teacher and who was the disciple". Ultimately, this separation produced grief poems that Rumi wrote a book titled *Shams* (ibid). After this encounter, Rumi came to the realization that the Law of Islam ( Shari'ah) should accompany the Way ( Tariq'ah) In order to help the seeker to reach the Truth ( Haqiq'ah).William Chittick (1983) stated as follow:

*"The Sufis understand "Law" or Shari`ah in its widest sense, as embracing "knowledge" and all the theoretical teachings of Islam. The "Way" or Tariqah is then the method of putting the Law into practice. And the Reality or Haqiqah is the inward states and stations attained by the traveler in his journey to God and in God". (p)*

Like all the Sufis who used to use people's names to express their love to God, Rumi used Shams as a reference to the perfection of God. He expressed his love and longing through Shams as he said in his *Divani Shamsi Tabriz* "Indeed *Shams-i Tabrizi is but a pretext is I who display the beauty of God's Gentleness*" (Nicholson, 1961, D 16533). This clarified the significant role of Shams upon Rumi's transformation that he can no longer bear to be far away from the Divine who created his soul-beloved. *Burhan Mahaqqiq* stated that Shams and Rumi were usually meeting in Saladin Zarkub's shop and in his house. Therefore, after Shams' death, Rumi found that Zarkub was the indeed company.

Though Zarkub was a simple goldsmith not like Shams in terms of education. However, Rumi predicted him to be his next guide "*He that came last year in red ( Shams), appears now in a brown robe ( Saladin)*". The relationship got stronger when Rumi's son Sultan Velad married Zarkub's daughter. Several letters were addressed to this couple as well as Rumi mentioned Zarkub's name at the end of his poems several times as an honor

sign. Ultimately, the dance of *Sema* came out when Rumi heard the transcendent music in the goldsmith's hammering. Therefore, when Zarkub died in 1258, Rumi led a glorious mystical dance with flute and drum through the streets of Konya to celebrate the spiritual wedding of a great saint. Eventually, the last companion of Rumi was Husam Chelebi who was a disciple of him. He was a source of inspiration to Rumi. Rumi and his scribe Husam produced six books of *Mathnawi*. He stated that he was the flute and Husam was the player and the breath. Rumi also described Husam as a saint who could not be content with silent completion for he belonged to those who must express their knowing (Barks,1995)

## 2.2. Rumi's Poems and Teachings:

The language of Rumi is considered a mysterious one that needs an interpretation (*Ta wil*) because it is symbolic and metaphorical. For instance, he portrays the seeker as *Majnun* or the mad lover who is lost in the contemplation of *Layla*. This love is endless and has no limit just like the quest for God. Another example of Rumi's paradox that he most often uses wine *Khmr* as a symbol of the divine essence which intoxicates the heart of the seeker when it reveals and shines inside him. Shutshari states about this point that "*Their material wine does not have the excellence of mine; my wine is eternal*". Further, this statement clarifies that Sufis' love for God makes them intoxicated with Him only, they are not conscious of any other things but Him. Therefore, this language makes the reader always wonders about this kind of love and try to interpret it (Geoffroy, 2010, p. 94).

Rumi always inserts certain symbols to express his ideas. Though he believes that words are not sufficient to precise his feelings but still he wishes that a reader may read what is behind his text. Rumi states that "*If the Mathnawi were as the sky in the magnitude, not half the portion of this mystery would find room in it*" ( Rumi: 2011, 95). He considers words as superficial therefore he proposes that only those who search under the shell of these superficial words are able to understand them. He states that he is not a common poet who only deserves shells. Rather, he is a mirror that reflects what in his heart. However, to understand him, a reader's ears should be eyes that can feel and imagine what they hear. Several symbols have been mentioned in Rumi's poems.

The bird is one of these significant symbols that Rumi always mentions in his poetry. Sufis consider themselves as birds who are caged in their bodies and the lower life.

They always long to get the liberation of this exile and come back to their nest. For Rumi, the birds are distinctive from one to another. He portrays the parrots as seekers on the path whereas the nightingale is the symbol of the dead seeker who sings in the gardens of heaven. The crow is the symbol of the cemetery which is totally different from its pairs. For Sufis, the winter is the season of isolation and preparation. Rumi depicts the dervishes just like the birds who fly to isolated destinations because of the cold. However, the only bird that does not leave is the crow who stands for arrogance. Rumi states that if only it realizes the roses that rise in the spring, it would turn into a beautiful white bird. Nevertheless, the crow always disappears in the spring because of its arrogance whereas the rest come back to enjoy the roses in the garden. The most significant bird for Rumi is the eagle who stands for the prophets (Johan, 2019). The phoenix is also a liked bird for Rumi that stands for the soul:

O soul ,  
 You are a Phoenix  
 That is created and arises from the heap  
 Of dust in unity  
 Why don't you fly? (Rumi 2000: 210-11)

The parrot for Rumi stands for the students on the path. The poem “*The Escape of the Merchant’s Parrot*” is the best example of this symbol. The poem tells the story of a merchant who decides to travel to India. He asks each female and male slaves whether they need anything from India or not. He then asks the parrot if she needs something. The parrot demands from the merchant to carry a message to her friends there “*When you see the parrots there \ Please tell them all about my sad affair*” (RUMI, 2004, 1565-1566 ). She expresses her desire to join them in India as she is unable to fly because of the cage “*Tell them a parrot pines continually \ To see you, but she’s caged by fate’s decree*” ( 1567-1568). She adds that she does not want to die in yearning and separation. She wishes to join them on the green grass and on the tress “*She sends her greetings and she asks for justice \ She wants to learn the faith you parrots practice*” ( 1569-1570). The parrot promises her friends that “ *If I escape these thorns now for a rose \ A nightingale’s lament I will compose*” ( 83-84)

When the merchant arrives, he goes at once to the countryside to meet the parrot's friends and tells them the message. One of the parrots trembles and dies when she hears her fellow's pain and misery "*One of the birds shook violently then dropped \ She fell just like a corpse, her breathing stopped!*" (98-99). The merchant feels very sorry and regretful for telling the story "*I've killed this creature, what is left to lose*" (1660). When he returns back from his trip, he gives each one a present. The parrot asks him what has happened. "*He said, 'No, for all that I now repent \ With biting fingernails my hours are spent'*"(61-62). The merchant tells her the dramatic scene that has been done. The parrot also suddenly tramples and starts feeling cold when she hears the answer. The man jumps to help her that he attempts to warm her with his robe and look after her. He tries to treat her but all his attempts go in vain "*O darling parrot, sweeter than a kiss \ What's happened to you, why are you like this?*" (1703-1704).

The merchant finally decides to free her from the cage. The parrot starts flying and singing once she is released "*The dead bird soared just like the solar ray \ That rises in the East to start each day*" (1836-37). The merchant bewilders by such an action that he asks her what does she learn from the dead parrot to do such a trick "*Is it that Indian parrot's ways you've learned \ To trick and roast me till my heart is burnt?*" (1838-39). She answers that her fellow is not dead rather she sends her a message by doing such a trick. The trick states not to stick in this cage even if it is beautiful and comfortable. She encourages her to escape from the attachment and join them because as long as she is in that cage, she is not able to be with them "*Just make yourself look dead and you'll be free*" (1846). The merchant feels happy to learn such wisdom that he is no longer sad about losing his parrot. He also decides to follow the same path as the parrot does and join those who are not attached to worldly stuff.

Rumi writes this poem with high creativity and morality. He points out that the cage is the body itself and the carnal soul is the parrot that is attached to the beauty of the cage. The merchant in this poem stands for the intellect who thinks that the parrot ( soul) may feel happy if it is put in a beautiful cage. The merchant thinks that happiness lies in the material elements that he asks the parrot which kind of present does she wish from India. However, the carnal spirit of the parrot becomes disappointed and depressed from the merchant's intellect. She starts seeking the true gift. This gift is represented in the piece of advice that

the Indian parrot has given to her. Therefore, the Indian parrot is a symbol of the guide who leads the parrot from the prisoned spirit to the free one. The parrot eventually decides to return to her origin that she is ashamed of forgetting. Noteworthy, the poet refers to the parrot with the pronoun (she) as a reference to the soul as an animate figure. Furthermore, India in this poem represents the spiritual center. (Perry, 2003)

The symbol of the mirror is considered important in Rumi's poetry. He portrays the heart as a mirror. Thus, he states to seek the reflection of beauty inside oneself. Rumi states that when a person sees his face in the mirror, he should not be trapped and think that is the real beauty. Contrarily, the real beauty lies in the pure heart that one should beautify his inside rather than the outside. The reason is that the outside will vanish within time and will turn to be nothing. On the other hand, the inner one will be immortal because it has no limit. In the poem "*The King and The Handmaiden*" The poet opens his poem with a question that he says "Do you know why your soul-mirror does not reflect as clearly as it might?". The answer to this question is introduced by the poet himself too "Because rust has begun to cover it \ It needs to be cleaned" (Barks, 2003,1-4)

Furthermore, this poem is considered one of the highest symbolic stories in Rumi's poetry. The story talks about the maid who falls in love with the goldsmith on one hand and her ignorance of the king's love on other hand. The poet then starts narrating the story when the king falls in love with the maid at first sight. He describes the passion of the king that "The feelings trembled and flapped in his chest \ like a bird newly put in a cage" (15-16). He decides to take her to his palace but once she enters there, she falls ill. The king gathers all the physicians from around the world to diagnose her illness but no one could find it. He prays to God to help him that " He knelt on the prayer rug and soaked \ the point of it with his tears" (26-27). Consequently, while the king is crying on his prayer rug, he has a vision of an enlightened sage after he becomes disappointed with the earthly medicine. The sage tells the king that the next day they would send him a physician. The next day, the king meets this enlightened physician whom he has been told about. The king feels so delighted once he meets this sage "Like two swimmers who love the water, their souls knit together without being sewn" (36-37). He takes him to see the sick maid. When he sees her, he discovers that her illness is not physical instead it is because of earthly love .

The physician informs the king that the young girl is sick with love. Thereafter, they discover that she is still in love with the goldsmith. Hence, the enlightened sage recommends wedding the goldsmith and the handmaid. Nonetheless, their happy marriage has continued for six months then the sage is inspired by the Divine to give a potion that would decrease the physical capability of the goldsmith. Consequently, the handmaid starts losing her passion and love due to the lack of the goldsmith's sexual ability “Any love based on physical beauty is not the deepest love \ Choose to love what does not die \ The generous one is not hard to find ( p.116). The handmaiden decides to leave him and marry the king when she discovers his real love. At the end of the story, the poet tells his readers that this marriage stands forever (Barks, 2003, 112)

This “*The King and The Handmaiden*“ carries a moral lesson that “ Virtual love is a bridge that leads us to the true love”. The mundane soul of the maid leads her to be attached to the delusional love of the goldsmith. Rumi symbolizes the goldsmith as the world attachment with whom the maid (the soul) is attached. Therefore, the holy spirit is the only way to purify this carnal soul from these worldly diseases. The physicians whom the king gathers from around the world represent the reason and the intellect that cannot diagnose the spiritual illness. Whereas the enlightened physician stands for the Holy Spirit that would bring the carnal soul the (maid) to its origin (the king) by killing the worldly attachments (the goldsmith) (Nazemian & Khoeini, 2018).

According to Rumi, a seeker cannot attend a spiritual station without a guide. For him, the guides consist of the prophets and the saints. He believes that these prophets and saints have vanquished their ego and reached the highest spiritual stations. The prophets are those who receive a message or revelation from God. This revelation is consisted of “ Form” and “Meaning”. The Form is the outward element of any religion that involves the scripture and the teachings. Whereas the meaning is the spiritual element of the Form.

