CHAPTER—VII

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After a thorough and investigative study on the topic entitled "A STUDY ON MYSTIC POETS IN ARABIC TILL 1258 A.D. WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IBN AL-'ARABI" it is pertinent to draw a conclusion on the study stated above.

Mystic poets in Arabic flourished during 500 A.D. to 1258 A.D. both in the East and West and Arabic mystical poetry cultivated by them is full of high imagery, lively diction and adorned with universal reality in its visions and themes. The Sufi poets mainly emphasized on the thematic aspect of mystical reality and they played an important role in depicting their mystical experiences and vision of reality of Hidden Treasure. However, they made themselves capable to observe the science of prosody in their poetic tune and they left no stone unturned to beautify their poems with fine poetic art. It has every charms of Arabic secular love poetry composed in their respective periods.

An in-depth study on the topic reveals that Arabic mystical poetry was existed in Pre-Islamic period also. The mystical sense among Pre-Islamic nomadic bard was derived from the ‘MISPA’ (مصفى) institution of ancient Hebrew; where law, religion, Hebrew literature and esoteric knowledge were continuously taught. The dwellers of ‘MISPA’ were called ‘Sopi’ (صوفي), because of their pure heart, pure living and pure thinking. ‘Sopis’ were the religious as well as social head of the then society. According to the rule of transliteration, ‘Sopi’ is equivalent to the Arabic word ‘safi’ (صافي); which means pure hearted and clean hearted. Thus the man, who is pure hearted, was termed as Sufi (صوفي). The religion of Prophet Abraham was corrupted by the successive generations but its inner spirit was never extinguished. It witnessed that the esoteric teaching of the religion of Abraham among the Pre-Islamic Arabia was continued and the followers of the religion of Abraham were called ‘Hanifs’; who worshipped only One God. They advocated for monism. Among them—Waraqa bin Naufal, Zayad bin ‘Amr bin Naufal and Umayya bin Abi al-Salt are famous. There were Ibadi poets, belonging to the Christian of Arabs of Nestorian sect. They produced mystical poetry in Arabic language also. Among them—‘Adi bin Zayad is famous. Both
Hanif and Ibadi poets composed a large number of Arabic poetry. Some of them used to wear woolen garment and devoted themselves in worship of ‘One’ God through self-mortification practices. Their poetry may be called purely mystical. They composed poetry on the theme of existence of universe as a plea of thinking about God for believing soul, their emphasis on the worship of One God, their satisfaction on the life of poverty and generosity, their belief on the immortality of soul, their belief on the curtain of light surrounding the God, their belief on the religion of Hanifa i.e. the religion of Prophet Abraham and so on. These are the major themes of Arabic mystical poetry of Pre-Islamic period and may be called purely mystical ornamentation. The later generation of Arabic mystic poets developed these themes with deep mystical colour in their poetical compositions.

With the emergence of new religion in the Arab peninsula, the people of various tribes of Pre-Islamic Arabia as well as poets embraced Islam. They continued to cultivate poetic art in Islamic period also. These poets were called Mukhadramin poets. Among them—Umayya bin Abi al-Salt, Ka’b bin Malik, Hassan bin Thabit are famous. Though, they were dominated by pagan spirit but they changed the mode of poetic expressions in order to suit the Islamic ideology. Majority of poetry composed in Islamic period were produced in battle field. They praised the mysterious quality of Prophet and his lion hearted companions in mystical terms. Prophet himself encouraged the poets to compose poetry having wisdom. Indeed, he prohibited to compose erotic poetry like the pagan bard. Majority of poets of Islamic period belonged to the generation of poets of pagan Arab. They did not take much time to adjust with the Islamic ideology in their poetical compositions. Moreover, esoteric teaching of Prophet towards his companions which highly encouraged the poets to compose mystical poetry. On the other hand, some companions of Prophet galvanized themselves in the realization of esoteric knowledge taught by Prophet. They believed in the miracle of Prophet, his night journey, his victory over the Quraysh—are the some issues that made to feel them in depth to find out the reality of hidden mystery of those miracles.

