



# Regaining Union with God: A Comparative Study of Jalaluddin Rumi and William Blake

 **Mahdi Dehghani Firouz Abadi**

Tolou-e-Mehr Non-Profit Institute of Higher Education

**Corresponding Author:** Mahdi Dehghani Firouz Abadi

**E-mail:** dr.dehghani.ell@gmail.com

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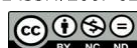
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## ABSTRACT

The comparative study of Jalaluddin Rumi and William Blake has not been fully conducted yet. This paper will examine how man can find his true home through the divine love and annihilation with regard to human struggle in the direction of union with God. The study is limited to Rumi's *Masnavi* as well as Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, Milton, and *Four Zoas*. In order to find the similarities and differences between the two poets, Aldous Huxley's ideas on perennial philosophy and the theory of hermeneutics will be employed. The discussion will concentrate on the two themes of love and annihilation. At first love and annihilation will be examined in the poetry of Rumi and then paralleled to Rumi, William Blake's attitude towards love and annihilation will be discussed. To the extent that the writer is concerned, the article is unique in a literary sense and it is possible to fill a literary gap through reviewing these two prominent figures and their literary mystical thoughts concerning love and annihilation. Consequently, it is concluded that love and annihilation could be considered as the home button of the divine GPS that man can push and be guided to his true home.

**Keywords:** Union, Love, Annihilation, Rumi, Blake

## 1. Introduction

The reason why man was created is union with God. God created man as a very unique creature that could be in relation with the divine and spiritual world as well as material world and the fleshy body. Man was created as a spirit, in the image of God. He is a soul that can think, reason and feel and a fleshy body who is in contact with the material world through different senses. The life of man has originated from his union with God. Man is supposed to be aware of the divine realm, while from his soul, he systematizes everything in his fleshy body and his material world.

This union will take place when every action and effort that man does, every desire that he wishes, and every word that he speaks is for the sake of God. He will remember God in every single breath. The union is carried over into our mind and understanding and as God loves us purely, man is also joined to him with an inseparable perpetual true love in order to be united with Him. In his Introduction to the *Bhagavad-Gita's The Song of God* (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:

First: 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.

Second: 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.

Third: 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.

Fourth: 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. (p.13).

Thus, in the mystic's eyes, the union with God is the ultimate Goal of the creation. Man as the representative of God on earth is supposed to reach to the realm of divinity. It is by no means justifiable to think of man as an earthly creature. Although man possesses animalistic desires, he owns divine characteristics as well. The ultimate goal of his life is to overcome the earthly affairs and be united with God. With regard to the above-mentioned explanations, this article examines the themes of love and annihilation as the two important preconditions of union with God in the selected poems of Jalaluddin Rumi and William Blake.

### Union In Rumi's Poetry

Rumi believes that man of God sees Him both in this world and the next one. In an intuitional vision man sees heaven, hell, and the resurrection even in this world. Rumi states while you are under your partial reason and the senses, you cannot understand the metaphysical aspects of God and be united with Him. 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" (Cited by Huxley, 1945:14). 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 (2011) 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 (pp.3-4).

This idea is narrated in the parable of the fool who is chasing the shadow of the bird on earth instead of the real bird in the sky. In fact, the fool is the hunter of the shadow not the true bird.

The bird is flying on high, and its shadow is speeding on the earth, flying like a bird:

Some fool begins to chase the shadow, running (after it) so far that he becomes powerless (exhausted),

Not knowing that it is the reflexion of that bird in the air, not knowing where is the origin of the shadow.

He shoots arrows at the shadow; his quiver is emptied in seeking (to shoot it) (*Masnavi*: 417-420).

Based on the verse of Qur'an (2:156), Rumi believes that the life is the return journey to God and man will be perfect during this journey. Organic material changes into vegetables. Vegetables turn into animal. Animals change into man. Finally, man will be in a position higher than Angels and will be united with God. Thus Rumi writes:

I died to the inorganic state and became endowed with growth, and (then) I died to (vegetable) growth and attained to the animal.

I died from animality and became Adam (man): why, then, should I fear? When have I become less by dying?

At the next remove I shall die to man, that I may soar and lift up my head amongst the angels;

And I must escape even from (the state of) the angel: *everything is perishing except His Face*.

Once more I shall be sacrificed and die to the angel: I shall become that which enters not into the imagination.

Then I shall become non-existence: non-existence saith to me, (in tones loud) as an organ, Verily, unto Him shall we return (*Masnavi* III: 3901-3906).

Rumi believes that the evolution starts from organic material. However, he states that the material is not separate from the mind. In other words, he claims that the body is the product of the soul not vice versa as he states: "Wine became intoxicated with us, not we with it; the body came into being from us, not we from it" (*Masnavi* I: 1812).

Human being's soul is searching for its origin and eternal life to be in union with God. According to Rumi, the soul's origin is endless and infinite and has no place. "The desire of the soul is for Life and for the Living One, because its origin is the Infinite Soul (*Masnavi* III: 4437). Rumi refers to the origin of Man as the reed-bed of the existence. He states: "Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, my lament hath caused man and woman to moan (*Masnavi* I: 2).

