

# HERBERT IS A POET OF INNER WEATHER AND A TRUE CALLER OF SUPREMACY: AN INDISPENSIBLE STUDY OF UNDERSTANDING HIS CENTRAL THOUGHTS.

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to conceptualize the exact ideas and deep introspection of George Herbert's writing during the entire span of his life. To give a subtle touch of his inherent philosophy and inner aspects during his fabricating poems in *The Temple* will be the sole purpose of this paper. Herbert, though he didn't belong to the first class group of the poets of his genre, magnificently exposed his talent by adopting different index of writing, and this eventually led him to be ranked in the first place. He knew only one thing by heart, and that is to serve the God, to praise the God, but his was the selfless, selfishness too. His each and every poem deals with the effectiveness of God, and how he could manage his God by calling Him again and again, and what would be happened if he met God. The focal point of this paper is to derive the inner psychologies and divine milieu of Herbert's thinking and writing onto his poetry, and to verify the relevance of his mental creed to that of his age.

Key Notes: Psychological introspection of mind, ways of writings, intensity of the reciprocation of the soul, subtle touch with devotion, healthy atmosphere.

## Introduction:

To deal with Herbert and his poetry, one must keep in mind that he was an Anglican priest of highly devout thoughts. His entire life was of his searching, reciprocating, praising and mingling himself to God not because of his own soul's satisfaction but because of his world's entire resurrection before the Judgment Day. Herbert led a very simple life, but did never forget to remembering his God for a single day. In this aspect R. Sundaram has rightly made a comment that 'a true priest need not be a scholarly competitive, but a man who goes about doing good, like his Master. In church the priest's care is to glorify the God by a form of worship that is perfectly intelligible to all those who are taking part in it' (12). For Herbert the writing of poetry or the act or 'ceremony of writing a poem', links itself in the eternal scheme of things with the occasion on the Cross (Asals 18). Herbert's act of writing was the prototype of repentance that would be made operative by the Cross. It is evident that Herbert's self consciousness was linked up with the power and strength of his pen, which at that time presumed to be a Renaissance trope found specifically on the continent, narrating an idea not incompatible to Herbert that 'writing is discovery and victory' (20). The very tradition in which Herbert was writing is paradoxical, and the paradox that is to be found not in the profane but in Biblical and religious

tradition. Herbert believed in the sense of vitality, the vitality of ceremony which was stronger than that of Donne, but he kept fast to what he himself called the 'via media of Anglicanism' (21).

Herbert knew it very well that his writing indicates the act of predication. He believed this fact strongly that to write is to depend on God's consent, but he never forgot the understanding of his sacramental gauge, the strong and fundamental hazard of his writing to praise God that could save and protect himself from being dejected and gloomy. Herbert's writing always reminds people of their sins, at a time also gives them a remedy to save their damnation. The languages used by Herbert no doubt, at a time, remind both of the sins of Adam and of the resurrection of Christ. The main aim of his writing is to save the souls from the bondage of the cycle of sin that disrupts and damages the process of creation. Herbert's poetry is his 'modus operandi of anatomizing the letter, of carving, serving, and pressing it for significance. He spells. Crumbles, and crushes the letter' (Asals 27). As a true Anglican Priest he deeply acquainted with the basic principles of his society, getting exhausted and distorted by the its constant negligence. To be precise, Herbert was less as a poet but much as a monk who knew well to defend the sin. To unfold the truth was his primary concern- truth of the presence of God and His duties spell upon the whole mankind. The resolution made by Herbert through *The Temple* was universally acknowledged to demonstrate how to be a resolute devotee to have the final grace and peace of Him. He was no doubt, in that sense, a practical man of devotion, who completely devoted himself for the salvation of entire universe- a dejected and gloomy universe. The essence and aroma of his soul is irradiating through his writings, the passion and tension is also lingering by the each and every spell of his word employed by him, that's why he very succinctly and carefully chosen the languages to reciprocate the tendency of his earnest desire, which was proved to be selfless and inconsiderate.

