Chapter V

Stream of Consciousness and Higher Consciousness in Virginia Woolf in relation with Her Concept of Perfect Man

The mystical ideal of One and Many has also been named as the Ideal of Consciousness and Group Consciousness (or Higher Consciousness) as well. Most of the misunderstandings arose about Virginia Woolf's real worth due to lack of fully comprehending this very Sufi ideal in her writings and personality. She departed from the traditional form of the novel. Characters were merely views for her about the nature of the mind and its contact with reality. Use of "stream of consciousness technique" in her case has been highlighted and celebrated. The phrase "stream of consciousness" has been misunderstood. She was a writer who offered a unique vision of life. She was extraordinarily receptive to the major currents of thought of her time - one of them is the notion of a group mind. In the opinion of Mc. Laurin the analysis of individual stream in most discussions of Virginia Woolf's works has been given a disproportionate emphasis. He writes:

One of the reasons for the imbalance in past discussions possibly stems from the belief that one can make an easy step from the stream of consciousness as
subject to the stream of consciousness as a method or technique. In other words, I will be arguing that the failure to understand the relevance of group feeling in Virginia Woolf stems in part from confusion about the direction of stream of consciousness in literature. What stream of consciousness actually meant, according to William James is stream of thought, of consciousness of subjective life.¹

Mc.Laurin feels that the depiction of the stream of consciousness as subject matter in fiction is an extension of this basic meaning. The confusion in the usage of the term, Laurin thinks, may have played its role in blurring Virginia Woolf's depiction of group consciousness or sea of consciousness. He asks a significant question from the advocates of the stream of consciousness method whether they are referring to a variety of methods which have been developed by writers to indicate the flow of inner speech or consciousness. If so, Laurin feels, surely these methods can be identified and separately named. In his opinion some fine work has been done in this field of technical analysis in which the label of "stream of consciousness" has been avoided. In Laurin's own words:

The alternative to this blanket use of the term would be to use 'stream of consciousness technique to designate a

specific mode of writing and the usual choice here has been either direct or indirect interior monologue. Restriction of the term to cover direct interior monologue, with its characteristic dislocation of grammar and syntax, would mean that we would have to limit the stream of consciousness to cover very few passages in very few novels and be forced into the contradiction of saying that Virginia Woolf is stream of consciousness writer who did not use the stream of consciousness technique.... We can avoid this confusion quite simply by reserving the stream of consciousness to refer to the phenomenon itself or as the subject matter of certain works of literature. We can then proceed to examine with greater clarity the relationship between the portrayal of individual consciousness and the way it is related to group consciousness in Virginia Woolf's work.2

Mc. Laurin finds a crucial difference between William James and Virginia Woolf. He thinks that in order to trace the idea of group consciousness in Virginia Woolf's works we must look closely at a major divergence from James, which comes at the point in his discussion where he considers the possibility of contact between the streams which constitute the inner lives of the individuals. In his opinion there is a partition between consciousness which creates isolation and becomes an emotional and intellectual problem.

2. Virginia Woolf: A Centenary perspective. This quotation is from Laurin's essays "Consciousness and Group Consciousness". p. 31.
Mr. Laurin opposes James' assumption about the privacy of each individual's inner life as it has an influence on critics of stream of consciousness writing. Laurin thinks that those writers are stressing on aspect of human experience which cuts off one human being from another. Laurin's thesis in his paper is:

*In Virginia Woolf's work there is a tension between the idea of privacy and the notion of group feeling or consciousness.*

This aspect of work has been explored by Laurin which is in conformity with the words of Jung - tension between ideal and real, between vision and existence. This is the essence of Virginia Woolf's vision, which was misunderstood by some critics whose emphasis was on the relationship of life with literature. This type of criticism, feels Cox; "cannot do justice to the work of Virginia Woolf whose purpose is to explore whether we can be in any way sure that our analysis of life have any real correspondence with truth... her novels have no plot in the conventional sense because her aim is to make clear her attitudes towards personality not to show individuals developing dramatically in contact with life.*

Virginia Woolf's attitudes towards personality and group consciousness are deeply related with each other. The

idea of group mind has not been systematically explored. Stream of consciousness has mostly been discussed as a technique. Members of the Bloomsbury Group, according to Laurin were aware of Unanimism in which man is seen as a member of the group as well as an individual. This reminds us of Dr. Iqbal’s couplet in which he says:

\[
\text{فرداً مَنِيبَ التَّالِمَة}
\]

Individual, if not related with society is nothing.

