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The Spells Of Consciousness In Creative Literature

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Vedanta deals with the nature and relationship between the manifest world, the individual Self and the Ultimate Reality, encompassing the two. The fundamental Reality, in this view; is Brahman Atman. *Atman* is the Universal or Supreme Consciousness.

Though Brahman is One Supreme Principle underlying all reality, in human condition it appears differential as subjects and objects located in time and space. This is so because in existential situation the Atman, the Supreme Being, resides as individual consciousness in the abode of *jeeva*. The *jeeva* is the embodied self; it is consciousness limited by mind, intellect, senses and body; i.e. consciousness is covered by the effects of *Maya*.

Unfortunately, all beings thus, are encased in this darkness of ignorance, and the Rishis of the long past could perceive the limitations laid down by the curtain of the material world and sought to discover and could discover, "the nerve centre in the brain which soon it became kinetic, revealed to them the Ultimate Reality. And then, they drew a line of demarcation. They called that body of knowledge which is achieved through the senses as *aparavidya* and that obtained through the higher senses as *paravidya*. Just as through the physical eyes we can see the sun which is millions of miles away so also by developing the inner eye, in which is located the spiritual essence can we obtain direct communion with the Supreme Being-the reservoir of spirituality, which is the aim of everybody's life.

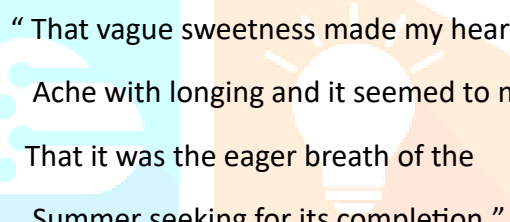
This has been the root and crux of the true Indian tradition, both in Literature and life, i.e. to develop a complete man whose senses on the physical plane, wisdom on the mental plane and the spiritual faculties all work in unison to awaken (spiritual) powers. The point of consideration is how Literature be of any assistance in awakening these powers and lead human wisdom from *aparavidya* to *paravidya* and as such to the state of higher consciousness.

Literature is a creative art. So much so during the 19th Century in New England and in England there rose a group of writers, like R.W. Emerson, Walt Whitman, Edgar Allen Poe (in New England), William Wordsworth, P.B. Shelley (in England) who added a new hue to poetry. By their Symbolist attitude they transformed totally people's attitude towards life and reality. "The world" says Emerson, "is a temple whose walls are covered with emblem, pictures and commandments of the Deity in this, that there is no fact that does not carry the whole sense of nature." A poet by his vision interprets these mysteries masquerading Nature.

Poetry, thus as it was with these New England Symbolist, as it was with their counterparts in France, a creative medium where the mysteries and truths lurking within the phenomenal world, work upon, to come out as revelations and once the poet sets them out in his poem, the poem itself becomes a creative force. Lost in some such moments of becoming R.W. Emerson bursting with joy cried, “ standing on the bare ground , my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space. All means egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and parcel of God. “

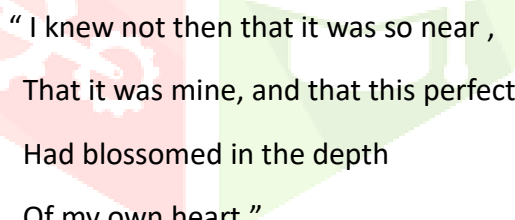
The process ultimately for a reader, as it is for a writer, becomes a process of becoming i.e. when a reader reads a poem , all the elements-the rhythm, rhyme, images, thoughts, ideas and emotions work together upon his mind, the reader forgets his own self and is drawn to a different plane. This different plane is the moment of shifting of the consciousness from the physical to the higher level. This process of transformation undergoes different stages i.e. first there is *Perception*, from perception the experiencing being reaches to the stage of *Cognition* of some truth different from the perceived one till finally there is *Realisation* of the all-pervading Supreme Consciousness.

See this piece of poetic prose composed by the famous poet Rabindranath Tagore from Gitanjali, where he is sitting , there are lotus and beauties of Nature but the poet says, “ the flower remained unheeded.” But as the curtain started getting lifted the spells of higher Consciousness startle him. He cognizes the underlying truth and he avows:



“ That vague sweetness made my heart
Ache with longing and it seemed to me
That it was the eager breath of the
Summer seeking for its completion.”

Finally, he reaches the stage of realization. The bliss and ecstasy of the Supreme Consciousness are his own and he writes,



“ I knew not then that it was so near ,
That it was mine, and that this perfect sweetness
Had blossomed in the depth
Of my own heart.”

A theatre here, in the same way activates human consciousness through its embodiment of thought in performance. The physical theatre promotes non-physical thoughts by connecting the two realms in a unique way.

Aristotle had talked of *Katharsis* which is taken in three senses, ‘*purgation*’ , ‘*clarification*’ and ‘*purification*’. Aristotle’s theory was in connection with a tragedy where, he says that, pity and fear artificially stirred, result in emotional relief. Psychologically, when a spectator watches a play and gets totally absorbed, he forgets the line of demarcation between himself and the protagonist. He identifies so fully and deeply that all that the protagonist on stage feels and suffers becomes his own experience.

We can take the example of Girish Karnad’s play *Hayavadana* where Hayavadan is a half horse and half man, desperately wanting to be a complete being. He visits all abodes of Spirituality i. e. Banaras, Rameshwar, Gokarn, Haridwar, Gaya, Kedarnath...but to no avail. Ultimately he comes in contact with a child – the symbol of purity. The child asks him to laugh and suddenly he finds that he is neighing like a horse. He jumps and keeps neighing because now he is a complete being. As the situation is, the child symbolizes purity and purity means devoid of the enticements of Maya.

It is true that Literature cannot bring to the reader that state of Bliss which he can achieve through meditation or Yoga but there can definitely be an experience of shifting of consciousness. We can conclude with these words of Kathleen Ann Goonam, “Literature, though, is more self-aware than mere story telling. It is deliberate placing of word against word until there is an edifice of thought...Literature is external , communal consciousness, loosed from dependence on one frail biological entity and persons limited lifespan. It is representation of time lived-real or fictional- and has the power to free both the writer and the reader. “

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