Therefore, the saints are those who follow the revelation of the prophets both in the form and the meaning. Thus, if a seeker vanquishes his ego, he can attain a certain spiritual level. However, this control over the ego requires a long period of starving and efforts on the spiritual path that a seeker should overcome his animal's desires and be totally pure in order to see the lights of Reality. Rumi warns that the bad deposition becomes rooted if the ant of sensuality grows up that it may turn to be a serpent. Therefore, Rumi warns to kill



this serpent of sensuality otherwise, it will be a dragon. (Chittick, 1983, p. 246). Rumi believes that humankind does not see their mistakes as the ego is dominant in their personality. Therefore, he encourages people to be humble and try to seek the spiritual spot in their hearts.

Rumi proposes to seek clarification from prophets and saints as they are the receivers of the divine knowledge. So he tells them to seek this holy knowledge until the copper turns to be gold. This means, the heart may be covered with sensual ideas therefore, it should be pure and shining like gold. Rumi adds that since the seeker is not a man of vision then he should follow the spiritual path until he reaches there. He goes saying that a seeker who decides to discover the knowledge of the Divine by himself will not be able to find it as it is a long journey. Therefore, in order to reach faster, a master is essential (ibid 248).

In “*The Words of the Saints*”, Rumi, tells that seekers should obey their saints in their soft and rough sayings. For they are the supporter of the seeker’s spiritual life. Therefore, the true seeker should not defend or object against the saint’s will because they who would make them sing with love (Helminski, 77). Furthermore, Rumi warns not to accompany those who are not fond of the Truth. He tells them that the heart is “Wealth” therefore do not plant it in any salty ground. Rumi describes the material world as a salty ground because it corrupts rather than purify. Therefore, he encourages to seek those who have spiritual sense and sit with them. (ibid, 117). Rumi believes that the power of the saints does not come from this material world. Rather their bodies have been molded with light so they have transcended the spirit and the angel (ibid,181)

Rumi focuses on a point that whatever the talent or the position of the seeker be, he should be humble when comes to seek knowledge from the saint. The poet states that many people may have a talent that brings to them fame in this world but in the next world, it turns to be a disaster. Therefore, the poet gives a solution that if a person wants to be saved in the next world, he should be under the protection of someone who has been rooted in spiritual discernment. However, Rumi says that even if a seeker is a king in this world, he should not put himself above his saint. He gives a great personification that he says “*Even if you are honey / gather up his rough sugar* ”. Rumi warns the seeker not to think his spiritual thoughts are better than his saint’s ones because the saints are the soul of thoughts. Consequently, the seeker should search for himself in his saint’s soul. He believes that if a

seeker cannot bring himself to serve well, then his soul is certainly in the dragon's jaws (Helminski, 169).

The music in Sufism is regarded as a major element to attend ecstasy that they consider as a divine echo. The tradition says that the angels could not lock up the heart in Adam's body only after charming it with music. The music in Sufism is one of the tools they can use to free the soul by awakening it. This awakening is called *Wajd* in Arabic which means "found God". Hence Rumi's *Sema* is one of the methods that search to attain ecstasy. Thus, the accomplished Sufi is not only a visionary one rather, he is the one who perceives the terrestrial sound as reminiscences of the spiritual world that is able to guide him to the state of nostalgia. This state is clarified in Rumi's verses as follows:

Listen to the flute of reed [the ney], as it sings of separation:

I have been cut from the rush bed, and since then my lamentation  
makes man and woman groan.

I call to a heart which separation has pierced to reveal to it the pain  
of desire.

Any being who lives far from his source aspires to the time when he  
will be reunited with it (Geoffroy, 2010, p. 171).

The music that Rumi calls for it, is the one that elevates the soul, not the one that may lead it astray. He expresses his abhorrence to the earthly music that is even stigmatized in the Quran. The reason is that this kind of music makes the soul dark rather than shining. The spiritual music reflects the inner state of the Sufi therefore it is prohibited for the beginners who are still exposed to their carnal souls. It is recommended only for those who have gone beyond their ego and stopped at the aesthetic aspect of the music. For *Ghazali*, this music is neither good nor bad because it depends mainly on the reaction of the soul to it. The more the soul is pure, the more it reacts with goodness and vice versa (ibid).

For Rumi, physical mediation is vital that his band *Mevelvis* is famous for *Sema* whirling dance. The *Sema* is considered an ecstatic action that fills the heart of the dancer with a transcendental sense. The dancer is physically on earth but his imagination is somewhere else. This action of dancing has a symbolic dimension. It begins with the dervish's headdress and white skirt as well as he wears a black cloak. The headdress symbolizes his ego's tombstone whereas the white skirt symbolizes his ego's shroud. The

dervish then removes his black cloak which stands for sensuality and materiality then he is born to the truth and starts his journey. Shiblī states about this action that “*Samā’ is seemingly a source of disorder, but it conceals a great spiritual teaching*” (ibid 172)

While the dervish is turning around himself, he opens his hands. The right one is directed to the sky as a reference to receiving divine inspiration while he is looking at his left hand. A dervish turns around from right to left as a symbol that he turns around his heart. Ultimately, the purpose of this dance is to mediate and reveal what is in the dervish’s heart (Çelebi, 2010). Rumi narrates in his *Mathnawi* that “*What can I do when Love appears and puts its claws around my neck? / I grasp it, take it to my breast and drag it into the whirling!*” (Sheikh, 2005, p. 242). Thus, it can be understood that this whirling is a kind of contemplation and mystical vision. By dancing, a seeker expresses his love to the Divine. His whirling around himself for hours without feeling dizzy or tired proves that this dancer reaches the state of *fana* or annihilation. Thus, *Sema* dancing represents a visionary journey towards the Truth and desertion of the ego.

In “Dancing in the Breeze”, Rumi states that the dancer visualizes his beloved while he experiences his whirling. He describes the beloved as a “sun” and the lover is just like a plant that takes its energy from the sky. Rumi narrates that when the breeze of spring blows, every branch starts dancing. Here Rumi takes the breeze as God’s love and the branches represent God’s lovers who start dancing once they feel the divine love approaches them (Helminski, 2012, p. 2). Further, Rumi believes that only the elected people can perceive and feel the unseen world. For the rest are in doubt of such spiritual world ( ibid, 76).

Death for Rumi is considered a journey from temporal life to an immortal one. For him and all Sufis in general that the true place of their souls is in heaven where they can see the lights of the Divine. Therefore, death in Rumi's poems is described as a motivation that gives awareness to the soul of its home. He believes that this body is mortal and a veil of the soul that always longs to find the way home (Kaya, 2016). Rumi believes that death is inevitable therefore the one who is spiritual and has faith is considered God’s friend. On the contrary, the one who is an unbeliever is considered God’s enemy. Therefore, death should be a friend as Rumi believes because someday it will visit us “*If you fear and flee from death, you fear yourself, oh friend. Take heed!*” (Chittick, 1983, p. 101).

Thus, it is important to be spiritual more than material and sensual because spirit and death are connected just like a tree and its leaves. Furthermore, Rumi insists in his

poetry on the idea that the spiritual journey is difficult as he states “*Whoever lives sweetly will die in bitterness, whoever worships the body will not win the spirit*”. (Chittick, 1983, p. 212). Rumi always insists that the worm which digs on the root of the body’s tree should be cut and burned. He advises the travelers that it is late to ignore the spirit because life is just like the sun that may set at any moment. Accordingly, the poet encourages to seize the opportunity and value the little remained seed. Rumi says “ Wake up! Do not say Tomorrow\_\_ for many tomorrows have come and gone” (Helminski, 158).

In Rumi’s poem “ *When I Die*”, he portrays death explicitly. The poet gives his will to his family and his disciples that his life may end at any moment because it is limited. However, they should not be sad or sorry because he never misses this world as he is moving to an eternal world where he unites with the beloved. Therefore he tells them not to shed any tears and not to mourn or feel sorry. The reason is that only his body falls in the grave that his soul will fly to heaven where it rests. At the end of the poem, he tells his beloveds that when they leave him, they should not think that he is alone instead, he is united with the beloved, and the grave is just a drape for heaven.

Thus, he tells them that they may see him descending in the grave but the reality is, he rises. Here Rumi means that people only can see the material thing like his body but they can not see his soul when it flies into heaven. This death is considered freedom to Rumi as the body represents a prison to his soul “*When the grave locks you up, that is when your soul is freed*” (Khan, 2016). After all, the union with the beloved cannot be attained without death. Therefore, the only passage of uniting with the beloved is to be patient and strive till the moment of death comes. The reason is that union is not something that can be purchased at the marketplace, on the contrary, union costs life as Rumi believes. (Golkhosravi, 2004).

In “ *The Freedom of A Place*”, Rumi describes the body as tight shoes that do not allow the feet to feel the plain. He adds that people may see him from a distance and wish they also feel the same relief but Rumi states that not everyone can experience such a feeling. Rumi also repeats that death is the only way in order to release the soul from its prison. He portrays the soul as a bird that may stand on the branch for a while but in the end, it returns to its real source. (Barks, 352). Rumi believes that life is a small garden whereas heaven is a huge forest. He states that “*sometimes the nightingale flies from the garden to sing in the forest*” (Barks, 2003, 41). The poet portrays the heart as a mirror. Thus, he states to seek the reflection of beauty inside oneself. Rumi states that when a

person sees his face in the mirror, he should not be trapped and think that is the real beauty. Contrarily, the real beauty lies in the pure heart that one should beautify his inside rather than the outside. The reason is that the outside will vanish within time and will turn to be nothing. On the other hand, the inner one will be immortal because it has no limit. (Helminski, 104-113).

The final stage of the path to God is not just to know Him, rather is to unite with Him. The union removes the Sufi from any temptations of the world that he be extinct in God (*Fana*). This state makes the Sufi sink in the contemplation of God that he becomes unconscious of anything around him because his consciousness is with the One not the various. This state is illustrated in the story of *Junayd* and *Shibli*:

One day Junayd was at home with his wife when Shibli entered. His wife wished to veil herself again, but Junayd told her: “He is not aware of your presence, remain as you are.” Junayd spoke for a moment with Shibli, and the latter began weeping. Junayd then said to his wife: “Veil yourself now, for Shibli has just come out of his state of being absent.” (Geoffroy, 2010, p. 14)

This state of vision opens up to the Sufi who vanquishes his ego. In Rumi’s poem “*Moses And The Shepherd*”. The poet tells the story of Moses while he is passing by a shepherd. He hears him prying that the statements, the shepherd uses seem inappropriate to Moses. The shepherd questions God about his place and whether He needs help or not and more other statements that seem odd. In this poem, Rumi tries to shed the light on a point that each believer may see God from a certain perspective so some may think that God has physical existence just like the pure shepherd.

However, in the second stanza, Moses stops the shepherd and tells him that not to talk to God in such indecent prayers. He also tells him to use appropriate terms when he prays to God. In the next lines, Rumi moves to narrate the revelation of God to Moses. God admonishes Moses for he has separated the shepherd from Him. Thus God informs Moses that He gives each one a certain mindest to recognize Him. Therefore He adds that the taste which may be poisonous to Moses, on the other hand, is honey for the shepherd. Hence, God does not pay attention to the form of worshiper or his way of praying. Rather, God informs Moses that what is important to Him is what is inside a believer. After this

revelation, Moses recognizes that he is wrong. He goes searching for the shepherd. As he finds him, he tells him that he is wrong. Furthermore, Moses tells him to say whatever he wants because his blasphemy in Moses's perspective is sweet for God because only the Divine power can see the inner of a person( Barks, 166).