The principal writer of this group was Jules Romains (1885 - 1972). Ideas about a 'group mind, about crowds, notions about group psychology were quite common during Virginia's days. She herself summarised Romain's ideas in a review (1913) according to which Romains was interested in the feelings of persons as members of the group. He excels in tracing the mysterious growth of a kind of consciousness of the group in addition to that of each individual of the group. From this point of view the contemporary review of Virginia Woolf's novels can be revealing. They have compared Virginia Woolf's works and that of the Unanimists. Forster found in *Voyage Out*, says Laurin, an atmosphere unknown in English literature - the atmosphere of Jules Romain's Marte de Quelqu'um (*Review of the Voyage Out, daily News and Reader, 8 April, 1915, p. 7*). According to Laurin Romain's novel was translated in English by Virginia Woolf's friends Sidney Waterloo and Macarthy (*The Death of a Nobody*). Macarthy was to become the model for Bernard, the spokesman of the collective consciousness portrayed in *The
Waves. Laurin has explored similarities between the translations of Romain's work and *Mrs. Dalloway*. Laurin writes:

*Here, the way in which the chimes of the clock spatialise the mesh of nerves is of course very close to whole conception of space and group feeling which we experience in *Mrs. Dalloway*.*

Virginia Woolf wrote an understanding review suggesting that Romain's work belonged to a type of writing of which there was scarcely the equivalent in England, the novel in which there are no characters, no humour, no plot (Romains had thanked Virginia Woolf for that Review). We are reminded here of Virginia Woolf's another such comments in "Modern Fiction":

*... If a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style.*

There are innumerable instances of group feeling in Virginia Woolf. Most characteristic is *The Waves* which again and again reminds us of great Persian mystic poet Rumi (Who may be called a Unanimist) In "A Sketch of the Past".

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she has referred to the Persian verses which were recited by her uncle Thoby. She writes:

The sound of music also comes from those long rooms where the great Watts pictures hang; Joachim playing the Violin; also the sound of a voice reading poetry - uncle Thoby would read his translation from the Persian poets.7

According to Laurin besides Romain's Unanimist Theory Virginia Woolf was aware of Trotter's analysis of the herd-like quality of human collective behaviour. This theory was interpreted in a much more pessimistic sense by her and the other members of the Bloomsbury Group. The Unanimists were optimistic whereas Trotter, as understood by Virginia, to be pessimistic. In the pull of these contraries Virginia could find a pattern which was familiar in her own emotional life, of elation and depression of expansiveness and withdrawal (namely isolation).

Virginia's literary critics could not understand this pattern. That is why her depression and withdrawal was attacked by them as "diseased". This very pattern of elation and depression is characteristic of all great mystics, writers and philosophers. Their withdrawal and depression was a sign of their greater concern with the group, (with society and humanity). Throughout her writing career Virginia remained interested in group consciousness. The advent of the first World War greatly stimulated

interest in explorations of the group idea. She herself observed herd behaviour during War and in the Peace Celebrations which followed the culmination of her exploration of the group consciousness.

William James by the metaphor 'stream' meant a "succession of states, or waves or fields of knowledge, of feeling or desire that constantly pass and repass and constitute our inner life. The existence of this stream is the final fact, the nature and origin of it form the essential problem of our Science." 8

Laurin rightly thinks that the ebb and flow of waves is a better image for the texture of Virginia Woolf's portrayal of moments of reverie than stream would be. Continuity is established between the individual and the group as the waves and sea metaphors are easier to elaborate in the direction of consciousness than the Stream image. In 1925 she wrote in her Diary:

*I sometimes think humanity is a vast wave undulating: the same: the same, I mean the same emotions." 9

The Waves is the most perfect attempt to establish a continuity between the individual and group consciousness through the elaboration of the image of the title. This interpretation of the stream metaphor brings Virginia Woolf near to Rumi. Thakur has explored this parallelism between

them. According to him Virginia Woolf has employed waves and sea as appropriate symbols of life and reality.

