



Purification of the Self in the Select Poems of John Donne and Manikkavasakar's *Tiruvachakam*

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.10515157

Abstract

A mystic's life denotes the beginning of a journey towards an endless spiritual life. Every step of the mystic journey has been an enlivening trial. In any case, the initiation of the self was disastrous and unexpected as birth, since it constantly means the awareness of a spiritual quest before illusion. The mystic distinguishes this birth of new awareness as spouted out with blended sentiments of delight and worship. It is awareness and an enchanted cognisant that secures reality as extraordinary and natural. The general inclination of a mystic is to find it in an individual state, which implies that the mystic grasps God with individual love transfiguring the spirit in the greatness of a transfigured universe and the response of oneself appears as a satisfaction towards the entire purification process. The Divine Beauty of the Mystic understands its limits and defects that horde malefic attractions that mediate between him and God and overcome tremendous separation that isolates him from the truth. John Donne, a Christian mystic has written many poems that have indicated his yearnings of his spiritual quest. Even though most of the poems are said to be love poems, his ideas are core to the union of Christian spiritualhood. Manikkavasakar, a Saivic mystic poet wrote Tiruvachakam, a spiritual treatise full of spiritual longings for the ultimate union with God. Both writers have a close concept of the purification of the soul which is seen in most of the lines of these poets. Hence, the article ponders over the reliable facts from the select works of the chosen writers.

Keywords: Purification, Self, John Donne, Poems, Manikkavasakar, *Tiruvachakam*.

Introduction

The 'purification' process has both negative and positive sides. The previous concerns it in throwing out the undesirable and embracing the order of separation. The positive view remains the lasting component of the character by experiencing 'Mortification', which infers a conscious experience. The mystic accepts humiliation and enters the limbo circle to win divine love. The Uttama is the Lord, the incomparable Brahman, who has both permanent solidarity and resourceful knowledge. In summary, Atman's obliviousness remains the Ksharapurusha's pleasure in the Prakrti and her transformations. Note that the Aparas-Prakrti or lower nature gets its energy from the three gunas. For Para-Prakrti, higher nature implies controlling the three gunas. The mystic comprehends that he needs to liberate himself from the gaol of 'I' hood since he needs to effectively lead the mission set to him by God. The essential obligation of the mystic in this dynamite task is to destroy every barrier in his way by control and neglect. The troublesome thing that goes up against the mystic is the swaying of his age, which may have preceded his goal of enslavement. John Donne and Manikkavasakar have yearned for the purification of the soul in their poems. The level of the accomplishments to acquire the holy self can be witnessed in Donne's "The Sun Rising", "Love's Exchange", "The Ecstasy", "Songs and Sonnets", "Pseudo-Martyr", "Satire III"



"Pseudo-Martyr" "Progress of the Soul" and in Manikkavasakar's *Tiruvachakam*. The selected works provide us with evidence of how the self of both writers longs, transforms and transcends to a higher level of purgation.

Theoretical Framework

In this article, the researcher employs a descriptive approach to detail similar concepts in the select poems of John Donne and Manikkavasakar's *Tiruvachakam*. The article is embedded with a comparative approach to decode the purgation of the self and the attainment of the souls from the chosen works of the select authors.

The Tri Gunas

In "The Bhagavad Gita", Lord Krishna affirms that "when the man of vision sees that the powers of nature are the only actors of this vast drama, and he behold THAT which is beyond the powers of nature then he comes into my Being". (104) The three gunas, namely, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas constitute not only the physical macrocosm but also the psychical microcosm of an individual. The dynamics of the gunas cannot be observed by a common man but a mystic can estimate the game of the gunas in him. Let us consider the Guna theory. A mystic ought to enslave the three gunas as well as try to rise above them. Despite the fact for the three terms, Tamas (id) suggests obscurity and sloth, Rajas (Ego) polluting influence that prompts careless movement and Sattva (Super Ego) enhances immaculate virtue and goodness. In "The Bhagavat Gita" Lord Krishna summarizes the characteristics of three gunas: "Sattva binds to happiness; Rajas to action; Tamas, over clouding wisdom..." (104). An elaboration on the three gunas will help better comprehension of their activity to find out the state of the mystic counterpart poets. Of the three gunas of Prakrti, Sattva is said to be perfect. Its substance is illumination, rather than Tamasic obliviousness and the Rajasic deceived kinesis. When the Sattvic Guna is predominant, the faculties are levelled out and with quiet coordination will work viably. A Sattva-ruled cognizance is sharp and alarmed, exact in the execution of the activity. A Sattvic individual is constantly cautious about his moral flawlessness. With a sharp understanding, he plays out his strict rituals and submissively pursues scriptural severities. Because the psychological constitution should be dictated by the nourishment materials, a Sattvic individual is very careful in the decision of nourishment. He evades impassive or hopeful things, however unadulterated and straightforward nourishment that gives him well-being and mental power.