Consequently, the shepherd in this poem stands for the seeker who has vanquished his ego that he stays alone with God. Rumi carries a message that the more a seeker gets higher in the quest for God, the lesser people can understand his words. Further, this state is called *Fana* in Sufism terminology that a person is always conscious of the presence of God. The second phase after *fana* is *baqa* when a seeker sees God in everything. Hence, the shepherd in this poem reaches these two stages that he sees God everywhere and in everything. This experience is proved in the quranic verse,

*All that is on [earth] is passing away (fān-in). There remains (yabqā) but the Countenance of your Lord of Majesty and Munificence” (Koran 55:26 27).*

Many attempts have been made to trace whether Rumi reads the Platonic theories or not. The reason behind raising such a question is that there are many Platonic themes in Rumi's poetry. Further, the east culture with no doubt is influenced by the Greek philosophy like Ibn-Arabi, al-Farabi, and others. Therefore, there is a kind of certainty that Rumi is familiar with this philosophy. What makes this hypothesis strong is that some recordings state that Plato has lived few years in Knoeya close to the lake of Beyshehir in the south of the city. Ultimately, one of the Greek thoughts that Rumi discussed in his poetry is the concept of creation (Schimmel,1975).

For Rumi, the reason for creating all the creatures whether animate or inanimate is to manifest God's existence. Therefore, a mystic or a Sufi is always seen in a meditation of this manifestation. Most of the time, a seeker tries to recognize this existence in nature as it considers the clearest manifestation of the Divine power. Rumi explains in his poem “*Become Who You Are*” that the world is created essentially to manifest the Divine power. Thus, whenever a seeker could recognize and feel the existence of God, he will move from the place of form to the place of meaning “*He said, "I was a Hidden Treasure." Listen! Do not lose touch with your own substance, make yourself manifest*” (Helminski, 2012, p. 272).

Similar to the two Plotinists and Sufis in general especially Ibn Arabi, Rumi believes that everything is attributed to one source. He and his pairs consider God as a necessary being that without his existence, nothing would have been found. Just like the earth borrows its light from the sun, similarly, the cosmos borrow their existence from God. He portrays in his poem that everything in this universe is self-manifestation or disclosure of God. Therefore, not anyone can realize this reality except those who go beyond their form and discover the meaning of their existence. Ibn Arabi describes this manifestation of God that “*everything is He but not He*”. Hence, mankind is God but not God which means that they are created by Him but they are in different places. However, if a man can realize the relation between him and God, they become close to each other. Further, when he realizes that this existence is the shadow of the real one, he will remove himself from the limited world and be attached to the eternal one (Chittick, 2007).

Rumi believes that though some claim that they are fish in form but their meaning is the one of a snake. Thus, the real Sufi is the one who should be acquainted with both form and meaning. Moreover, Rumi states that the one who has faith with only sense-perception will receive no milk. Hence, he encourages to make the meaning a priority and not to be exposed just to form. He carries a message that the form alone has no spirit (Helminski, 31). Rumi focuses on the meaning inside man’s form. He proposes that a seeker should go beyond his form in order to realize his spiritual sense. Rumi theorizes that things become more clear when they are contrasted with their opposites. Therefore, the nature of the spirit becomes more obvious when it is contrasted with the body. For Rumi, the spirit is divided into four levels. These number of levels begin with the animal spirit which has no light inside. The second spirit is the human one. The third one is the angelic spirit whereas the highest one is the spirit of saints that Rumi always calls to reach. The unreachable spirit is the one of Divine as It is the “*The spirit of spirits*” and “*meaning of meanings*” (Chittick, 28-30).

Rumi takes the prophet's saying as a model that states, the carnal soul that lies within the body is the fiercest enemy. Therefore, his attention always goes to a point where there is no room for ego in his disciples' souls. The prophet and other Sufis call this process “the greater holy war” (*al-jihad al-Akbar*). However, in order to tame the carnal soul, Rumi and other Sufi masters believe that purification of the soul is the first step in the path to God. This purification would lead then to the emergence of the noble character inwardly and

outwardly. Moreover, the second step is to know God as it is mentioned in the Holy Quran that “ *They have not appreciated God equal to his true measure*” (az-Zumar, 67)

In the poem “*A King Insides Who Listens*”, Rumi makes a comparison between the animal spirit and the spirit of saints. He informs that the materialist's people are physically awake but spiritually they are blind. Therefore, whatever they see, it does not matter because, for Rumi, the true joy is to feel what you see from inside not outside. Rumi describes those saints are physically asleep but still their souls alert with love. However, Rumi addresses his readers that if they are not of those who are filled with love then they should limit their body desires in terms of lust and sleep ( Barks, 321). He adds that if a seeker does not perceive how the leaves applaud then he needs a spiritual ear. He proposes to shut the ear of the head which only hears witty chatters and lying and open the ear of the spirit that listens to the manifestations of the Divine. Rumi believes that nature is the manifestation of the Divine therefore it has a spirit that should be felt. However, only those with spiritual sense can meditate and feel it. (Helminski, 185)

On the same account, Rumi states that to live on material food is not sufficient. He believes that the original food is the light of heaven that fills the spirit with divine love. Hence, eating material food leads nowhere but to more delusion and confusion. He says that this material food makes the spirit more pale, weak, and faint. Rumi proposes to search for the food that can be eaten without a throat or fork. Ultimately, Rumi mentions earthly food as a reference to material pleasure which is limited whereas spiritual pleasure is limitless though it is abstract. (Helminski, 155).

Rumi always focuses in his poetry on the elimination of the ego. He proposes to transform from being selfish to selfless that he states “ *Self-existence brings terrible drunkenness; it removes intellect from the head and modesty from the heart*” (Chittick, 1983, p. 173). Hence, Rumi most often calls to come out of the self because selflessness is the true meaning. He states that all the ears and the eyes are shut, except for those who have escaped from themselves and demolished their ego. To do so, humans need freedom from all their limitations like greed, anger, and ignorance. Those who recognize their selfhood and shortcomings can get the freedom of any constraint.

In Rumi’s poem “*Town and Country*”, the poet shows the selfishness of the country's people. At the same time, he shows the purity of the town’s people. Rumi tells the story of two friends that one is from the country and the other is from the town. Whenever



the countryman visits the town, his friend welcomes him and invites him to his table in the morning and evening. After eight years, the town man decides to travel to the country where he can visit his friend. When the countryman opens the door, he asks angrily “ Who are you?”. The town man tries to remind him but his friend dismisses him with no respect. Here Rumi narrates that “ *This is how your life looks when you take it away from its town center into the company of those with no love of inner light*”.

This line displays Rumi’s abhorrent to the country because he believes that most of the country’s people are men of sensuality, not spirituality. Therefore the countryman denies his acquaintance of his friend because his soul is dark due to its attachment to materiality. Further, his involvement in artificial life makes him spiritless, unlike the town man whose essence is pure. The reason behind the town man’s purity is his attachment to nature as it is considered the real manifestation of God which provides him with selflessness and spirituality ( Barks, 341).

Love in Sufism is divided into two parts: the figurative and the real love. The figurative one is for mortals whereas the real one is for God only. For Sufis, everything that happens to them is a sign from God therefore, everything they come across, reminds them of God. They always insert the story of Majnun and Layla that even the dog reminds the mad lover of his beloved Layla. Therefore, if the love for a mortal one makes a person mad, what if this love is for the eternal one. This love makes some Sufi intoxicated that they start uttering words that may seem abnormal for common people. The best example is Hallaj whose love for God leads him to say that he is the Truth because he reaches a stage where he is no longer exists in this mortal world for his soul is attached to the divine. However, Rumi recommends not take such intoxicated Sufis as guides though they are on the right path (Chittick,1983)

Furthermore, Sufis interpret the *Hadith* that states “ Love for one’s homeland is from faith” as a reference to the place of the soul where it has been created. Therefore, their love and longing are always for the real land where they can reunite with it at the end of the path. Consequently, this belief makes Sufis see the joy and pain as a favor because they are both from God. For them, common people can differentiate between joy and pain but few can see the joy hidden in pain (ibid).

Rumi writes almost about every aspect of life but his central theme is Love. This topic is interchangeable between the lover and beloved, most often a reader wanders

whether the intended figure in Rumi's words is the lover or the beloved. He believes that this love is just for the strong and patient ones. It is not for those who prefer sleeping and enjoying the lower life. Rumi describes love as a goldsmith shop that changes its visitors into gold. For Rumi, Love can determine the Sufi inward psychology for it is a practical state rather than a theoretical one. Therefore, it should be experienced in order to be understood. He clarifies that one can discuss this love forever and never exhaust because it has no endpoint. He portrays this love as an ocean whose depth has no bottom. Therefore, it does not matter if a man wastes his life explaining this term because it is a state of experience not speaking (Schimmel, 1982).

In his poem "*A Basket of Fresh Bread*" the poet believes that the source of love is inside the human being, all he has to do is to search for it. Rumi describes divine love just like milk, white and pure. He states that there is a milk fountain inside everyone therefore he provokes the lovers to distribute their love wherever they go. This love is limitless just like an ocean hence it should be distributed among people and not ask others a reward. Rumi asks that how can an ocean demands water from a little pool. He then carries a message for those who also want the same water. He tells them that water is everywhere around them but the things that prevent them are their bad deeds.

Rumi refers to a point that if they want this spiritual sense and gifts, they should first overcome their barriers like body desires. The poet describes the body as a horse and a man should control this horse accurately. He clarifies that some people are not conscious of a point that the horse may ride them. Therefore, Rumi proposes to balance the body and the spirit (Barks, 1995, 256). He gives a statement that even if the body's senses lead a person to recognize the world but only the spiritual perception has the ladder to make people recognize what is beyond this world ( Helminski, 5). Rumi states that he may be able to wash his body but only the Divine power is able to wash his spirit (Barks, 195).

However, Rumi proposes that this love cannot be explained due to its mysticism thus it should be lived and experienced. As the mystics and philosophers believe that love is the reason for every motion; for Rumi, love has neither beginning nor end. He states that if he tries to explain this love, he will be ashamed of his words because this love does not have a shore or limit. Hence, the more a person tries to explain it, the more he feels it is not sufficient. He says even the pen when comes to write about love, breaks, and the paper tears. Eventually, Rumi insists in his poem that divine love is beyond the intellect and

explanation. (Helminski, 3-284). For Rumi, it is most important to speak with love whatever a man's language is.

Further, though Rumi encourages to speak with love however this speaking can be with the heart only, not the tongue. For Rumi silence is an ocean whereas speaking is a river as he states that “ *When the ocean is searching for you, do not walk to the language-river / listen to the ocean and bring your talky business to an end*”. Rumi considered silence more meaningful than speaking ( ibid, 198). He mentions that though he is outwardly silent, inwardly he has blood-stained talk in his blood-drinking heart (Schimmel, 1982) .

The divine knowledge for Sufis cannot be obtained through senses and mind. They believe that this knowledge can occur through revelation and inspiration. Knowledge is called *Ma'rifet* in Sufism terminology which occurs inside those who accomplish the path to God. The organ that can perceive this knowledge is only the heart. For Sufis, knowledge is to know God perfectly therefore, for them knowledge is superior to love. However, in order to know Him, a Sufi should increase his supererogatory and obligatory worships besides contemplation of the existence. Moreover, to gain divine knowledge, there are four bases that should be undergone. They are to know God, to know the self or *Nafs*, to meditate the manifestation, and lastly to know the devil. For Sufis, everything should be based on divine science because the four orders which consist of logic, science, math, and natural science are limited in their results. For instance, if one gets his information about the divine based on theoretical order, the devil may not submit to him because he may raise questions and doubts. On the other hand, if he gets his information based on divine science, he is protected from and suspicious (The Knowledge in Sufism, 2016).

Rumi states that knowledge is the key to receive and consume the light of goodness. Without divine knowledge, ignorance and cruelty will lead to more evilness. Rumi insists that human being is created too close to God, however, the more he gets involved to life, the more he gets away from the Divine. Thus, a seeker should always be close to God till he unites with Him again in heaven. The unite here is not to be “One” instead is to be close to each other “*For that cruelty will pass, but the distance from Him will not.*” (Chittick, 58) In “ The Dog of Ego”, Rumi mentions that grasping divine knowledge is not an easy job. It requires patience and sacrifice. He addresses his heart to endure the pain because it is a remedy. He tells it not to groan or complain that he asks it to stamp its foot upon its desires.