Virginia Woolf's vision of life and reality is the same. Both this vision and the symbols that she employs to evoke it are archetypal because since ages saints and sages have had similar visions. Similar idea has been exposed by Eliot as well while he says "the river is within us the sea is around us". So also Virginia sees reality residing in the down or sky, besides which nothing matters, in which she shall rest and continue to exist. The wonder of such moments restored her faith in life at times when depression urged her towards suicide. Her characters occasionally feel that some purpose lies behind the beauty of Nature and that some pattern of meaning underlies the confused incidents of our individual lives. Mrs. Ramsay feels this in To The Lighthouse:

It was odd, she thought, how if one was alone, one lent to things, inanimate things; trees, streams flowers; felt they expressed one, felt they became one, felt they knew one, in a sense were one.\(^{10}\)

Virginia Woolf herself had a feeling of separateness. Her mind seemed isolated never sure of the meaning of the impressions received through the senses. Cox thinks that Virginia Woolf is doubtful about the meaning of sense - impressions - The doubt which affects all her values. He says: "Virginia Woolf's characters find it difficult to make

contact with other people. Many of them are lonely". In *The Years* Sally describes "men and women as prisoners scratching on the walls of their cells in their attempts to make contacts with other people... In *The Years* Eleanor feels her life has no meaning. "She seemed to be alone in the midst of nothingness..." A feeling of separateness comes to all of us at certain times but in Virginia Woolf's characters it is excessively developed... Virginia Woolf's search for fine relationships makes her too self-conscious out of touch with common experience".\(^{11}\)

Cox has discussed individual consciousness, her determinism, her pessimistic outlook, her idea that man is a mere victim of fate etc. But he suggests that the isolation of her characters is due to the lack of fine relationships for which she yearned. He feels that separateness can be overcome by personal relationships. Helen Ambrose in *The Voyage Out* and Mrs. Ramsay (*To The Lighthouse*) use all their tact and intention to create harmony among their friends. The lighthouse symbolizes the essential isolation and independence of the individual, but the beams of the lighthouse crossing the dark waters at night represent the love of Mrs. Ramsay which unites all her friends and gives meaning to their lives. Mrs. Ramsay heals the tensions and makes them for a moment feel a delightful sense of union. She is extremely successful in the art of personal

relationships. Virginia's purpose was to "explore the nature of love".\textsuperscript{12}

Consciousness or Self (\textit{\'khudi} حُدی) is a blind force without love or more rightly Universal Love (\textit{\'ishq} اسماعیل) which was explored by many mystics and Sufis. This love, though mentioned by Cox, has not been elaborated by him. The Universal Love, which is the most predominant aspect of Self or the concept of Perfect Man (\textit{\'insan-e-kamil} نَاسِن آل), is the only remedy for all the mental and spiritual diseases of man. From this point of view Virginia Woolf has got a universality. She is in company with Rumi according to whom "Love is a malady apart" and a sign of mysteries Divine".

When man has received from God the gift of self-knowledge he continually beholds the manifestation of the Divine Beauty. The lover ascends to the highest beauty, to the knowledge of the divinity by steps on this ladder of created souls. Whether it is the philosophy or psychology of the religion, i.e. the stages of mysticism - both of them have been aspiring to get pleasure from the limitless and infinite, rather to conquer it. How to capture the past was not the only incentive for Virginia Woolf, she also tried to think about the relation of past, present and future. She perpetually took interest in the concept of Time and Space which is the whole philosophical journey of hers. The problem of Time related with personality is the most

