Are the Sagunites mystics? There are critics who deny that they are. They take their cue from Sukla who sought to distinguish the Nirguna from the Saguna on this very basis. According to him the Sufis and Nirguna may be called mystics but the epithet does not apply to the Saguna. Mysticism is rendered in Hindi as 'Bahasyavāda'. The Hindi term is unfortunate for it creates the impression that the mystic Way and Reality are esoteric, occult, not accessible to the light of human knowledge.

There have been protests in the West against those psychologists who have sought to annex the phenomena of mystical life to the domain of the morbid and the abnormal. "Some writers would confine the word mysticism to the pathology of religion, a view which can hardly be held except by those who either give the word a meaning which it does not bear in a religious philosophy or who regard all except the most tepid religious devotion as pathological. The term 'Bahasyavāda' does not seek to discredit mysticism as some Western psychologists are wont to, by regarding it as an unhealthy manifestation of the religious life-sense.

The term 'Bahasya', however, implies that Mysticism is a phenomenon occurring in the half-lit chambers of consciousness, and likely to dissolve in the daylight of reason.

1. "अत्यन्त सहज यह महत्व पर उपलब्ध की बाहर तोड़े दे बीने शब्दएक जब रहे हुई हैं।"
   [शुरू: मोक्षी न्योरी दास, पृ. 8], नारायण आनंदी (तम., 84लंग)।

2. "स्पष्ट: समस्यागोलन्तों के भव्य राजनीति की कोशी में जो भी आती"
   [शुरू: आनंदी न्योरी दास, पृ. 161] (मूलिका)


Also Underhill: Mysticism, Preface to the Twelfth Edition, pvi
This view, no doubt steers clear of the error of those critics who with a scientific or pragmatic bias try to measure the truth revealed to the mystic with the yardsticks of social utility or scientific accuracy or in accordance with the psychology of the common man. But in itself it is no less erroneous and has given birth to much fatuous and wide of the mark criticism in contemporary Hindi Literature.

Sukla is the chief advocate of the view that the Sagunites are not mystics for mysticism is a process or an experience that belongs to the recesses of the mind and not to the thoroughfares of social life or history.

"In Indian tradition, the way of knowledge, the way of devotion and the way of Yoga (he means Hatha yoga) are distinct and apart. The Way of Knowledge leans on the pure intellect. The Way of devotion lies through the intuitions of the pure in heart and the Way of Yoga resorts to various abnormal practices and leads to the indwelling God through the achievement of supernormal powers. On account of this clear division the orthodox Bhaktas lay claim neither to supreme knowledge nor to supernatural powers nor again to mystic vision. The supreme knowledge is the sphere of the logical mind. For the Bhakta, the Supreme is both Known and Unknown. He proffers his devotion to the Known aspect and leaves the remainder to be tracked by the philosopher."

1. शुङ्क : मेहरानी नटकशाला, प्र. 4-5
According to Sukla, visions and trances so characteristic of mysticism are peculiar to Semitic religions tradition. He thinks that the Indian Bhakta does not try to search for his God within nor is he prone to the cultivation of mystic states. The God of the Indian Bhakta or devotee is abroad in the world; he is not esconced in a corner of the heart. The Nirgunites, according to him, strike an alien note; their mysticism is a compound of Semitic elements with certain indigenous religious tendencies.

In Indian tradition itself we find no justification for the division of mediaeval Sadhakas into mystics and non-mystics. It is true that in popular parlance the Nirgunites are sometimes referred to as saints and the Sagunites as Bhaktas or devotees. But these labels are not stringently applied and are not exclusively valid in either case. It is only a popular distinction without any strong roots either in fact, in or even in common usage. Moreover, the distinction between saints and devotees, even if it be conceded for the sake of argument, is hardly conterminous with that between mystics and non-mystics. Both Nirgunites and Sagunites can be regarded as followers of Bhakti-Yoga and this will be in consonance with orthodox notions on the subject. Bhakti Yoga is as authentic a form of Yoga as Jñāna Yoga, Karma Yoga, or any other form of this many-faceted discipline. Since all these are ways up the hill of the Lord, it is but proper that the community of aim and achievement be brought out in the nomenclature applied to them and this is done in the term Yoga.

