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Reason, A Barrier or A Bridge to Pure Life: A Comparative Study of the Poems of Rumi and Blake

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We appreciate our families, for helping us to compile the article.

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article History: Received 03 September 2021 Revised 29 November 2021 Accepted 26 January 2022 Key Words: Partial Reason Universal Reason Pure Life Rumi Blake DOI: 10.22034/IMJPL.2022.13188.1043 DOR: 20.1001.1.26767619.2022.9.29.4.5 	SUBJECT AND OBJECTIVES: Although Jalaluddin Rumi and William Blake hail from different literary and cultural contexts, their poems bear interesting affinities. However, these affinities have not been fully addressed by scholars. This paper will examine the role of reason in the poetry of Rumi and Blake with regard to human endeavor towards pure life which is union with God. In other words, the researchers attempt to find out how it is possible to gain an in-depth understanding of the theme of reason in the poetry of Rumi and Blake through analyzing and interpreting their poems. In addition, the study tries to see what the similarities and differences between the poetry of Rumi and Blake are in a comparative manner, especially with regard to the theme of reason. METHOD AND FINDING: The selected poems will be from Rumi's "Masnavi" and Blake's "Book of Urizen" and "Four Zoas". To compare both poets' views on reason, Totosty de Zepetnek's approach of inclusion will be employed. This comparative study is constructed on the doctrine of perennial philosophy led by Aldous Huxley. The discussion will concentrate on two main aspects namely, partial reason and its function as a barrier to the good and pure life (Hayāt Tayyiba) as a desirable human lifestyle and union with God. The second aspect concerns universal reason and its function as a bridge to union with the Absolute Being. CONCLUSION: Even though Rumi and Blake are originally from diverse geographical, political, social, and religious milieu, they have shared common ideas regarding the concepts of reason. Thus, a comparative study of the two literary giants will pave the way for those who are interested in finding the commonalities of Sufism and Romanticism particularly in the poetry of Rumi and Blake.

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Introduction

Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273), and William Blake (1757-1827), are poets and mystics from two different cultural backgrounds and different languages living in different periods. One is Persian Sufi and the other a Christian mystic and English Romantic poet. As mystical and spiritual poets, their poetic traditions are also different. However, if one carefully analyzes their poetry, certain similarities could be found in their views towards reason.

Through comparing the concepts of reason in the poetry of Rumi and Blake, the affinities in their views regarding pure life could be identified and analyzed. *(Dehghani Firouzabadi and Yapaar, 2014: 56)*

Statement of the Problem

The paper attempts to find out how it is possible to gain an in-depth understanding of the theme of reason in the

poetry of Rumi and Blake through analyzing and interpreting their poems. In addition, the study tries to see what the similarities and differences between the poetry of Rumi and Blake are in a comparative manner, especially with regard to the theme of reason and how it can pave the way to pure life. The study also attempts to ascertain and define clearly the spiritual positions and views of the two poets based on the theme of reason regardless of the differences in culture, language and their presence in different centuries and different places.

This study is not only a comparative study of poets who come from diverse religious and literary backgrounds, but who indeed share deeply similar mystical insight. The paper also endorses scrutiny of the

crucial relationship between mystical experience and the construction of hermeneutical forms of writing.

Theoretical Framework and Review of Related Literature

In this study, the theory of comparative literature according to Steven Totosy de Zepetnek (1998) will be employed in order to analyze and compare concepts of reason in the poetry of Rumi and Blake. This theory contains a practical model which is useful in comparing literary themes. The model relates to Totosy de Zepetnek's approach of inclusion. Totosy de Zepetnek contends that comparative literature involves "theoretical, methodological as well as ideological and political approach of inclusion". (*Totosy de Zepetnek, 1998: 17*)

To him First, Comparative Literature means the knowledge of more than one national

language and literature, and/or it means the knowledge and application of other disciplines in and for the study of literature and second, Comparative Literature has an ideology of inclusion of the Other, say, a marginal literature. (*Ibid: 13*)

Inclusion can be inferred as a theoretical activity to enable two literary themes or literary figures to have more affinities and be closer to each based on the parity existing between them. Thus, thematic inclusion must be structured to meet particular objectives while the two comparable sides keep their individual characteristics.

In addition to the theory of inclusion, this study is constructed on Aldous Huxley's Perennial philosophy. Accordingly, the foreground theory in the present article is Huxley's Perennial philosophy.