Further, he asks his heart to train the dog of ego and make it as a sacrifice to win divine knowledge (Helminski, 30).

On the same account, In “ Keep Digging”, Rumi tells us to be detached from this world and try to dig away to freedom. He says it is a kind of foolishness to be in this dirt hole. The reason is, the true Sufis are prisoners in this material world therefore, they should dig deep in order to get themselves out (Helminski, 27). Consequently, Rumi proposes that if a seeker detaches himself out of this world and devotes himself to the divine, therefore, the divine knowledge may reveal to the seeker at any moment. Hence, he should be ready to receive it and grasp it well. Rumi describes this knowledge as a falcon. However, this falcon does not come to anyone but Rumi tells that if it comes to you, it is God’s reward (Barks, 154).

Rumi always prays to the Divine to save him from his bodily senses. He asks God to lift the veil but not at once that he may go insane. Therefore, he asks to lift not to tear this veil. The poet prays to be saved from his ego which its knife has reached the bones. Rumi believes that this world is a number of ashes and his connection with God plants the rose among them. The poet expresses his longing to return to his source where his soul may rest (Helminski, 170). Rumi states that the seeker of knowledge is not able to catch it unless he seeks refuge with God. However, the poet notifies that if the seeker finds the intended knowledge, he should not stop rather, he should keep seeking. He ought to learn what he does not know. Further, the things that he knows should be taught to others. The poet advises the seeker to be gentle when he teaches others because he also does not know everything when he starts his spiritual journey ( *ibid*, 177)

Rumi believes that all religions and doctrines should be in harmony because there is only One God. Therefore, the truth about him should be one. This belief makes him a universal poet that many Christians, Jewish, Greeks, Arabs, and Turks attend his funeral. Each group read from their holy books that they read verses from the Pentateuch, the Gospels, the Psalms, and the Holy Quran as well. The reason behind this respect to Rumi that they have seen in him the nature of Christ, of Moses, and indeed all of the other prophets. The Muslims claim that Rumi is the Mohammed of his day and the same with the Christians and the Jewish. A Greek priest states that Rumi is like bread that anyone needs to live. Rumi does believe that Jesus is just a prophet as it has been mentioned in Quran. He states that those who claim that Jesus is God, are sunk in the wine of Satan (Lewisohn,

2014). Rumi mentions Jesus and Mary in several poems. Furthermore, he always shows great respect to the Christian people that whenever he passes nearby them, he bows to them. One day, a Christian butcher is walking across the road, Rumi stops and bows to him seven times (Schimmel, 1975). In Iran, there is a Christian church where is written a verse of Rumi poetry on its entrance:

Where Jesus lives, the great-heart gathers.  
We are a door that's never locked.  
If you are suffering any kind of pain,  
Stay near this door. Open it. ( Barks, 201)

In the poem “*Jesus on the lean donkey*” Rumi describes the rational intellect of Jesus and his strong spirit. Rumi encourages people to have such a pure spirit because if they do not have such one, their spirit may turn to be an uncontrolled dragon. ( Barks, 202). Rumi believes that the man with a lower mind is just like a donkey who is always exposed to his body desires. The poet takes Jesus's patience and discipline as a model that his neglect of worldly desires makes him riding his donkey ( body) not the opposite. The poet advises to have a guide like Jesus and stick with him that he insists, everyone has this breath of Jesus inside but at the same time, there is always a snake in this life that prevents people from discovering this gift (Helminski, 2012, p. 168). Therefore, in Rumi's poetry, Jesus symbolizes the purity and selflessness in the world. So, he proposes to follow his teachings and the ones of the other prophets and saints (ibid, 204).

So far, it is explained in this chapter the endeavors that make Rumi turns from being a man of exoteric religion and form into a poet of love and meaning. The central figure behind his transformation is Shams-Tabrizi. Moreover, several poems are analyzed to display Rumi's Sufism. The first two poems “*The Handmaiden and the King*” and “*Merchant and The Parrot*” show the battle of the soul against the body; in other words, the battle of spirituality against sensuality. However, Rumi believes that this battle cannot be attained unless there is a guide who monitors a seeker in the path. This matter is mentioned in “*The Words of The Saints*”.

Moreover, besides the guidance of the saints, a seeker should train his soul to be attached to the spiritual world. One of these methods is mediation, thus Rumi considers

*Sema* whirling dance as a central way of meditation and revelation of the love inside the heart of a seeker as he mentions in “*Dancing in the Breeze*”. Further, this meditation removes the seeker from the lower life that he be attached more to the eternal one. Consequently, a seeker begins longing to meet his beloved therefore Rumi considers death as a way to fulfill this wish. This freedom is mentioned in “*When I Die*” and “*The Freedom of a Place*”.

For Rumi, there are two kinds of union: the first one is done in death however, the second one is called annihilation or *Fana* that a seeker sees God everywhere and in everything. This state makes the seeker conscious of God only that he neglects every various thing and focuses only on the One and the unique. This states brings the seeker to utter words that may seem abnormal for common people as it has mentioned in “*Moses and the Shepherd*”. Further, the major reason that brings a seeker to this state is his meditation of the creation. The most important manifestation of God is nature that reflects His power. Therefore, Rumi states that once a seeker realizes the Ultimate power that controls this huge nature, he may reach the stage of meaning as it is mentioned in “*Become Who You Are*”.

Furthermore, for Rumi, the material joy is limited whereas the spiritual one has no limit. He states in his “*A King Insides Who Listens*” that even if the eyes are awake, it does not matter if the heart is blind. Therefore, he proposes to seek for those whose hearts are always alert with love. He also gives a great comparison between the man of materials and the one of spirituality in his “*Town and Country*”. The poet explains the selfishness of those who are attached to material life. On the other hand, he also shows the simple and innocent life of the rural country.

Moreover, this chapter also shows the element of love in Rumi’s poetry as it is mentioned in his “*A Basket of Fresh Bread*”. For him, love leads to divine knowledge. However, Rumi always prays for God not to lift the veil of this knowledge at once because he may go insane. He believes that without consuming this knowledge, the path is incomplete as he mentions in “*The Dog of the Ego*”. Lastly, Rumi is considered a universal poet because he addresses all the religions and the doctrines with the language of love. In his poem “*Jesus on the Lean Donkey*”, Rumi proposes to seek a guide like Jesus. He expresses his admiration for this prophet because he neglects his worldly desires and sacrifices himself for others as a sign of selflessness that Rumi always calls for in his poetry.



## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.1. Yeats as a mystic:

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) is considered one of the foremost poets who added the element of mysticism to modern English literature. He inserted his characters from the Irish legends, myths, and folklore in order to come up with something unique. He is also regarded as the first poet who used the mask theory in his poetry. Muhammed Azzam stated that Yeats was the first modern poet who introduced the occult system into poetry. (HASSAN, 2015). For Yeats, a poet is close to a mystic. Therefore, if that poet had a mystical sense he would create a spiritual world poem. However, this chapter shed the light on the endeavors that pushed Yeats to dig deeply into the field of mysticism and how mystical life was the center of all that he thought and wrote. (Ross, 2009, p. 4) . It also examined his mystical experience through some selected poems.

Nevertheless, the first reason behind Yeats's mysticism was his father's skepticism about existence. Yeats's father did not approve of his son's quest for spirituality and religion. One day he wrote to Yeats that he would feel sorry because of his son's attachment to mysticism (ibid, 2009). Despite Yeats' father's disapproval of his activities, Yeats kept studying mysticism and did not step back. He defended his ideas and beliefs in his *Autobiographies*. He clarified that his father's disbelief had set his thinking about the evidence of the religion. In addition, he weighed the matter perpetually with anxiety for he did not think that he could live without religion (24). In another section, he mentioned that he was unlike others of his generation (Au. 115). However, In order to break away from his father's domination, Yeats stated that it was only when he started studying psychical and mystical philosophy, he could break away from his father's influence (Au 89).

Richard Ellmann showed in his book (2016) that the relationship between Yeats and his father looked like a thesis and antithesis. Yeats' grandfather and Yeats' father looked almost the same. Yeats' grandfather (1808- 1862) was deeply an orthodox believer who also crashed with his son's disbelief. Thus, "*Yeats erected an eccentric faith somewhere between his grandfather's orthodox belief and his father's unorthodox belief*". Furthermore, Yeats' mother was one of the supporters against his father's skepticism although she was not deeply a religious woman. The recording said that "*She had her way in taking the children to church, teaching them to say their prayers and having them confirmed*" (ibid, 23). Yeats mentioned in his *Autobiographies* (1966) that he was a devout man, his eyes filling with



tears at thought of God and his sins.

Yeats' hatred for London was another major reason behind his involvement in the realm of mysticism. He did not like the city as David Holdman (2006) stated that Yeats loathed everything associated with England because of its vulgarness and godless materialism. Yeats was most often felt homesick for Sligo and the folk-life of rural Ireland where he lived his happy innocent childhood (Ross, 2009). When he was in London, he was looking for answers to his spiritual questions. He could not find these answers in such a materialistic city. London represented misery for him; it caused him tearing tears longing for his simple rural city. He wrote to Tynan,

*"This hateful London, where you cannot go five places without seeing some wretched objects broken either by wealth or poverty".* (Wellesley, 1964).

As a result, Yeats came back to Sligo where he could find the answers in the solitude and the beautiful silence of the nature of Sligo. Richard wrote that Yeats' wonderings were mostly about reality, the truth, and man. He added that his answers were symbolic and fully in harmony with one another, for they spring from a rich, unified consciousness (Ellmann, 1948, 298). In the meanwhile, Sligo made Yeats enjoy nature and the fairy tales of local people which had great impacts later on in his poetry and plays. (ibid). He wrote describing Sligo *"here one gets into one's own majority among people who are like one's self mystical literary folk and such like Dawn as Sligo one sees the whole world in a day's walk"*. (Atkinson, 2016)

The folklore stories that were narrated by the peasants while he was in Sligo influenced Yeats so much. These fairy stories from the legends and myths made Yeats escape from reality and establish his otherworld. These stories united Celtic mythology with the Christian ideals later in Yeats's drama (Pokorna, 2012,). Otherworld concept was famous in Irish literature, it meant "the land of promise" or The Utopian City as Plato had described it before where no trouble or misery is there. For Yeats, Ireland represented his land of promise that attracted him since his childhood. The reason is that besides Ireland is considered a spiritual city to Yeats it was also geographically isolated from the world. It is surrounded by water from all directions. Yeats (1965) described Ireland and its history as follow:

*"Alone among nations, Ireland has in her written Gaelic literature, in her old love tales and, battle tales, the forms in which the imagination of Europe uttered itself before Greece shaped a tumult of legend into her music of the arts; and she can*

*discover, from the beliefs and emotions of her common people, the habit of mind that created the religion of the muses” (467)*

Yeats's interest in Romanticism was another reason for shaping his thoughts and his poetic style. The reason behind his interest in romantic writers was their rejection of the epistemology of the enlightenment. As well as their mystical sense for paying more attention to nature and meditation. Therefore, Yeats is considered a late romantic poet. He was greatly influenced by Blake and Shelley. Yeats was familiar with the works of Blake and Shelley since he was a boy that he considered *Prometheus Bound* as a sacred book (Skelton ,1965). Blake also meant so much to Yeats for Blake provided Yeats with mystical literature which could orient him as a poet and thinker. Yeats considered Blake as a source of wisdom that he quoted no one more context than Blake’s ones. He was mainly admired in his quote that stated when Blake used to write, he did not start without the command of the spirits. The moment he started to write, he used to feel the words fly about the room in all directions (Ross, 2009).