The relevance of Herbert and his deep introspection of attaining God is of high importance and a matter of sincerest presentation of a person. Vendler about Herbert's poetry has rightly remarked that it is 'as valuable to those who share them all. She takes a different stand from that of Coleridge and Eliot "both of whom believed that Christian made the best readers of Herbert"' (Sundaram 23). Her argument is based on her concern which sees the workings of Herbert's mind and heart as the main subject of the poem rather than the religious beliefs expressed through them. Herbert's strength and his mental power imbibe from his inherent believe on himself, and that's why he could wholeheartedly believed on Christ, could talk and share his impression and intension to Him without any bias. Herbert ostensibly believed that if there was no existence of God, there would be no concept of mankind, if there was no mercy of God, there would be no concept of Love, and if there was no faith of God, there would be no question of Creation of everything (Ebner 17). Herbert was a true practitioner of God's crown and mercy, and also of His vast and magnificent objectives. He, from the true sense of religious monk, is genius in his field of the promotion of God, and that eventually led him to the path of sure devotion and made him a truly follower of God in the era of seventeenth century.

#### Discussion:

To discuss Herbert's works with the light of the aforesaid topic, it must be important to remember that Herbert was a man of acute order of precision and symmetry of divine thoughts, practice and meditation. In *The Reprisal* Herbert understood that there would be no compromise in dealing with God, and His mercy and supremacy, and made us acknowledged the fact that if we were die for our sins without quoting God by enchanting, we would not be free from the feeling of insult. God is thereby requested sincerely to be merciful and resourceful to the poet himself so that he might be free from his eternal dejection of being a man of sordid world:

O make me innocent, that I

May give a disentangled state and free:

And yet thy wounds still my attempts defy,

For by thy death I die for thee. (line 5-8)

He was ready to die for his God to reciprocate Him and His eternal love for not only of his own salvation but also of his entire mankind who unlike him, dejected and proceeded towards damnation. Unless you, to the apparent conscience of Herbert's belief, be a true devotee, you would not be graced and have mercy of God, unless you confessed his sins to Him, you would forget Him:

Couldst thou not grief's sad conquests me allow,

But in all vict'ries overthrow me? (line 11-12)

Herbert vehemently noted that no materialistic thing would be of no importance and helpful to defend the sins of soul, rather he pointed out that only a true devotion and sincerest prayer at a regular basis would surely lead one to venture his ultimate goal and his major objective of his evangelical life. Here, Herbert in *The H. Communication* lamented mournfully for having been dejected from the grace and tender of his God since a very long time, and directly made a sweet complain:

To me dost now thy self convey;

For so thou should'st without me still have been,

Leaving within me sin. (line 4-6)

Herbert knew it very well that to please God and have His mercy, he would have to give his the best- the best adoration, the best devotion, and the best belief- which would lead him, by the end of the day, surely to the reign of Him, the ultimate destination of every human beings. And in this regard, Herbert requested Him to make a path, a controllable circumstance and smooth journey for himself to attain high price of devotion, with which he would be eligible to defend the strength and conspiracy of his sins:

But by thy way of nourishment and strength

Thou creep'st into my breast,

Making thy way my rest,

And thy small quantities my length,

Which spread their forces into every part,

Meeting sin's force and art. (line 7-12)

Herbert, as Benjamin Todd Ebner argued, “sees evidence of God’s grace everywhere, and at the same time seems overwhelmed at the mercy he has received from God” (17). He called his flesh ‘rebel’ because it was totally guided by his sins, controlling him to link up the connection with Him, and departing his body (flesh) from having the creed of his soul yearned to be mingled with God since a very long time. In fact, the deep and stark confidence in God is strongly pervaded in Herbert’s poetry, which has been found in this poetry too (17):

But as th’outworks, they may control

My rebel flesh, and carrying thy Name

Affright both sin and shame. (line 16-18)

Herbert’s deep and mournful yearn intended that without His kind and sympathetic help, his soul wouldn’t be free to demonstrate how magnificently he wished to build up the temple of his God there, and also madly requested Him to give the ‘key’ of his temple immediately by irradiating His grace and mercy to set up Him permanently:

Only thy grace, which with these elements comes,

Knoweth the ready way,

And hath the privy key,

Op’ning the soul’s most subtle rooms; (line 19-22)

As Diana Benet has rightly justified the fact that “*The Temple*” itself reflects Herbert’s progress toward full religious employment and his related search for a sincere art of praise” (Allen 22). The symmetry and precession of Herbert’s art of praying God universally acknowledges the fact of sincerest devotion of the true recesses of human soul, and this poem sincerely demonstrates this fact without any hesitation.