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) in his eminent book “The Perennial Philosophy”, captures an overview of the mystical and metaphysical world via presenting and amalgamating literary extracts from mystical traditions. The term was promoted in more recent times by Aldous Huxley. However, Huxley himself believed that the “phrase was coined by Leibniz. (Huxley, 1945: 1)

According to Roy, Huxley was deeply influenced by Vivekanda's Neo-Vedanta and Universalism. Correspondingly, Huxley maintains that the perennial philosophy is: (Roy, 2003)

The metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical to, divine

Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being; the thing is immemorial and universal. Rudiments of the perennial philosophy may be found among the traditional lore of primitive peoples in every region of the world, and in its fully developed forms it has a place in every one of the higher religions. (Huxley, 1945: 1)

Thus, as Huxley believes, even though the divine Reality is equally “immanent and transcendent” and could be felt inside the world as well as outside of it, this Reality has genuine associations for the way man comprehends the world, the way he apprehends himself, and the way he thinks and acts in his life. Based on

the Perennial Philosophy, there is infinity within, and it is closely connected with the “infinity beyond”.

Huxley believes that in order to attain the divine reality, human beings need to choose certain conditions to fulfill “making themselves loving, pure in heart and poor in spirit”. (*Huxley, 1945: 2*)

He claims that only a few people can attain this state. Those who have achieved these states of affairs, grasped the universal reality and understood the enlightened ones. These people are generally named as saint, prophet, or sage”. (*Ibid: 3*)

According to Huxley, to study perennial philosophy, we can start from the bottom which is the gate of practice and morality, or the top which is the consideration of metaphysical truth or in the

middle which is the focal point of mind and matter in human psychology. The lower gate belongs to “strictly practical teachers”. The upper gate is devoted to “born philosophers and theologians”. Finally, the middle gate belongs to the promoters of what has been called “spiritual religion, the devout contemplatives of India, the Sufis of Islam, the Catholic mystics of the later Middle Ages”. (*Ibid: 7*)

Huxley decides to choose the middle gate and states that:

It is through this central door, and just because it is central, that we shall make our entry into the subject matter of this book.... Starting from this mid-point of doctrine, it is easy for the mind to move in either direction. (Ibid: 7)

In the first chapter of the book entitled “That Art Thou”, Huxley proposes that orders of reality could be divided into two hierarchical levels. The higher order is complete; and the lower is in constant flux, impermanent and conditioned. It is the place where we live. Huxley refers to the higher order and the man who is in that state (union with the divine reality) as “That”. Thus it is possible to consider the lower order as “This”.

Therefore, according to Huxley’s idea, in the fundamental canons of all religions, something exists other than what man observes in this world and the mystic is trying to be united with “That”. In his Introduction to the Bhagavad-Gita (1951), Huxley shed light on this connection. He called this doctrine

“The Minimum Working Hypothesis”.

According to Huxley, the perennial philosophy consists of four fundamental doctrines as follows:

1. The phenomenal world of matter and of individualized consciousness- the world of things and animals and men and even gods- is the manifestation of a Divine Ground within which all partial realities have their being, and apart from which they would be non-existent.
2. Human beings are capable not merely of knowing about the Divine Ground by inference; they can also realize its existence by a direct intuition, superior to discursive reasoning. This immediate knowledge unites the

knower with that which is known.

3. Man possesses a double nature, a phenomenal ego and an eternal Self, which is the inner man, the spirit, the spark of divinity within the soul. It is possible for a man, if he so desires, to identify himself with the spirit and therefore with the Divine Ground, which is of the same or like nature with the spirit.
4. Man's life on earth has only one end and purpose: to identify himself with his eternal Self and so to come to unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground. (*Huxley, 1945: 13*)

Each of Huxley's four fundamental doctrines proposes a type of connection between the individual Soul and the divine Reality:

- Declares that nothing would exist at all apart from the divine Reality.
- Asserts that individual Souls has the potential to know the divine Reality and be united with it directly.
- Claims that man can identify himself with the eternal Self which paves the way to know the Divine Reality.
- believes that the final goal of man is to attain union with divine Reality.

Having discussed Huxley's ideas, it is clear that underlying Huxley's argument is man's separation from the "divine Ground" and his attempt to be united with it. Almost all religions agree on this issue that man lives in the state of separation and isolation through wrong perception and wrong action and his final goal is

union with the divine reality. Consequently, one is satisfied if he approaches the divine Reality. On the other hand, one is unhappy or frustrated if he fails to find the right path. Thus, it is concluded that knowing God and being united with Him provides everlasting happiness.

