Shakespeare – New Dimensions – Way of Life

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Abstract: In this article I will be dealing with Shakespeare's work and lifestyle he has created, the connection of Shakespeare and modern world in any sense! Shakespeare's protagonists, his messages, links with Islam, his place of nowhere, the role model he has become; interference with purpose or without it on a daily basis. I will try to show, through his famous characters like *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, how Shakespeare reconciled all ideologies of this earthly world and created one new/old 'religion' – Ardonic state of mind. To write on such topic requires personal aspect as well as professional approach, even though these two can not be strictly separated in my work.

Introduction

When Shakespeare was writing God was expressing Himself, it was the Beauty, the absolute Truth – it was and still is the Balance. As R.W. Emerson said: "Nothing divine dies..." (Nature, 1836), and that is exactly how Shakespeare affects the world from his time up to 21st century – even though I think that we are still living in Shakespeare's time, and we will continue so.

When I think of Shakespeare all sorts of things come to my mind, but mainly I think of how he has affected my life, he united me with myself; He through him blessed me with awareness. Sometimes it may be a curse, but most of the times it is a path which makes it impossible to stray away – it is the one dimensional way.

Shakespeare was thoroughly introduced to me by Dr. Shahab Yar Khan, and since then, and then it was five years ago, worlds could live side by side in peace, mainly. Can one be peaceful in search of light knowing that a quest of such kind can never be a complete cognition of reality, nor metaphysical state? Thoughts are always scattered.

However, it is like the ocean wave: impatient, restless, yet liberated and strong – so strong it can never be stopped; a wave always follows the moon, therefore it gives flux and reflux. Both can happen with high or low intensity. It doesn't matter, as long as it is happening. If the wave stopped its circle life would vanish and our thoughts wouldn't have to walk through the path of awareness, because there would be no path – just eternity. While that time comes no one can subdue the ocean, nor can one's mind.

New Dimensions

I have every reason to believe that Shakespeare's ideas were those of Sufi's. As Rumi said: "These sad and lonely people tire me", so I feel that his characters were led by some force and were chosen by Shakespeare carefully to see His light, but "with lamps in hands" they needed sheiks of some kind to help them find "the Essence of the Essence, the intoxication of Love"; their sheik was Shakespeare, he is the one who created new dimensions for his characters, he created 'place of nowhere'. "*******************************(Rumi, 1998) Shakespeare managed to give them that; thus he has to be observed as a spiritual leader of those who chose to believe, those who chose

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to follow. Just like any other scripture his works stand for values, rest is up to us. "Ripeness is all." (Shakespeare, 2006)

> "O Shakespeare! The beauty of your verse mirrors the human heart. Life finds perfection in your sky-soaring thought.
> Was your luminous nature the goal of existence itself?" (Iqbal 2007)

Shakespeare lived in a period of change. In religion, politics, literature, and commerce, in the habits of daily living, in the world of ideas, his lifetime witnessed continual change and movement. When Elizabeth came to the throne, six years before he was born, England was still Catholic, as it had been for nine centuries. When she died, England became Protestant, and by the date of Shakespeare's death, it was on the way of becoming Puritan. The Protestant Reformation had worked its full course of revolution of ideas, habits and beliefs. The authority of the church had been replaced by that of the Bible, of the English Bible, translated by Shakespeare's contemporaries. During his life England had attained unity and an international importance.

Although he wrote during Elizabethan period, which was very much influenced by Bible, Shakespeare's work has traces of Platonic, Cabalistic, Humanistic, and even Ishraqqi teaching. Dr. Shahab Yar Khan, in his PhD theses, brings us to understanding that Shakespeare's tragedies are not about conflict only, he claims they have their soul of diversity which is essentially an Ishraqqi concept. Therefore, Shakespeare carries something that makes him a man of all nations and time.

We must be aware that Shakespeare was closely in touch with the Islamic world and the Illuministic

To elaborate on this, "Illuminism is a constant search towards the liberation of the soul; the liberation of all 1998) The founder of these teachings is Shahab al-Din Suhrawerdi. Illuminism was revived by Shahab Udin, in Europe known as Suhra Verdi. He speaks of two themes, saying that Islam is not only a Muslim phenomenon. He used word balance to explain it. He gave us 12 names of great thinkers of Illuminism; Plato being the first and himself the last, 12th. Among them there are people of different religions. He also said that balance and diversity go side by side; as diverse you are as balanced you get to be. "God Himself is the first principle of diversity", he says. God has 99 names, all opposite, diverse. If we don't understand diversity, its beauty, and power we can't understand God.

