L.H. Myers, like most of his sensitive contemporaries, expresses his deep concern for the modern spiritual malaise which he described as "the deep-seated spiritual vulgarity." His major concern in his novels is man's quest for salvation. This search is best exemplified in the development of Prince Jali who serves as a thematic link between *The Root and the Flower* and *The Pool of Vishnu*. Myers' thematic concern reflects the problems of harmony between the outer and the inner modes of life and an attempt to discover a solution to them.

His major characters, Rajah Amar, Hai Khan and Prince Jali are in quest of what is true and meaningful in life. They appear in the first book of the tetralogy and are carried over to the last book *The Pool of Vishnu* (1940), where first Rajah Amar is dropped and then Hari Khan fades out of the picture. Jali alone, succeeds in this quest and attains inner enlightenment - "the grace of communion with God". This quest for inner enlightenment reaches its climax with the pantheistic discovery that the real which is at the heart of the universe is identical with the real life in man. The words of the Guru in *The Pool of Vishnu* embody this idea: "You know that there is a divine meaning in the life of the world - in
the life of men, of you, and of me."

Several influences turned Myers's mind to contemporary ethical and spiritual problems. From his father, founder of the Society for Psychical Research (1882) and the leading spiritualist of his day - Myers imbibed the liberal interest in religion and looked askance at dogmatic religion. He was interested in proving the immortality of the soul through scientific research. His moral earnestness is evidenced by his keen interest in Eastern philosophy (Buddhist), and Christian thought and the psychological and archetypal patterns traced by Freud and Jung. His ideas were shaped by his interest in philosophy and psychology which inherited from his father and the influence of Martin Buber, George Orwell and Max Plowman.

In the novel Strange Glory (1936), Myers expresses his spiritual view of life. The mystic Tom Wentworth, dwelling in the lonely Louisiana forests, appears to be one of Myers's masks when he tells Paulina, "I live here, not in order to be alone, but to feel connected. It so happens that in this place I feel particularly aware of the intertwinning of our spiritual roots......... I want to feel the essential and not the particular, the archetypal and not the historic." He is also aware of the presence of evil and demonic forces which are at work in the world. Myers interprets the meaning of 'absolute fear', "I tell you" says one of the characters in The Pool of Vishnu, "there is Terror beyond the Terrible ........... The things to be feared are limited, but Fears is without limits ........... the Hell into which you sink alone.
It is the solitary dark where all courage, and all love, and all hope, are dead. They are of reality, but fear is of unreality - which has no bounds, no law."^4

Another important element in Myers's early mental make-up was his attitude towards sex and its hidden mystries. At the age of fifteen when he was spending his holiday in a Swiss hotel with his parents, he was seduced by a girl of seventeen. At this stage, sex and its magic confused his mind and he came to know its "forbidden pleasures and hidden mystries."^5 When, at the age of eighteen, he lost his father, he had to face harsh realities of the wide world where money is beckoned as a great power. Gai Eaton rightly points out, "The power of sex and power of money! These were the secret rulers of our lives ........ even of the elegant life of Edwardian society, with which he (Myers) soon became familiar."^6

The final shaping influence of Myers's early life was the breakdown of health. He was obliged to spend two years on Colorado, the lovely island whose strange atmosphere left a lasting impression on his mind. This impact finds its expression in the description of the Indian desert in The Near and the Far (1929).

II

The Root and the Flower (1935) is a harmonious and living work of art, for it presents man as basically moral and spiritual. Myers himself says that his chief concern is the
exposure of "the deep-seated spiritual vulgarity that lies at the heart of our civilisation." He explicitly states the problem in the opening Chapter of The Near and the Far (1929):

He clung to the truth of appearances as something equal to the truth of what underlay them. There were two deserts: one that was a glory for the eye, another that it was weariness to trudge. Deep in his heart he cherished the belief that some day the near and the far would meet.

The 'two deserts' here symbolise the two worlds - the world of reality and the world of appearances, 'the far being the life within us, and 'the near' the life outside us. and it is clearly suggested that the road for Prince Jali is the progressive realisation of harmony between these two modes of life. Irene Simon rightly says that the principal theme of The Root and the Flower is the problem of the "good life" which involves "a right conception of the nature of the universe and man's place in it", and this theme is carried over to The Pool of Vishnu (1940) where Jali discovers the key to the good life .............__ and arrives at a definite philosophy under the guidance of the Guru.

In the appearance and reality context, Myers is keen to show how man borrows his identity from the surrounding world, suppresses his true self and alienates himself from the truth of his being. In order to achieve a sense of personal identity he takes shelter behind the world of appearances, the realm of materialistic life, of flux and decay. In this process he becomes "rootless", loses his faith in mankind and is led to form a debased vision of life and the men around him. He
stands in isolation surrounded by "the darkness of the night in his mind". And this darkness, as Myers puts it, is the darkness of "the whole long night of humanity's suffering and evil-doing"[1].