To a Sattvic man, virtue, righteousness, chastity, and peacefulness are long-lasting standards. His composure, established in insight, takes a friendly and the uncongenial same, with no worry about material advantage. In simple words, Sattva Guna is goodness in its most perfect structure. One of the most famous Indologists, George Feuerstein views the literal meaning of 'Sattva' as 'being-ness'. He adds that the primary constituents of this type are responsible for the essential form- the 'idea' (in the Platonic sense) of a thing which is to be realized during the course of its life. Of the three gunas, Sattva reflects most faithfully the condition of the One Being 'Sat'.

Rajo Guna is portrayed by his agitated activity. It is the enthusiasm that springs from wanting and connection. A Rajasic man is brimming with exercise yet polluted by narrow-minded intentions. He is anxious and consistently yearns for material advantages. He cannot confront disappointment because of nervousness and agony. A Rajasic individual is an awful and ravenous individual. His avariciousness has no restrictions and causes him to enjoy foolish deeds. Indeed, even his strict obligations are just dry deceptive activities for material increases. Sri Aurobindo effectively regards this activity to be 'Asuric' or 'Satanic'. According to him, all works in this way that return from a fierce or prideful individual want



or from an audacious will to force itself on the world is the Rajasic nature. Even though it is given to God or the Divine Beings, it remains an Asuric activity. Whatever a Rajasic man does, it is his willful pride to win social distinctions. He savours the unpleasant, acrid and hot nourishment that brings him ailment and torment. To sum up, a Rajasic individual is tricky, calculative, and ever tricky. Rajo Guna is a principal kinesis, and even a positive power to get fair results.

Tamo Guna is conceived of latency and obliviousness, which darkens information and creates perplexity. It brings inadequacy, carelessness, mistakes, and slothfulness, thus causing daydreaming and latency. The outcome is wretchedness and misery. The Tamasic man acts by intuition and is nearly at the degree of a monster, picks the devil for his love, tastes characterless nourishment and conveys his strict obligations without conviction and regard to the scriptural directives. He is childish, self-important, and arrogant and is dependent upon sorrow. Because of sadness, dread, and misery, he surrenders his obligations to rest and sloth. He demonstrates that the activities are lost, less than ideal and not well-roused. In his obliviousness, he takes the incredible for the genuine without making a big deal about the real. The 20th-century mystic Sri Aurobindo Gosh in his "Essays on the Gita" rejects the blithe Tamasa Guna and says it is "inertia of nescience and inertia of inaction, a double negative" (416). Henceforth, Tamasa Guna opposes the dynamic Rajasa and the benevolent Sattva.

S. Radhakrishnan's view of the merits of "The Bhagavad Gita" references it as: "To rise above bondage, we must rise the modes of nature, become trigunatita; then we put on the free and incorruptible nature of spirit. Sattva is sublimated into the light of consciousness, jyoti, rajas into austerity, tapes and tamas into tranquillity or rest, Santi." (317). Lord Krishna suitably portrays such a 'Trigunatita yogi' as one "He who hates not light, nor busy actively, nor even darkness, when they are near, neither longs for them when they are far." (Gita 105). The Lord implies that man is intensified by indestructible components. Much the same as a master restraining a perplexed nature, man has to control his wild faculties by the mystic preparing recommended by the Lord Himself, by the aid of three 'Margas' or 'ways'.

Purification of the Self

Donne's compositions stand proof of his coordinated personality occupied with an advanced journey and record of the steady peculiar movement of the poet from the pre-arousing state to the next state. The pre-arousing state includes undertaking oneself to make the Sattva Guna that overwhelms the Tamas and the Rajas. Uncertainty moves in temperament, negativity and doubt - the Tamasic and the Rajasic qualities – the mind returns to unattic ways. Such an unsattvic Donne can be seen in his sonnets. When this incredible visitor records the subtleties of his love, he relies on enthusiastic truth and negativeness.