1. ज्योतिस ज्योतिश शास्त्र, p. 162
   ग्रंथि रामचंद्र, p. 13
2. ग्रंथि रामचंद्र, p. 8
The weakness of Sukla's position can easily be pointed out. He has not tried to think things through to the logical end; particularly his bifurcation of Divine nature into manifest and unmanifest categories is hardly tenable. According to him the God of the Sagunite is manifest, probably because He is invested with human form, but that of the Nirgunite is unmanifest. We can hold communion with the God of the Nirgunite only by diving into the mind and this plunge into the deeps of Godhead is a mystic fact par excellence for it cannot be noticed by the eyes of flesh.

If Sukla thinks that the God of the mystic as such is hidden from our regard and that of the Sagunite stands before us, stark and well-defined to the view, then we cannot help saying that the distinction can hardly stand examination. The mystic according to him finds God only when he retires from the work-a-day world and its transactions and works himself up into an ecstasy and in this abnormal state when normal intellective functions are suspended he can behold the God who is shy of the common gaze.

This is, however, an over-simplification of the problem. Firstly, the God of the Nirgunite is hardly unmanifest. It is hardly correct to say as Sukla seems to think, that the unmanifest God dwells in the mind while the manifest wears human guise. According to Indian thought mental objects and processes are not unmanifest; they are as much revealed as any so-called material object. While the Self itself is unrevealed and irrevealable in the empirical condition, being the principle of all revelation, it illuminates all other objects—mental as well as...
material—which stand over against it and constitute non-self. Mental states belong to the class of objects that are illumined by this Light Increate. If the God of the mystic is the Mysterium Tremendum He is hardly contained in the mind for He is the continent of all minds. If the meeting of the mystic with his God in the recesses of the mind is a mystery, the en rapport of the mystic Bhakta with the Personal God is a greater mystery.

Since He seems to have been made in the image of man, the God of the Sagunite is even more insusceptible of logical determination than that of the Nirgunite. How can epithets like Immortal, Immutable, All-pervading apply to Rāma and Kṛṣṇa with their all too obvious human limitations? It is naïve to think that because Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are invested with human form or because actions can be construed in terms of human motivation and purposiveness they become perfectly intelligible. How can the historical transcend mortality and other badges of the human estate? The problem is: how can the God become man? Does not the assumption of the human form compromise the status of the Divine? The Rāma of Tulsī and the Kṛṣṇa of Sura present greater riddles for the logical reason than the God of Kabir and his followers. These riddles cannot be solved by saying that the Saguna God is manifest, and that his actions lie open to the view of all. Nor do the actions of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa go beyond the pale of human judgment because they have been regarded as Līlā by the Saguna devotees.

1. जगदे प्रकाश्य प्रकाशनं राम०
   अयोध्याति यज्ञ गुन ब्रम्ही
   रमचरितमानस्, प.१३५
The question is whether or not this Līlā is a historical phenomenon. If it is only a historical biography, how can it be efficacious for the good of the devotee to-day ages after its enactment? It is obviously not a part of the contemporary history. If Sukla thinks that it is being enacted even to-day then he goes over into the camp of Nirgunite mystics. To read an extra-historical meaning in the historical is to turn history into a symbol and symbolism goes hand in hand with mysticism. If the Līlā of Rama or for that matter that of Kṛṣṇa is a fact constituent of the contemporary scene, what is the relation of this Līlā to the actual historical Līlā enacted in Tretā or Dvāparā? How can ancient history set modern scepticism at rest? How can what happened ages ago fulfill the longings of the devotee of to-day? Rāma is obviously not manifest to-day in the sense that, say, our contemporaries are manifest. The Nirgunite God admits of easier logical demonstration than the Sagunite. Kabir fights shy of the mystery of the Incarnation because he does not know how to reconcile time with Eternity! Tulsi himself says that the Saguna is more difficult of comprehension than the Nirguna. Mysticism is essentially the experience of the Divine, no matter whether this experience is of transcendence or of immanence or of the integral Godhead who is both within and without.

