



The Eco-Spiritual Perspective Of Jalaluddin Rumi And Khalil Gibran

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Abstract: This paper attempts to explore the Eco spiritual dimensions present in the works of Jalaluddin Rumi and Kahlil Gibran, two mystic poets whose writings transcend temporal and spatial boundaries, offering profound insights into humanity's spiritual relationship with the natural world. Their poetic expressions underscore the interwoven relationship among the self, the divine, and the natural environment, illustrating how nature serves both as a spiritual guide and a reflection of divine presence. Rumi and Kahlil Gibran, often highlight the interconnectedness of all creation and the importance of embracing the spiritual essence of life rather than attempting to control or dominate natural world.

Eco spirituality, as an evolving field of study, scrutinizes the inherent connection between spirituality and the environment, recognizing nature as a sacred entity that promotes human consciousness and self-realization. Gibran and Rumi both explore significant aspects of ecological spirituality through their distinct poetic styles and ideologies. In an era marked by environmental predicament, the work of Rumi and Gibran offer a gentle yet vivacious reminder that caring for the earth is not separate from spiritual practice — it is, in fact, a form of prayer.

Key Words: Eco-spirituality, nature, sacred entity, ecological thought and divine thread.

Introduction

Eco-spirituality in literature refers to the deep and devoted connection between nature and the divine, where the natural world is seen not merely as a resource or backdrop, but as a living manifestation of the sacred itself. It echoes the understanding that creation and creator are not two separate entities, but expressions of the same divine essence — a vision rooted in the non-dual understanding of existence, where all life is interconnected and infused with spirit. This literary approach accentuates the inherent sanctity of the environment and through this lens, human responsibility towards nature becomes not just an ethical duty, but a spiritual calling.

Jalaluddin Rumi, a 13th-century Persian Sufi poet, takes this even further, dissolving the boundary between human, nature, and divine entirely. He sees the universe as living testament to divine love. Eco-spirituality in Rumi's poetry is deeply rooted, as a perspective that sees nature as a reflection of almighty and as guiding force in human spiritual evolution. In his *Masnavi*, elements of nature like trees, rivers, animals, and fire are not mere metaphors but spiritual entities that communicate profound truths about human existence and god's presence. This eco spirituality in his poetry is deeply non-dual — he does not see God as a being outside of creation, but as the life-force animating all beings.

Khalil Gibran's poetry, mainly *The Prophet* (1923), is engaged with ecological consciousness and spiritual insight. The mystical and metaphysical aspects in his poetry align his thoughts with the Sufi notions of love and mysticism. His writings reveal a reflective reverence for nature as a sacred teacher and mirror of the human spirit. In his essay "**On Nature**," Gibran writes:

And forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair.

This simple yet profound line captures the spirit of eco-spirituality — the earth is not just land beneath our feet but a conscious, joyful presence longing to connect with us. Gibran sees the natural world as infused with the divine, a living scripture through which the voice of the Creator speaks.

Rumi and Gibran both explore significant aspects of ecological spirituality through their distinct poetic styles and ideologies. Rumi's prose poetry emanates from his highest intellectual state as a Sufi saint, reflecting deep spiritual insights. In contrast, Kahlil Gibran, who also employs prose poetry, draws from a less tranquil background and a different historical context. Although both poets exhibit philosophical thinking and ideologies, Gibran's style is notably more accessible to the common reader, utilizing everyday language. His most notable work '*The Prophet*' is characterized by a conversational tone.

Nature and Spirituality

Rumi believes that all creation represents God and that everything originates from Him. According to Hasanzadeh and Raoof, humans are both spiritual and physical beings. Rumi emphasizes the spiritual aspect of humanity to illustrate that people should not seek to control their environment. Focusing on the spiritual side of creation fosters respect and knowledge towards nature and other forms of life. Love is desire and need. God is beyond all need, yet at the level of his attributes he said, "I desired (or "loved") to be known, so I created the world."

In '*the king and the sick maiden*,' Rumi revolves around showing how divine presence nurtures creation toward healing and understanding.

"For God is the healer of all pain,

Yet He made pain so you would turn to Him again."

The king's deep care for the maiden reflects god's love for creation. Through creating the world, God sets the stage for creatures to seek him and find healing his presence.

Rumi frequently expresses the spiritual unity of all creation, emphasizing that humanity's focus should be on inner, spiritual journey rather than attempt to dominate or control the external world.

Everyone who is left far from his source

Wishes back the time when he was united with it.

The reed is a companion to all who are parted,

Its melodies tear our veils asunder.

With '*the song of the reed*', the poet uses reed to symbolize the unity of creation with its divine origin, encouraging humans to see themselves as part of a larger, interconnected spiritual existence rather than as controller of material world. The fable '*bald parrot and the monk*' emphasizes the futility of worldly attachments and importance spirituality. The journey of parrot reflects humanity's struggle with worldly dominance and eventual realisation of spiritual truth.