Some of the interpreters of *Masnavi* (Angharavi, 1348/1969, Sabzevari, 1374/1995, Akbari

1383/2004) based on Ibn Arabi's coined phrase, permanent archetypes (*A'yan Sabita*), believe that the reed-bed refers to permanent archetypes. Permanent archetypes are the essence of things. However, the writer is not going to go to such philosophical interpretations as other interpreters of *Masnavi* such as Foruzanfar (1371/1992, Volume 1:9), are not interested in such philosophical interpretations and Rumi himself is not into philosophy as he is a mystic and poet rather than a philosopher.

Rumi believes that man has been separated from his home and is continuously attempting to be close to the Absolute being and be in union with Him. The reed refers to the Man's ego (*Nafs*) who is trying to be united with God and the reed-bed refers to the universal truth that man has been separated from it.

We are as the harp and thou art striking (it with) the plectrum (playing on it): the lamentation is not from us, it is thou that art making lamentation.

We are as the flute, and the music in us is from thee; we are as the mountain, and the echo in us is from thee.

We are as pieces of chess (engaged) in victory and defeat: our victory and defeat is from thee, O thou whose qualities are comely (*Masnavi*: 598-600)

Man has been separated from his true home and in an evolutionary process is about to be in union with God. Rumi states: "Everyone who is left far from his source wishes back the time when he was united with it" (*Masnavi*: 4). Man in the path of union passes through some stages, acquires the divine attributes and reaches to his true position. Although this path is towards perfection, it has some limitations as well. In other words, man is sometimes limited to some specific attributes while the Absolute being is completely free of any limitations. Rumi states:

Simple were we and all one substance; we were all without head and without foot yonder.

We were one substance, like the Sun; we were knotless and pure, like water.

When that goodly Light took form, it became (many in) number like the shadows of a battlement (*Masnavi*: 686-688).

Man should be free from all limitations in order to find his true source and he should transcend to the position of perfect man through the spiritual journey. Those who cannot have this spiritual journey will remain in the physical world and those who have not completed this journey will be limited to the position that they have gained. "Whoever is not a fish becomes sated with His water; whoever is without daily bread finds the day long" (*Masnavi*: 17).

The man who has remained in the physical world is like the one who is without bread and the one who has remained in a specific position is like the person who has drunk the water of life however he got full immediately. On the other hand, the person who reaches to the position of perfect man is like a fish that always drinks the water of life and lives in the position of Absolute Being. As man intends to reach to the union with God, he should make himself ready by passing some of the stages or precondition of union. The two most important precondition of union are love and annihilation. In the following sections the writer will examine these precondition in the poetry of Rumi and Blake.

### Love in the Poetry of Rumi

Rumi believes that the fiery melody of the reed is due to the love. The wine also boils due to the love. Zamani (1381/ 2002: Vol 1:58) states that Rumi believes that movement of all creatures is due to the love. In other words, love exists in the entire universe. Rumi states: 'Tis the fire of Love that is in the reed, 'tis the fervour of Love that is in the wine (*Masnavi*: 10). Indeed, all creatures' lively activity and movement is because they wish to be perfect. Rumi's love is the divine love. It is the love that destroys lust, passion, and worldly affairs. It is a true love. Rumi states: "Those loves which are for the sake of a colour (outward beauty) are not love: in the end they are a disgrace" (*Masnavi*: 205).

Rumi does not appreciate external beauty. He is looking for the truth and real meaning of love. He believes that if you go after the appearances you will be the idolater. Thus he states: "Do not be intoxicated with these cups, which are (phenomenal) forms, lest thou become a carver of idols and an idolater" (*Masnavi* VI: 3708). Rumi does not accept the love which is deviated from the truth rather he believes in the love which annihilates the self and unites man with God. In this case he writes: "Reality is that which seizes (enraptures) you and makes you independent of form. Reality is not that which makes blind and deaf and causes a man to be more in love with form" (*Masnavi* II: 720). Therefore, Mahdiah Boostani (2017) contends 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."

Rumi in the first volume of *Masnavi*, in *The story of the king's falling in love with a handmaiden and buying her* uses the metaphor of astrolabe in order to show the secrets of the sun of truth. "The lover's ailment is separate from all other ailments: love is the astrolabe of the mysteries of God" (*Masnavi*: 110). Rumi believes that the mystical love will polish and purify the soul so that it can explore the divine secrets like the astrolabe which is useful in astronomy.

Rumi who is a capable poet states that he cannot describe love in poetry as love is an infinite ocean. Therefore he states:

Whatsoever I say in exposition and explanation of Love, when I come to Love (itself) I am ashamed of that (explanation) (*Masnavi*:112).

Love is not contained in speech and hearing: Love is an ocean whereof the depth is invisible (*Masnavi* V: 2731).

If I should continue to describe Love, a hundred Resurrections would pass, and it (my description would still be) incomplete (*Masnavi* V:2189).