For example, the zealous lover declares, "she is all state and all princes, I/Nothing else is." (The Sun Rising 6) and in another mood, the sceptical man swears love as, "love, any devil else but you,/would for a given soul give something too." (Love's Exchange 25) However, the prodigality of young John Donne has not prevented him from enjoying Sattvic's love, as described in the poem "The Ecstasy"

**This extasie doth unperplex
(We said) and tell us what we love.
we see by this, it was not sex,
We see, we saw not what did move. (39)**

This poem explains how the lover, by merging himself with another being loses his distinctiveness. What he enjoys here is the intense love that gives him a transcendental unity



and experiences through for a fleeting moment. Donne seems to relate his Tamasic hate and Rajasic turbulence, as the poems of “Songs and Sonnets” portray. He stays anxious in his relationships and other human activities. For example, he honestly reports that his inclination to pleasure is carried away by the noticeably terrible attractiveness, which is a Hydroptique, an unbalanced want of compassionate human wishes.

In the preface of his first published prose work, “Pseudo-Martyr”, he makes another open admission about his extravagance to freedom in all other uninterested things is evidence of avariciousness and the amassing of knowledge is viewed as a Rajasic quality. Such knowledge is just a blind movement performed without the coordination of will and action. Hence, the result is that the individual becomes an ego-centric conceited man, seeking fame and his mind is perplexed with doubts. Donne is no exception.

In general, Donne’s love experiences make him a cynic, and his many-sided knowledge creates a keen sceptic out of him. In him, both pessimism and doubt appear to correspond to one another and influence his demeanour towards religion. During this period, Donne had been inundated in the disputable godliness, when neither Catholicism nor his ancestral religion Protestantism, the acknowledged religion of the nation could completely fulfil him. In the sense of uncertainty, the critic reprimands derisively the artists such as legal advisors, liars, libertines and particularly the divines. For example, in *Satire II*, he lashes them as;

**Who with sins all kinds as familiar bee
As confessors; and for whose sinful sake,
Schoolmen new tenements in hell must make,
Whose strange sins, canonists could hardly tell
In which commandments large receipt they dwell. (CP 113)**

For some time, the writers' fierceness extends itself into the sharp parody. In any case, *Satire III* is not so much critical but rather more developed in tone, because the writer is propelled by his subject itself to look for genuine religion. The pursuit of reality begins in this verse. To be a positive sceptic, to 'question shrewdly', is by all accounts the most ideal route for Donne to look for truth, because an enquiring mind is important to find genuine religion. For example;

**Ask thy father which is she,
Let him ask his: though truth and falsehood be
Near twins, yet truth a little elder is;
Be busy to seeks her, believe me this,
He's not of none, nor worst, that seeks the best. (CP 117)**

Helen Gardner is of the view that in “*Satire III*” Donne is ‘genuinely religious’ as a religious person we comprehend a person to whom the inspiration of God not only is self-manifested but brings with it a deep sense of absolute commitment. The poem alludes to the way that Donne has just lost confidence in his Roman Catholic family since it cannot be the 'genuine religion' to him. Donne's strict transformation, from Roman Catholic to Anglicanism is a significant single occasion in his life. It did not occur out of a sudden. Donne records in his "Pseudo-Martyr" that it occurs in the wake of having overviewed by the entire assortment of Divinity. This is evident that the prevalence of the Sattva Guna as the power of harmonising knowledge becomes a temporary blaze. Sattva emanates the wide experience to stay without childish rationale. Thus, the transformation comes to him simply after the passing of his significant other. In any case, the change between the Sattva and the Rajas continues. Indeed,



the hasty Donne detonated in the lyric "Progress of the Soul" or "Metempsychosis", as an ambitious abortive plan and feels the prudential truth of the crucified Lord.

**That cross, out joy and grief where nails did tie
That all. Which always was all, everywhere,
Which could not sins, and yet all sins did bear,
Which could not die, yet could not choose but die. (CP 135)**

Such honourable flashes do improve him in fact; however youthful Donne could not suffer it long. A sliding back to Tamasic and Rajasic Gunas constantly pursues, when Donne faces a significant choice – regardless of whether to take up the heavenly requests or not. It was during this period; that Donne created his two "Anniversaries", to the memory of a 15-year-old young girl Elizabeth Drury, whom he had never seen. The twin poems are viewed as significant ones, as the results of his dithering period and as the main lyrics to be distributed during his lifetime. They additionally remain as confirmations of Donne's tremendous learning. His questionable frame of mind and understanding of the mystic hypothesis have no negative infection of the world. At this stage, this might be an incomprehensible task for him, as the sublimation of love and knowledge has not yet started. As noted before, Donne has had the look at supernatural love through human love, what he needs is Bhakti or Devotion to turn into an unadulterated Sattva. In a word, his 'Abhimana' or 'Self-esteem' must offer an approach to God-love. The caring commitment and the courageous Bhakti will unquestionably lead him to the initial step of mystic quality, the enlivening purification of the soul. By scrutinizing the mystic life of Donne, the pre awakening state of him is crystal clear that Donne has entered the plane of purification through the mortal understanding of the fleeting life.