In *Church Lock-and-Key*, Herbert requested God to return his intellectual and processed soul, and in turn to take his bulky materialistic body. The idea of giving and taking policy undermines the close and inherent bonding of Herbert with his God, and additionally reciprocates the message of unification of self to the God in order to none but simply have His grace and mercy during and after the end of his life:

Give me my captive soul, or take

My body also thither.

Another life like this will make

Them both to be together. (line 1-4)

The use of the letters by Herbert throughout *The Temple* is noteworthy and superb, summing up the idea that, as Asals incorporated, “letters’ in *The Temple* are both the letters of laws (engraved in stone paper) and the living letters of the spirit. Here the letter bridges the gulf between the text and the living God” (Chap. 1 25). The only strength of powerful prayer can lead a soul of a man to attain the reign of God, as Herbert believed so, to

substantiate the unlock of the heart. Even he also requested God to look forward this matter and help him to get rid of this emancipation of sins, which captivated the soul since its understanding of this projected and diluted world. Herbert narrated, as Sundaram noticed, 'at the divine principles of harmony, order, balance, economy, regularity and a clock-work pattern of conformity to nature' just to be a perfect practitioner of the devotional thoughts, and a true receiver of messages of God to deliver to his fellow people:

Thou hast restored us to this ease  
 By this thy heav'nly blood,  
 Which I can go to, when I please,  
 And leave th'earth to their food. (line 13-16)

Herbert, during his entire life, was a man of truest sincerity with practical thoughts that were revolving to his poetry. His sense of devotion and prayer as well as his through interaction simultaneously reciprocates his deep gratitude to the Christ and Christianity. The love of God, or to love to God seemed to him the truest and purest love and rather 'immortal love' to him that would not be faded and diminished, but he mourned for the utter negligence of the human beings for their grasping and claspings of love of artificial things due to their ignorance gyrated by their sins. God and His grace, it seemed to the poet, were a matter of joke for them, and they were ready to forget rather humiliated Him to overcome their own failures and misfortunes:

Immortal Love, author of this great frame,  
 Sprung from that beauty which can never fade;  
 How hath man parceled out thy glorious name,  
 And thrown it on that dust which thou hast made. (line 1-4)

William G. Witt, in his article, said that, "the spirituality of George Herbert, the seventeenth century poet and the priest, has been extolled as combining many of the factors that have become especially associated with classical Anglicanism: the pursuit of the *via media* (which is supposed to be both Catholic and Evangelical); a this-worldly theology that celebrates creation viewed in continuity with redemption; a corresponding focus on the incarnation of Christ as the prime example of the positive value of creation; an approached articulated not so much by speculative theologians as experienced in Word and Sacrament", which is very relevant for assessing Herbert's delectable energies of creating such a strong phenomenon (George Herbert's Approach to God). People of this earth, to Herbert's view, is becoming insatiable and prodigious to magnify and signify God's importance in their lives, transforming their values in deformed ways, and thereby reciprocating laws of God mercilessly and intemperately:

Bear all the sway, possessing heart and brain,  
 (Thy workmanship) and give thee share in neither. (line 7-8)

Utter irresponsibility and constant necromancies of the most intellect origin/species of God seemed to Herbert a slow indication of decaying and defective world, where every step is guided and manufactured by the magic of

veil and illusion that intemperately affects the actuality of their origins and believes, especially onto their God. ‘That man is the jewel in the crown of God’s creation’, said Sundaram, is forgotten by man himself, according to the faith of religion of Herbert. They even do not know how to pray to the God, and to start a link with God. with their wit, fancy and beauty they wish to sum up a close connection to their God, but unable to do so, as Herbert said, due to their lack of devotion and divine thoughts that must necessarily be required to ascertain and attain deep understanding with God, and naturally grief, as Joan Bennett argued, tortures them as a carpenter tortures wood (Sundaram, 220):

Wit fancies beauty, beauty raiseth wit:

This world is theirs; they two play out the game,

Thou standing by: and though thy glorious name (line 9-11)

Herbert’s “architectonic skill”, as Sundaram rightly justified in this regard, “is evidenced by the harmonious blend of thought and imagery. He seems to be a master of concise, contained, comprehensive expression”, where he proved confidently that without Him and His grace nothing would be exist, and would be subject to decay by the chain of time. If we protect our souls by His name, these will be exist too after the end of judgment day, and be inside the guards of heavenly pleasure:

Who sings thy praise? only a scarf or glove

Doth warm our hands, and make them write of love. (line 13-14)