The parrot said, 'My feathers were plucked,

So that I might not fly to the illusions of the world.

When your soul is freed from greed and lust,

The spirit of nature will reveal its trust.

It means, once the soul is freed from the grip of desires and fear, it becomes aligned with the natural order — the flow of Divine Will itself. Life's wisdom is revealed only to the one who no longer grasps or controls. This truth resonates across traditions. In **Islamic and Sufi thought**, it is beautifully captured in the concept of **Tawakkul** (Arabic word meaning complete reliance on God)— a state of complete reliance on God. This resonates the concept of **Ishwarapranidhana** (ईश्वरप्रणिधान), the surrender of the individual will to the Supreme in Hindu philosophy. In the **Bhagavad Gita**, Krishna teaches Arjuna the **path of Karma Yoga**, which is action performed without claiming the fruits of action. This surrender is **not weakness** — it's **trusting the infinite wisdom of the Divine**. The parrot's surrender in Rumi's story (playing dead, letting go of its feathers) is exactly like a Bhakta (devotee) **offering his/her ego and desires at the feet of the Divine**.

Kahlil Gibran, like Rumi, often speaks about the interconnectedness of all creation and the importance of embracing the spiritual essence of life rather than attempting to control or dominate in natural world. Gibran emphasises the respect for nature and spiritual unity, urging people to recognise the divine essence in all things. He portrays nature as sacred teacher, guiding humanity towards spiritual growth. From *On Love*;
 "For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you.
 Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning."

Gibran likens love to the forces of nature uncontrollable yet essential for spiritual growth. It suggests humanity should align with natural forces than dominating them. He frequently highlights that humanity is not separate from nature but part of it.

"You are but a breath in the boundless forest of the sky."

This reminds readers of their smallness and their connection to the vastness of the natural world, fostering humility and reverence. Gibran pronounces the necessity of giving way to the divine flow of life, which includes embracing the nature cycles of existence. Kahlil Gibran beautifully expresses this surrender to life's sacred flow in his work "**On Giving**", where he writes:

"You give but little when you give of your possessions.
 It is when you give of yourself that you truly give."

This giving — not of things, but of **the self** — is an act of dissolving boundaries, of recognizing that there is no separation between giver and receiver. In giving to others, one gives to the **whole**, and therefore to oneself. This understanding resonates deeply with the teachings of the **Upanishads**, it is stated that all existence is one, and giving to another is ultimately giving to oneself because the same divine essence pervades all. The **Isha Upanishad** declares:

īśā vāsyamidam sarvaṁ yatkiṇca jagatyāṁ jagat |
 tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā mā ṛdhaḥ kasyasviddhanam ||

All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion. By that renounced thou shouldst enjoy; lust not after any man's possession.

The first verse from the **Isha Upanishad** aligns with the ideas of Kahlil Gibran and the philosophy of Rumi. It emphasizes a non-controlling attitude toward nature and a rejection of greed for material possessions. Instead, it highlights that true giving and sacrifice stem from an inner realization of the divinity present in everything. This ancient wisdom — whether from Gibran, the Upanishads, or the parrot in Rumi's tale — speaks of **the same truth**:

To let go is not to lose, but to become part of the whole.

To surrender is not to fall, but to flow.

In giving of oneself, we remember that we are not separate at all — we are threads in the same great weaving. To become a hollow reed, a vessel, a bow — through which Divine Will flows unimpeded. In letting go of self-will, the soul does not vanish — it **finds its place** within the **cosmic harmony**, where creation itself **flourishes**.

In all these traditions — whether Sufi, Vedic, or poetic — the **truth is the same**:

Humanity in the Divine Garden

Rumi's philosophy celebrates the idea of divinity as a fundamental essence woven throughout the fabric of the universe, guided by the powerful force of love. He draws inspiration from nature uses it as a metaphor to convey his insightful knowledge. He portrays love as a profound and transformative explosion that ignites and burns within all creatures, deeming it essential for human evolution in pursuing God and the quest for oneness. Human beings are considered as crest jewel of universe, for Rumi, humans sit high in garden of creator.

"He is the soul of the universe,

And He nurses every being in His garden.

Like a kind gardener, He tends to all souls

And lifts them high with love."

This directly reflects humanity's position as a cherished and elevated in divine garden.

Kahlil Gibran also portrays humanity as part of divine garden, emphasising that people are co-creators with God, entrusted with care for the natural world and unfolding of divine beauty. In *The Prophet* he writes, "You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth."

This metaphor powerfully conveys humanity's divine role- not as isolated beings carving out their destinies, but as **vessels** through which the **Divine creation unfolds**. In this unfolding, each life, each act of giving, each release of control, reflects a **sacred purpose** far beyond personal ambition. Here, the self is not the archer — **God is the archer**, and we, his creation, are the **bows**, shaped by the divine hand. This vision resonates deeply with both **Tawakkul in Islamic thought** — where trust in Divine Will frees the soul from the burden of control— and **Ishwarapranidhana in Hindu philosophy**, where the self offers itself entirely to the Lord's unfolding play.