1. Upanishad, p. 93

2. स्नातन रूप सुत्वम् प्रति लगुन जान नहीं कोर।
सूगम प्रगम नाना गद्यं तुम कुच नृत्रम् प्राम हेतु।
प्राणस, उत्तर 122
Sukla thinks that the Sagunites see God in man, the full manifestation of Divinity in the human creature. That is a fact but she does not draw the necessary conclusions from it. To see God in man is to acknowledge the provisional character of the distinction between the two. The Sagunites, particularly those of the Krsnavata School, will recoil from any such position that seeks to establish complete identity between the two. Even to Sukla this conclusion will hardly be acceptable in its entirety. However that may be, Indian tradition does not hold that the distinction between God and Jiva is entirely irreconcilable.

Even in Schools with an indubitable dualistic bias it is acknowledged that even though Jiva cannot attain to absolute parity with the Divine, it can transcend its contingent modality and acquire some of the attributes of the Divine. If God and soul are not entirely incompatible modes of existence then the character of the soul of man becomes manifest. The unfoldment of this latent Divinity is a mystic fact and shows that the Divine and the human are not entirely incompatible modes of existence. The humanity of God and the Divinity of man are complementary facts and if one of them, namely, the Divine essence of the human creature is conceded to be a cardinal doctrine of mysticism, there is no reason why the other should not be regarded in the same light.

1. शरमु: गोपाली दुर्लभित्व, p.23

2. In the non-Advaitic Schools of Vedanta, the Jiva, though not identical with the Divine, is not altogether a disparate entity. The schools of विशेषज्ञातिः, कुर्कु, खर्मित्ति, and दर्श, derive their
Sukla seems to think that the position of the mystic is at odds with logic. The mystic for him typifies the life of unreason. According to him the mystic experience is only the rapture of a fleeting moment of union between the human soul and the Divine. It is a state of trance. It supervenes only when the action of the critical faculties has been paralysed. Mysticism thus has no ontology, no doctrine of what is. It is only an abnormal state wrought by the a-logical powers of the mind. The Semitic religions afford no room for the exercise of reason.

Advaitism, therefore, entered them through the back-door in the guise of mysticism. Advaitavada according to him is the fruit of the ratiocinative powers of the mind. Mysticism is born out of the wedlock of imagination with Advaitism. Mysticism, again, is of two types: emotional and practical. By practical mysticism he means the one cultivated by the Nathists and other occultists. This mysticism has for its aim the acquisition of supernormal powers and is linked with occult practices of many sorts. He distinguishes between two types of emotional mysticism. The first type is concerned with the propitiation of supernatural powers, malign and benign, and the second one revolves round the conception of a theistic God regarded as standing in some sort of personal relation to the devotee or the Sadhaka.

1. *ibid.*, p. 162
2. *ibid.*, p. 158
3. *ibid.*, p. 159
4. *ibid.*, p. 159
5. *ibid.*, p. 160
According to him there is no mysticism in the Upanisads for the Upanisads mark the culmination of the intellectual quest. He discovers mysticism in the vision of the cosmic form in the Gita, but according to him the acceptance of the Sagunite theory of incarnation gave the quietus to mysticism so far as the masses at large are concerned. The object of the mystic quest is mysterious, but the Līlā of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa manifests itself in the broad daylight of history. "Rāma and Kṛṣṇa were no longer regarded as the objects of mystic's seeking; they became an integral part of popular religion.