\textsuperscript{12} C.B. Cox: "The Solitude of Virginia Woolf" - \textit{The Free Spirit}, p. 111.
predominent problem in Muslim philosophy presented by the
Oriental Sufis. Virginia Woolf also is deeply concerned
with this problem. The importance of Time in relation to
personality was realized by Iqbal as well. Time, which is
Destiny destroys as well as preserves, degenerates as well
as regenerates. All the concepts presented by Virginia
Woolf (and so also by Iqbal) are interrelated. Whether it is
the concept of Consciousness ('khudi' خودی) or of Destiny
('taqdir' تقدير), of Universal Love ('ishq' عشق) or Reason
('aql' عقل) or Soul ('ruh' روح) - all are interrelated. The
same is true of her concept of Time and Space ('zaman-o-
makan' زمان و مکان) which is all prevailing in her writings.
Innumerable questions have been asked about this concept.
What is its relation to Space and Matter? How is it related
to Personality ('shakhsiat' شکسیت), Freedom ('hurriyat' حریت),
creativity and Evolution ('irtiqa' ارتقاء). There are many
controversies regarding this concept. For Plato Time is
unreal. Hume thinks that Time depends on individual
consciousness. According to Newton it is independent of
Space, motion and matter. Bergson, Einstein, Samuel
Alexander, Mc Taggart etc. have said something new and
fresh about this concept. Muslim concept of Time, under the
influence of Platonism and Aristotelianism has regarded Time
as subjective and unreal. A radical change was brought in
our approach to the study of Time by emergence of 20th.
century Physics. It was Einstein who presented the theory
of Relativity which tends to accept time as real.
Iqbal in his essay "The Problem of Time in Muslim Philosophy" says that there are more than one points of contact between Muslim thought and Modern Western Thought. He finds a spiritual kinship between Islam and the West. According to him there is a great necessity of the proper study of nature of Time for the purpose of a synthetic attitude towards the Universe. Concept of Time has been considered by him to be a perpetually creative movement.

For Virginia Woolf as well this concept was of great importance. She also had identified herself with the contemporary destiny of community and in large the whole humanity. She was capable of integrating the past with the present and to perceive the future direction of the contemporary movement. Virginia Woolf's artistic and poetic genius cannot be understood if we ignore time-tension. She experienced this tension. She has linked the temporal with the eternal. In her Vision time and change signify the most important aspects of reality. There is time - tension in the entire realm of existence. This element (besides others as well) is common between Virginia Woolf and Iqbal. This dominant element connects Iqbal with the tradition of Western thought and spiritual culture which reaches its fruition in Nietzsche passing through the German Romantic Movement whose source of inspiration was Al-Jili - the great Oriental Sufi. This element also connects Iqbal as well as Virginia Woolf with that part of Islamic tradition which is represented by Mansoor Al Hallaj, Attar and Ibn' Farid and
finds its consummation in Rumi. In their case this special philosophy which impelled them to seek a new interpretation of their philosophic heritage was the philosophy of life and personality. The concept of Love of an Islamic mystic is extremely refined. The inspiration Iqbal drew from the life of the Prophet Mohammad was his role as a revolutionary transformer of history. Both Iqbal and Virginia Woolf do not believe, like most of the Vitalists, that the primary stuff of the world is Universal life. They do not share this pantheistic idea. They differ even with Bergson on this point. They consider all life as individual. God himself is regarded as most unique individual. They believed in the primacy of the Living Self (Living Stream). Each being is to them a Living Being. Evolution consists in the emergence of higher individuality. What is called matter is itself a lower kind of individuality. The emergence of individuality is a mystery. The idea of Personality as the highest value seems to be a contribution of the West and particularly German philosophy. Iqbal was earlier introduced to this idea by his master in Cambridge Mc Taggart, and it seems to be a forceful idea in his stay in Germany. The idea of Personality constitutes an important element in his vision of reality. The same is true of Virginia Woolf. She was also inspired by Mc Taggart (besides Coleridge) whose source of inspiration was German thought (especially Goethe) which was rooted in Al-Jili’s Yusan-e-Kamil and his Vision of the androgynous mind. He
believed that God is One as well as Many having a universe within him. The world, according to Jili is like a circle. God’s soul is permeating. Like Arabi and Jili Virginia had deep reverence for Intuitionism.