Directly or indirectly, many critics have discussed concepts of reason and how they are related to pure and desirable life style as well as separation and union in Rumi and Blake either in their books or articles. The following book and articles on the two literary giants are discussed briefly with a short commentary after each.

- *Grace (2011)*, has written an article titled “Beyond Reason: The Certitude of the Mystics from Al-Hallaj to David Hawkins”; In this article, the author

evaluates the ideas of some Christian and Sufi mystics from the view point of reason in the spiritual life. Many mystics are of the opinion that reason can be considered as the ladder of spiritual achievement. However, according to Grace, reason alone is not a suitable instrument to reach to the realm of the Divine. Love can play a more important role in reaching to the Divine. The author in this article discusses the differences between the two ways of reaching Reality or God- one through reason and the other through love.

- *Laskar (2012)* in her book “Maulana Rumi and Kabir: A Comparative Study” tries to highlight the core of two great Sufi

poets and mystics, Kabir and Rumi. The writer believes that Kabir's poetry could be considered as a reproduction of his philosophy towards life. The Kabir's mystical preaching elevated the oppressed people. The ideas strengthened them to be independent and fight against all political and social inequalities. Thus, they formed a new culture and universalism founded on oneness and unity of ultimate reality, and union of mankind regardless of their ethnic, racial, cultural, and linguistic differences. On the other hand, Rumi is one of the greatest mystical poets throughout the world. He employed his poetic talent to spread his spiritual experiences as well as

his theosophical ideas. When the Mongol gangs had caused chaos in Asia and societies were groping in the obscure world and striving painstakingly in search of realization and truth, Maulana Rumi foreshowed the source of Sufism. This study is related to the present thesis in a sense that it is a comparative study in mysticism comparing Rumi with Kabir regarding corporeal and spiritual lifestyle. However, the selected mystics are both from the east and consequently the reader can get nothing of the western mystics.

➤ *Dehghan et al (2013)*, have written an article entitled "Survey on the Nostalgia for Return to

Origin in Mystical Poetry (Sanaei, Attar and Mowlavi =Rumi)”; The authors believe that one of the styles of composition in literature is using the theme of nostalgia by the poet in order to symbolize his memories in regretful and painful way. The nostalgic ideas could be found in many mystical poems. However, return to origin is the dominant element of nostalgia that is considered to be the subject of the Persian mystical poetry. The mystics believe that human soul is trapped in this world and wishes to return to its origin. The writer believes that Sanaei, Attar and Rumi are the prominent figures of the mystical poetry. These literary giants have

paid due attention to nostalgic moods such as love, pure life, the past memories, and pain of separation of human from eternal beloved and original home in their poetry.

This article is related to the present study regarding the theme of pure life, separation and union. However, in this article the literary figures that have been discussed are from one language, and one country. Thus, this issue limits the scope of study and consequently it is impossible to have different view from different parts of the world on the mentioned themes.

Reason as a Barrier to Pure Life

According to Huxley’s “Minimum Working Hypothesis”, individual reason could be considered as a path of union with God. In this regard, Huxley believes that discursive reason or as

Rumi puts it partial reason is inadequate to attain divine union and one may do vicious acts according to one's own reason.

Thus, he states:

What we do depends in large measure upon what we think, and if what we do is evil, there is good empirical reason for supposing that our thought-patterns are inadequate to material, mental or spiritual reality.
(Huxley, 1945: 62)

In view of that, reason plays an important role in Persian and Romantic literature. More specifically, reason is a significant concept in the works of poets who are familiar with theology, philosophy, and logic. Sometimes poets and writer have noted reason in order to find a theme or express a concept and a literary image. In addition, in some cases, when the subject

of love is brought up, the poet looks at reason negatively. In this regard, Rumi states:

When you build a nest for a chicken

You cannot put a camel so large in it

That chicken is reason and that nest is your body

That camel is love which is high and proud

(Rumi, 1990, *Ghazal*, 2937: 1-2)

Rumi metaphorically points out that reason is so limited in time and space that one cannot understand metaphysical concepts such as love through it.

Accordingly, Blake also believes that reason might be limited to time and space and it is so narrow and spiritually blind that cannot enlighten the path to the union with God. Blake states "man has closed himself up till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern".
(Blake, *Vision*, E 555)

Similarly, Huxley asserts that:

If, in our pride and madness, we treat it (reason) as a proximate means to the divine End (as so many religious people have done and still do), or if, denying the existence of an eternal End, we regard it as at once the means to Progress and its ever-receding goal in time, cleverness becomes the enemy, a source of spiritual blindness, moral evil and social disaster. (Huxley, 1945: 163)

The Argumentative Nature of Reason

Reason by its very nature, is analytical. In other words, if an individual is about to find out the truth through reason, he or she has to split up the known entities which are going to be analyzed and

realize how they fit in. To state the matter differently, reason is a rational process in which one must enter step by step and gradually and determine the etiology of cause and effect.