Nonetheless, as it is known that William Blake had been understood wrongly by English society. Yeats adapted this case in defending Blake's thoughts and his poetry, trying to explain his mystical verses. One of the well-known works that Yeats had written about Blake was "*The writing of William Blake*". Yeats once wrote to John O' Leary that "*no one will ever call him mad again*" (Ross 444). On the same account, Yeats wrote to Katherine Tynan on September 7, 1890, when he was preparing his introduction about Blake's poetry describing him as "*A great religious visionary*".(L 117). Yeats believed that Blake was just like him a member of the Golden Dawn.

Moreover, Yeats discovered an unpublished long poem by Blake. Its name was "*Vala*", this mystical poem consisted of two thousand lines written between 1797 and 1804. However, he wrote this poem in his edition "*Blake poems*" and published it by Mr. Ellis for the first time. (Lincoln, 1996). Wrenn mentioned that "*Without Blake, there could have been no Yeats as we know him*" (Ross, 2009, P. 444). Worth mentioning that Yeats had lived the two generations that his poetry is considered a transition from the late Victorian to the modernist themes. He was known as a master of the traditional poetic forms but at the same time, he was considered as one of the greatest poets who used modernist verse. Besides, he was also influenced by aestheticism, pre-Raphaelite, and the French symbolists as well (Miller, 2015).

Meanwhile, as it was mentioned earlier that Shelley also influenced Yeats' style and shaped his mystical and political beliefs. Shelley was considered one of the few romantic poets who influenced Yeats poetry and philosophy (Ross,2009). Yeats connected himself with the characters in the poems of Shelley like *Alastor* which made him derive the same images to his poems like the *Swan, Fountain, Cave, and Tower*. He also "*derived the motif of the soul-allegorizing journey upon sea and river*" (ibid, 548). Moreover, Yeats was also influenced by the aesthetic expressions in Shelley's poetry. He tried to make a relation between aesthetics and religion. He linked religion with poetry; this made Yeats trace Shelley's philosophy. Thus, Yeats combined the Celtic mythology and the Christian ideals in Celtic mysteries.

Yeats's interest in Eastern mysticism is worthy to notice. His poetry and prose involved several references to Eastern Sufism. For instance, Yeats stated in his *Autobiographies* a tale that a professor was talking to his students about the Golden Dawn of the East. Yeats commented that when this Professor was a boy "*he had seen a vision in a pool of ink, a multitude of spirits - singing in Arabic, Woe unto those that do not believe in us*" ( Au, 91). Additionally, Yeats mentioned in his diary (1930) that the Persian Sufi Hafez is considered his best reference to the Sufi poets. (Yeats, 1962). Therefore, an educated man like Yeats might have read about the Muslims and the mystics of Islam and the Holy Quran. Willson confirmed that "*The Hour before Dawn and the seven sleepers*" are derived from the *Quran* as well as "*The well at the world's End*". (Burgess, 1960). Moreover, in the introduction of his book *A Vision*; Yeats talked about the East through his two characters Owen Aherne and Michael Roberts. A story is told by Roberts to his friend that:

Thus turning violently from all sensual pleasure I decided to say my prayers at the Holy Sepulcher, and for there I went to Damascus that I might learn Arabic for I had decided to continue my prayers at Mecca, and hoped to get there in disguise ( xxiii)

The Platonic relationship between Yeats and Maud Gonne is regarded as another factor in Yeats's mystical life. He fell in love with her when he met her for the first time in late 1880. Marjorie (2006) described this relationship as one of the most famous one-sided passions in English literary history. Yeats proposed her four times (1891, 1894, 1899,1900), but with each proposal, he was rejected (Harold, 1972). This rejection did not stop Yeats from being in love with her. Subsequently, he settled into a "mystical marriage". Maud

states that this mystical marriage was "*the means of spiritual illumination between us*", (Harper, 1974, P. 168). Therefore, this platonic love had appeared in several poems like "*Among school children*", "*The Secret Rose*" and others. However, Yeats at that time was struggling because of his poverty. He could not offer her something tangible. He was just a journalist and he had nothing except his beautiful words:

“But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I had spread my dream under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.” (Yeats, 1996, P. 73)

Yeats was united with Maud Gonne spiritually but he recognized that this was not enough to be bound with her. Therefore, his trouble reached its climax when she converted to Catholicism and married the nationalist revolutionary major John McBride who was executed later in 1916 after the Easter rising. Hence, Maud justified her rejection that Yeats's beautiful poetry was out because of his unhappiness therefore, being together would be a dull affair for he would not produce such beautiful words. At the end of her justification, she added that the world would thank her for not marrying Yeats. (Ross, 169).

Yeats described Maud in his poem "*The Rose of the World*" (1892) as a goddess in heaven pretty but unreachable. Hence, he asked the archangels to bow for Maude. These archangels are the most famous ones in the Catholic tradition (Yeats, 1996, P. 36) However, even after her marriage in 1903; Gonne remained an inspiration source for Yeats's works. Ross (2009) commented,

*“Gonne was an incarnation of the romantic heroines, Yeats had been imagining since boyhood. For 50 years, Gonne tormented and provoked Yeats; racked him with desire and struck him with awe; baffled and frustrated him; and inadvertently roused him to immense feats of arts”.*

Further, Yeast used Helen of Troy as an image of Maud Gonne. He deprived this character of the Greece myth. This woman had left her husband as Gonne left Yeats. He portrayed this image in his poem "*No Second Troy*" (1916). Yeats's highest used image of Gonne was in his poem "*The Rose of Peace*" when he stated that even Michael, the leader of Gods would give up his battles if he saw Gonne's beauty. (ibid)

Yeats was obsessed with the way that people used to practice their religion, especially the Christian one. He used to label himself as "a churchless mystic". The reason is that even those who used to preach at the churches did not have that transcendental sense which Yeats was looking for. He was deeply a Christian but he did not agree with those who represent the religion. Thus, he decided to study mysticism and occultism to prove that there is an invisible transcendental world. Yeats' wife acknowledged, "*Her husband prayed all his life*" (Elmann, 2016).

Yeats expressed in his *Autobiographies* that he attempted to unite the two doctrines of Christianity: the Catholics and the Protestants. He tried that through the mystical union that he compared the marriage between the sun and the moon. He considered that the Catholics represent the imaginative and contemplative side of temperament. While the Protestants stand for pragmatics and active nature. Yeats commented about this mystical union in his *Preface to God and Fighting Men* that old writers used to insert symbols that attributed certain energies to the influence of sun and lunar. He added that for himself, he imagined the marriage between the sun and the moon in his arts. Therefore they are one in his mystical embrace as a reference to the two rituals. (131)

Moreover, Yeats was not attracted only to Christianity; rather, he was interested in any religion or doctrine that had a mystical sense. The most important ones that Yeats was influenced by are Islamic Sufism, Buddhism, and Cabbalism. He insisted that all the religious doctrines emphasize the importance of reconciling the conflicts of the soul as a means to achieve the Kingdom of God. Additionally, Yeats was also interested in the thoughts of Plotinus. Helen Vender (1963) explained that Yeats was studying Plotinus just to confirm and to be sure about the ideas that he learned. As he stated that "*The more I read the better I understand what I had been taught*"

Furthermore, Yeats felt obsessed with the universe. He thought that his ideas were not appropriate to it. He expressed his hatred for the universe in a letter to Katherine Tynan on May 18, 1887 "*My personal grievances against the universe*". (L 28). However, this situation created a kind of alienation to Yeats. He started looking for supporters for his concepts. Richard showed that though personal reasons urged Yeats to be away from his father's disbelief, he would hardly depart from the world at all. The reason was that he refused to accept scientific, rationalist, materialist, and hypocritically religious elders who attempted to hand him this material world (Ellmann, 2016, 58).

Yeats eventually found his passion first in the Dublin Theosophical organization in 1886, which was led by Madame Blavatsky. Then he joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. This band was founded in 1888 by MacGregor Mathers and had a great impact on shaping the mystical concepts in western culture. Yeats was so admired by the abilities and thoughts of Mathers and his magical ancient concepts. He had read the "Kabalah *Unveiled*" in (1887) before he met him in (1890). Furthermore, Yeats joined this Order to transform his isolation and loneliness into the power of the mind as well as it was considered as a knowledge revolution against the supporters of science at that time. This order let Yeats confirm his ideas much more about the supernatural world. He even read about magic due to its supernaturalism and mystery. However, this order gave Yeats a chance to establish some friendships with whom he would share the same spiritual beliefs. (Ross, 2009).

Furthermore, another factor behind Yeats' mysticism was the domination of science and intellect in the late Victorian age and the beginning of modernity. This critical period witnessed a revolution against tradition and religions. People started to adopt the scientific discoveries of Darwin, Freud, Helmholtz, to name only a few, which led to shaping a new understanding of the social processes and human nature. However, these explorations, and especially the anthropology ones led to high criticism of the Bible by that time. Yeats argued that science allowed no place for the supernatural.

Further, Yeats did not approve of the style and the way of writing of his pairs at that time. He remarked that the role of art cannot as many English writers thought just a criticism of life. Yeats believed that art should fire the spirit and burning away what is selfish. (UPR ,84). Moreover, Yeats rejected the concept of "Art is for art's sake" along with Erza Pound, James Joyce, T.S.Eliot, and Wallace Stevens. He declared that the role of writers should be the same as that of the priests. Yeats stated that if poets wanted to win the people again, they should follow the method of the priesthood. (Ex &I 203).

However, the period between (1880-1914) was a complex one because of the First World One which caused the loss of faith, hopelessness, and pessimism. Constantly, people came to find a substitution of the religion. Some found their substitution in humanism and others found it in escapism, stoicism, and art as well (Finneran, 1983). They looked at religion as "a dead tree" which cannot fruit anymore. Harper (1975) showed that the world

was in suffered from a crisis of faith when Yeats was just young and boy. This crisis was because of the changes in European society as scientific discoveries reached their climax. This led the society to be away from the spiritual beliefs for their life was full of materiality.

As a result, Yeats devoted himself to occultism and mysticism so he could find proof against the men of science as he argued, "*experimental science was limited in its results.*" (Ellmann, 1964, 3). Furthermore, Yeats also described science as a "tree of death" for its limited horizon. Modernism was based on the theory of empiricism of Newton, Locke, and Descartes. For this reason, they were considered members of the realism of Enlightenment epistemology school. (Fogarty, 2007).

The theory of Locke insisted that "knowledge arises from experience" (Surette 61). However, Yeats stood strongly against this theory claiming that it encouraged the empirical world apart from the transcendental realm and spirituality. Harper (1961) stated that Blake was "the first great artist to reject Locke's theory" (63). Along with his master, Yeats rejected such an understanding of the universe. His studies were mainly on occultism and mysticism, which had their own roots back to ancient times. In his *Fragments* poem, Yeats mocked Locke for his belief in intellect neglecting the supernatural power of God. Yeats exclaimed that his truth did not come from the realm of reason rather it came from his vision, which made him close to heaven where the reason had no entry. Yeats understood this aspect much better when he studied the visionary works of Blake.

### **3.2. Yeats's mystical poems:**

Yeats believes that literature has the ability to awake and enlighten the mind of society. He remarks that great poetry changes human beings (UPR 84). Furthermore, in his *Autobiographies*, he also expresses the same idea.

*"We gaze at such men in awe, because we gaze not at a work of art, but at the re-creation of the man through that art, the birth of a new species of man, and it may even seem that the hairs of our heads stand up, because that birth, that re-creation, is from terror"* (AU 273).