Iqbal's first acquaintance with Islamic theosophy was with the *Insan-e-Kamil* (انسان كامل) of Jili, hence the affinity between Virginia Woolf, Iqbal and Al-Jili. Iqbal writes:

*In his personality the finite centre of life sinks into his own infinite depths only to spring up again with fresh vigour to destroy the old and to disclose the new directions of life.*

Nicholson, referring to Arabi’s book *The Bezels of Wisdom* writes:

*Its subject matter coincides to a large extent with that of *Insan-e-Kamil* while both writers are not only inspired by the same mystical philosophy but use similar methods in order to develop their ideas.*

Arabi thinks that all objects are attributes of God. He indicates the relation of One to Many by means of metaphors, i.e. 'tajalli' (تجلی) (self-unveiling). Virginia Woolf is also doing the same by means of the metaphor of lighthouse. Both of them have contrasted the finite God of religion with the infinite God of mysticism. Arabi claims for Muslim saints the right to modify the religious code that is based on 'ijtihad' (یجتیهاد), on non prophetic


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authority. The same has been done by Virginia Woolf and Iqbal. Love, according to Arabi, is the highest form in which God is worshipped. He remarks that God can never be seen immaterially and that Vision of Him in women is the most perfect of all. Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Ramsay is a very appropriate illustration of Arabi's opinion. Arabi anticipates Wordsworth on a tribute to the heavenly influence of children:

"... for the child was with God a short while ago since he is newly come into the world, where the father is further away and one that is further from God is subject to one that is nearer to Him".15

In Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse Mrs. Ramsay and James, mother and son (Madonna and the child) illustrate these words of Arabi fully. Mrs. Ramsay, being intuitive, possessing Universal Love at the utmost, could identify herself with the objects and people around her, those whom she looked at. Here is a passage from To The Lighthouse:

Often she found herself sitting and looking, sitting and looking with her work in her hands until she became the thing she looked at -- that light for example.16

She instinctively responded to other people's feelings and could heal a child's wound before it was given:

Perhaps you will wake up and find the sun shining and the birds singing, she said compassionately smoothing the little boy's hair, for her husband, with his caustic saying that it would not be fine, had dashed his spirits she could see.  

Mrs. Ramsay was "God - intoxicated", who, having realised her kinship with the universe dedicated her life to the uplift of her community swinging between contemplation and action. She created a unity and harmony for soothing the distressed ones. Universal Love resides within Virginia's own soul and besides it in the souls of the major personalities created by her. This Love (or intuition, or 'ishq' عشق) or Feminism in the real sense of the word as Virginia interpreted it or Pantheism (Which has been called Wahdatul Wujud وحدة الوجود) by the Islamic Sufis whose source is Ibn'l Arabi who had derived it from The Holy Quran as Plotinus had derived it from ancient Egyptian religion and The Upanisads.

Universal Love, as stated earlier as well, makes the Perfect Man long for death, death which is mingling, which is communion. There is an embracement in death which is Universal Love. Septimus Smith became a sage uttering the messages of Universal Love - "There is God", there is no death." His suicide is an act of defiance as he is not willing to conform to the worldly sense of proportion.

17. Ibid, p. 18.  
Life, like history, starts from a point and after passing through certain phases returns back to its origin. Life continues after death. Thus man defeats death even after he has died. Towards the end of Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, Bernard challenges death. There is a defiance in his tone which removes despair and pessimism. Death as an annihilator ceases to be when one realizes that by residing in reality one continues to be. Life subsides into reality as the waves subside in the sea. Ibn'l Arabi goes so far as to say that this whole universe, along with its mettle and forms, dies away every moment and instantly is regenerated. Every new 'tajalll'(unveiling) gives message of decay for the pre-existent world. This cycle of degeneration and regeneration is, according to Arabi, persistent.

Rumi says:

"Everyone's death is of the same quality as himself, my lad, to the enemy of God an enemy, to the friend of God a friend. your spirit is like the tree and death like the leaf. It has grown from you, whether it be good or evil: all your hidden thoughts, foul or fair are born from yourself."