According to Lankavatara Sutra, “Those who vainly reason without understanding the truth are lost in the jungle of the Vijnanas (the various forms of relative knowledge), running about here and there and trying to justify their view of ego-substance”. (*Ref: Ibid: 14*)

Thus, it is not possible for reason to understand the totality at once, rather it must go in a definite manner in a syllogistic logical step. In this regard Spurgeon remarks:

The mystic believes that as the intellect is given us to apprehend material things, so the spirit is given us to apprehend

spiritual things, and that to disregard the spirit in spiritual matters, and to trust to reason is as foolish as if a carpenter, about to begin a piece of work, were deliberately to reject his keenest and sharpest tool. (Spurgeon, 2011: 3-4)

As a result, reason by itself does not lead man to a point where the mystic receives knowledge of the eternal self. The stage where man becomes united with divinity is beyond the realm of reason. Thus, in the eyes of mystics, reason has been shelved as an inferior function of the mind as it is not able to find out the reality of the eternal self. It is of course possible to discover the characteristics of the self at the rational level.

In other words, reason might be able to help man to find

the right path to the higher order of reality when it can contribute man by informing him that he has reached a realm which is beyond the scope of reason. However, it is not possible to gain a direct knowledge of divinity through reason. This is possible only through mystical experience. In this regard, it is believed that reason, as Rumi puts it, could be divided into partial and universal. Partial reason will be a barrier to the union of man with the divine ground; however, universal reason will pave the way as a bridge to the union.

According to Safavi, "Rumi the great 13th Persian 'Arif/sage, has used around 34 terms on Reason/Intellect in his masterpiece Mathnawi." Similarly Blake also believes that reason is an obstacle to the divinity; however, he uses the term imagination

instead of universal reason as a bridge to the divine ground. (*Safavi, 2010*)

The Limitations of Partial Reason

The materialistic world is the mixture of truth and falsehood. This claim is proved by the barriers of understanding metaphysics, the descent of spirit from the unseen world to the materialistic world, and the exposure of God's will to the existence of negligent in the universe. In other words, when man came to the material world, there were veils between him and the unseen world. Thus, the veils prevented man from complete understanding of the truth in the unseen world.

In this regard, Lankavatara Sutra states "Those who vainly reason without understanding the truth are lost in the jungle of the Vijnanas (the

various forms of relative knowledge), running about here and there and trying to justify their view of ego-substance". (*Ref: Huxley, 1945: 14*)

It is believed that everything that cannot be understood is rejected by partial reason. Man must have convincing arguments for everything that he accepts or rejects and be silent when something is beyond his understanding. However, those who judge based on partial reason accept or reject everything easily. Thus, partial reason wants to solve all metaphysical and supernatural issues while it is limited to the time, place, quantity and quality.

In other words, partial reason deals with the instruments that were acquired from the materialistic world and limited sense. Consequently, partial reason is condemned since it tries to perceive metaphysical

concepts such as love by the physical instruments. (*Fouladi and Yousefi, 2005*)

In this regard Rumi states:

*In expounding it (love) the
intellect lay down helplessly
like an ass in the mire*

*It was love alone that uttered
the explanation of love and
love hood
(Rumi, 1990, I: 115)*

Or in another poem he states:
*When the lover (of God) is fed
from (within) himself with
pure wine
Then reason becomes lost, lost
oh comrade*

*Partial reason is a denier
of love
Though it may give out that it
is a confidant
(Ibid, I: 1981-1982)*

It is believed that “the foundation of life and creation is neither science nor reason,

but love, so a person has to go with love and passion to know the essence of creation.” (*Boostani, 2017*)

Partial reason is only familiar with worldly love and cannot transcend the worldly love to the heavenly one.