Yeats attempts to heal the political and social situation through art along with religious references. *Second Coming* is the best example that portrays the challenge between

the empirical society and religious system. It is regarded as a masterpiece of modern poetry. It has been interpreted variously by scholars due to its complex mystical symbolism. It is written in 1919 just a month after First World War. It is first published in the American magazine in 1920. Later on, it is included in the volume *of Michael Kobartes and The Dancer* in the year 1921. This poem comes as a result of several complex events in Yeats's life: The Easter rebellion of 1916 (the Irish civil war) and the European great world of 1914-1918. Thus, these events have a great influence on Yeats's way of writing. (Trimbakrao, 2012)

The poet believes that the Christian era falls down in the twentieth century where there is no sense of innocence or divinity. However, a new era is about to come which is the era of bloodshed and murder. The poem opens as if the poet is seeing a vision. Yeats is in great social trouble that the world is spinning out of the control "*Turning and turning in the widening gyre*" (1). He shows us a vision of ritualistic, apocalyptic, and mystical symbolism. The poet visualizes a gyre or a cone circling swiftly round a fixed center. Its circumference gets wider and wider and ultimately even the center fails to control its movements "*Things fall apart, the center cannot hold*" (3).

The gyre is one of the most important symbols in Yeats's poetry. It stands for order and stability on one hand and chaos and decay on another hand. In the second line also the poet narrates, "*The falcon cannot hear the falconer*" (2). The falcon here symbolizes the man whereas the falconer is a symbol of God. It shows that man is turning away from the spiritual life to the life of non-spiritual, which is the life of science and intellect. In fact, Technology and rationalism are too much with the folk to wholesale annihilation.

The poem shifts to describe the leaders of this new era "*Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world*" (4). They are characterized by violence and savagery. The next line also hints that technology progressing beyond mankind's ability to control it "*The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere*" (5). This problem is present in Yeats's time and the problem has worsened since then. Yeats shows his concern that technology has advanced to the point where humankind can do a great deal of harm with relative ease. This makes people tend to the mind more than the heart. However, faith in religion somehow starts to vanish especially after emerging some theories that doubt the existence of God.

In the same stanza, Yeats shows the misery and the destruction that has been caused by technology and wars. Innocence and pure people are drowned and have no right to



express themselves. The best, the wisest, and the aristocratic have lost all faith and conviction. On the other hand, the worst and the fanatical irrational beings are full of violence. In Yeats's time, the imperial powers start to get more expanded across the world. They would do anything in order to accomplish their interests and get what they want regardless of humanity and modesty. The ruthless is outspoken and few dare to speak out against them in the name of peace. ( ibid, 2012)

This brutality of anarchy connotes that a new civilization is about to arrive. Just like the arrival of Jesus over the Roman empire, the second coming of Jesus seems to be around the corner given by the first two lines of the second stanza " *surely some revelation is at hand; surely the second coming is at hand*" (9-10). This prediction is supported with a biblical reference " *when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself; that where I am you may be also*" (John 14:3). No sooner does the idea flash across the poet's mind when he sees the image of some bizarre form coming out of "*spirits Mundi*" ( a storehouse of images in Yeats's philosophy). It can be expressed as the spirit of the world or the collective of sub-consciousness. These images are given in lines 4, 5, and 6 of the second stanza.

The poet has a kind of vision that this grotesque form has a body of a lion and the head of a human being. The speaker then visualizes this shape as "*A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun*" (15). It means that this shape does not have human expression but at the same time, it is not evil. As well as it is "blank" which means that it does not have any empathy with bad people. He sees it coming out of some distant desert and advancing slowly with clumsy ungainly movement towards *Bethlehem*, which is the birthplace of Christ. The slowness seems to add more terror to the shape. This shape may symbolize the sphinx of a mythical beast. It could be also attributed to the beast from the book of *Revelations*. (ibid, 2012)

The speaker comes back to his conscious " *The darkness drops again; but now I know That twenty centuries of stony sleep Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle*" (18-19). The speaker has a vision that Christ's rocking cradle is about to come. The last line of the poem ends with a mysterious question " *And what rough beast, its hour comes round at last, Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*"(21-22). Yeats sees things rising up to bring forth the end of the world of empiricism and science. The rough beast may symbolize an alternative character that comes instead of Jesus.

Yeats prefers being alone and isolated from the public for meditation. He is a dreamy and imaginative man. He always thinks of buying or hiring a castle on an island where he can meditate and establish his mystical order. This would be an alternative to logic and reason. Such an idea is clarified in his poem "*The Lake of Innisfree*" (Miiller 2013). He mentions in his *Autobiographies* that he has lived some days in a small cottage where he meditates in order to conquer his body desire and inclined his mind away from thinking about women and physical issues. He does so to seek wisdom and divine knowledge ( Au, 71, 72). Subsequently, Yeats starts to see visions and hear some voices similar to those whom he greatly admires like Blake, Swedenborg, Boehme, and others. Further, many incidents have been recorded in his *Autobiographies*.

Nevertheless, "The Lake of Innisfree" poem is written in 1888 when he is in London feeling homesick for his calm county "Sligo". The source of inspiration for this poem comes when he stands in front of a shop window. He sees a toy fountain that its sounds of water inspire him. Thus, the poem opens with enthusiasm to start a trip to Innisfree "*I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree*" (1). The opening verse echoes the prodigal son in the Bible when he says, "*I will arise and go to my father*" (Luke 15:18). This biblical reference connotes that this place is a holy one for the speaker. It brings to the mind the relief sense of the prodigal son when he decides to leave his chaotic, unhappy life and return to his childhood home where he could find quietness and innocence.

By the next lines, the speaker describes the simplicity of the place "*And a small cabin built there, of clay and wattles made*" (2). The setting refers that the poet prefers being alone just like the hermits and the mystics in order to mediate the concept of creation. The speaker portrays his peaceful solitude happily "*live alone in the bee-loud glad*" (4). In the same stanza, the poet portrays how peaceful the place is where there is no sense of selfish modernity. Yeats's vision about the place gives us a sense that as if he were there at the moment. He describes his feeling of peace vividly "*Peace comes dropping slow*" (5), and "*midnight's all a glimmer*" (7).

Such a description indicates how the romantic writers influence Yeats. His portrayal of his pleasure gives a sense that this spiritual quest is a never-ending cycle. The poet tries to vision every tiny moment of his solitude that the morning mist is like veils thrown over the lake. At noon, the purple heather, which gives the island its name, blazes under the sun. In the evening, is full of the whirr of the linnet's wing. At night, the stars fill the sky:

"midnight's all glimmer". The images in this stanza indicate how the poet is involved with nature. He depicts nature as a tool to reach a high sense of ecstasy.

The first two stanzas portray how Yeats imagines his county's nature. In the third stanza, the poet describes his misery as his wish is unattainable while he is listening to the "lake water japing with low sound by the shore" (10). He is ceased with the disorders of the reality "while I stand on the roadway, or on the pavement grey"(11). He uses "grey" to refer to his dissatisfaction with the atmosphere of London as he writes once to his friend "What a horrid place this London is!" (L. 62). Hence, the last line refers that this feeling of yearning for his nation is in "the deep of heart's core" (12). Hugh Kenner (1984) mentions that the whole world comes to agree that this poem is Celtic. (53)

Nonetheless, besides being isolated on the surface of the areas, Yeats used voyaging as another way to experience mystical mediation. For society is a symbol of escape but for mystics is a quest after the ultimate truth, which can be found only in meditation and calm nature rather than in a sensual society. However, Yeats's interest in ships and seas started in his boyhood. He states in his *Autobiographies* "All my dreams were of ships" (Au 15). In another place, he states that "I used to sail on toy boats in the river before my uncle's house" (Au 53). Additionally, he mentions that he was influenced by an Arabian legend sailor "Sindbad" " I have walked on Sindbad's yellow shore and never shall another's hit my fancy" (Au 52). This ambition is reflected in several of his poems. One of these poems is "Sailing to Byzantium".

This poem is revealed in 1927 under the collection of *The Tower* in the 63 years old of the poet. The poet announces his determination to leave the country of sensuality and turns to the world of spirit. Ross (2009) states that Yeats shows "his persistent longing for spiritual redemption through the timelessness of art" (214). Moreover, Byzantium as a city means too much to Yeats, it is a city of religion, harmony, and art. He expresses in his *A Vision*(1956) that he wishes if he could spend a month in Byzantium where he would find some philosophical workers in mosaic who may answer all his questions. He adds that in early Byzantium, religion, history, aesthetics, and practical life are one. Yeats argues that even Plotinus could not live the experienced unity of the native people of Byzantium (279).

Interestingly, Byzantium is considered one of the greatest cities of the Christian religion because it has one of the major cathedrals there. Apparently, the east has a great influence on western writers. The more they get closer to the east, the more spiritual they

become. Richard Ellmann (2016) concludes that "*Byzantium is a holy city because it is the capital of Eastern Christendom but it is also Yeats holy city of the imagination*" (257). Therefore, this city symbolizes oneness and the existence of the transcendental world. Yeats states, "the work of the one that made the building, picture, pattern metal-work of rail and lamp seem but a single image" (*A Vision*, 280).

*Sailing to Byzantium* poem is a dialectic one, between the speaker and the young generation. The poet on the shore leaving his country (Ireland) as he feels sad for its corruption. Yeats comments in his *Explorations* that Ireland is a religious nation. (Ex. 263). However, it seems that this concept is no longer alive as materialism conquers nations around the world. Therefore, Yeats feels that his country is no longer a religious one. "*That is no country for old men (1) because of—The young / In one another's arms (1-2)*". These two lines indicate that there is a binary between young people and old ones.

The speaker describes this generation as a dying one due to their hollowness. They have a body with its lusts but without any spiritual sense, so that, they are not alive according to Yeats. Even their song is a dying one because it does not have a sense of ecstasy that would make a listener feels. He portrays this life as a long summer that will end sooner or later, "it is begotten, born, and dies". Elder Olsan (1962) comments that mortal things last for a short time because they are attached to sensuality. In addition, the young neglect anything that is related to saints and spiritual leaders (223).

Furthermore, Yeats indicates that being attached to the earthly beauties would make the young arrogant and therefore neglect the spiritual and the divine aspects. They can get purified when they learn the language of "Monuments unageing intellect". However, they may observe these beauties with their earthly senses: touch, seeing, and hearing but they cannot taste it or feel it unless they go beyond these senses.

In the second stanza, the speaker keeps voyaging to his holy city metaphorically. He mocks his body and describes it as "*a paltry thing*", / *A tattered coat upon a stick*" (9-10). Thus, the speaker here is not satisfied with his immortal body because it is vain and mortal according to him. However, the speaker indicates that though the body is old but the soul can flourish if it studies the Monuments. Olsan says that a seeker cannot be like these saints unless he casts off his body (Olsan, 223). For the persona, the soul is immortal and never gets aged in contrast to his tattered body. Ross (2009) states about this stanza that Yeats:

creates a deliberate contrast with the fleshiness depicted in the first stanza and his emphatic description makes the sudden revelation of the reserves of imaginative energy and spiritual ambition ( 215).

Thus, by prioritizing the spiritual and divine aspects of the soul and neglecting the sensual pleasures, the speaker succeeds in arriving at his destination. "*And therefore, I have sailed the seas and come to the holy city of Byzantium*" (15-16). Nevertheless, this journey is not an actual one, rather it is an imaginative journey for the utopian city of the speaker. It is considered an inner quest to find the ultimate truth.

In the third stanza, the speaker has arrived at Byzantium. He would like to start a journey of transformation by then "*As in a gold mosaic of the wall*" (18). This image indicates that the speaker (Yeats) wishes if he could be a part of that wall in order to be immortal just like a golden mosaic. Yeats's interest in alchemy's philosophy is reflected in this line. It aims:

to transform base metals into gold; to extract the fine from the coarse; to redeem spirit from the matter; to unite the opposites; to discover the secret of matter, and hence, the mystery of creation; and, to perfect the human soul" (Gorski, 1996, p. 3) .