Rumi asserts that love cannot be described as it exists in the whole universe and its manifestation everywhere is self-sufficient. Thus, if we do not turn our back on love, it would be the best reason for itself since love is present in all creatures.

Although the commentary of the tongue makes (all) clear, yet tongueless love is clearer.

Whilst the pen was making haste in writing, it split upon itself as soon as it came to Love.

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 loverhood.

The proof of the sun is the sun (himself): if thou require the proof, do not avert thy face from him! (*Masnavi* I:113-116).

Love is like a physician who can heal the spiritual and moral illnesses. Whoever falls in love is not selfish and arrogant. Philosophy and logic have no place where there is love. Love flows in all creatures, integrates everything and enhances the soul. True love will make the lover see only the beloved. Thus, falling in love with God leads us to see only God. Rumi states:

Hail, O Love that bringest us good gain—thou that art the physician of all our ills,

The remedy of our pride and vainglory, our Plato and our Galen!

Through Love the earthly body soared to the skies: the mountain began to dance and became nimble (*Masnavi* I:23-25)

Love is that flame which, when it blazes up, consumes everything else but the Beloved.

He (the lover) drives home the sword of *Not* in order to kill all other than God: thereupon consider what remains after *Not*.

There remains *except God*: all the rest is gone. Hail, O mighty Love, destroyer of polytheism! (*Masnavi* V:588-590).

Gholamhossein Zarinkoob (1375/1996:280) believes that the spiritual journey of the mystic back home is very difficult and he will have more problems as he travels from the stations of asceticism to self-annihilation. However, love makes the wayfarer powerful and the way will be easier for him. The mystic will be entrapped in the divine kindness through the lasso of love. Rumi believes that God's demand should be precedent to man's demand so that the true love appears. He states:

He (Khadir) said, "(God saith), That 'Allah' of thine is My 'Here am I,' and that supplication and grief and ardour of thine is My messenger (to thee).

Thy shifts and attempts to find a means (of gaining access to Me) were (in reality) My drawing (thee towards Me), and released thy feet (from the bonds of worldliness).

Thy fear and love are the noose to catch My favour: beneath every 'O Lord' (of thine) is many a 'Here am I' (from Me)." (*Masnavi* III:195-197).

Thus, as one of the most important preconditions to union, love can boot out the burden of "separation", and pave the way for the human's soul to tolerate the determined sense of suffering and affliction. The beauty that motivates love, the honesty that is accompanied with love, as well as the viewpoints of reunion with the beloved are the components of Rumi's divine. Rumi's reply to the tragedy of human's suffering in this world is only love, love, and love.

In the following sections, the writer focuses on how this true lover through annihilating himself, can be united with the Absolute Being and finds his true position.

### Annihilation in Rumi's Poetry

Rumi believes that one of the preconditions of union with God is to annihilate the self (*Nafs*) and its attributes such as arrogance and self-glorification. Only the one who has annihilated avidity, greed, and lust, and all the attributes of selfish ego can be in union with God and attain the divine position and live in eternal subsistence. However, in order to enter the path of annihilation, one has to be a lover and follows the life style of the reed that is emptied of velleity. Like a writer who studies and tolerates the difficulties in order to get rid of ignorance, the spiritual wayfarer with the spiritual journey tries to get rid of earthly life and annihilate egoistic behavior in order to revitalize the spiritual and illuminated life. Rumi states:

There is no way (admittance) for any one, till he become naughted, into the audience-chamber of (Divine) Majesty (*Masnavi* VI: 232).

Although that union (with God) is immortality on immortality, yet at first that immortality (*baqá*) consists in dying to self (*faná*).

The reflexions that are seeking the Light are naughted when His Light appears (*Masnavi* III: 4659-4660).

In "*The story of the merchant to whom the parrot gave a message for the parrots of India on the occasion of his going (thither) to trade*", Rumi states that if you want to have an eternal life by the breath of Jesus, you should be like parrot and ignore coquetry and chattiness and die before you die. Then, you can have the divine breath and true life, like Jesus who revived the dead people with his breath.

The meaning of dying (as conveyed) by the parrot was supplication (self-abasement): make thyself dead in supplication and poverty (of spirit),

That the breath of Jesus may revive thee and make thee fair and blessed as itself.



How should a rock be covered with verdure by the spring? Become earth, that thou mayst grow flowers of many a hue.

Years hast thou been a heart-jagging rock: once, for the sake of experiment, be earth (*Masnavi*: 1909-1912).

Thus, annihilation (*fana*), and immortality (*baqa*) which is the ultimate goal of mystic is one of the main themes of Rumi's thought. He states: "Whence shall we seek (real) existence? From renouncing (illusory) existence. Whence shall we seek the apple (of Truth)? From renouncing the hand (of self-assertion and self-interest)" (*Masnavi* VI: 824).