Comparatively, Blake also believes that, reason is the cause of separation of man from the divinity. He states that reason, firstly, has separated man from nature and then from his creator. Thus, he writes:

*And Urizen craving with hunger
Stung with the odours of Nature
Explor'd his dens around
He form'd a line & a plummet
To divide the Abyss beneath.
He form'd a dividing rule:
He formed scales to weigh;
He formed massy weights;
He formed a brazen quadrant;
He formed golden compasses
And began to explore the Abyss
(Blake, 20.32-20.41, E 80-81)*

Blake believes that reason and philosophy are like the chains that restrict man's mind and are against imagination that paves the way for pure life, salvation and union with God. He believes that philosophy is even unable to explain the simple natural phenomenon in this world. Therefore, he states:

*A Riddle or the Crickets Cry
Is to Doubt a fit Reply
The Emmets Inch & Eagles Mile
Make Lamé Philosophy to smile
(Blake, 103-106, E 492)*

Thus, Blake believes that observation of the nature and creatures are the direct way to reach to the truth and reality while learning and acquiring knowledge is the indirect way which sometimes even leads man to the deviated path.

By the same token, Rumi also criticizes philosophy and

philosophers and syllogisers and states:

*The leg of the syllogizers is of wood
A wooden leg is very infirm
(Rumi, 1990)*

Chittick believes that barriers of understanding metaphysics, the descent of spirit from the unseen world to the materialistic world, and the exposure of God's will to the existence of negligent in the universe indicate that the materialistic world is a mixture of truth and falsehood.

In other words, when man came to the material world, there were veils between him and the unseen world and the veils prevented man from complete understanding of the truth in the unseen world.
(Chittick, 1983: 34)

Rumi believes that the most important feature of these veils is man's limited reason,

as the limited reason cannot understand God and infinite universe.

Rumi believes that our parts of body like ear and eye cannot see that metaphysical truth. The light of partial reason cannot enlighten the path to divine ground. Thus, he states:

*The spiritual ear and eye are
other than this sense-perception*

*The ear of discursive reason
and the ear of opinion are
destitute of this (inspiration)
(Rumi, 1990, I: 1462)*

Relatively, Blake also believes that reason is a barrier between “vegetable man” and his immortal imagination”. Accordingly, Fischer asserts that “Disembodied rationalism is a major source of this loss. As the divine spark that is in fallen man is hidden. The Spectre is ‘a false Body: an Incrustation

over my Immortal/Spirit; a Selfhood.” Fischer claims that Blake has confirmed this issue in Jerusalem: (Fischer, 2017)

*I am your Rational Power . . . &
that Human Form You call
Divine, is but a Worm
seventy inches long
That creeps forth in a night
& is dried in the morning sun
(Blake, Jerusalem, pl. 29:
5–7, E 175)*

Likewise, Rumi believes that reason is like a prison for the wayfarers of the path to the divine ground and you cannot apprehend these metaphysical concepts through sense because those senses are even captive to the reason.

*Sense-perception is captive to
the intellect, O reader; know
also that the intellect is captive
to the spirit.
(Rumi, 1990, III: 1824)*

*Reason is the prison of
wayfarers and lover Break
the bars and the path is
completely revealed oh Son
(Rumi, 1990, Ghazal, 1082: 1)*

By the same token, Blake compares the reason to a crystal cabinet in which man is imprisoned. In this virtual world, man is separated from the natural world that he was once lived in it happily. Blake claims that, in childhood, man's mind is free and full of imagination. Thus, the child possesses the unlimited potentials and energy. However, man is separated from the world of imagination through reason as well as traditional and social rules while he is always looking for his paradise lost and his union with divinity. Thus, he writes:

*The Maiden caught me in
the Wild
Where I was dancing merrily
She put me into her Cabinet
And Lock'd me up with a
golden Key
(Blake, Crystal Cabinet: 1-4, E 488)*

The outstanding metaphor ("Lock'd me up") could be considered as a pun on John Locke, the philosopher who associated all newborn humans' minds as "empty cabinets". Blake believes that true knowledge is acquired in nature and creation. Books and philosophy are not helpful in acquiring knowledge rather it is intuition and "inward eye" that makes the truth visible for human beings.

Blake states that although some people are old and experienced, they do not have the divine vision and their understanding cannot help them to find the truths. Therefore, he states:

*For double the vision my Eyes
do see
And a double vision is always
with me
With my inward Eye 'tis an
old Man grey
With my outward a Thistle
across my way
(Blake, Letter to Thomas Butts: 27)*

Rumi also believes that philosophical discussion cannot pave the way for the union with God and only their discussion ends up to nothing. Thus he states:

*Similarly, there is a disputation,
(which will continue) till mankind
are raised from the dead, between
the Necessitarians and the partisans
of (absolute) Free-will.
(Rumi, 1990, V: 3214)*

*O (dear) soul, Love alone cuts
disputation short, for it (alone)
comes to the rescue when you
cry for help against arguments.
(Ibid, V: 3240)*