As has been pointed out above, Sukla did not try to have a clear grasp of the nature of mysticism due to a deep-laid prejudice. Almost all the statements made above can be disputed and shown to be inadequate and hardly consistent with the conclusions arrived at by those who have given long and sustained thought to the nature and province of mysticism. His contention that the mystic is a proponent of unreason is hardly tenable. The anti-intellectualist philosophies of William James and Bergson were greatly in vogue when Sukla was writing. These philosophers had tried to demark the boundaries of reason and restricted its province to physical sciences, law philosophy, and mathematics. Reason came to be defined as the faculty of logical thought and all that did not fall within the purview of the methods of logic was assigned to the sphere of intuition, imagination, to

1. जानकी ज्ञान, p. 160.
2. "", p. 160.
a supra-intellectual faculty! These supra-intellectual ranges of the mind embraced moral, aesthetic, and religious thinking. All that could not be made amenable to the laws of inferential thinking was annexed to the domain of intuition which is regarded fundamentally as anti-rational faculty. The type of knowledge to which we have access in religious, aesthetic and artistic activity is not begotten as a result of the activity of reason but of supra-intellectual faculties. When mystic vision or the direct knowledge of Godhead is regarded as the sphere of the anti-rational, the content of reason is impoverished and distrust in its activity engendered. It is, however, wrong to say that this direct knowledge is born when we renounce or forego the use of reason. All knowledge is the province of reason, of the particular no less than of the universal, of religion and art no less than that of science and mathematics. When religion becomes an experience we have mysticism. Where truth is revealed we have the activity of reason. It is wrong to think that mysticism has to do with auditions and locutions and visions and other supernormal powers and that it is not sustained by any doctrine of the Real.

Mysticism may not unfairly be regarded as a form of Yoga, for Yoga, too, has to do not with conceptual activity but with the immediate knowledge of Godhead. If a man is deflected from the path of Yoga by the lure of Siddhis or the

   "De Sade: The Modern Gospel of Universe"

2. "No responsible"

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the supernatural powers that the utmost concentration of mind begets, he is a materialist whatever the measure of his proficiency in occult practices. A materialist is one for whom the states and processes of consciousness are subservient to and are determined by results in the outer world. Such a one will be regarded as 'Yogabhrasta', one whose efforts to become a yogi have proved to be abortive. He sets out towards Brahmapura or 'Civilitas Dei' but falls by the way or strays from the path to the lure of alien influences. Auditions or locutions and other supernatural or preternatural phenomena found in the literature on mysticism were aberrant or pathological forms thereof. They are psychic experiences and not mystic or spiritual ones. Indian mysticism mysticism never took a fancy to these pinchbeck forms of what is essentially an emancipative experience which reveals to the seeker the meaning and destiny of human life. As Yoga, not exhausted in the Siddhis but has a definite ontological basis wherein its ethics are rooted, so mysticism too has a well-defined theory of the Real and its ethical approach is conditioned by that. The transports and ecstasies of the Seeker are manifestations of the phenomena of Bhaktiyoga as the perception of the super-essential Transcendence is that of Jnanayoga. These Yogas may be regarded as the various paths that lead up the hill of the Lord but the view from the summit is the same.

1. There are references in the scriptures in the Prakrit, but there were not regarded as human. (Vide Shvetatmaharatri P. II and Durga P. III. 6.)

2. ज्ञानयोग योगवाच्च काठी विनायकानुष्ठाने गुरुहसने प्रवाह गुरुपाद्यान्तः: (सूतकृत्वः)

Thus the Siddhis are regarded as basis for fulfillment for they are conditioned.
Mysticism appears in connection with the endeavour of the human mind to grasp the Divine Essence or the Ultimate reality of things and to enjoy the blessedness of actual communion with the Highest. The first is the philosophic side of mysticism, the second its religious side. On the practical side mysticism maintains the possibility of direct intercourse with this Being or Beings. God ceases to be an object and becomes an experience.

Mediaeval Hindi mysticism in both the Nirguna and Saguna schools seeks to integrate the religious with the philosophic aspects of consciousness. The mystic's mind is no longer a house divided against itself. The Sagunites have behind them the tradition of Vedanta as it had been interpreted by the Vaisnava Acaryas. It is in these Acaryas—Narayana, Vallabha, Nimbarka and Madhva—that we find the most sustained attempt to reconcile the demands of the religious consciousness with those of the philosophic consciousness. In them the heart runs in harness with the intellect. Although at times the Saguna Sadhaka seems to abandon himself to the tidal flow of emotion yet we should not forget that they are all committed to reliance on the testimony of the Vaisnava experience, as expanded in the Puranas and the works of the Acaryas. The enjoyment of the blessedness of actual communion is, however, what distinguishes the Sagunite mystic. They taste the Lord and know that he is sweet. They feast their love-lorn eyes on His Beauty. They delight in Him as the lustful do in women.