Myer's characters generally represent permanent impulses of meanness and triviality which pervade at all social classes. But those of his characters which are spiritually aware, seem to raise the problem of the "moral worth of human existence"[2]. Myers condemns the materialistic approach of the contemporary society, for it leads towards inner frustration and disappointment. G.H. Bantock says in this regard: "Myers realises the power of money; from this springs his condemnation of the material spirit of the present day society,"[1] Myers is, undoubtedly, critical of the materialistic approach and advocates the necessity of preserving the spiritual vision of life.

In The Root and the Flower, (1935) Myers presents both the problem and its solution. Simply stated, the problem is the problem of adjustment to the world - a problem which is related to the question of appearance and reality. The answer is that it can be solved through the realization of life's essential truth, by putting off the mask that veils it. And this answer is more explicit in his last novel The Pool of Vishnu (1940). In this connection G.S. Fraser rightly remarks: "It is with spiritual rather than ordinary social problem that Myers himself concerned"[1]. In his Preface to The Pool of
Vishnu Myers himself says: "I have made little attempt to conceal my ethical pre-occupations".\textsuperscript{15}

Myers is one of the significant figures of the age who have realised the seriousness of this inner or spiritual crisis, and whose works offer a view of life, a philosophical or religious synthesis to the agonised soul of tortured humanity. He probes into the basic causes of the modern malaise and concludes that there is no escape from the nemesis of a purely materialistic civilization except in a return to the life of faith in God and religion. Myers points out, "Religion, he would say, was nothing more than a refuge - even for those who were not conscious that they stood in need of one," and "To sum up, a religion was what every honest man wanted".\textsuperscript{16}

In The Root and the Flower, Daniyal's Camp shows the inner emptiness of refined society. It is a world with twisted values about life and art. Jali is bewitched by the "little paradise of artifice and art,"\textsuperscript{17} and revels in an expanding sense of sophistication as a means of escape from the feeling of spiritual aloneness. But while watching of the performance of a burlesque at the camp, Jali notices with surprise that each person there "wears the same-like smile."\textsuperscript{18} As an enthusiastic visitor to the camp, he gets into the spirit of the place. But when his eyes begin to open to the degenerate morals of the camp, its early glamour turns into an evil shadow. Jali said to himself, "This is like a evil dream."\textsuperscript{19}
It is the base, the ignoble, despicable world where vulgarity passes for art and refinement for truth. The Camp is a symbol of the triviality and shallow outlook on life that puts on the appearances of refinement and art.

It is at the Camp that Jali discovers how villainy is practised under the pretext of art. Conscious of the Camp's sinister atmosphere and of the malign powers working there he regards it as "the nest of snakes". He prefers to remain trivial-minded in order to find an escape from this world of evil doing:

In a world so full of the drab, the tedious, and the terrifying, it was after all rather fine to remain trivial-minded and to enjoy one's trivial-mindedness.

But Jali soon comes to know that to escape from the terror of the world into trivial-mindedness is no escape, for it is not without its overshadowing horror. He realises the necessity to discover a way of escape from this place of terror and illusory pleasure into something that provides fearlessness and blissful self-realisation.

Jali, filled with disgust and hatred, understood quite clearly "What the Camp needed - it needed as imperatively as his father needed the truth of Buddhism and his mother, the love of God". Here Myers seems to indicate that in a state of disillusionment and embarrassment man requires some kind of religion and philosophy to find a meaning in the universe as a whole - a meaning that would link the courses of the
farthest stars to the smallest movements of the human heart". In sum, Myer's acute awareness of the spiritual problems of modern life, made him realise that modern man requires a spiritual dimension to his existence.

Myers, through his writing, focusses our attention on the problem of religious belief which suffered a great setback in the early years of the present century. "Never before" observes Paul Brunton, "were so many people plunged in so much uncertainty, so much perplexity and unsettlement". The post-war writer found it difficult to accept Christian metaphysical framework as a source of values which could provide him with a satisfactory view of existence. L.H. Myers deplored that, "those simple prayers to the simple Christian God did not satisfy him".

Myers rejects Christianity and other missionary religions, for they lay stress on renunciation of worldly life and suggest a rigorous and ascetical discipline to attain spiritual realization. "Christianity elucidated", writes Myers, "nothing for him; on the contrary, it insisted upon a set of beliefs that seemed to him so arbitrary that he could only wonder how they had ever arisen in anybody's mind". According to Myers, in Christianity and other traditional and dogmatic religions it was difficult "to believe in so many things that were obviously not true". In Christianity, the existence of soul on this earth, its continuity in heaven, Christ's promise for salvation, etc. are things in which one
could not believe. Myers regrets, "To us such a doctrine is so fantastically childish in its want of perspective that it is difficult to keep it in mind when talking to a Christian".