The real existence and the union with Absolute Being lie in annihilation of the self. One cannot pick up the fruit of truth by egoistic and selfish hand. For God who has no limitation, everything is limited and will be annihilated. According to Holy Qur'an, "Everything is perishable except Him" (28:88). Rumi states: "Before the infinite all that is finite is naught: everything except the Face of God is passing away (*Masnavi* II: 3321). "Before His Face the existent and the non-existent perish: existence in nonexistence is in sooth a marvelous thing" (*Masnavi* III: 4662). Everything will be annihilated facing the divine essence. In other words, all the creatures of the world whether those who are entrapped in the virtual existence and consider themselves as a real being and those who are aware of the Absolute Being and consider themselves as nothing are annihilated. Thus, annihilation of the self leads to immortal and true life.

Since thou wert not passing away (from thyself) in my presence, 'twas an act of grace to smite thy neck (behead thee)."

*Everything is perishing except His face*: unless thou art in His face (essence), do not seek to exist.

When any one has passed away (from himself) in my face (essence), (the words) *everything is perishing* are not applicable (to him),

Because he is in *except*, he has transcended *not* (nonentity): whosoever is in *except* has not passed away (perished) (*Masnavi* I: 3051).

The above verses are told by the lion. Lion here is a metaphor for God. The wayfarer should negate his virtual existence and ignore his ego and selfishness to get rid of all limitations. The annihilated person is really nothing and lives in nothingness although he thinks that he is alive and exists. When the mystic negates his virtual existence, he is apparently annihilated but in fact he has gained immortal life in the union with God. Rumi explains the negation of the self in "*The story of the person who knocked at a friend's door: his friend from within asked who he was: he said, 'Tis I,' and the friend answered, 'Since thou art thou, I will not open the door: I know not any friend that is 'I.'*"

A certain man came and knocked at a friend's door: his friend asked him, "Who art thou, O trusty one?"

He answered, "I." The friend said, "Be gone, 'tis not the time (for thee to come in): at a table like this there is no place for the raw."

Save the fire of absence and separation, who (what) will cook the raw one? Who (what) will deliver him from hypocrisy?

The wretched man went away, and for a year in travel (and) in separation from his friend he was burned with sparks of fire.

That burned one was cooked: then he returned and again paced to and fro beside the house of his comrade. He knocked at the door with a hundred fears and respects, lest any disrespectful word might escape from his lips.

His friend called to him, "Who is at the door?" He answered, "'Tis thou art at the door, O charmer of hearts."

"Now," said the friend, "since thou art I, come in, O myself: there is not room in the house for two I's (*Masnavi* I: 3056- 3063)

The secrets of truth are understood by annihilated man. However, the egoists and deniers are deaf and dumb to these secrets. As the customer of tongue is only ear and other parts of body cannot show reaction to the words that are uttered by tongue, man should only purify himself to hear the secrets of truth. "Only to the senseless is this sense confided: the tongue hath no customer save the ear" (*Masnavi* I: 14). Rumi believes that you have to leave your partial reason and physical ear. You have to listen to the ear of heart to be in union with God. Thus, he states: "Let thy mind go, and then be mindful! Close thine ear, and then listen" (*Masnavi* III: 1291).

The nonexistent man, who has annihilated his virtual and apparent existence, is the best creature. He has been annihilated in relation to the divine attributes. However, he has reached to the union with God and immortality. In other words, he has annihilated his human attributes in order to have divine attributes and find his position in union with God. Rumi states: "Such a non-existent one who hath gone from himself (become selfless) is the best of beings, and the great (one among them)./He hath passed away (*fanā*) in relation to (the passing away of his attributes in) the Divine attributes, (but) in passing away (from selfhood) he really hath the life everlasting (*baqā*). (*Masnavi* IV: 398-399).

In the following sections, union, love, and annihilation will be comparatively discussed in Blake's poetry.

### Union in Blake's Poetry

According to Abrams (1973:257), Blake believes that The Old & New Testaments could be considered as the perfect codes of Art in order to represent the overall biblical story of man's separation from the Edenic world, the historical account in the world of separation and his reunion in the restored Eden through his mythology and poetry

with a different focus on the original references. Blake's mythological foundation, or creative paintings are not concerned with transcendent and superior God, rather "The Universal Man" who unites deity and divinity in himself and thus is considered as "the Human Form Divine". By the same token, Blake's prophetic books recount different stages of the separation and union of the Universal Man, whose mythological account of occurrence is the shared depiction of the past and possible future of each human being. The process of separation is acted out by what Blake calls *Giant Forms*. Blake's Universal Man, thus, plays an important role in his mythology who is called "Albion" elsewhere.

Abrams (1973: 257) states that Blake's founding image is noticeably in accordance to the primal man or Ur-Adam, the ancient mythical being, who falls into division and separation. It is believed that Blake's fundamental principle in this tradition associates essential good with union and essential evil with separation. Blake's Eden is the perfect spiritual state of union which is in parallel with the idealistic community of *Universal Brotherhood*. Blake's Universal Man in this original state was not sexually divided. This Universal Man unifies all of human beings as well as the universes. His fall was a fall into separation which is regarded as separation of unity of man, and he has been separated into lonely beings as well as a strange physical world. The fall overlaps with man's creation as well as that of nature in a way that one may normally experience and understand these entities.