Manikkavasakar earnestly longs for purgation in his profound mystic journey. His pining is found in his universal treatise "Tiruvachakam". The mystic poet gets the strenuous endeavours towards purgation of oneself, when once the vision vanishes. At the point when one gets the spiritualist experience of God, the effect on oneself gets gigantic. This significant viewpoint in the lives of spiritualists merits the examination. Manikkavasakar's first vision at 'Perunturai' shows his spiritualist experience. Evelyn Underhill in her book 'Mysticism' shows how the endeavours of the Western mystics yearn towards purgation. She depicts the essential technique to apply with benefit to the lives of the Eastern mystics, just as to the experience of the spiritualists everywhere throughout the world. The religions experienced everywhere throughout the world are the same. Underhill contends that the mystics endeavour towards purification subject themselves to boundless torments and sufferings. She says the two causes for these agonies are as follows:

The mystics suffer from the pangs of separation. The contrast between the self's clouded contours and the pure sharp radiance of the Real; between its muddled faulty life, it's perverse self-centred drifting, and the clear onward sweep of the becoming in which it is immersed. (127)

Manikkavasakar's mystic poem. Love-verses of the Cankam Period communicated the awful sentiment of the pain of partition. The blurring endlessly of the mystic vision turns into the reason for the pain. The spiritualist's affection for good is contrasted and a woman for her sweetheart. The heavenly love enrages the mystic as much as commonplace love rankles the sweethearts on the planet. The mystic feeds that his division from Him influenced preeminent delight. Numerous lines of 'Tiruvachakam' depict the aches of division. While a mystic advances towards purification, the aches develop progressively intense. At the point when the spiritualist vision of God is declined to the writer's holy person, they increment in him. In



'Consecrated Cento' Manikkavasakar communicates the aches detachment. He feels that he was contemptible of such a heavenly encounter when the mystic vision blurred away. The disastrous mindfulness offers to ascend to the aches of partition from God. The vision of God yields 'Jnana' or "Wisdom". The mystic vision is novelistic. It saturates the spiritualist's body, life and soul. At the point when the vision disappears, the mystic feels boundless desolation. The more unmistakably its vision the more extraordinary its torment and can be found in the refrains as:

**Like an opening bud;-
My hands above my head I raise; while tears
Pour down, my melting soul.
The false renouncing, praises Thee; - with songs
Of triumph praises Thee, -
Nor suffer I adoring hand to rest; - O Master,
Look on me!... (TSC 44-45)**

The minute when his hands ascend above and fold up in prayer towards God, Manikkavasakar understands the vision of the Holy feet of God. The memory of the vision gets the devoted mindset. The adoration and commitment motivate his entire being; his body is zapped and it trembles in light of this amazing feeling. It causes tears in his eyes. His feeling of misfortune overwhelms him. The primary stanza of "Hallowed Cento" communicates this desolation brought about by relinquishment and a feeling of misfortune. The whole Cento uncovers the different feelings. The primary stanza strikes the detachment and consciousness of his shamefulness. He battles hard to cleanse himself of this disharmony. This is the refinement method. The above-cited lines propose Manikkavasakar's acknowledgement of the Absolute and show his familiarity with the fantasies. His expanding enthusiasm for God, his melancholy distress emerging from division from God and his endeavours to break the obligations of connections and free his mind show the method for purgation.

The feeling of separation connects the two points; God at one end and the bond of attachments. This feeling forces the self to long for the vision often and nurtures the fervour to flare up into a fanatic zeal to see Him. It gradually leads to a long conflict where the earthly bonds are sounded and lost ultimately. But for the pangs, there would be no freedom for the self. Therefore, this theme of separation plays an important role in the penance of purgation. Manikkavasakar declares this 'flood of feeling' in his poem 'Tiruvachakam' as:

**'Thou from unique to even heaven by ones
Unknown! Thou mystic Dancer, who didst make me Thine!
Me Thine! On earth, in heaven, or when all these
Have passed away, - WHEN shall I see Thy face? (TSC 62-63)**

These lines communicate that Manikkavasakar has not yet risen altogether deserving of the merit of God's Grace. He experiences questions and falters in need of conviction. So he does not get the total fulfillment from his first experience of the main vision of God. He fears that he would tumble down by and by in common issues and the fantasy of connections. Be that as it may, he was never deluded by the dream. He was aware of his very own blundering self and this mindfulness makes him experience the ill effects of the aches of partition. This misery in division prepares for purification. This familiarity with his inadequacies encourages him to react to the call of purgation.