1. Albertson: *Nirvana Mystica*, p. x x xvi ('Introduction').

2. तनन्दन मेधृस्थं जारं प्रहुरं तनन्दन मेधृस्थं जारं प्रहुरं " (तेन्हौतुमलांने, तेन्हौतुमलांने, प. 233).

3. जुली : आश फारसी (कोहिम्न नागर णंजात को भोंतिवंत लाभ रहत उम्माक, प. 71).
The real Jñāna is not one who has resolved the doubts raised by the sceptical intellect. Advaitavāda is either a theory held by the intellect or the immediate realization of the unity of Being in which all distinction between the subject and the object of the empirical plane is negated. In the latter case it is the variety of mystical experience in which we are face to face with Pure Being. But there are other varieties of mystical experience in which the distinction between the soul and her Lord is not altogether sublated. These are comprised under love-mysticism. Here the soul reaches out towards her Sources and Continent Who is also her lover. Here we do not find the unity of Being but communion between the human and the Divine. While the experience is essentially unwordable its expression is an obligation laid upon the mystic who wants to heal the souls of men riven by hope and fear. But the experience and its expression are indissolubly linked. The 'Given' is interpreted in the very act of apprehension. Again our experience and its expression are set within a framework of tradition. In a way both personal and impersonal conceptions of the Real are interpretations of experience. Kabir apprehension is multiplex. He apprehends Him as the Absolute to whom the categories of Personal and Impersonal, finite and infinite do not apply.4

1. Shāntkara: Upaniṣadārāmā, p. 10
(“पुत्रों उ मरुषयं र पनि म दर्शिता भवेऽति। श्रीण निर्देश परं दर्शनीयकं तः परमेश्वरमिहः।"


4. See pp. 94-95, 75
He is also apprehended as the Impersonal Reality that outreaches the mind, and cannot be figured, finitised or delimited in the way the human person is. Again, He is also the Supreme Person, responsive to love and petition, in whom all earthly love is consummated and perfected. Fundamentally thus the Nirgunite and Sagunite viewpoints do not seem to contradict each other. For both recognize the immobile actionless Supreme, inaccessible to thought and beyond name and form. Both lay stress on the ethical life as a pre-condition for winning the spiritual experience and redeeming the mind from its entanglement in futilities. It is thus on the basis of their experience of God as Avatara that they are denied admission to the mystic fold. But as we have pointed out the doctrine of Avatara is a mystic doctrine par excellence for the Avatara is not an anthropomorphic conception essentially. The reality of the Avatara is not exhausted in his apparent humanity. The Avatara transcends the human even as the spirit transcends the body. The mystic reading of the body will regard it as spirit temporalized; the Avatara too is the symbol of the historical dimension of the Supreme. The mystic character of the Sagunite God consists in this that He is God and man at the same time. Suhla does not expressly say so but

1. Suhla, p. 95

2. Suhla, p. 96

3. Suhla, Giovanni Luigi Des, p. 6. Here Suhla seeks to distinguish the way of mystical from mysticism (in UU) on the ground that for the mystic the divine is an indwelling Reality only wherever for the Bhakta He is manifest in time.
the implicate of his argument is that the human and social
significance of his character is what is ideal about him.
Rama is the mirror of social idealism and a witness to the
noblest aspirations of the human heart in the field of social
relations. Sukla puts great emphasis on the fact that in Rama
love and wrath are reconciled. According to him a healthy
society does not cultivate love, beneficence, and good-will
to the exclusion of harder virtues like justice and
stocicism which embody its will to weed out those evil
forces that threaten its well-being. The wrath of Rama is as
essential for the conduct of social life as is his indulgence
towards his devotees. Moreover, Rama is an exemplar of all the
virtues that make for nobility and raise the tone of life in
the family as a social institution. He is an ideal brother,
master, husband. Sukla sees in the character of Rama an attempt
to rehabilitate social idealism which was withering under the
influence of negative creeds—Nathism. It is thus clear
that for him Rama is because he is the paradigm of human
perfection. He does not try to bring out the metaphysical implica-
tes of his Lila. His Lila is but human activity idealised to the
utmost limit of perfection. He forgets Tulsi when he (Tulsi) says
that to sing of the greatness of the souls