Therefore, according to Rumi philosophy and philological discussion are just a barrier to the path of God. In order to be united with God, one has to possess the Sufi's reason which is the universal reason. Thus, he writes:

“The qibla of the gnostic is the light of union (with God); the qibla of the philosopher's intellect is phantasy”.
(Ibid, IV: 1897)

The limitation which prevents human being from the transcendence should be destroyed. Love should be free so that the poet can reveal hidden potentials. Blake considers this idea, when he uses his personal symbol, Urizen, to condemn partial reason which is the denier and limiter of others and the enemy of imagination. As Rumi who blames philosophy as a barrier

to the divine ground, Blake also writes:

“Abstract Philosophy warring in enmity against Imagination”.
(Blake, Jerusalem, 5. 59, E 14)

Reason as A Bridge to Pure Life

According to Schimmel “behind all the individual manifestations of the partial intellect is hidden the universal reason. This is the secret power from which the partial reason can create immortal works and produce gardens which never fade”. *(Schimmel, 1993: 272)*

Man’s humanity depends on his thought and understanding. If we remove thought and understanding from human’s existence, nothing will remain but a handful bones and organic materials. Man was created in a way to understand the truth about the universe.

In other words, God has equipped man with special

epistemological tools which can help him to understand himself, God, and universe. These epistemological tools should be used accurately since man is responsible to them in the other world. To state the matter differently, man must justify how he has used his perceptive faculties. Eckhart states:

Up then, noble soul! Put on thy jumping shoes which are intellect and love, and overleap the worship of thy mental powers, overleap thine understanding and spring into the heart of God, into his hiddenness where thou art hidden from all creatures. (Ref: Huxley, 1945: 153)

Contrary to partial reason, universal reason could be considered as a bridge to union with God. In other words, it is considered as one of the

significant instruments of understanding. Rumi believes that universal reason is the “kernel” that is the center and partial reason is the “rind”.

*The view that is faulty arises
from the weakness of his
understanding*

*Universal reason is the kernel
and the partial reason is like
the rind
(Rumi, 1990, I: 3743)*

Rumi advises people to rely on universal reason not the partial reason. He states:

*Do not take the partial reason
as thy vizier: make the Universal
Intellect thy vizier, O king.
(Ibid, IV:1258)*

In the same spirit, Blake also contends that imagination- which could have the same meaning of Rumi’s universal reason- is the bridge to union. Fischer asserts that:

*Imagination creates the
bridge makes possible
the awareness of the
interrelationship between
the human and the divine.
(Fischer, 2017: 18)*

One should strengthen his imagination as it is a go-between to union. Nice thought and imagination will make man relaxed and unsound imagination makes him disturbed. Huxley states “The goods of the intellect, the emotions and the imagination are real goods”.
(Huxley, 1945: 126)

Nice imagination brings up patience and patience are one of the signs of faith. Imagination is a guest from the unseen world and will probably return to that world. Thus, sometimes the imagination and thought start with a turbulent storm and end in worthless undulations and fluctuations. However, it is also possible

that the greatest events start with weak mental fluctuations and gradually reveal their own greatness. Nevertheless, most people are unable to distinguish these two issues from each other. Imagination is an extraordinary issue which is created by the divine power and originated from the metaphysical sea and again unites with it.

Thus, to be in union with the divinity is only possible if one adheres to imagination and skips rationality. Blake believes that “Energy is the only life and from the Body and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy. Energy is Eternal Delight”. (*Blake, Marriage of Heaven and Hell, E 34*)

On the other hand, he contends that reason is ugly and “restrainer”. He states that “The Ugly man represents the

human reason. (*Blake, Descriptive Catalogue, 41, E543*)

However, “As Schiller put it in his Aesthetic Letters: In the eyes of a Reason which knows no limits, the Direction is at once the Destination, and the Way is completed from the moment it is trodden. (*Ref: Abrams, 1973: 216*) This reason that knows no limitation is the universal reason.

Universal Reason and Ideal Man

Universal reason is comparable with the notion of Ideal man in Islamic mysticism. It is believed that the Ideal man is final cause of creation. The Ideal man (who is represented as Adam in the Holy Quran) is even higher than the angels as according to the Holy Quran they prostrated.