- Mathnavi ('Beauty of Death')

According to Rumi the separation of soul from body is of no importance. Body is a prison for soul which is

anxious for release as it has to do whatever it was unable
to do within the prisonhouse of body:

روح دار رهبه مان لب كرو پار
مرغ با شکر در قفسی بس بیگرار

Symbols and images employed by Rumi etc. are archetypal
because since ages saints and sages had similar vision (sea,
waves, circle etc. are common metaphors used by them). Sea
is symbolic of Supreme Reality —— the Invisible as well
as Collective Unconscious. Invisible Light named by
Wordsworth as an Active Principle subsisting in all things
permeates everything and pervades everywhere.

Although transitory, the moments of illumination
enlarge our vision making us realize that one is a spirit
who can "see into the life of things", is intuitive, who is
everywhere and nowhere, is deathless, changing its shapes,
turns into original form. The spirit casting away the body
that it wears attains its form and glory — "the still point
of the revolving wheel". Bernard, in The Waves, knows he
might like the waves that rise and fall again, be renewed,
but being in essence, he like the sea will never cease to
be. The mystical concept of the drop being blended in ocean
is similar to the metaphor of the waves and the ocean the
symbols of life and reality. Here are a few lines from Rumi
as quoted by N.C. Thakur:

When waves of thought arise from the ocean of wisdom.
These forms of speech are born and die again.
These waves cast themselves back into Ocean.
Form is born of that which is without form.
And goes again, for 'Verily to Him do we return.'

While indulging in comparative study Thakur refers to the Persian mystic Baba Fariduddin Attar. He writes:

The Persian mystic Fariduddin Attar, in his allegorical epic, "The Conference of Birds", clearly brings out this point that life, not merely has the essence of, but is, in essence reality... Virginia Woolf is thinking in traditional mystical way when she says that reality is something abstract and that it pervades everywhere residing in the down and the skies.

Attar writes in his book Conference of the Birds:

The birds on fire with love said, "How can the moth save itself from the flames when it wishes to be one with the flame. We are like the moth for union with the flame of the candle."

The idea expressed is visible in Virginia Woolf's writings. The title of The Waves previously was The Moths. Moth symbolizes an individual, a devotee who "wishes to be one with the flame". Life continues after death. Virginia Woolf's vast learning and close familiarity with both the Orient and the Occident should not be taken as a drawback,

but a proof of her all-inclusiveness, her cosmic and oceanic vision and sensibility. She had faith in the indivisibility of Self (in company with Hujweri etc.). Bernard who has been created by her in her own image is "Living stream". The word "Stream" has been used for "I", for the Self, for Virginia Woolf herself and far all the sages who have attained perfection. In Javid Nama of Iqbal we find Rumi introducing Iqbal with these words:

(Rumi said: he is a grain soaring in heavens; his heart brims with cosmic longings.)

Except at his own Self he looked at none
Free, traversing swift in expanse and vastness;
'A little humorously I call him Living Stream".

-Javid Namah.

'Zinda Rud' (ژنده رود) has connections with James' conception of 'Stream of Consciousness', (which was later on changed by him as "wave of consciousness"). Live and inspired streams are both Virginia Woolf and Iqbal. Virginia Woolf, like Iqbal, knew within James as well as Zarathushtra's Zarwan - the Spirit symbolizing Time. There seems to emerge a multidimensional writing, a remarkable blending of East and West, the Orient and Occident.

23. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, Javid Namah, The English translation has been extracted from Dr. T.R. Rastogi's article on Iqbal - "Zinda Rud - An Appraisal in the Perspective of Thought". Pub. Iqbal Review, p. 42.
Besides the affinities between Arabi, Jili, Iqbal and Virginia Woolf, the author of this thesis has traced out affinities between Sri Aurobindo, Iqbal and Virginia Woolf. We find a great effort having been made by these three (besides other Oriental Sufis) to reconstruct their religious thoughts. It has to be kept in view that Dara Shikoh had translated *The Upanisads* in Persian with the title *Sirr-e-Akbar* and was sure that the *Kitab-e-Maknoon* in the Holy Quran is actually the essence of *The Upanisads*.