The fall of man could be considered as falling into division. On the other hand, when the process is reversed man is resurrected to union. In Christianity, Jesus is the unifying code. Blake in his mythology identifies Jesus with the human imagination retaining dimly at the extreme limitations of the separated state to be regarded as the redeemable vision of the original union and the capability of reconstructing it once more. Blake states: "All Things are comprehended in their Eternal Forms in the Divine body of the Saviour ... The Human Imagination." (Cited by Abrams, 1973:258-259). This idea obliges Los, who is the symbol of imagination, to find itself in the context of art, and bring the separated humanity back to union. This universal union organizes the overjoyed apocalypse indicated in the Ninth Night of *The Four Zoas*. Thus, man recognizes that even external nature could be considered as his own dehumanized and alienated self:

The Lamb of God has rent the Veil of Mystery soon to return  
In Clouds & Fires around the rock & the Mysterious tree  
As the seed waits Eagerly watching for its flower & fruit  
Anxious its little soul looks out into the clear expanse  
To see if hungry winds are abroad with their invisible army  
So Man looks out in tree & herb & fish & bird & beast  
Collecting up the scatterd portions of his immortal body (*Four Zoas* 8-114[110].2-7;E358).

Thus, in the reunion of man with the divinity, the pain and pang of separation bursts into the blissful life of an everlasting joy:

I shall cast off my death clothes & Embrace Tharmas again  
For Lo the winter melted away upon the distant hills  
And all the black mould sings (*Four Zoas* 9-132.22-24; E401).

In Blake's mythology everything is separated from a divine Man and consequently will be returned into him. Thus, the entire image of life is circular. In other words, Blake's restoration is believed to be a returning of separated man to his original unity. To state the matter differently, man gets rid of his continual round of separation and becomes united with the divinity.

Abrams (1973:260) states that Blake, similar to his German contemporaries, believes that the sequence of human history as well as the standard personal life could be considered as a return and a progression as well. It is not really fair to state that Romanticism was known based on the idea of the noble savage as well as the cultural impression of a return to an initial phase of easeful and simple "nature" which has no conflict since there is no complexity and differentiation. Quite the reverse, Blake and generally major Romantic writers, believe that regaining the union is the main objective for human being which is supposed to be received by perpetual effort. Blake calls this union an "organized" unity, a symmetry of contrary forces which keeps all the powers and supremacies of culture and intellection. Blake identified the strong point of cultured man's desire for the modest self-unity of primitive beings and infants' life. To do so, he created "Beulah" as the inferior heaven of disorganized innocence where there is no dispute and opposition. However, Beulah is a peace-loving domain only in the deleterious sense that there are no challenging contraries, and its residents delight in only such original safety as Blake states:

Beulah is evermore Created around Eternity; appearing  
To the Inhabitants of Eden, around them on all sides.  
But Beulah to its Inhabitants appears within each district  
As the beloved infant in his mothers bosom round incircled  
With arms of love & pity & sweet compassion (*Milton* 30.8-30.12, E129).

Blake employed a doctrine in his mythology of creation by which human being, revealing the fundamental virtue of "energy," should find his way through a simple purity and innocence in order to reach to a higher and greater

heaven of "organized innocence". Blake, in this process, allocates the essential role to the arts and imagination. Los works willfully in order to build the city of Golgonooza. According to Northrop Frye's concise and coherent clarification of Blake's image, Golgonooza is the symbol of the social and collective role of art. Once this construction is over, nature which is its framework will be hit away and human being will reside in it. Thus, Golgonooza will be considered as the New Jerusalem, the city of God, which is the complete form of all civilization and human culture (cited by Abrams, 1973:261)

The dominant theme of *The Four Zoas* has indeed been the fall and separation of man's faculty of imagination and its knowledge in experience to the point at which it is talented of the highest systematically human art. Equally, Los, as the category of all creative artificers, fits in Blake. Thus, the theme has also been the perfection of Blake's individual awareness and poetic authority. Accordingly, as the task had initiated with the epic declaration of Urthona's separation in the figure of Los, it ends with Los's retrieval of self-unity, in the achievement of "Science":

The Sun arises from his dewy bed & the fresh airs  
 Play in his smiling beams giving the seeds of life to grow  
 And the fresh Earth beams forth ten thousand thousand springs  
 of life Urthona is arisen in his strength no longer now  
 Divided from Enitharmon no longer the Spectre Los  
 Where is the Spectre of Prophecy where the delusive Phantom  
 Departed & Urthona rises from the ruinous walls  
 In all his ancient strength to form the golden armour of science  
 For intellectual War The war of swords departed now  
 The dark Religions are departed & sweet Science reigns (*Four Zoas* 9-139.1-10; E407).