The collapse of Christianity resulted in agnosticism in matters of belief, and indifference in regard to value. The spirit of the age, in the twenties, observes David Daiches, "was agnostic and Left Wing". Myers shows his great concern for spiritual bankruptcy of the present age. Rajah Amar seems to become a spokesman of Myers when he says:

What a ghastly spiritual bankruptcy awaits those unfortunate Christians who lose their faith! Completely devoid of a true understanding of the moral and spiritual order of the universe, they are like children thrown out of the nursery into a wilderness.

This 'spiritual vulgarity' "often passes without giving offence and even without being noticed". The moral degeneracy, disillusionment and isolation of modern life can only be overcome through a transcendental experience or spiritual awareness. Myers believes that it is the religious experience through which a man can enjoy, "a sense of interior illumination of direct awareness of the Numinous, or of communion with the Divine". He seems to be in search of a philosophy to arrive at a solution to the ills of modern civilization. Jali enters this stage when he reflects on the cause of his unhappiness:
The trouble is that I have no settled standard of values. Though Myers rejects Christianity and other dogmatic religions, salvation remain his highest spiritual ideal. And he, conducts his search for transcendental experience outside the Christian tradition. G.H. Bantock rightly observes: "This provides the basis for Myers's belief that conventional morality is not a safe guide to conduct". Myers regrets that "Christianity had presented itself to him either as a system of theology which he could not accept ........ the highest spiritual values were ommitted."

In his search for "a system of thought" and some form of transcendence, completely divorced from dogmatic religion, makes Myers tries other means of Salvation. G.H. Bantock rightly points out that "There may be more than one road to Nirvana but that does not mean to say that any road will reach there or that a moral democracy is possible. If the temperament leads the pilgrim along one road rather than another, that temperament has to be guided by a fastidious moral integrity which springs from the being's deepest sanction and corresponds to the profoundest spiritual resources of the universe". In order to arrive at truth or blissful self-realisation Myers comes to Eastern religion and philosophy. Myers must have done sufficient reading in Indian thought and philosophy before he undertook to write The Root and the Flower, (1935) and The Pool of Vishnu (1940). One cannot but agree with Professor G.H. Bantock when he points
out that, "He read widely in Eastern philosophy and religion, as is obvious from The Near and the Far, .........."[1]. L.H. Myers presents the spiritual development of his hero, Prince Jali, who is a sensitive, speculative youth, haunted by a sense of terror and the mystery of the world. It is only in the spiritual experience at the pool of Vishnu that Jali gains the knowledge of his real identity, of his inner self and emphasized in Indian tradition.

III

L.H. Myers shows his acute awareness of the Indian tradition by using Indian Myths and symbols in his novels. In the opening of the first book of tetralogy, The Near and the Far (1929) Myers presents the inward feelings of Prince Jali. He is introduced as a sensitive boy, standing on the balcony of the old palace. The Palace is the central emblem in the tetralogy symbolising the Great World, the world of appearance, the realm of material and pulsating life. The problem before Jali, as it appears, is how to adjust himself in the world, without killing the essential self in him. He feels that he is a small boy lamentably alone. Jali has an epiphany. An ordinary thought of strange sight deepens his sense of life's dreadfulness. A snake is moving "slowly but cautiously along the gutter, .......... in a constant danger of slipping over the edge .......... nursing a cold anger"; it moves forward without noticing "the little plant bent downwards by every puff of wind," and "beating its thin twigs against the gutter", till a strong gust makes the twigs thrash
down upon the snake's head; it over balances and falls. This strange sight makes Jali look upon the world as "a place of mystery and terror".

The symbolic images of snake, gutter and plant are not accidental but reflect in their totality, a common Hindu attitude towards the world as a place of mystery, where misery, separateness, and the sense of impending fatal gloom keep man snake-like writhing in the gutter that is the world. Through these images Myers seems to show that the world of Samsara is 'a place of mystery and terror that bears a striking resemblance to the world of Samsara described in Mahabharata, the Indian epic.

The world of samsara is ...... a terrible jungle full of wild beasts and venomous serpents which seek to devour you. In terror of these, helpless man vainly seeks a way of escape, but he loses his way and falls into a pit ........... When his gaze is turned to the bottom of the pit, he sees a gigantic serpent patiently waiting for his fall ........... there grew on the edge of the pit a tree on which there was a honey-comb; ........... and this diverted him from the terrors of the pit but his comfort was short-lived, for he saw that the roots of the tree were being nibbled away ........... the days and nights of all consuming Time. And he saw that the tree must inevitably come crashing down and carry him off with it into the bottom of the pit where the mighty serpent lay eager to devour him.