Mortification implies the passing of self-hood in its restricted individualistic sense is the essential part of embarrassment. During the phase of purification, both personality and



oneself become compared to the authenticity of the Supreme. The mystic's protest against pride rouses the feeling of ownership. It turns into their obligation to dispose of this inner self. The fantasy of distinguishing oneself from one's body is finished. The mystic needs to remain unconcern about the body. Henceforth humiliation comprises detachment to body and this is valid for Manikkavasakar. The poet acknowledges the intense mental misery brought about by his internal clash. He chastens the body and he discusses his fulfilment of genuine shrewdness that the body is not one's self. He was bound to His Feet in a condition of unadulterated obliviousness. Presently he is epitomized. He accomplishes wisdom and acknowledges Him in the mystic vision. He feels that he can stay in the condition of genuine shrewdness. This is the evidence of the purification of the self. He communicates these in his verses:

Upraised, made former falseness cease, removed all fault, filled me with gleaming light:

'T'WAS THUS HE MADE ME HIS, AND JOIN'D ME TO HIS SAINTS: SUCH WONDER HAVE WE SEEN! (TWD - CP 241)

Mortification also means death into oneself or death of the ego. Manikkavasakar attains this sort of sensory shift and hovers on to the next level with gradual development. His mystic voyage succeeds in every attempt with perseverance and dedication. This sort of state will help him to the illumination of his self. Thus, through this path, the mystic can enter the illumination of the soul.

Donne enjoys Sattvic love to get ultimate ecstasy which is revealed in his poem "The Ecstasy". The idea of transcendental joy is a perfect example of Donne's progress in his work. Manikkavasakar also longs for the mystic purgation and experiences his first vision at 'Perunturai'. Even both have attained a Sattvic sense. Donne experiences it through love but Manikkavasakar visions through his spiritual elevations. To one extent the pessimism in his life in Donne makes him lean towards religion and he tries to look at Truth from a religious perspective. Whatever the time he gets despair of the worldly crisis, he seeks the refuge of God. But as revealed in the "Consecrated Cento", Manikkavasakar forwards himself towards the path of wisdom. His commitment makes him an entire spiritual soul than that of Donne. Donne has been sliding from the lower sense (Thamo) to the middle sense (Rajo). At that time he has to go to the higher sense (Sattva). But a kind of rational output evolves in his mind due to his faith in religion. In his poem "The Second Anniversary", he proves to be philosophical (Sattva). In turn, Manikkavasakar expresses the pangs of his soul directly to God to get His Grace. His experiences are completely of the maturing self: as this concept can be seen in the poem "The Sacred Cento". Thus, Donne and Manikkavasakar yearn for the purgation for their selves to attain spiritual hood.

Conclusion

Donne's yearning for purgation comes out of an extrovert passion but Manikkavasakar has an introvert passion: which means self-purgation. Donne has seen the world as chaos because of its impact on him. He has transcendental awareness; he positively accepts death. This is a lucid example of the Christian way of submission and sacrifices by denying the body, it tries to elevate the spirit; the sure way of purgation. Manikkavasakar also has such fear that worldly passion surrenders completely to the bejewelled foot of the Almighty. Both Donne and Manikkavasakar have the same sort of idea and fear of worldly pleasures. In responding to them Donne starts to criticize the external passion and the creators of these passions. Manikkavasakar wants completely to evade himself from the madding crowd to attain purgation. Donne gets self-conscious by going to the level of Sattva and



disintegrates his selfish consciousness. Manikkavasakar tries to martyr himself to eliminate the selfish notions of his mind that hinder in purgation of his self. By indicating a different temperament in his mind, he considers his body as being jailed and his soul completely detailed. So he develops mental suffering to merge with God. He starts to worship God to drive away the selfish favour that makes him weak in attaining purgation. Donne is not religious often and his aim is not completely to attain self-hood. But he has touched and crossed the plane: and then returned to his conscious level. But Manikkavasakar surpassed all these endured by John Donne and crossed the life of the ocean with his strong hope on the aid given by Almighty. In such a way both endeavour to get purgation. By seeing the levels of purgation process in both mystic poets, it can be easily assessable that cleansing those conscious and unconscious impurities of the mind must be eliminated by complete surrender. Both of these poets wish to attain the level which is high in the divine arena.

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Author (s) Contribution Statement: Nil

Author (s) Acknowledgement: Nil

Author (s) Declaration: I declare that there is no competing interest in the content and authorship of this scholarly work.



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