Qur’an is the sacred book of God. Its language is awe-inspiring and its rhythms and rhymes, its metaphors and symbols, and its musical sounds are often echoing the heart of the readers. Qur’an is neither prose nor poetry; rather it is rhymed prose having definite meter and prosody. Such measure is often echoing the musical
sound suitable to the listeners. This beauty of musical sound continued to echo in the Sufi poems. The first *Kalima* of Islam (لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله), itself a musical sound that provides spiritual solace while, it is sung in the assemblies of *Dhikr* collectively. Sufi or mystic poets of Islamic period were highly influenced by the musical sound of the Qur’anic language. Some of them composed poetry in praise of Prophet. They also composed some forms of prayer as *Du‘a al-Sabah* (supplication for morning), *Du‘a al-Masa* (supplication for evening) and *Du‘a al-Kumayl bin Ziyad* are usually composed in rhyme prose, which are suitable and acceptable to listen. Since, poetry dominated the literary field of Arabia and it considered to be the sophisticated and excellent mode of expression of intuitional knowledge, so poetry became the sole media for transforming the esoteric knowledge in Islamic period also.

Esoteric teaching of Prophet to some of his companions made them to spent whole night in supererogatory prayers and in remembrance of God repeating His qualifying (صفات) names in order to reach nearness to God. There are some Qur’anic verses having mystical insight which induce the believers to feel in deep and consequently there appeared some individual ascetics who gave up the worldly pleasure and chose a simple life. They felt happy to remain alone in deserts and valleys and engaged in praying God through self-mortification practices. The truth is that the life of this world is perishable and the life here after is permanent. Therefore, the Sufis of Islam tried to realize this truth through practice. Description of multiple terrors in the Qur’an regarding the Day of Judgment compels the believers to give up the worldly pleasure for the sake of everlasting pleasure through noble deeds, moral transformations and ideal humanity.

There is no any exclusive *Diwan* on Arabic mystical poetry in Islamic period. Nevertheless, Sufi or mystic of this period composed some poetry which is very magnificent having deep mystical insight. *Hazrat Ali* is considered to be the gateway of the esoteric knowledge of Prophet, has composed mystical poetry of highest order. His poetry became the model for Sufi poets of next generations. Among the mystic poets of this period—*Hassan bin Thabit, Abdullah bin Rawaha, Ka‘b bin Malik, Hazrat ‘Ali* and *zain al-Abedin* are notable. They composed mystical poetry on the theme of mysterious light of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH); his nocturnal journey, nature of soul, essence of
knowledge and so on. They embellished their esoteric knowledge in the form of poetry and they equally decorated their poetry with every charms of secular poetry.

Esoteric knowledge of Prophet transmitted through forth Caliph of Islam to Hassan al-Basri and on the other hand, esoteric movement of Uwais al-Qarni and Salman-e-parsi continued to run through the believing soul and its torch bearer became Hassan al-Basri. The aim of the movement of Hassan al-Basri was to spread out the true spirit of the religion of Islam. He openly criticized the luxury life of Umayyad rulers. During Umayyad period, the pagan spirit once again arose in the Arab peninsula. Mecca, Medina, Basra and Hijaz became the centre of music, dance, love and romances. Singing girls were brought to Arabia from Europe. As a result, there arose a new theme of erotic poetry, which is called Ghazal or love ballad.

Besides these, inner spirit of Islam continued through the pure soul of the believers. The converted Muslims were highly impressed with the morality taught by Prophet and four Caliphs of Islam. But they disguised with the rude behavior of Umayyad rulers. They easily motivated towards the esoteric movement in order to protect themselves from being polluted with heinous activities and tried to develop spiritual knowledge for knowing God through devotion and self mortification practices. Hassan developed the idea of Sufi theophany i.e. the reciprocal love between man and God. His asceticism does not entail total abandonment of social life; rather he tried to instigate the moral consciousness of Umayyad rulers. His doctrine of ‘pure’ is the major theme of his poetry. His fruitful endeavor resulted in the production of Arabic mystical poetry. Some notable mystic or Sufi poets of this period are Hassan al-Basri, Malik bin Dinar, Habib al-Ajami, Abd al-Wahid bin Zayd and Rabi’a al-Basri.

Rabi’a al-Basri invented the theme of Divine Love in Sufi poetry. Her poetry is considered to be the literary accomplishment of Divine Love as if she is yearning like a frustrated earthly lover. Her mode of expression is quiet clear without any symbol thereof. The mystic poets of this period wrote Arabic mystical poetry on the theme of pure heart, manifestation of God in human soul, reciprocal love between God and man, pride in poverty, sufferings in the spiritual path, search of reality, Divine Love and tolerance. Their poetry is very rich in respect of theme, meter and rules of prosody as well. As regards to the Rabi’a’s poetry, there is a tune of agitation of Divine Love like the earthly love-mad Majnoon and Layla. Secular Arabic poetry was a vehicle for
expression of human love, while Arabic mystical poetry was equally applied for expressing Divine Love for Sufi readers and earthly love for common readers. Rabi'a's love theme in Sufi poetry later developed into the doctrine of love, which the Sufis of next generation termed as the regulator of Sufi theophany.