The main sources of the Indian philosophy and Hindu mysticism are *The Vedas* and *The Upanisads* and those of the Muslim thought *The Holy Quran*. These scriptures have been variedly interpreted resulting in various schools of thought. Some interpreted them implying asceticism and self-negation as the true ideal of man's life, while for some the world is real and not an illusion to be renounced. According to them the main objective placed before us by the Absolute reality or Supreme Being is the perfectibility of life in this world. Aurobindo, Iqbal as well as Virginia Woolf considered this world to be real. According to Aurobindo the Vedic statement "One without second" was not read in sufficient light of another equally imperative statement "All this is Brahman". According to Iqbal the Quranic Statement "There is no Time and Space except Allah" should be read in the sufficient light of "All this is God" (or Time is God). Virginia Woolf also has faith in One and Many at the same time. On the one hand she makes Mrs.
Ramsay say "We are in the hands of the Lord"\(^24\). On the other hand she speaks through Mrs. Ramsay, "how if one was alone one leant to things, inanimate things, trees, streams, flowers, felt they expressed one, felt they knew one, felt they became one... How could one Lord have made this world"?\(^25\)

The Pantheism of Aurobindo, Iqbal and Virginia Woolf, being vast, accommodates both the individuality of God and the individuality of man. The unknown God is not really unknowable. He can be known through intuition. Through material objects we come to the concept of Higher Consciousness, (God) which manifests itself in the world forms, using the individual as a centre. Iqbal says:

Quran has regarded God as expressing its symbols both within and without, is the first and last, the Visible and the invisible".\(^26\)

Like Aurobindo both Iqbal and Virginia Woolf try to prove the existence of God by showing that spirit and matter are ultimately one. They, having faith in Einstein's theory of Relativity, agree that Matter is not altogether devoid of consciousness which resides in material objects. (Here we are reminded of Rumi's Creative Evolution). They participate in the life of the objects, the very essence of

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24. Virginia Woolf: *To The Lighthouse*, p. 73.
25. Ibid., p. 73-74.
the forms, the "Mrs. Brownness of Mrs. Brown" (Virginia), or
the "woodness of wood" (Arabi).

According to Aurobindo Brahma is Silent, Inactive yet
manifested in Activity. Man can be free and at the same
time involved in the life activities of the world. Ultimate
Reality, according to Aurobindo is called Non-Being, Nihil.
Both Being and Non-Being are eternal and complementary to
each other. Time for him is real as it is for Iqbal as well
as Virginia. God for all of them is transcendent as well as
immanent. Besides being Upanishadic the very essence of
this philosophy is Islamic as the "source of all scriptures
is one". The Finite Forms are not illusory but real. It is
in this sense that the Holy Quran asks us again and again to
reflect over the phenomena of Nature - the forms, for they
are the symbols of God. The universe is not separate from
God. God is identical with Time according to Aurobindo,
Iqbal and Virginia. Divine Time is indivisible, above
eternity having neither beginning nor end. This is the
concept of Time which is applicable to God as well as man.
Out of the Self of God issues forth all individual life.
God's personality is the external Nature which is his
creative activity, Nature has been called by Iqbal as a
living growing organism whose growth has no final external
limits. This very concept of Nature reminds us of
Wordsworth's philosophy of Nature which had been one of the
sources of Virginia's idea of Nature and God. They could
wish their "days to be bound each to each by natural piety".
Iqbal writes in his book *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*:

> How unlike the spirit of the Quran which sees in the humble bee a recipient of Divine inspiration and constantly calls upon the reader to observe the perpetual change of the winds, the alternation of day and night the clouds, the starry heavens and the planets swimming through the infinite space.\(^{27}\)

Iqbal does not altogether avoid pantheistic implications. Human life has been considered by Iqbal as well as Virginia Woolf as a unity or self or ego having been derived from the Supreme Self. This derived Self is the nucleus, the finite centre surrounded by the circle of the Infinite. These centres of experience, or "moments of being" are real and fundamental facts of the Universe. Iqbal, Virginia Woolf and so also Aurobindo establish an identity between the Self of man and the Divine Self.