Once the regained form of Vala is united with Jerusalem as the real and true beauty which is considered to be the feminine supplement of man's imagination, she could play her important but supplementary role in completing the mystical union with the Universal Man. According to Abrams (1973:264), Blake's mythology denotes that all natural things not only turn into human but also reunify, without losing individuality, into the Human Form Divine:

All Human Forms identified even Tree Metal Earth & Stone. all  
 Human Forms identified, living going forth & returning wearied  
 Into the Planetary lives of Years Months Days & Hours reposing  
 And then Awakening into his Bosom in the Life of Immortality (Jerusalem: 99.1-4, 258).

In "Night the Ninth," the problems of persecution and oppression are inverted in the chaos of the Last Judgment:

With thunderous noise & dreadful shakings rocking to & fro  
 The heavens are shaken & the Earth removed from its place  
 The foundations of the Eternal hills discovered  
 The thrones of Kings are shaken they have lost their robes & crowns  
 The poor smite their oppressors they awake up to the harvest  
 The naked warriors rush together down to the sea shore  
 Trembling before the multitudes of slaves now set at liberty (*Four Zoas* 9-117.15-21; E387).

The final upheaval of all rulers and oppressors that worldly uprisings experienced but were unsuccessful to succeed will be achieved successfully on the last day. The symbol of "harvest" signifies the process of collecting and discarding that indicates the development of man's spirit on the Day of Judgment.

As dead people are revived, "Lamb of God", Christ, comes back to life and solves the problems of institutionalized and traditional religions. The heavenly and holy City of Jerusalem is considered to be the real church of God. The various types of religions are only shadowy copies of that real religion where the church and God are united. In that place, man's separate selves are reunified, and man is in union with the divine.

Thus shall the male & female live the life of Eternity,  
 Because the Lamb of God Creates himself a bride & wife  
 That we his Children evermore may live in Jerusalem  
 Which now descendeth out of heaven (*Four Zoas* 9-122.15-18; E391).

In the preface of *Milton*, Blake inquires for a perpetuation of Christ's prophecy in modern England. He believes that through mental challenges a Jerusalem must be established in this Land.

I will not cease from Mental Fight,  
 Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand  
 Till we have built Jerusalem  
 In England's green & pleasant Land (*Milton Preface*: 13-16,  
 E95).

The poet-prophet's task is to divert man's attention from his fallen state toward a restored state where he can perceive union with divinity. An impulsive inspiration leads Blake to rise above his "earthly lineaments" and reach to the world of eternity. Blake's creativity allows him to be united with Los:

He kissed me and wishd me health.  
 And I became One Man with him arising in my strength:  
 Twas too late now to recede. Los had enterd into my soul:  
 His terrors now posses'd me whole! I arose in fury & strength (*Milton* 22: 11-14, E117).

Act of faith in William Blake's world of imagination empowers him to strengthen his capacities of perception and understanding. In the poem *Milton*, Blake's union with Los signifies the completion of one phase of unity process that originated at the end of the Bard's Song. However, in each event, the belief in the influence of love, annihilation precedes union.

### Love in Blake's Poetry

As noted earlier, union with the divinity has some preconditions and in order to be united with the Absolute Being. Love and sympathy are essential factors of the mystical pathway. It is believed that if a mystic leaves out himself of love as one of the most important factors of mystical development, he or she is not worthy to be known as a mystic. This development also highlights the significant difference between the illuminated path and the path of darkness. Thus, on the Path of Light, man is opened to the state of union which is a condition where man experiences a sense of unity and nonseparation with the all. The state of union is, in general, a state of deep enjoyment and kind-heartedness. It is supposed that those who do not believe in true love have inevitably disqualified themselves from the development of inner revolution whereby higher levels of union state may be achieved. This is why love is an inherent part of the process of union. As Rumi, Blake also contends that discursive reasoning is not that much efficient in this way. Accordingly, Kevin Fischer (2017) 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*:

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 (*Jerusalem* pl. 29:5-7, E175)

William Blake like Rumi believes in both earthly love and the divine love. While he rejects the corporeal love, he appreciates heavenly true love. In the poem "The Clod and the Pebble", Blake provides two challenging versions on the subject of love. In this poem, a clod of clay justifies that true love is self-sacrificing:

Love seeketh not Itself to please,  
 Nor for itself hath any care;  
 But for another gives its ease,  
 And builds a Heaven in Hells despair (*The Clod and The Pebble*:1-4,E19)

In the next verses, the pebble replies that love is selfish:

Love seeketh only Self to please,  
 To bind another to Its delight:  
 Joys in anothers loss of ease  
 And builds a Hell in Heavens despite (*The Clod and The Pebble*: 9-12, E19).

As the technique of personification indicates in the poem, Blake tries to convey the different aspects of human nature through the concepts of love. The clod of clay signifies an innocent insight of the world. In other words, the clod of clay symbolizes the self-denying love which can pave the way for man to be in union with God. The pliable characteristic of the clod signifies the unselfish love. Another trace of the true love throughout the poem could be found in the phrase "trodden with cattle's feet" signifying self-denying nature. On the other hand, in the preceding stanza, a "heaven in hell's despair" is made by the clod of clay, although it sacrifices itself.