At the emergence of western thought in 8th century, the intellectual development took place in Islam. Consequently, Arabic mystic poets also were influenced by the western culture and civilization. Arabic mystic poets began to develop their own doctrines which they received from their personal experiences, observations and visions of mystical reality. Mystic poets believed that vision in ecstasy provides maximum accurate reality than knowledge. Their theosophical observation led to doctrinal development in Sufi literature. The mystic poets of this period did not confine themselves in composing poetry; rather they also wrote Sufi manuals in prose. However, their mystical poetry composed in this period is very awe-inspiring and appealing to the hearts. They composed poetry in support of their own doctrines.

Abu Sulyman al-Darani, Maruf al-Karkhi and Dhu-I Nun al-Misri developed the doctrine of gnosis (علم المعرفة), Bayazid al-Bistami, Jonayd al-Baghdadi and Mansur al-Hallaj developed the doctrine of annihilation and subsistence (علم القناء والبقاء) and doctrine of union and separation (علم الجمع والترفيق) and doctrine of love is interconnected with the above all doctrines. Arabic mystic poets became excellent guides for the then society through implementation of their theory into practice. Among them—Bayazid al-Bistami, Dhu-I Nun al-Misri, Jonayd al-Baghdadi, Hallaj and Abu Bakr Shibli are famous. They contributed a rich amount of Arabic mystical poetry of highly sophisticated and ornamented with fine poetic imagery. Their poetry is devoid of conventional and fanciful imagery. There is approximate balance in their sayings and doings. Their science of plundering the Reality is so interesting that one once entered along the Sufi path made to forget him to return from it. They widened the scope of Arabic mystical poetry incorporating the subject of their doctrines. They composed poetry on the theme of knowledge of God, unity of God, annihilation and subsistence, essence of soul, Divine Love and ecstasy and so on. Their poetic imagery tinged with deep mystical colour. Their symbolic expression of Divine Love through the intoxication of wine is very resonance and appealed to the heart of the readers. Their poetry became the source of mystical philosophy for the Muslim philosophers.
Mystical philosophy in Arab and in Spain was greatly influenced by the works of Greek philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. Moreover, Hellenistic culture, Persian influence and Indian philosophy also influenced the Muslim philosophy at a great scale. Muslim scholars were keen to find out the reality of the mysterious verses of the Qur’an and they applied the method of Greek philosophy in their search in order to find out the Qur’anic truth. But whenever they tried to harmonize the Qur’anic truth with Greek philosophy, there arose some contradictions in certain points; which no human knowledge can cover it. Therefore, some philosophers inclined themselves towards mysticism for guidance in respect of their search. So, they tried to develop philosophy on Islamic line under the light of Qur’an and Hadith. Consequently, there arose some schools of mystical thought in Arab and Spain. The main schools of mystical philosophy are Ijadiya, Wujdiya and Shuhudiya. Thus, mystical philosophy in Islam became an interesting branch of Muslim thought both in Arab and Spain. Philosophy is based on reason and intellect while, mystical philosophy is something beyond the reason and intellect which no logic and intellect can cover it. This is why, mystical philosophy is super logical. Mystical philosophy is direct vision of reality and it is seldom ostensible to express it by language.

There are many philosophers in Islam who being confused in their philosophical search, inclined towards mysticism for guidance in order to find out the satisfactory truth. They are—Farabi, al-Kindi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazzali, Ibn Bajjah, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Tufyal and Ibn al-'Arabi. These mystic philosophers composed many philosophical manuals as well as Arabic mystical poetry of sublime nature. They clothed their mystical philosophy in the form of fine poetic art. Their poetry is often half understood without reading of their prose works. They also composed mystical poetry in symbolic terms to express the hidden mystery of phenomenal existence in order to rationalize mystical philosophy for common understanding. They composed poetry on the theme of philosophical issues, like prophecy and revelation, God and His attributes, cosmos and its phantom nature, celestial archetype and its reality, soul and its immortality, knowledge and its source, essence and its manifestation, love and beauty and so forth.