And when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam,’ they prostrated, but not Iblis:

*he refused and acted
arrogantly, and he was
one of the faithless.
(Quran, 2: 34)*

Therefore, the universal reason is embodied in Ideal man or Adam. In this regard, Rumi also believes that prophets and saints could be ideal beings. He states:

*The saints are the
intellect of intellect, and
(all) intellects (from the
beginning) to the end are
(under their control) like
camels. (Rumi, 1990, I: 2498)*

Four Zoas

In the same way, Blake also believes that the origin of creation is the Universal Man. He calls that Universal man allegorically Albion. He believes in four distinguished faculties (Four Zoas), namely, Urthona (imagination), Urizen (reason),

Luvah (passion), and Tharmas (body/instinct).

*Four Mighty Ones are in every
Man; a Perfect Unity
Cannot Exist. but from the
Universal Brotherhood of Eden
The Universal Man. To Whom
be Glory Evermore Amen
(Blake, 1963, 1-3.4-1-3.6, E 301)*

Blake's Universal Man (Albion) that is the soul which is in union with God lives in Eden. However, due to the separation from God, his perfect soul is divided into four characters that fall into the world of *Generation* which is comparable to the earth. In their prelapsarian state, *Four Zoas* are free of any contradiction and they are pure and innocent. Through acquiring experiences in corporeal life, they put an end to their innocence and fall into the world of *Generation*. In this world of *Generation*, they are

separated from their origin, drowning in darkness and rationality.

Blake believes that the only way to be reunited with the divinity is through imagination. In other words, imagination, for Blake, is the only power that can pave the way for man to be in union with the divine world. Blake believes that reason and imagination are two opposite faculties. To state the matter differently, if imagination unites man with the Absolute Being, reason lays the door of darkness open to him and separates him from the divinity. In this regard, Blake claims that the role of the Artist and more specifically the role of the poet is as significant as the prophet.

Phenomena of the World as a Form of Universal Reason

As mentioned earlier, Rumi also believes that prophets and “saints are the intellect of

intellect”. He even goes further in saying everything in this world is a “form of universal reason” and this world with all its evil feature might appear like a “carpet of gold.”

Thus, he writes:

The whole world is the form of Universal Reason, which is the father of whosoever is a follower of the (Divine) Word.

When any one shows excessive ingratitude to Universal Reason, the form of the universe appears to him (as) a cur accordingly.

Make peace with this Father, abandon disobedience, that the water and clay (the world) may appear (to thee as) a carpet of gold.

(Rumi, 1990, IV: 3259-3261)

Rumi believes that ego (Nafs) is like a retrogressive beast. If man ignores the lust

and desires of ego (Nafs), universal reason will be strengthened. He contends that universal reason is like a camel driver and man is like a camel under his control. He also goes on to say that partial reason is a vulture. Thereupon, he states:

*O changer, make its (carnal)
lust, which is the tail, to be
entirely lust for the world hereafter.*

*When you bind its lust (and
debar it) from the loaf, that
lust puts forth its head from (is
transformed into) noble reason.
(Rumi, 1990, VI: 1122-1123)*

The vulture is the particular (discursive) reason, O poor (spirited) one: its wings are connected with the eating of carrion. (*Ibid*, VI: 4138)

*Your intellect (universal
reason) is like the
camel-driver, and you
are the camel: it drives*

*you in every direction
under its bitter control.
(Ibid, I: 2497-2497)*

Thus, this is the universal reason that unites man with God. Universal reason is a conceptual faculty which can enter the entities. To do so, universal reason frees itself from the world of senses and tries to understand the entities.

By the same token, Blake's familiar concepts of worldly problems by weak, fragile intellects are contradicted by the incorporating perception of this dominion both as a provisional stay against non-entity, and as an essential step in the direction of ultimate redemption. Therefore, what was just the limiting reason in "The Book of Urizen" adopts the characteristics of a magnificent creation, accomplished by human forms. Thus, regarding this limiting reason Blake states:

*Spread a Tent, with strong
curtains around them
Let cords & stakes bind in the Void
That Eternals may no more
behold them
They began to weave curtains
of darkness
They erected large pillars
round the Void
With golden hooks fastend in
the pillars
With infinite labour the Eternals
A woof wove, and called it Science
(Blake, *The Book of Urizen*,
19.2-19.9, E 78)*

However, these “Eagles” of intellect prove that imagination is still conceivable in the inmost spreads of Urizen's domain. Under these challenging levels, energy accedes to those of surrounding reason; and natural life stays unkindly imprisoned into a death cycle. These potentials are intensely reinforced by images of regeneration in the following lines:

*While far into the vast unknown,
the strong wing'd Eagles bend
Their venturous flight, in Human
forms distinct; thro darkness deep
They bear the woven
draperies; on golden hooks
they hang abroad
The universal curtains &
spread out from Sun to Sun
The vehicles of light, they
separate the furious particles
Into mild currents as the water
mingles with the wine
(Blake, 1963, 2-29.8-2-29.13,
E 319)*