Having discussed clay as the symbol of true love, Blake in the last stanza of poem talks over the pebble as the representation of selfish love as he states: "Love seeketh only Self to please". The pebble represents experienced love which is in contrast to inexperienced love of clod of clay. The version of love offered by the pebble is founded on meeting the needs of the self in the expense of others. In other words, the pebble seeks to please itself and the beloved is just a mean to reach to the mentioned end. Thus, contrary to the clod of clay, the last line of the poem mentions that the pebble is making a hell out of the existing heaven. This declaration shows that the pebble appears not to be as hopeful as the clod of clay. Apparently, pebble has learned through the earthly love to save itself and enjoy at the expense of others.





According to Wicksteed (1928), Blake conveys his message more clearly through the supplementary artwork to the poem. In the painting, one can see different creatures such as sheep and cows, called cattle in Blake's time, a worm, a leaping frog as well as a sitting frog. The cows in the artwork are also considered to represent experience, whereas the sheep represent innocence (cited in <http://www.unc.edu/~rlglover/index3.html>). It is believed that the cows could represent earthly love due to their rough nature. On the other hand, sheep could be the symbol of true love as they are more delicate such as the clod of clay.

"The clod and Pebble" conveys a mystical and earthly interpretation of love concerned with the union and separation respectively. Blake's explanation of the clod of clay and the pebble via symbolic images indicates how the perception on love can be subject to separation and union. Succeeding that notion, one who falls in earthly love may behave arrogantly and selfishly and consequently becomes "hardened" and tough. On the other hand, one who is a true lover will become soft and sacrifices oneself to be one with the beloved. According to Hyland (1996:31), Blake clearly cannot sympathize with the Pebble's perspective. However, he notifies that such is the world of separation. The message of Goodness is every so often rejected and crushed down whereas that of evil succeeds.

### Annihilation in Blake's Poetry

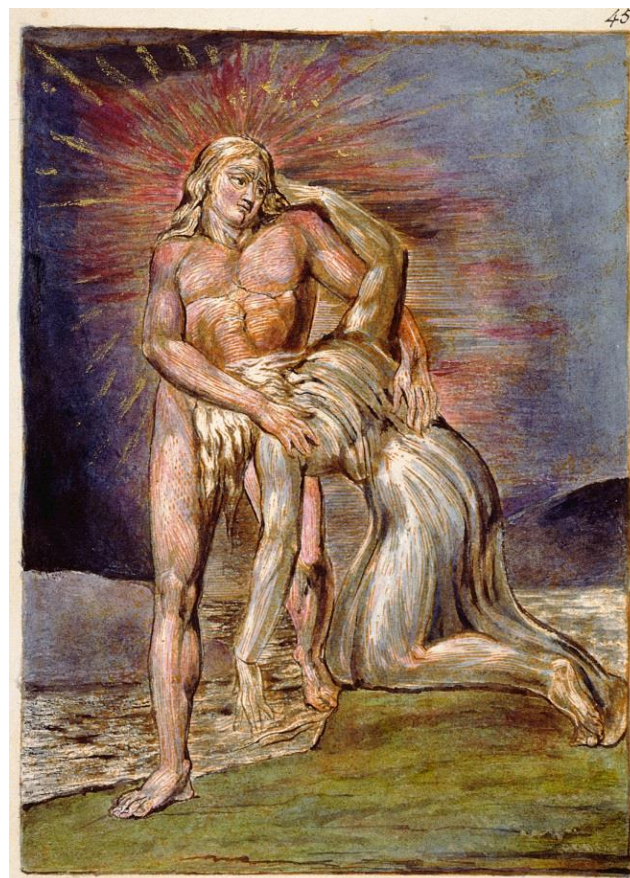
A pointed quest into the self is an essential stage in the poet's development. Blake believes that one must look within first. Thus, In the poem *Milton*, he states:

And thou O Milton art a State about to be Created  
Called Eternal Annihilation that none but the Living shall  
Dare to enter: & they shall enter triumphant over Death  
And Hell & the Grave! States that are not, but ah! Seem to be.  
Judge then of thy Own Self: thy Eternal Lineaments explore  
What is Eternal & what Changeable? & what Annihilable! (*Milton* 32:27-31,E132)

Milton falls within himself and evaluates the dispersed fragments of his own self. He is supposed to differentiate between what is perpetual and what is temporary. Crucial to the procedure of evaluating the self is a

conflict with that devastating fragment of man's identity which Blake entitles the Selfhood. This destructive identity repeatedly deters man's transcendent development. Blake believes only through annihilating the Selfhood man could be hopeful to partake in the visionary understanding of the poem. If the Selfhood is not annihilated, one is not capable of becoming a true poet, as the Selfhood constantly hinders man's creativity.