1. He always retrenches the ideal quality of the action of
Saguna Lord

2. Tulsī, p. 139

3. See, p. 35-36

4. Tulsi, p. 2-24

5. Ibid, p. 8
is to debase language. All social virtue, however, is the sphere of the "Prakṛti." Rama's greatness does not lie in this that he exemplifies human nature at its best. Sukla thinks that Rama's pre-eminence is due to his being a pattern of morality, individual and social. But the excess of Sattva does not take us beyond the sphere of Prakṛti. The "Sattvika" man is still a "Prakṛti" man for it is the interaction of all the three Gunas that weaves the web of human life. And all the virtues that Sukla catalogues while portraying Rama do nothing more than bringing out this Sattvika quality of his character. It is possible to transfigure our passions by changing their reference. On account of its social orientation the wrath of Rama becomes Sattvika. Since the realm of Prakṛti extends right up to Sattva it is wrong to treat of the actions of Rama as merely illustrative of this attribute or, better still, constituent of the manifold of Prakṛti. That is why all efforts to delineate the character of Rama and to probe into his psychology do less than justice to Tulsi who has expressly told us that it is not his intention to give us a portraiture of human nature after the manner of psychological realists. To rest content with cataloguing the virtues of Rama is to miss the metaphysical dimension. The

1. The entire field of Prakṛti is constituted by the inter-play of Guna. Bhāg. 8.4.14, 5-20

2. The well-known śatrutāḥ dharmaṁ vartate mahābhutāṁ sarvokteḥ (Gita IV.13)
The play of Prakṛti is His Līlā and He is the witness of this Līlā. To be a witness is to transcend Prakṛti, and to become (Aprakṛti). This means to say that He sings of the Līlā who is not involved in the tragi-comedy of life that the Gunas in their unceasing process continue to weave and unweave.

That is the significance of his aversion towards the Prakṛta and his desire to celebrate the "aloe of calm" of the Āstā or the Spectator of the agitation of Prakṛti. This role of the spectator does not imply deliberate abstention from action. As Prakṛti He acts but as the Self of Prakṛti He does not, and the Soul or Self of Prakṛti represents the higher nature of the Supreme. His greatness does not lie in the greatness or magnitude of his actions or the daring with which he takes a plunge into the world of action. It lies in His being the witness of the cosmic spectacle. To miss this metaphysical dimension, the significance of His nature as the witness of Prakṛti, is to fall into the trap of that psychological realism that seeks to register the details of a man's mental make-up and thinks that by resolving the mind into its constituent psychic units it has got at the whole truth about the being of man. This is the fallacy into which the person who tries to give an elaborate character-sketch of Śrīma in the way in which we discuss the...
characters of, say, Shakespeare has fallen. When we lose sight of the Sūkla when he says that the Rama of Tulsi as distinguished from that of Kabir is wholly manifest. It is only then that we come to regard the Rama of Tulsi as a being whose nature can be fully grasped by the intellect of man. The Rama of Tulsi transfigures history even as the Rama of Kabir transfigures the human mind and raises it above its chronic ailment as a creature of moods and passions. That Rama is a mystic entity means that He cannot fall wholly within the ken of man as long as man is an unregenerate creature of the earth. The Sagunites never forget this particular aspect of their Ista-Devata. They, again, seek to bring home His super-earthly character by regarding His activity as Līla which is not subject to the same criteria of judgment as the action of unreclaimed human nature. As long as the Rāmāyana is read as mere literature or as the record of the biography of a man, Rama, we cannot get at the secret of those who see the entire significance of Rāma human life unfolded in its pages and for whom it provides an unfailing inspiration in the trying situations of life. And as soon as we cease to regard it as a merely human document and regard it as an account of the transactions of the supreme Spirit in time we abandon the position of the literalist and Sūkla and his school are literalists whatever their protests.
We have to take note of the amplitude of Divine nature in order to understand the real character of mysticism. We can distinguish between levels of Divine manifestation. There is the Primordial fact of the Absolute, the Brahman of Sankara. Brahman personalized is Isvara. In Kabir's mysticism there is the recognition of both Brahman and Isvara. With Brahman we are 'One' in experience but it is possible to hold communion with Isvara.