In the Indian parable, the pit stands for ignorance, the tree with a honey comb represents a cluster of illusions that cling to individuality, serpent represents venomous and mighty forces of all-devouring Time. All these images are employed
by Myers, more or less, in the Indian context to describe an inner condition which provokes the sense of fright in Jali's mind and becomes his quest for reality.

The opening of the tetralogy is then in line with the Indian metaphysical problem that starts with the realization that man suffers from a sense of insecurity and dread of death till he arrives at a higher stage of consciousness where discovers a spiritual reality which is beyond time and space. Myers thinks that man suffers only because he cannot choose rightly between the world of appearance and the world of reality. To choose the world of appearance or Maya is to "identify ourselves with our apparent selves" and thereby to cut ourselves off from our real nature, the universal or spiritual in us. The real choice lies between "seeing and being". Jali's problem is not "to be or not to be" after the Western psychological fashion. It is after the typical Indian tradition, "to be or to see". That is to be entangled in the process of becoming or to perceive Reality. Myers aptly says:

To live in and for reality was to dwindle and fade, to accept appearances was to wax fat and grow strong. It was by cultivating the appearances and illusions belonging to the outer man that you not only offered to others but obtained for yourself a substantial and intelligible.

Here Myers explicitly suggests that falsity is the general human condition and that Man's attraction for something tangible, something graspable makes him overlook the reality
of the spirit. Myers firmly believes that "what was graspable could not be a spirit - it must be illusory - in short Maya." This falsity, according to Indian thought, is the outcome of ignorance (avidya), which mistakes the empirical world for the supreme reality.

The chief aim of Indian thought is "to release men from the spellbound acceptance of the projection and externalizations of their own Shakti." "The world" as Zimmer rightly says "is the product of our own Maya or delusion." It is only by piercing the veil of Maya that man can attain his salvation.

Myers considers Karma Marga, as propounded in the Gita, a means to deliverance. He points out: "This is Karma; it is the chief force in the universe in as much as it controls life's gradual progress towards final deliverance." In the state of salvation man realises his oneness with the universe, the fact that the real self in man is identical with the Supreme Reality. It is at Hawa Ghar near the Pool of Vishnu that Jai discovers himself and realises his oneness with the universe - the lingering sun, "the low - hung moon, small bird sounds, leafy silences, scents...... All this he felt, all this he was." To elucidate this point of "the mysticism of identity," Myers quotes the celebrated Vedantic saying: "Tat tvam asi." It is a statement of an experienced fact, of man's spiritual union with the Infinite Being. It points to the identity of Thou, the Atman, with that, the Brahman. In
his quest for truth, Jali realises that Truth is within us. The identity of Brahman and Atman is explicitly asserted in the Upanishads, "What is within us is also without. What is without is also within." According to the Hindu tradition the intellectual quest must deepen into intuitional quest because Reality cannot be understood, it can only be experienced.

Hawa Ghar, where Jali gains inner enlightenment, seems to symbolize "spiritual home" which is closely parallel to Paul Brunton's version of the Overself: "The inner world of the Overself is our true homeland......." Jali's understanding of life deepens and he feels the liberating effect of Hawa Ghar, the new spiritual home. He reflects that his spirit had never been at ease until he came to Hawa Ghar. He begins to "think about the inner spirit as a fish swimming in the deep of the sea." The image of the fish that has a close parallel in the Mahabharata, is deliberately presented by Myers:

The liberated soul is like a fish in the sea ...........

In The Pool of Vishnu, Myers speaks through the character of the Guru and recognises the value of the spirit. He suggests that the higher state of consciousness can be achieved if we do not mask our desires and thoughts. The dungeon incident and the sudden outbreak of roits teach Jali that society can play any significant role in the path of spiritual realisation.
Here, the dungeon is the world of suffering and death. The dungeon experience makes Jali arrive at the much-needed point of complete self-surrender to the Guru. Jali can see "neither the top nor the bottom of dungeon." The bottom is lost in darkness. "The fear of death by suffocation" has taken so terrible a hold on him that he is "struggling against suffocation." The Guru's word are the consoling factor in this predicament: "Take courage! Keep up your heart! We shall emerge alive." The dungeon experience is of vital importance for Jali because it brings him into "so close a contact with the Guru" that he is unable "to think of himself without his communion." It is in accordance with Hindu tradition which emphasises the importance of Guru, the spiritual teacher, in the attainment of one's salvation.