Shakespeare's drama depends on diversity. Every character is neither good, nor bad; it depends on the abstract being. His drama is not black, nor white, it is grey, undefined, balanced. As a result of diversity the focus of Shakespeare's plays is not within the action, but beyond it. This can be also explained as a concept of Sufism – Shakespeare's drama as the illuministic art is the hidden Truth in all its possible dimensions. Just like any other illuminist Shakespeare doesn't present the truth in all aspects. I suppose that the complete Truth is left to be discovered by those who realize that there is something to be discovered. That something is one thing in common in all Shakespeare's works and that is his "place of nowhere" (Persian: 'na kuja abed') – metaphysical dimension, hidden message, the Truth, 'divine Light'. Place of nowhere is not geographical location. His place has no concept of time. When Shakespeare's protagonists come back from that place they are transformed, elevated to the highest possible state of mind.

Hamlet

I will mention only some of his characters and the affect that place of nowhere had on them. I will begin with Hamlet, the one who is fundamental for this kind of work, whose spiritual growth is seen through his soliloquies. Without any explanation difference between his blasphemed soliloquies:

> "O, that this too too solid flesh would melt Thaw and resolve itself into a dew! Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

****** Sir Muhammad Iqbal (2007), Shakespeare ("The republic of Rumi: A novel of reality" by Khurram Ali Shafique, Iqbal Academy Pakistan) ************* S.H. Nasr "Three Muslim Sages", Sohail Academy, 1998. p.112 395

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!" (Shakespeare 2006)

and his time spent with the greatest symbol of purity, water, and his 'kidnappers', his 'thieves of mercy' who transcended his mind and made him sound like this:

"...there's a special
providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now,
'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be
now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the
readiness is all: since no man has aught of what he
leaves, what is't to leave betimes?"

(Shakespeare 2006)

Shakespeare made Hamlet went trough all these transformations only to show us that changes are fundamental for our growth as humans, and on that path to elevation, Hamlet had various phases. Trough meditation, one gets transformed and gets to the point of reaching eternity. This idea is very common in Persian and Illuministic literature. Eternity in Persian is called: "na kuja abed"- the place of nowhere. The concept of "place of nowhere" is one thing that's common in all Shakespeare's great works. This is why we call his drama "illuministic". And this is why Shakespeare is essential to all of us, in our paths that lead to wisdom.

King Lear

First of all I have to say that Lear stands for conventions, the old system of values. It is the old and the new at clash. This needs to be understood before elaborating on Lear's mind growth and metaphysical place of nowhere. In *King Lear* Shakespeare forced us to experience the place of nowhere more vividly along with Lear. When Lear enters 'the heath' he is forced to confuse materials and abstract world and ideas. His state of mind changes. At first hi pities himself and that is when he really entered the place of nowhere. It is essential for human growth. It begins with loss of ego. Human personality develops through psychological escalation. We all begin with the state of 'it' feeling hunger, cold, and baby's instincts, almost animal. With awareness of possession 'it' becomes ego, the unnatural mark of identification. When we start imposing our ego on others it leads us to super ego. With King Lear it is an inverse process. Shakespeare teaches us the way of life through Lear's realization of other people's suffering, so the last two acts were dedicated to the state before 'it'. Traditionally speaking, we all existed before we were given the body. Our souls existed on the other side, in the other dimension. Soul is, finally, the essence of our being, not our body. That state is state of balance. That balance is perfect Ardenic state – state which can only be achieved through perfect love. Lear lived through this with his daughter; twoness became oneness and ego was eliminated.

Purpose of one's life should be achieving that state. We must search for God, elevate beyond matter, be in constant process of growth – once we have the awareness journey towards absolute begins. As Dr. Khan says; once it starts, the process itself is an accomplishment. Jesus, Prophet Mohammad, Socrates, Plato, Shakespeare, Rumi, Khan, ... all showed that genuine ideas survived in history of mankind.

Conclusion

Humans are the only creatures with power of will. Human will is designed by material accouters, references of temporary success. God's will supersedes matter. Great will is beyond matter, and to succeed without matter is closest we can come to divinity. Purpose of our life should be to discover that concept of living without matter, beyond it, to struggle every moment, searching for God. It is a constant process of growth. We have to have in mind that there are two kinds of will: human will and eternal (divine will). We cannot control the eternal will, but we can try to liberate ourselves from earthly characteristics – only then we become 'nothing' and we can enter eternity. We must elevate our mind and direct it towards Haven. Illuminism suggests that human will alliances with divine one and Shakespeare teaches us the same. Through his characters he has shown us it is possible. The attempt to release ourselves from chains of matter requires insensitivity towards it. Can a

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being survive without essence? Of course not. The value is derived through essence. Essence is that idea which is not for personal goal, and Shakespeare's essence was for genuine goal and continues through those who stepped on the path of wisdom.

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