Continually, Yeats appeals to the sages of Byzantium to purify him "*In God's holy fire*" (17). The reason is that he believes his heart is "*sick with desire / And fastened to a dying animal*" (21-22). However, this kind of cleanse has its own reference in the Christian religion for those who would like to be purified as it is called (baptism). "*I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*" (Matt. 3:11).

The speaker believes that once he is purified, he will achieve what he seeks. By this time, the speaker could observe by his earthly senses but at the same time, he activated his divine soul. Therefore, he could see and feel the realm of the transcendental world. Ross states that the song of the sages is unlike the melodists of the first stanza whose song is only sensual with no spiritual sense (215). After all, Byzantium in this poem is a city of spiritual men, and only those who are purified "*In God's holy fire*" are accepted "into the artifice of eternity" (24). In the same account, Plotinus said anything that does not belong to the realm of being, it belongs to the realm of Non-being therefore it should be purified. (Plotinus,

1952).

In the final stanza, the speaker seems to be involved in the transcendental world. He does not care about the earthly beauties and the sensual desires “Once *out of nature I shall never take / My bodily form from any natural thing* “(25-26). The speaker by now is beyond temporality, he is where he can see everything in its simplex form. He is immortal and can sing " *To lords and ladies of Byzantium / of what is past, or passing, or to come*". (31-32).

These lines indicate that Yeats has succeeded to achieve a high mystical vision and abandoned the animal desire of his body. His soul is free and has been born again. He could sing philosophy in his poetry and being immortal by his words and imagination, not his tattered body. David (2006) stated about this poem that the speaker " *regards these monuments in the same way Yeats had long regarded symbols and masks: as magical icons empowering him to call down otherworldly —sage who will —Consume his mortal attachments and gather him —Into the artifice of eternity*. (82). Finally, Yeats tries to convey a message that the soul can only rejoice and be happy when it releases itself from the animal desires.

*The Shadowy Waters* (1906) is another poem that indicates Yeats's ambition to start his quest for spirituality by voyaging across the sea. In a letter to Fiona, Yeats states about this poem, "*my mystical Shadowy Waters is mystical and mystical beyond anything I have done*" (Ellmann, 129). The poem tells the story of the king of ancient Ireland (Forgael) when he decides to voyage across the sea following human-headed birds. His crew considers him a mad man due to his illogical idea. As his friend Aibric says "*while we are in the body that is impossible*" (Yeats, 2001). So that, the only way to unite with the beloved ones is death. Therefore, Fogael continues his quest to the end. The birds symbolize the souls of the dead whose final rest is overseas towards the sunset.

In the meanwhile, while they are on the sea, Forgaels' sailors arrest a ship upon which they discover queen Dectora. After then, his crew comes back and leaves him with his new beloved one following their goal. Deborah Tannen (1978) comments that the sea symbolizes a passage to the otherworld for Yeats. That world is the eternal and most spiritual one. Forgael declares that the purpose of his quest is to follow love which is not the common one that people are familiar with. This love is not of this world as a reference to divine love (Yeats, 2001).

The persona in *Shadowy Waters* shares the same misery with the one in "Sailing to Byzantium". Forgael is unsatisfied with the materialistic world and the realm of sensuality that they are sunk in. Neither can he do the things that they do nor they understand what he says. This situation portrays Yeats himself who uses to be disappointed with the twentieth-century society. However, Katharine Worth believes that this sense of dream and ecstasy makes Forgael attain a position above the real world. This enables him to distinguish the principles of life and death. (Worth, 1978)

Furthermore, Yeats tries to "*mythologize his own desire for a permanent love and consummate love no living man can obtain*" (ibid, 276). As long as this quest cannot be obtained in the actual world, Yeats prefers to attain it spiritually and imaginatively. According to Yeats that "*the poet is a dreamer or a magician whose power is to overcome what is real and what cannot be attained.*" (ibid). Meanwhile, along the journey, the relationship between Dectora and Forgael keeps its purity and platonic sense. This relation is a reference to the mystical marriage between Yeats and Maud Gonne. It can also be said that without this companion, the spiritual journey would not be attained. Dectora asks Forgael about the birds: *O, I can hear them now, what are they? Unto what country do they fly?* (96) Forgael explains to her:

*They are crying out, could you but hear their words  
There is a country at the end of the world  
where no child's born but to outlive the moon* (496)

At the end of the story, Forgael and Dectora keep voyaging together to their ultimate goal waiting for their death in order to be united forever in the otherworld. Even when Dectora tries to seduce Forgael "until my body gives you kiss for a kiss", his reply was "your soul shall give the kiss", i.e. after being released from the bondage of the body. Lee (1990) states that the real union can be attained only after death. Finally, they turn to be spirits in a bird form. So far, Yeats used the bird as a symbol in the *Shadow Waters* and "Sailing to Byzantium" to suggest that there is a link between the visible world of humans and the invisible divine one therefore the bird is the link between the human and the divine.

The motif of death is present in most of Yeats's poems for he believes that the soul is imprisoned by the body. Therefore, death is the only way to get free. Yeats depicts this

image in his poem "*The Wheel*". He indicates that life is just like a wheel cycling through the seasons. Yeats evokes the sense of the ignorance of death that when the winter season comes we call upon spring and other seasons but we forget that death one day will come and we will no more call for anything.

He uses the pronoun "we" as he believes that we are all on the same boat that one day the cycle will not include us. Yeats expresses his feeling with "longing for the tomb" in the last line. He believes what we will feel in the hereafter is much better than what we feel in this life. The poem is written with eight lines only which symbolize that life is short too. Time is created for man, therefore; life is a chance for man to prepare to be immortal in heaven when time ceases to exist. This poem demonstrates how Yeats is involved in the spiritual realm. He writes to his friend Ethel Mannin a month before his death " "Am I a mystic? No, I am a practical man" (L.921). These two lines sum up Yeats's mystical sense that he has practiced throughout his life.

Moreover, imagination and memory play a great role in establishing the mystical realm in Yeats's poetry. Yeats is influenced by several elements as he has moved through several phases of spirituality and beliefs. His life is mixed with philosophy and art. Yeats considers writing poetry as an act of divine possession; for he states that the perfected soul visits him in his visions and inspires him to write (Graf, 2000)

The *Tower* is one of the most passionate poems in Yeats's poetry. It is published in 1927 after receiving the Nobel Prize in literature. Ross (2009) states that "*As Roos is the chief symbol of Yeats's youth so that Tower is the chief symbol of his maturity*" (256). Yeats writes this poem in his sixties accompanying his similar poems "*Sailing to Byzantium*" and "*Among School Children*". However, in this poem, Yeats tries to find a solution to his dilemma through his imagination and memory whether he can find the true place with his Muse or with philosophy. In the final part of the poem, Yeats declares his Will through his speaker that he cannot prefer philosophy over his art. Therefore, he would prefer to philosophize through poetry. Hence, the mystical vision is the only way to achieve such a rank.

The speaker opens the poem with a bloom mood and unsatisfactory of his body and the empirical society that he lives in "*What shall I do with this absurdity*" (1). Then he moves on mocking his heart "*O heart, O troubled heart*" (2). In "*Sailing to Byzantium*", the speaker described his heart "*as a sick one full with earthly desire*". Here he refers to a high



mystical element that he is upset with his body that functions as a prison to his pure soul. Virginia Pruitt (1980) states that the poet should "*relinquish his heart, and thereby achieve the victory of transcendence*" (150).

Furthermore, the good news comes in the next line that indicates though the body is old and decayed but still the power of imagination is getting stronger "*Never had I more / Excited, passionate, fantastical imagination*" (5-7). These lines describe the life journey of Yeats himself that in the last years of his life most of his poems tend to be visionary and mystical. He states in his *Autobiographies* that when he is young, his Muse is old, but that as he ages Muse grows younger. In the next line, the speaker goes far away with his imagination. He remembers his boyhood and the period of innocence "*boyhood when with rod and fly, / Or the humbler worm, I climbed Ben Bulbin's back / And had the livelong summer day to spend*" (9-11). These lines create a binary between two different periods (the old and the young one). It is just like the one, which is present in the previous poem "Sailing to Byzantium". He indicates how active he is unlike what is he now. Moreover, with the progressing of the poem, the speaker is confused between the philosophy and his art:

*It seems that I must bid the Muse go pack,  
Choose Plato and Plotinus for a friend (12-13)*

The words "It seems" indicate that the speaker is struggling between his heart and muse which is trapped by the empirical society on one hand. On the other hand, he is thinking of giving up his sick heart and go beyond temporality by being a friend of Plato and Plotinus. The dilemma is getting more complex as in "Sailing to Byzantium" that the poet can abandon neither philosophy nor his art. Therefore, it would better to combine them together. This combination would produce a unique art due to its mystical vision and imagination. However, this part ends with no clear decision from the speaker.

The poet moves to the next section, he is heading up the tower looking out over the countryside. The tower here is similar to "the monument of unageing intellect" in Sailing to Byzantium. He starts a new quest with his imagination and the recollection of his memories as he "*Paces upon the battlements*" (18) "*around his neighborhood and sends imagination forth*" (21). The thematic element of the tower refers to the dynamic interaction between the poet and the images. He prefers to ask some of those people who have lived in the neighborhood and whose spirits are still hunting there. He tells the story of each one before asking them his question. These characters are Mrs. French, a peasant girl, a blind poet, and

Hanrahan. The question of the speaker is revealed whether they have stood against this old age or not. Ross (2009) states that:

In this local procession – imperious patrician, peasant beauty, rustics smitten to madness, blind poet, rambling visionary, scandalous wastrel, rough-men-at-arms<sup>4</sup> whose ghosts continue at their game of dice – Yeats finds a precedent of passion and personality that corroborates his own living heart ( 258).

At the end of the stanza, the speaker fires all the characters from his mind except Hanrahan who is created by Yeats's imagination. "*Go, therefore; but leave Hanrahan, For I need all his mighty memories*" (104-105). This recollection of memories failed to give a clear answer to the speaker. Therefore, the poet decided to give his own decision "*It is time that I wrote my will*" (122) and "*I declare my faith*" (146). This declaration stated that the speaker could not abandon his imagination power, and his muse altogether. Bloom concluded that "*like Hanrahan, the poet has not attained Unity of Being, and so finds himself at the impasse of knowing perfection neither in his life nor in his work*" (351). It seems that the poet chooses imagination because of the "*poet's imaginings*" (161). At the same time the speaker does not give up the philosophy rather, he tries to combine them both.

Yeats's belief in Buddhism and Christianity has a great influence on his style of writing of his poems and plays. They enrich the mystical sense and spirituality especially the two doctrines of reincarnation and the Tree of life. One of these poems that clarify his belief is "*The Indian Upon God*". This poem is written in (1889-1893) in the early years of Yeats's life. It is one of Yeats's spiritual poems that discuss the concept of creation. Yeats adapts the pantheism theory that stresses the unity between the One and the many. He also adapts the Christian concept concerning the theory of creation that everything is created in God's image "*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, created he him; male and female created he them*" (King James Version, Genesis 1:27).

The poem opens with the persona describing his trip to a forest or a garden. He encounters some animals whose dialogue attracts him. These animals consist of a moorfowl, a lotus, a roebuck, and a peacock. Each one of these animals describes God with a different image. The first animal that the persona encounters is the moor flow. He hears it discuss the

power of God who creates them with their strengths and weaknesses. The moor flow asserts that God is eternal and lives beyond the sky in heaven. All the gifts come from his generosity. It visualizes God with a physical entity who has a "bill" and "wing" that raindrops from Him and the moonbeams shot from his eyes. However, in the second movement, the speaker encounters another animal.

This time the persona listens to a Lotus which is also discussing the essence of God and his powers. It compares itself with god's image. It talks about rain and his ability to give more. Interestingly, the two creatures talk about rain due to its vital need. They know that water is the essential source to continue in life. By such a description, Yeats proves that he is a spiritual and religious man. He knows that without the power of God there would be no creation nor sources to live. However, creation is a fact not a myth as most of the modernist claim. Moreover, the poet encounters the third animal that is also has a conversation with other animals. This animal is Roebuck.