In the 'Indian novels', The Root and the Flowers (1935) and in The Pool of Vishnu (1940), it is obvious that Myers was turning away from the materialistic West with its worship of Mammon, where, as Dr. Radhakrishnan says, 'wealthy people imagine that their wealth is a sign of moral excellence.' Myers, therefore, turned to the East for light and perhaps found in Vishnu a philosophically satisfying symbol of Supereme Being, and a code of ethics equally satisfying to his fastidious mind. The Vishnu Purana describes Vishnu as the highest form of Brahman or the Absolute Reality in Indian Thought. "Vishnu is the highest and most immediate of all the energies of Brahman, the embodied Brahman, formed the whole of Brahman. On him the entire universe is woven and
interwoven; from him is the world, and the world is in him; and he is the whole universe. Vishnu, the lord, consisting of what is perishable as well as what is imperishable, sustains everything, both Spirit and Matter in the form of his ornaments and weapons."

Myers has deliberately chosen the image of Vishnu as the symbol of the spiritual unchanging Reality. He affirms, "Only Vishnu remained. Vishnu would certainly be there for him, if ever he came back." Myers, of course, thinks that it is the eternal search of man's soul for the Supreme Being which caused the ancient Hindu seer Uddalaka to say to his son Svetaketu:

Verily, indeed, my dear, you do not perceive Being here. Verily, indeed, it is here. That which is the finest essence - this whole world has that as its soul. That is Reality. That is Atman. That is Thou, Svetaketu."

"The knowledge of this Reality", says Coomaraswami, "is Release............. To attain this release is the highest end of life." Therefore, Prince Jali at last arrives at the Pool of Vishnu, where in the naturally beautiful and calm atmosphere, he is able to say "Tat Tvam asi" i.e. That art Thou.

L.H. Myers not only, shows his acute awareness of the Vedantic technique of self-enlightenment but also reveals his acquaintance with Hinayana Buddhism for Nirvana. Myers presents
the Hinayana attitude to life and Nirvana in the character of Rajah Amar. As a Hinayana Buddhist, Rajah Amar believes that "Arhat May attain to a state of bliss in this world, but that bliss is not of this world; it arises out of a sense of deliverance from it." L.H. Myers rejects Hinayana Buddhism as it emphasizes the way of renunciation of the world for spiritual enlightenment and peace. Rajah Amar who seldom gets out of his quiet contemplation, fails to cope with the world around him, and finally takes refuge in a Buddhist monastery for pursuing Nirvana. Myers, on the contrary, describes the Hinayana conception of Nirvana without a sense of personal involvement:

In Nirvana all human lives and loves are lost; but the love of human beings for one another is the last of the fetters that men are called upon to cast off.

To grasp the truth and to experience the oneness with reality, Myers seems to advocate Dionysian mysticism. He seems to be aware of Tantric religion i.e. religion of sex which emphasises that "spirit and flesh are one." Through the tantric Yogi who explains the Tantric religion to Rajah Amar, Myers says:

The true religion of a man is that which he lives - and that which all men live is the religion of Creativity, the religion of Sex. Knowingly all men worship Woman and all women worship Man. To understand this in its simplicity is to grasp the truth; to grasp truth is to be in contact with reality.
When Myers says, "there are other ways" to attain salvation, he simply means that sex can be a means to experience Reality.

IV

L.H. Myers is one of those writers of the present age who advocate the mysterious and mystical nature of sexual experience. In his novels he presents through characters, incidents and symbolism the essence of different aspects of Indian thought - Vedantic, Buddhist and Tantric. Unlike D.H. Lawrence he does not render scenes of love-making directly but suggests it through symbolism. Myers, no less than Lawrence, has in Maud Bodkin's words, the 'Bardic quality' in his fictional archetypes that are transfigured thus, "reflecting in some special degree the life within and beyond us." 

Myers's early attitude towards sex was, however, "half-erotic, half-magical which pervades certain passages in his work" because 'at the age of fifteen, when he was staying in a Swiss hotel with his parents, he was seduced by a girl of seventeen. Sex and Magic confused his mind. To Myers at this stage "there is a natural similarity between forbidden pleasures and hidden mysteries." The revelation of sex had brought him to a precocious awareness of the personal life of the adult world. He came to conviction that "The power of sex and the power of money! These were the secret rulers of our lives." 

Myers suggests that the gap between the outer and the inner life, between appearance and reality, is the outcome of
make-believe and that when self-knowledge dawns, the gap is closed in the universe. But it is not only a transcendental experience of Vedantic thought but also a philosophy lived by a Tantric. The followers of Tantrism make the Tantrism their peculiar Veda or Agma and worship the female side of Siva and Kali in her more comprehensive character as the power Shakti (power of Nature). In The Root and the Flower and The Pool of Vishnu, Myers uses the symbol of the Cosmic Mother, Kali, as 'the totality of the universe, the harmonization of all the pairs of opposites'.