Conversely, according to Abrams (1973:266), "when man, "all self-annihilated," shall repossess the alienated parts in an act of all-comprehensive sympathy, he will affect the redemption prophesied in the Second Coming". When William Blake mentions annihilation in his poetry, he is referring to total destruction of the Selfhood. This annihilation is an inner change. It is not achieved by violence or force but by clemency and acceptance of the Selfhood as a comrade. Equally, Blake represents annihilation as not an only event but a life style. As the Selfhood constantly declares itself, the course of clemency and forgiveness should perpetually be alive. Blake understands the developments occurring in different people as also occurring in Albion the One Man who is supposed to be the body and form of which all human beings are part. As plate 45 of the *Book of Milton* illustrates, Milton annihilates his Selfhood when the poem reaches its climax. The conflict has been over, however not in triumph of Milton over the Selfhood. The Selfhood is hugged sympathetically although it is now powerless.



I see thee strive upon the Brooks of Arnon. There a dread  
And awful Man I see, oercoverd with the mantle of years.  
I behold Los & Urizen. I behold Orc & Tharmas;  
The Four Zoa's of Albion & thy Spirit with them striving  
In Self-annihilation giving thy life to thy enemies (*Milton* 40:4-8, E141)

Blake left this image open-ended. As the whole book is about Milton, the standing man is believed to be Milton; however it could be considered as Jesus or Los or Blake himself, whose story is narrated through Milton. The leaning character might be considered as Ololon, which is Milton's emanation. It could be also considered as Satan or Urizen. The event depicted is annihilation, clemency, and being united to the Selfhood via self-awareness or recognition. Possibly it is best believing in moving beyond the limiting barriers of the self into the infinite being in Eternity through understanding and imagination. The clemency and annihilation is reciprocal and mutual.

Blake believes that the true artist could also get rid of the notion of the self. As the inspired artist Milton in Blake's poetry says:

Laws of Eternity  
Are not such: know thou: I come to Self-Annihilation



Such are the Laws of Eternity that each shall mutually  
Annihilate himself for others good (*Milton* 38:33-36,E 139).

Blake believes that Milton as the artist is not afraid of annihilating the self. On the other hand, the Spectre, from a completely egotistic view point, claims that self-annihilation merely demolishes. The Spectre claims that destroying the Self can merely turn out to be an evil and overwhelming act, while Milton identifies the good that originates from annihilating the selfish ego. Divine humanity overwhelms the ego for the sake of others. The self egoistically tries to reside in the corporeal world as ultimate. As Fry (2004:65) explains, the true Self can emerge if the Selfhood is annihilated. The true self acts more identical to an artist who has the vision of union, with the perception that generally selfhood is being in ideas and abstractions. According to Frye (2004:64), vision is the only conceivable therapy for this selfhood. In other words, one can get rid of this selfhood if he or she understands that this world is the world of separation and consequently not definitive and ultimate. Blake believes that the artist should look to the unified and integrated existence. He or she should be aware of the fact that as soon as the self is annihilated, the eternity will reunite all people.

## Conclusion

Although the themes of union, love, and annihilation as unconsciousness concepts entered to literature from religious and psychological fields, this mood of union and the wish to return to the true home is devoted to poetry of Sufism as well as Romanticism. The traces of mystical union could be found in both Persian and Romantic poetry and the mind of both poets are engaged with the wish to return to the true home. Mystical Persian poetry as well as Romantic one is occupied by the theme of union due to their background of thought, poetical spirit, and flawlessness. The stories of *Masnavi* and the prophetic books of William Blake encompass the wish to return to the true home. The nostalgic setting and notions of return to the true home are perceived in the poetry of Rumi and Blake. They recounted various allegorical stories through poetry in order to show their desire to return to their true home and origin while suggesting different traditions for eternal journey.

The relationship between, the infinite, Absolute self-existent and irreversible and the finite individual who is trapped in the time-based order is inconceivably close though challenging to describe and clarify. A painstaking study of the works of Jalaluddin Rumi and William Blake indicates that their poetic ideas conjoin regardless of the variegated difference by reviewing their poetic art, craft and creations. The two poets put aside nationalistic affectations and the cultural tensions. Some of the most noticeable themes in Rumi and Blake's poetry are those of union, love and annihilation. Blake's poetry, though mainly biblical in its descriptions and symbols, is apocalyptic in scope and style. On the other hand, Rumi's mysticism is in keeping with Islamic tradition. Rumi throw-outs all the narrow national barriers and prays for human beings to be granted with an atmosphere where the mind is fearless and the heart is filled with joy. Moreover, Blake's true home also exists in imagination and vision. He has presented the invisible immutable, formless existence via visible things. Although born in different geographical areas, Rumi and Blake seemed to share a mystical affinity. Therefore, it is believed that both of them are elevated mystical figures sharing the essence although they are greatly different in the application of manners and expression. Much like the Sufi poet, Rumi, who super-ordinates Islamic values to Islam, Blake eludes the snares of constricted fundamentalism. Rumi and Blake as the two great mystical poets dreamt of a perception and intuition of the Supernatural, of a direct observation of the Divinity. They are the emanation of the Divinity in human soul as well as the world. Indeed, their poetry can be entitled an invocation which incarnates the soul in human language.

To sum up, the present article scrutinized 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.

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