The Roebuck talks about God's power also and now it asserts that God stamps the sky with stars in order to make it more beautiful. It describes Him as gentle, that is why Roebuck is created sad, gentle, and soft. Finally, the persona comes across the last animal which is a Peacock. The peacock here also praises God's power that creates the grass and the worms in a peacock monstrous image. Its tail waves all night in order to give light to the world.

Lastly, this poem expresses the notion of God and mysticism in Yeats's poetry. Ellman (2016) states that "*all religions whatever their particular form, sprung from a common and valid instinct*". It means that God is the One in all the religions and doctrines and it depends on that band how to describe Him. "*Man was wrong when he tried to create God out of some other substance than humanity*" (ibid). Dr. Hamdi (1999) showed that in this poem "One can easily discern the idea of God as a macrocosm while every creature and logically every man looks at itself as a microcosm".

Yeats uses Rose as a symbol in several poems in which he refers to eternity, ideal beauty, and perfection. The rose is a link between the subjective feelings of the poet and the divine essence. In another word, it stands for both the temporal world and the idealized immortality. Yeats's interest in such symbols is inherited from the Irish methodology as it is associated with the goodness that gives the names to the people of Ireland. Yeats celebrates the symbol of the rose in his poem "*To the Rose upon the Rood*". It is published in 1893

included in the *Rose* collection. Stephen (1997) views that “*the rose upon the rood was a symbol worn around the neck of those belonging to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn*” (96-97).

The poem opens with an emphasis upon the rose “*Red Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all my days!*” and ends with almost the same lines. The critics agree that the Rose stands for beauty and mystical knowledge. The disagreement is on the meaning of “*come near*” which has been repeated six times throughout the poem. Harold Bloom (1970) states that

“*Come near*” as a sign of the poet's vacillation between occult knowledge and common things by pointing out that the poet asks the Rose “to come near, but to leave him still ‘a little space’ for the natural odor of less occult roses to pervade. Come near, but not too near; this is the start of a characteristic pattern of vacillation” (111).

It is assumed that Yeats is searching for the truth as he neglects the temporal world “*Lest I no more hear common things that crave*” (15). Instead, he is seeking the divine knowledge of those who are dead a long time ago (19-20). Nevertheless, it is believed that the poet is addressing the divine knowledge to come near but not too near because it would astonish his mind by its brightness. Some mystics keep searching for the truth then they are revealed to the secret knowledge. However, most people could not understand them because of their mystical words. The reason is that those mystics reach a stage, which is higher than the common people are. One of the Christian figures is Blake who is called mad for his mystical words. The same with an Islamic figure (Al-Halaj) who is executed due to his revelation of the divine knowledge and up to now his case is critical. In short, Yeats wants to catch the divine knowledge and be identified with it but at the same time, he wishes to balance and not be overwhelmed by this knowledge (Murphy 1975, 39).

Furthermore, Yeats's interest in the inner side of the self rather than the outer side is revealed in his poem “*The Two Trees*”. It is one of the mystical poems that is written for his beloved Maud Gonne in (1892). The title of the poem stands for the two trees in the Garden of Eden that are mentioned in the Holy Bible: The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life. However, in the first stanza, the poet encourages his beloved to look inside her heart because the real beauty and knowledge grow there (1-2).

The tree in the poem is “holy” for it stands as a symbol of unity and perfection. It also can be described as a link between heaven and the earth as it is considered the inspiration source to the poet that let him release the hidden melodies to the audience (10-

12). The poet uses highly explicit lexical that refers to his spirituality such as "holy branches", " merry light", " flaming circle". The same "tree" appears in "Among School Children" and functioned as the first one:

*O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomed,  
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?  
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,  
How can we know the dancer from the dance?*

Nevertheless, the image of the "dancer" and the "dance" is noteworthy. It is a symbol of unity with the divine as the dancer represents the seeker of the truth in the realm of the divine "dance". However, the same image is repeated in "*The Two trees*" "*the flaming circle of our days / Gyring spiring to and fro*". These images refer to the dervish dance. It means a physically active meditation that aims to reach a high stage of ecstasy by abandoning the ego and personal desires (Yeats, 1956). Furthermore, this image brings us back to "Sailing to Byzantium" when the persona was baptized by the fire of sages there, he narrated

*Tossing and tossing to and fro  
The flaming circle of our life. (15-16)*

Moreover, as the poet celebrates the tree of life in the first stanza, now he turns to warn his beloved not to eat from the Tree of life which may bring consciousness and mortality. "Gaze *no more in the bitter glass / The demons, with their subtle guile*" (Yeats, 1996). Thus, Yeats invokes his beloved and the audience not to look too much to the mirror because the one who holds it is the demon himself. However, this involvement with the outer self makes the soul dark which then prevents it from seeing the Truth as it is mentioned in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 13:12: "*For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face .*"

Finally, Yeats encourages people to be involved with spirituality in order not to lose the link between " the falcon and the falconer" as he mentions earlier in the " Second coming". Meanwhile, all the symbols that Yeats uses in the second stanza indicate to the mortality and death such as "night, snow, broken boughs, blackened leaves, barrenness, ravens". Ultimately, Yeast's message in this poem is to shift from the outer side to the inner

side because the first one will vanish sooner or later but the second one will not ever die if a person develops throughout his life. The inner self is responsible for creativity thus it gives immortality just like the poetry of Yeats who has been dead many years ago but he is still alive with his spirit.

The chapter has explored the influences that lead Yeats to be involved in mysticism. The most important elements that provide Yeats with mystical vision are the Theosophical society and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn as well. In addition to other reasons such as Yeats' father's skepticism, the influences of romantic writers like Blake, Shelley, and the corruption of the society because of the domination of science.

The selected poems that have been studied explore the interest of Yeats in the spiritual world. He mocks his body as it stands like a prison to his soul. These poems have revealed the ambition of Yeats to overcome the animal desires as it is presented in "Sailing to Byzantium" and "The Shadowy Waters". It also indicates the obsession of Yeats towards the empirical society due to their neglect of their soul's purification as it is done in "Second Coming" and "The Lake of Innisfree". The concept of pantheism and creation is also depicted in "The Indian upon God". Furthermore, the imagination and memory power is revealed in "The Tower" in which Yeats combines philosophy and art by using his mystical vision. Lastly, "The Wheel", "The Ross upon the Rood" and "The Two Trees" depict that immortality lies in shifting from sensuality to spirituality.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows mysticism in Christianity and Islam by selecting two poets from both religions. The study traces the emergence of mysticism and how the two religions are being influenced. Platonic and New-Platonic thoughts greatly influence the mindset framework of the mystics and the Sufis. Genuinely, the main goal of mysticism is to purify the carnal soul from all worldly diseases. This purification depends on intuition and inner knowledge. For Plato and Plotinus, this world is the shadow of the real one which is beyond imagination. However, the scriptures of the Holy Bible and Quran show that this world is heaven. The scriptures insist that only sincere people can get into this indescribable paradise .

The Christian mysticism appears firstly in the days of Jesus then it develops from then on. Similarly, Sufism also begins as a spark in the days of Prophet Mohammed with those who are called ( Ashab Alsafa) or the friends of purity. The mystics and Sufis are always called Gnostics because they interest more in the world of meaning more than the world of form. Jesus is the best example of this movement; he has been accused of heresy and blasphemy by the Jewish. The reason is that he has shown them the religion of meaning and love. The same with Prophet Mohammed who is being accused of magic and madness for his spiritual missionary .

Consequently, the followers of these two religions also face many troubles once they sink into spirituality. One example of Christianity is Blake who is accused of madness and insanity because of his utterings and the spiritual pictures that he craves. For Islam, Al-Hallaj is a good example; he also gets misunderstood because of the statements that he reveals. He gets executed by the tyrannical power in front of people, however, even though, he forgives them because he believes that God has revealed to him matters that they cannot even imagine. Briefly, these Gnostics are always misunderstood; the reason is, people interpret their utterings intellectually. Such experience cannot be absorbed by the mind that it needs a purified heart which endures several interpretations.

The mystics and Sufis speak one language which is full of spirituality and love. The selected poets Rumi and Yeats carry the same messages that they describe their spiritual journey through their poems. Both poets consider materiality as the cruelest enemy in their

path. Thus, they concentrate firstly to be detached from the world of materiality and make a journey to the world of spirituality. This theme is being portrayed in Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium" and Rumi's "The Escape of the Merchant's Parrot". In these two poems, the poets take a step to leave the world of sensuality and illusion to the world of spirituality and reality. These two poems show the process of transformation and being born again when a gnostic decides to travel to God .

However, this journey takes too long if a mystic or a Sufi decides to get it alone. Therefore, a master is necessary to make this path much shorter. The master on the spiritual journey works as a monitor or a supervisor who correct his disciple. This theme has been discussed also in Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium" and Rumi's "The Words of the Saints". However, the poets propose in these two poems to be humble when a mystic or a Sufi asks the saints for their help .

Further, to make this journey a successful one, the poets propose to tame the body and raise the sense of spirituality. This process can be undergone in experiencing meditation that there are two kinds of meditations as the poets write. They consist of physical meditation and the one that is done in isolation. For the physical one is mentioned in Yeats's "Among the school Children" and Rumi's "Dancing in the Breeze". For the two poets, whirling dancing is the best way of physical meditation that they can reveal the things which cannot be described in words. Noteworthy, the mystic and Sufis consider words a superficial tool that cannot reveal the feelings in the heart completely, therefore, for them, silence is an ocean whereas words are considered a river. Moreover, the next meditation is done in wilderness and isolated places where a mystic or a Sufi can meditate the creation and the manifestations of God's power. This theme is precisely described in Yeats's "The Lake of Innisfree" and Rumi's "Moses and the Shepherd."

Furthermore, death for the two poets is considered a new beginning for eternal life. They depict life as a lie and illusion that one day will vanish and end. Therefore, they always long to live eternally where they can unite with the Ultimate beloved. This theme is presented almost in most of the poems but the most important ones that have shown this theme explicitly are Rumi's "When I Die" and " The Freedom of A Place" as well as in Yeats's "The Shadowy Waters ."



The concept of creation is also being discussed throughout the selected poems. Both poets believe that this world is the manifestation of God that everything is considered a microcosm of His existence. This concept has been discussed in Rumi's poem "Become Who You Are" and also in Yeats's "Upon the Indian God". It worthies notice that two poets have mentioned India in their poetry that they consider it as the central spiritual place for its powerful nature.

Rumi and Yeats also discuss the selfishness of the materialistic people on one hand and the selflessness of the spiritual people on another hand. They both believe that whenever a person attaches to sensual matters, his heart will turn to a black stone in one's chest because it has no light within. Therefore, they consider love as the only solution to the misery of this world. Further, it has been noticed in the biography of the two poets that they adopt the language of peace and love in their poetry. They even attack those who distribute evilness and destruction among people.

Symbols are regarded as one of the main figures in the poetry of Rumi and Yeats that they both are considered symbolists poets. Both poets use several symbols to carry their intentions. However, the most explicit symbols that they usually use are the mirror and the bird. The mirror stands for the heart as it reflects the essence of a person. This element is being emphasized also in the Bible and Quran scriptures. Consequently, the poets always advise not the look at the material mirror because it deceives and gives just the outward shape. They propose to look at the mirror of the heart which its reflection is the real one .

Lastly, the ultimate aim of the two poets after doing all the steps above is to gain divine knowledge. However, the two poets always pray to God not to reveal His knowledge at once because they would be like Blake and Al-Hallaj who have been misunderstood because of the knowledge that they gain. Therefore, they pray to gain just a little bit of this great knowledge that it would be too much for them.

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