Myers shows his awareness of ancient Indian Tantric philosophy through the character of Gunevati, the Yogini of the Goddess Kali who represents the 'religion of sex'. Gunevati initiates not only Prince Jali into sex and life but emotionally involves the elderly Gokal, the Brahmin scholar and librarian in Akber's Court and Prince Salim. To young Jali, life was puzzling and frightening and Kali was to him symbolic of the terrifying and the destructive forces in the world. During one of his assignations with Lalita, Hari Khan is led to a little decaying building in the woods of the royal hunting grounds and finds the gardener’s elder daughter, Gunevati, lying drugged with wine infused with poppy. She is fifteen and on questioning her he identifies her with 'Vamacharis - Flowers of the Left-hand Way'. She is a Yogini, one who represents the goddess.

The way in which Gunevati introduces herself to Hari Khan is very much that of a Tantric:
'Hari came up to her, grasped her beautiful arm and drew her to her feet. At the touch of his hand she at once became self-conscious, cast down her eyes and bent her head'. He stood over her, very close. 'Lovely one, what is your name'? he murmured'. She put her beads upto her lips, and although her face remained hidden he could guess that she was regaining confidence. This was the kind of approach she knew best how to meet. "Tell me what is there to prevent me........ in such in lonely place.......... from plucking this Flower of Delight?"

Her silence gave him his answer.78

When Hari Khan questions her about the Shakti cult of the Goddess Kali, her reply is that of all the Divinities "The great mother is the strongest. Kali is the power." To the question why the worshippers of the goddess perform their rites in secret, Gunevati's answer is that 'they are done' "according to the prescribed rites"79, the Panchatatva or Makarapanchakam or worship with the five Ms, namely Matsya (fish), Mamsa (flesh), Madya (wine), Mudra (parched grain) and Maithuna (Sex).80 Captain Edward Moor in his work The Hindu Pantheon writes, "............ The power and energy of the divine nature in action is personified and worshipped and is termed Sakti ............ the female energy is worshipped through the maternal organ which is regarded as a symbol of self-existent and all productive nature............ The five Ms comprising fish, flesh, wine, grain and woman are used with further mystical diagrams and incantations in midnight orgies in retired places."81

Gunevati represents Shaktism, one of the forms of the Hinduism, which means the worship of Shakti, the consort of
Shiva. This sort of worship requires "the presence of a female as the living representative and the type of goddess." Gunevati, as it is later revealed in novel, is not merely a member of the sect, "She is one of their Yoginis. She embodies the Goddess in their secret rites."

As the goddess of love, Ranee Sita is Myers' symbol of the earthly Aphrodite. Though the lawfully wedded wife of Rajah Amar has renounced the world. The place of human love in Myers' thought is thus substantially stated in the love-affair between Sita and Hari Khan. Sita pleads with Hari, "Couldn't you play with love - instead of letting it be a sad, craving thing?" But she told herself "Oh, it is wonderful to be loved.......... one ought to exist but for love alone - no matter how short the time. One should be perfect - and then one should die." The love of Hari and Sita is the love of primal Man and Woman for each other. Myers symbolically expresses this affinity between two souls in the image of the two butterflies tumbling over the lily pond. The very flowers in the old Rajah's garden where they meet are "archetypal flowers."

L.H. Myers presents the effect of the woods in incident and description with a symbolic significance. Jali during his wanderings in the woods comes upon a "dilapidated Hindu Shrine" with a "primitive lingam" (Sic) surrounded by sacred fig trees and before the mystic image of the god lay fresh offerings of Marigolds and bilva leaves. "The shade of the
pipal trees spread peace" and grey monkeys on their boughs slept upon them. It is here at this shrine in the woods that Jali first meets Gunevati who is loitering about, "her lovely body as lazy as a water-weed swaying in the streem". She is the living lure of sex. To Jali she appears, "like a lotus unfolding upon a mere." The symbolic images of "lotus" and "mere" are highly significant from the Indian stand point. 'Lotus' is the symbol of creative power and 'mere' represents the world. Sankra calls the creative power of the universe maya, or illusion, whereas the Tantras calls this creative power Sakti. As Gunevati belongs to the Tantric Cult, is in fact shown as Maya-Shakti, the world seducing feminine that stands for the spontaneous acceptance of life's tangible reality. In her presence Jali's spirit "felt comforted and sustained." It is her simplified vision of the world which brings Jali "Out of isolation into communion with the kindly race of man."