Rumi and Gibran emphasise that humans hold sacred place in the creator's garden. Rumi focuses on humanity's potential for transcendence and unity with divine, while Gibran underscores the interconnectedness of humans with nature and their role as nurturers within the divine plan. Both the prominent poets invite readers to embrace the spiritual essence and live harmoniously within the god's garden. For thousands of years mystics have written and spoken about the oneness of life, the connection between all species. Rumi views nature as passionate lover. For him, all this wind, water, stars, moon, sound and animals, are all manifestations of God. Saint Kabir das uses soil as a metaphor to reflect on equality and all beings, through these lines,

"Mati ek anek bhaant hai, mrinmay ghada kayi rang.

Murakh nahi samajhat hai, sab ek hai ang."

The soil is one, yet the pots are of many shapes and colors.

Fools do not understand that all are made of the same element.

"Mati kahe kumhar se, tu kya jor kare,

Ek din aisa ayega, sab ulat jayenge."

The clay says to the potter, 'What strength do you show?

One day will come when all will be overturned.

This couplet or doha highlights the temporary and earthly nature of the body and creation. As humans, we often fail to recognize that we are all made of the same elements, leading us to fight over trivial matters. Poets like Rumi, Gibran, and Kabir Das, who share similar theological ideas and mystical insights, encourage us to rise above the complexities of body and mind. They urge us to see the divine thread that connects the universe.

Spiritual Awakening Beyond Religious Labels

Rumi invites people to rise above the limitations they impose on themselves, urging them to look beyond specific religions.

"If you have not heard the voice of the Friend,

you are wandering like a beggar in the streets.

Look beyond the veil of these forms and appearances.

The truth is not found in any specific form.

This form, this name, this religion is a waystation.

But the essence is the same everywhere."

Rumi, here, stresses that the essence of the divine is not bound by the labels of any religious or the forms through which it is practiced. He urges to transcend the any human-made distinctions or religions.

In the section 'on religion' of *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran expresses several ideas of transcending religious boundaries and recognizing the unity all of spiritual paths:

"Your daily life is your temple and your religion.

Whenever you enter into it take with you your all.

Take the Plow and the loom and the mallet and the distaff,

and forget not that you are a seed of the divine.

You shall not kneel before another god nor seek the temple of the gods in the mountains.

For the kingdom of God is within you."

These lines express that the essence of religion is not limited to specific rituals or structures, but rather is present in everyday life. Gibran encourages individuals to find divinity within their hearts and actions, suggesting that true spirituality transcends religious institutions. Rumi's Sufism merges religious mysticism with natural symbolism, portraying nature as a divine manuscript that reveals existence's secrets. In the moth and the flame, Rumi compares the moth's relentless attraction to the flame symbolizes the soul's pursuit of

divine truth. This line reflects Gibran's and Rumi's rejection of formalized religious dogma in favor of a personal, mystical connection with God.

Human Responsibility

Gibran's works encourage readers to approach the natural world not with a sense of dominance, but with awe and humility, recognizing that humans are not separate from nature but part of its sacred web. Their verses do not merely describe nature, but sanctify it — celebrating the earth, the sky, the trees, and the rivers as living embodiments of the divine.

In their works, the natural world is not a backdrop, but a voice, a teacher, and a companion on the spiritual path. Gibran's reverence for the earth as both nurturer and mirror of the human spirit resonates with Rumi's vision of nature as a radiant reflection of divine love. Both poets emphasize the interdependence of all life forms — the way the rustling leaf, the flowing water, and the beating heart exist in a shared rhythm, a cosmic harmony.

Literature as a Call to Ecological Consciousness

Eco-spirituality in literature, thus, invites readers to awaken to the sacredness that surrounds them, reminding us that caring for the earth is ultimately an act of reverence for the divine — a practice of communion, stewardship, and love.

When we read Gibran and Rumi through the lens of eco-spirituality, their works become more than personal reflections on love and God — they become urgent calls to reawaken our reverence for the nature. Their words remind us that spirituality is not a path walked apart from nature, but within it. The tree, the river, the breeze — all become our companions, our teachers, our reflection.

Conclusion

The poetry of Khalil Gibran and Rumi serves as a link between spirituality and ecological consciousness. Their verses do not merely describe nature, but sanctify it — celebrating the earth, the sky, the trees, and the rivers as living embodiments of the divine. In the modern context, where ecological crises threaten the balance of life, the voices of Gibran and Rumi offer us a timeless guide: Their words accentuate the oneness of all life forms and remind us that spirituality is not a path walked apart from nature, but within it.

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