However all of them were inclined to intuitionism like Bergson whose obligation to ancient thought was chiefly to Plotinus whose mysticism became increasingly congenial to Bergson in the later years of his life. Virginia Woolf did not have less regard for intuitionism or Unity of Being. Actually she was disgusted with the excesses of Feminism which had exhibited itself wrongly as Women's Lib. and slogan raising. Therefore she tried to bring a balance into

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those excesses, which was for her the only way out, the only path of deliverance. That is why, she with the help of her deep consciousness of history and Pre-history and Egyptalogy pointed out towards the evolution of civilization and was bent towards the roots. For her feminism ought to be means of comprehending reality. By the study of social movement she reached the conclusion that the Western Civilization has emphasized the faculties of Reason and Intellect and overlooked the intuitive or feminine elements. The feminine aspects of thought and the subjugation of women are the central facts of history and the source of most of social and psychological disorders and maladies. Upto the end of the 19th century this spiritual disease spread all over the world and resulted into the disasters of the World Wars (and the recently fought Gulf War) turning the individuals into fragments. Thus an Isis is badly needed today who could rediscover the various pieces of man's body and unite them together and heal them by her miraculous magic power!

Ultimate Reality is known through intuition. It is the state of common self-existence in which the knower and the known are one through knowledge. Self-knowledge and Self-realization, according to Aurobindo, Iqbal and Virginia (along with other great Sufis) is attained by intuition. Love itself is, according to them a form of intuition which is a higher kind of intellect (Higher Reason according to Bergson and Iqbal). Intuition grasps the object being known as a whole while intellect is analytical. That is why
physical sciences have been compared by Iqbal with the vultures falling on the dead body of knowledge. Wordsworth also called it "meddling intellect". Intuition sees things in the whole tending towards synthesis. That is why circle, which is archetypal, is a favorite metaphor with the mystics and Sufis. This metaphor symbolizes wholeness. Al-Jili, in his book *Al-Insan-i-Kamil* uses it again and again. It is Upanishadic and Islamic thus Sufistic in spirit. These echoes arouse a pleasant surprise in the heart of creative and perceptive reader of Virginia Woolf. Human mind and sensibility is the same everywhere.

Virginia Woolf found that reason affirms some and negates others. Intellect does not possess that adventurous spirit which is possessed by Intuition. There is possibility of a synthesis of both Reason and Intuition to be called Higher Reason as stated earlier. Intuition is higher Reason, Universal Love or 'Ishq' (مَّلْحَنُ). Iqbal says:

In a single leap Love reached the destination

I had imagined this earth and the sky to be Infinite.

Iqbal's Perfect Man is well-aware of this very fact that even after death life continues, it is eternal, ever flowing. Thus man defeats death even after he has died. towards the end of Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, Bernard (who is in the image of Virginia herself, challenges death. There is a defiance in his tone which removes despair and pessimism. He says:

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"And in me too the wave rises. It is death. Death is the enemy. Against you I will fling myself, unvanquished and unyielding. O Death".28

For building Perfect Man sound reason, knowledge, self-realization, judgement and insight are needed in a harmonious way. Man is a blending of earthliness and other worldliness establishing individual's relationship with his origins on the one hand and with society and humanity on the other. Uncontrolled reason remains under the control of intuition which is Higher Reason.

The analogies between the sensibility of Virginia Woolf and the Oriental Sufis are suggestive of the fact that in spite of difference of culture, civilization, heritage and language human nature, thoughts, responses and emotions have basic similarity. Literature is as indivisible as humanity. She has that balance which is necessary for breaking the barrier of Time and Space. Therefore it was but natural for her to be against division or separation of Self (human and Divine), or Time. She has reflected in the same way as for example Rumi and others. She is inseparable from Bernard and Mrs. Ramsay. This indivisibility of Self and Art is characteristic of all of them.