Ottenhoff in this regard, points out that “Herbert the craftsman exploits the conventions of the sonnet in diverse ways” (Sundaram 226). Herbert desired to be a sales-representative of God for whom he would sell and distribute the messages of God to cure the dejected and poor souls of the people to whom he belonged. He addressed His love and tender as the ‘immortal heat’ that, according to the poet , has the power to captivate the souls of human beings, to fume their hearts with intense passion of desire of God’s grace and kind affection. He more swiftly confines the fact that the impetus of His intense love is too turbulent to be missed by any dejected poor souls:

Immortal Heat, O let thy greater flame

Attract the lesser to it: let those fires,

Which shall consume the world, first make it tame,

And kindle in our hearts such true desires, (line 1-4)

Mankind so long as guided by power and greed and pride too, they would not touch the essence and feel His sense inherently into their minds. And for that reason, Herbert mournfully and tenderly narrated the scheme of his soul’s aim which was guided by his strong and practical prayer of devotion. A devotional aroma of soul can lead a man to go beyond his limit, even enable him more powerful and stronger than that of his past condition of dejected soul. Herbert was no doubt a learned preacher. John Drury said about Herbert that ‘divinity saturated and enclosed his world’ from inside to outside of his bulky and subtle world (422):

All knees shall bow to thee, all wits shall rise,

And praise him who did make and mend our eyes. (line 13-14)

He was bored and obsessed too to mankind's stark and inherent obsession with materialistic and lustful things, and mournfully regretted for their abjection of Creator who gave them love and life and light too. Herbert notified that those who were dejected and deceived by excessive lust for materialistic things would surely be received and consoled by His grace and abundant mercy, because they even did not know rather experience how their God is, and how mercifully He consoles the wretched and poor souls if they would pray:

Thou shalt recover all thy goods in kind,

Who went disseized by usurping lust; (line 11-12)

Herbert was very careful of using words to attain and summon his God, to link up a bridge to Him, and that's why he is a true devout caller to arrange the atmosphere of evangelical milieu. Herbert's strong sense of religiosity and broadness led him apart from the notable practitioners of the same spirit of his genre, and thus made him a truly devotional figure of piety and caller of God. Herbert knew it very well, in terms of the better understanding of his age, that without the grace of God it would not be possible to mould the kinesis of religious thoughts of that age, which was really in turmoil. God was needed, His mercy was required, as Herbert experienced by his intense prayer and subtle devotion, and especially His active intervention in accessing and manipulating the mankind to rectify and purify their concept of religion and religiosity were of essentially important for the seventeenth century England. Herbert moderates the inner weather of the relationship of the God and himself in his poem *The H. Scriptures I*, where he graciously demonstrates the effects of that weather five times to sum up the fact of his deep faith in the context of holy Light of devotion. Herbert says that God has the power to revive the dead soul, to enable a morbid person to be healthy and worthy of praising of Him. He also demonstrates that it is the power with which the heaven 'lies flat' spontaneously, where every animate and inanimate object pays homage and allegiance to:

Thou art all health, health thriving till it make

A full of eternity, thou art a mass

Working against the states of death and hell.

Thou art joy's handsel: heav;n lies flat in thee,

Subject to ev'ry mounter's bended knee.

(line 5-6; 12-14)

The moment Herbert looks over the letters of the Holy Scriptures he reminds the God and his overall possession pervaded throughout the universe, reminding His presence and guardianship. He retrospective addresses this written component as 'infinite sweetness', vivifying its deep impact on the poor and dejected souls, and 'mollify all pain' (line 4) of the entire mankind. Helen Vendler, in this regard has made a succinct impact that 'the poetry of George Herbert is something else again a brilliant reading of the poetry, alert to form and feeling,

but much less interested in matters of history' (Drury 158). But it also redefines the fact that 'the presence of God', as Kenneth Mason argued, 'is an indefectible determinant of our lives' (104).

Conclusion:

Herbert's primary aim of entire life was to surrender and to testify the addiction of his soul to God, who seemed the Father to him who lost his biological father at the age of three and half years. Perhaps, his absence of father, since the very initial stage of his life, led him to be closer of Him, and that is proved by the use of languages of his poetry. Language chosen by Herbert is unquestionable and worthy of justifying his divine parameter, which he used to formulate and fabricate the divine milieu of the hearts of entire mankind. His languages are the sign of macrocosm of the outer part as well as the inner part of his delectable journey, especially of his entire life that is proved to be the goal of our life of objected world.

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