Here the description of the jungle with a 'Hindu Shrine' and the 'Pipal boughs' is not merely a decorative background to the scene of the meeting between Gunevati and Jali but it is highly suggestive so far as the Tantric vision of life is concerned. The small Hindu Shrine is obviously the Shrine of shiva : "The low, round white-washed dome sheltered an altar upon which stood a primitive lingum" (Sic). The lingam or phallus is Shiva's symbol. The followers of the Tantric cult also worship Sakti, Shiva's consort, who is a part of Shiva. "In the full figure of Shiva, however, the male and female
principles are united. Lingam and Yoni (the female organ) represent the totality of his nature and totality of all created existents. Shiva then represents "the fusion of the male and female principles," and followers of the Sakta cult seek to realise this perfect union in themselves. According to a Tantric "the close union of the sexes" is thus said to represent the "divine transcendence of all opposites" on the mundane level. Shiva's Shrine in the wood thus suggests the forthcoming meeting of Jali and Gunevati and the resultant discovery by Jali of Sex, as the Cure for all his troubles, the magic password and a means to attain peace by living in the fullness of our nature.

Jali learns from Gunevati, how to "establish contact" with anyone in the world. To Jali, "Here was a mind that one could take one's ease in a veritable paradise of indolence and sensous unrestraint." She knew "no principles of any abstract ethic", nor did she feel the need for "Self-government." Her religion consisted entirely of sex and at their second meeting she 'unblushingly enticed' him into the mysteries of sex. Though she was "ill-educated, ignorant and superstitious, she had a great deal of knowledge regarding human nature. She told Jali that 'Rajahs and Emperors were after all males and great ladies, too, were women and so the men were simply complementary to herself and the women had no secrets from her'. R.A.D. Grant in The Cambridge Quarterly rightly says:

For Myers, sexuality is a type of the 'natural', and his evocation of it is sparing in detail, exceptionally compelling and realistic. This, one
feels, is sex as it is suggestive and mysterious yet potentially real and immediate, not abstracted, idealised or spiritualised away into something else, as it is often the case with (Say) Lawrence........... sexuality is used as Myers' metaphorical bridge between the transcendental and the actual..........

Jali soon comes to know that "the world was not a bad place after all; its grapes were not sour; to despise it was ridiculous; to fear it unneccessary." He finds that Gunevati's religion and her vision of the world are simple, on the other hand his father with his abstract philosophies, appears to him "simple natural." While Gunevati's religion is rooted 'in the body and in sex, and had no need of a future Heaven or a Savior', Ranee Sita's religion appears to Jali to be rather 'farfetched'. Like a Tantric, Gunevati 'lived in her body and her body was her present sufficiency' and in her eyes both "sex and religion were one."

Jali, in the course of his search for truth through Gunevati's religion, is unable to attain self realisation, because "he was quite unable to feel and accept the world as she felt and accepted it." Here Myers seems to indicate that when the practitioner is not able to rise above his self, sex is also an illusion. It can promise only excitement and ecstasy but not happiness:

For a time, then Jali's life continued to be one of intense excitement - an excitement sometimes ecstatic, but never approaching very close to happiness.
The reason behind it, as Myers seems to suggest is that Gunevati "had no other self behind, but when he adopted her vision....... his own self lay behind, remaining absolutely unchanged." Jali could not adopt Gunevati's Tantric religion completely and fully, on the other hand he feels that 'it would never be within his power'. He feels that he has not acquired sufficient discipline to be a Vira (hero) and cannot, therefore, attain reality through maithuna.

Herbert V. Guenther points out the secret of maithuna:

The Shakt (worshipper of Sakti) during his bhoga (sexual union) with woman "must proceed in such a way that his mind does not swerve, for when his Jewel-like mind swerves.............. perfection will never be accomplished." The Tantric ritual is thus a kind of Yoga which requires arduous mental and moral discipline. Ajit Mookerjee and Madhu Khanna rightly point out that a long period of training in self-discipline is pre-requisite the practice of maithuna as a means to transcendence. Maithuna being something much loftier than mere gratification of carnal desire.