The universal curtains in this poem signifies universal reason and furious particles symbolizes partial reason. The tone of the passage is dialectically positive. This description through the “vehicle of light” moves beyond the restricted world of “The Book of Urizen” to a new concept of reason. This renewed notion of universal reason is as

renovated as its characteristics. All the way through his separated existence, Urizen has recollected a seed of true light. Although Urizen is in his most degraded form, he could still regain the divine light. Thus, he declares:

*I lose my powers weekend
every revolution till a death
Shuts up my powers then a seed
in the vast womb of darkness
I dwell in dim oblivion
(Blake, 1963, 6-73.8-6-73.10,
E 350)*

In this situation, the visionary eye appears merely as an equivalent for creative union. Finally, with restrictive “mantles” detached, light is not limited any more to the vegetative “Eyelid”; rather it turns out to be a power exposing the complete form, as reason arranges to join with the other faculties of spiritual humanity.

The essential progress in Blake's representation of Urizen emanates in “The Four Zoas”, where the problematic reason is discovered within the framework of a fundamentally refined Christianity. In “The Book of Urizen”, no hint indicates that the demiurge could perform positive action either in his original union or separated state. The poem begins with the eternal faculties, by this time, falling into a state of separation and chaos. However, in “The Four Zoas”, these undesirable events are reflected against the background of infinite, eternal existence. Each passage of separated state is envisioned as art of an inevitable passage headed for regeneration.

In addition, the prelapsarian latent of reason for good is appreciated as well. Furthermore, light, and subsequently reason

itself, is understood as characteristics of divinity.

Thus, Urizen, even when he is at the summit of his influence and power, bewails the paradise lost that belongs to universal reason and spiritual wisdom. His fallen and separated nobles also make a comparison between the states of separation and union:

*They have surrounded me with
walls of iron & brass, O Lamb
Of God clothed in Luvahs
garments little knowest thou
Of death Eternal that we all go
to Eternal Death*

*To our Primeval Chaos in
fortuitous concourse of incoherent
Discordant principles of Love
& Hate I suffer affliction
Because I love. for I was love
but hatred awakes in me
And Urizen who was Faith &
Certainty is changd to Doubt
(Blake, 1963, 2-27.9-2-27.15,
E 318)*

This dual outlook on Urizen goes further than the earlier criticism of partial reason. Understanding true and false innovative desires within his dominion paves the way for ultimately joining up the rational faculty among the powers employed for redemption of humanity.

Conclusion

It is an axiom that there is an adjacent association between Sufism and Romanticism. Obviously, Romanticism in the form that appeared in nineteenth century in Europe has been premeditated in relation with mysticism. More specifically, some of the key doctrines of Romanticism including reason would not be completely valued without referring to mysticism.

The present study has attempted to scrutinize the ideas of the two poets, Jalaluddin Rumi and William Blake, with the aim of studying and comparing these mystics and exploring mutual threads of thought they had in their mind. Rumi and Blake were in different nations, grew in different traditions and cultures however, this research was conducted to compare the two poets with the intention of

investigating how they were strongly close in terms of the theme of reason and its relationship with pure life. The questions that crossed the minds of the researchers were answered as there are plentiful resemblances between these two particular hermeneutical poets and mystics to authenticate the formation of an innovative, better well-defined area of literary research. The poems of the two poets were studied in detail and consequently compared according to the theme of reason.

Having compared Rumi and Blake, it is concluded that both poets and mystics believe in the destructive and constructive aspects of reason as an obstacle to the path of true and desirable life and union with God. In conclusion, to untangle Rumi and Blake's views regarding reason and rationality, one must be careful that both Rumi

and Blake pejoratively use the word partial reason in their poetry and believe that it is a barrier to ultimate desirable lifestyle.

On the other hand, universal reason or intellect is used positively by both poets and is considered to be a bridge to the union with Absolute Being. Thus, Rumi and Blake distinguish reasoning processes and their operations in different levels. In their views, the higher level of thought is occupied by intellect or universal reason and the lower level is positioned by partial reason as the most superficial mechanical rational operation of thought.

In other words, partial reason for Rumi and Blake refers to the most mechanical and superficial processes of thought and corporeal lifestyle, whereas intellect or universal reason means an understanding of the whole, advancing not

through step by step of collecting particular data, but by impulsive re-organizations and leaps of the conceptual and intangible associations among those particular data.

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