In fact, their Sufi metaphysical thinking contained in their poems is the summery of their prose works. They profusely used poetry in their prose works in order
to hide the most esoteric knowledge from improper eyes. On the other hand poetry dominated the field of Arabic literature and it is considered to be the most sophisticated mode of expression of thought and realization. So, philosophical mystics also adopted the poetic mode and developed the Sufi poetry literature, displaying artistic talent like the secular poets of a particular time. As regards to the charms of the Arabic mystical poetry, it equally provides amusement to both common and Sufi readers. Symbolic poetry of Ibn al-Farid and Ibn al-'Arabi denotes two fold mental refreshments: erotic refreshment as secular love poetry for common readers and spiritual refreshment of Divine Love for Sufi readers. Thus, their poetry became the ideal vehicle for transforming morality and humanity, fraternity and brotherhood, common consciousness and self-consciousness, integration and communal harmony, inner spirit of religious unity and belief, love and tolerance and so forth. There is no any conventional imagery in their poetry. Mystic poets claimed that their visions are direct knowledge of God which reflects in their souls through manifestation of His Names and attributes in the time of their ecstasy.

As regards to the philosophical mystic poets in Arabic literature flourished both in East and West till 1258 A.D., the Spanish mystic poet, philosopher and theosopist Muhy al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi is considered to be the greatest. He was philosopher, theosopist, visionary mystic poet as well as a writer of great 'fecundity' both in prose and poetry. He had written more than three hundred books on prose and more than ten thousand verses of Sufi metaphysical nature. All his works deal with his mystical philosophy and theosophical observations. His works have received more attention in the West than East. His works are recently having been translated into various languages throughout the world. Journal of 'Muhy al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi society' (JMIAS) in America and in United kingdom have been taking initiative steps for spreading the universal message of Ibn al-'Arabi throughout the world.

His Diwan of Arabic mystical poetry contains more than ten thousand verses. Nevertheless, the exact number of his verse is quit a mystery, because, two volumes of his Diwan al-Marif al-Ilaahiyya (ديوان المعارف الإلهية) are stolen from the library of Yusuf Aga. In spite of this, his poetic output may be regarded as greatest among ever composed by mystic poets in Arabic. His poems contained in the Diwan deal with Divine Love, knowledge of God, nature of creation, revelation, prophecy,
manifestation, illumination and so on. In addition to these, he composed Arabic mystical poetry on every principle and on every ritual of the religion of Islam in order to expose the inner spirits of those rituals and its significance to be understood by the mankind. His erotic breathe on inanimate object like, Black Stone (حجر أسود) and House of God (کعب) is remarkable and was composed in order to expose the nature of love which knows no rule.

His collection of love poem ‘Tarjuman al-Ashwaq’ (ترجمان الأشواق) is a masterpiece of the poet. He expresses the Divine Love through the symbols of beauty, image and knowledge of lady Nizam (نظام). His masterly analysis of symbols in mystical terms placed him in unique position among the Arabic mystic poets. His language of poem is sonorous. There is no exaggeration and fanciful imagery. He fabricated the visions of Hidden Treasure in more particular Sufi terms. He systematically expresses the doctrine of former Sufis in explicit terms and finds out the shortcomings of their expressions. His doctrine ‘Unity of being’ has received universal appeal. His plea of investigation is taken from the Qur’an and Hadith. Though he was influenced by Greek philosophers, but he never transgresses the orbit of Islamic law and thus he introduced a unique system of school of thought in Islamic philosophy for which mankind would ever indebted to him.

Practical approach of the ideality of mystic poets and representation of their visions and imagery as well as intuitional knowledge in their poetry provide element of spiritual refreshment for readers. Arabic mystic poets throughout the ages are ideal guide for spreading universal message for the benefit of mankind in this world and awareness for hereafter. The practicality of their thinking and their self realization often win the heart of masses. Their poetry itself is guide for the reader to realize ones own self. Mystical poetry opens the windows of the mind of the believers to realize the secret of creation. Thus, mystical poetry may be regarded as a vehicle for transmitting the sense of integrity, fraternity, secularism and universalization of love throughout the world. In this respect, Ibn al-'Arabi is more perfect visionary artist who became able to represent the vision of Hidden Treasure, vision of mystical reality of the universe and vision of Divine Love more clearly than other Sufis, in order to provide common awareness and self consciousness to the mankind.