It is interesting to note that when Rajah Amar at Kaithiapur, suffers severely from a sense of isolation, "the fascination of Being" the joy and wonder of the phenomenal world arises within him. He realises that as to a weary traveller come home, the joys of wife and home are indeed sweet. What Myers here puts in the mouth of Amar is highly significant and worthy of consideration:
Once more the fascination of Being uncoils like Kundalini within me. Life's energies and desires fascinate me not as temptations but as mysteries.\[105\]

Snake is a well-known Chthonic as well as spiritual being and symbolizes the unconscious.\[106\] It is a Tantric symbol of Shiva bindu, the creative latent god without extension in space who is supposed to life coiled in the form of a point or lingam encircled three and half times by the Kundalini serpent.\[107\] And when the Chthonic nature of man becomes active, the Kundalini awakens, and uncoiling, rises from the Muladhara or root support situated at the base of the spinal column and passing through the six bodily centres of Chakras passes into the Sahasrara in the upper brain, "the highest centre of manifestation of consciousness in the body and, therefore, the abode of the supreme Shiva-Shakti.\[108\]

"In Kundalini Yoga Symbolism", says Jung, "Shakti is represented as a snake wound three and half times round the lingam, which is Shiva in the form of a phallus......."\[109\]

Myers has, certainly, referred to the Tantric religion through an Indian Yogi who enunciates a new experience to Rajah Amar as another way to achieve Salvation: The Yogi expounds:

'The true religion', the yogi broke in, 'is that which has run like a hidden vein of gold through the history of this country from the earliest times. Underneath all the shams and inventions of shame, pedantry and hypocrisy, there has lived amongst us Hindus the ancient verity that Sexuality
and Religion are one. You Rajah, are an ascetic, and it may pain you to listen to these words; nevertheless in your asceticism you recognise their truth. Chastity is a noble way of recognising the divinity of sex. But there are other ways'.

The Yogi tells Amar that he would willingly die for the great goddess, for his religion. The curing of Amar's headache by the small, old wizened Yogi may thus be related to magical ritual, in which the hostile forces of Nature are sought to be controlled by magical means. The Yogi further presents the 'aphrodisiac pills' to Amar "for Kundalini" is what Arthur Avalon refers to as "phallic sorcery". He refers to certain schools of "Black Magic" which are said to use Kundalini Yoga for the purpose of stimulating the sexual centre to seek "superworldly bliss." Prof. Dasgupta avers : "The ideal of conduct for a Yogin is the removal of ignorance and the realization of the true nature of the Self and thus ultimately to dissociate the soul from the bondage of matter."

When Amar consumes the 'aphrodisiac pills' he recollects the memories of his marriage with Sita. He sees how prematurely he had begun to detach himself from her. He realised that "certainly, there is a beauty in women nature." He comes to believe that "in a world filled with brutality, the harshness, the pedantry and the hypocrisies of men", women are "a saving grace, and a fragrance and a light." When Lalita comes up to him he views her in a new light for "his senses" had become "acute". The way in which Myers presents the feelings of Amar is note worthy:
As they were leaning over the sill, he felt her body warm against his. He felt her leaning more and more heavily. 'I, too, am thirsty', he said.............

Lalita's beauty enchants him: "Taking flesh and spirit together as one, he found her some beautiful." C.H. Bantock is right when he avers: "The point of the meeting is to re-affirm the closeness of the relationship between flesh and spirit; those who are concerned with the spirit cannot ignore completely the things of this world." Myers, through Lalita's remark: "There are certain spiritual experiences that the chaste cannot obtain", seems to support Dionysian Mysticism as a way to salvation.
Notes and References


2. *ibid*, p. 405.


8. *ibid*, p. 16.


18. *ibid* p. 326.


22. ibid, p. 351.
23. ibid, p. 352.
27. ibid, p. 238.
28. ibid, p. 444.
29. ibid, p. 444.
30. ibid, p. 452.
31. ibid, p. 451.
35. ibid, 235.
37. ibid p. 144.
39. ibid, p. 20.
42. L.H. Myers, The Root and the Flower, p. 235.
43. ibid, p. 235.
44. ibid, p. 236.


47. ibid, 194.


51. L.H. Myers, Pool, p. 150.

52. Katha Upanishad, 11, IX, 10.

53. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, I, p. 174.


55. L.H. Myers, Pool, p. 198.


57. L.H. Myers, Pool, p. 391.

58. ibid, 391.

59. ibid, 392.

60. ibid, 394.

61. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Eastern Religion and Western Thought, Oxford, 1939, p. 322.

62. Vishnu Purana, 1, 22, 36, ff.

63. L.H. Myers, Pool, p. 411.

64. Quoted from the Chandogya Upanishad, 6.13, by Robin Boyd, An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology, Madras, 1969, p. 104.


68. *ibid.*, p. 551.
70. *ibid.*, p. 525.
74. *ibid.*, p. 147.
75. *ibid.*, p. 147.
78. *ibid.*, p. 74.
79. *ibid.*, p. 79.
89. *ibid.*, p. 244.
93. ibid, p. 114.
95. ibid, p. 241.
96. ibid, p. 245.
99. ibid, p. 249.
100. ibid, p. 249.
101. ibid, p. 251.
102. ibid, p. 251.
114. ibid, p. 531.
115. ibid, p. 532.