Sankara would say that the first level is Brahman and the second is Isvara. In passing from one to the other, the Nirgunite Supreme does not forfeit its mystic character. Isvara is the supreme, beneficent, compassionate Lord engaged in delivering the souls from ill. He is the cosmic form of Brahman. At the level there is no contingency or creation for Brahman is not a creator. The Creator stands in relation to His creation but Brahman is the relationless Absolute. Isvara, however, exists in relation to a finite and temporal world. He acts upon this world. There is, however, the third level: God become man. It is the contention of the Sagunite that it is possible to hold communion with the Avatar, too. In passing from the first to the second and thence to the third, Divine nature suffers no diminution of its super-eminence or its fullness. The Incarnate has all the attributes that characterize Isvara. This is the paradox of Divine nature that its temporal manifestation does not detract from its a-temporal fullness. This is a mystic fact recognized by the Sagunite but missed by the Nirgunite on account of his all too literal interpretation of history.

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It has been pointed out that whatever level of Divinity we approach, our experience of that level must be first-hand before we can aspire to the title of a mystic. Kabir is not a mystic because his God is unmanifest. One does not become a mystic by arriving at the Unmanifest dialectically. Thought has to turn itself into feeling and will before we can turn a theory into realization. Similarly, Tulsi’s Saguna Rama does not stand in the way of Tulsi’s mysticism. Kabir can have direct perception of Brahman so that he becomes Brahman and comes to know the futility of all ritual, dogma and worship. He again, has direct apprehension of the Personal God, can yearn for him and look forward to meeting him. The Sagunite too is a lover, a lover of the incarnatory form and can enter into communion with him. “In Christendom as well as in the East, contemplatives who follow the path of devotion, conceive of and indeed directly perceive, the incarnation as a constantly renewed fact of experience.”

To say that the God of Tulsi has become manifest in history does not mean that the Sagunite loses sight of the contingent character of what is merely historical. But he does not forget that the historical is anchored in the Eternal. Sura tells us that

1. Vide supra, pp. 2, 18, 25

2. Vide supra, pp. 59 ff.

3. Vide supra, p. 66

4. Aldous Huxley: The Perennial Philosophy, p. 34 (Collins)
the Līlā of Kṛṣṇa goes on from age to age without let or abatement. Time cannot eclipse Eternity. "Eternal is Vrndavana, the abode of Śyama; eternal again is Pāñcāla, the Lady of Braja. His Pāsa again is eternal and eternal are his disportings in water. In the lush bowers is bliss everlasting. Constant is the joy of the Spring. Endless is the play of the triple Kṛṣṇa and fadeless is the charm of Spring. There is in Braj joy without end, without a trace of sorrow. Hand Dāsa sings in similar strain of the charm of Pāsa and of the eternal youth of Kṛṣṇa and his mates, and of how the secret of this Pāsa is inaccessible even to the Sāṅgītes. That God should become man is a mystic fact par excellence. The Sāṅgīte is aware of this. Tulsī too tells us that the biography of Pāna is his Līlā enacted variously from age to age. Manifold are the ways in which Pāna incarnates and countless are the Ramayanas. Manifold are the resplendent deeds of Pāna, diversified from age to age. Infinite is Pāna, of duration endless is his tale. But it is only the pure in heart who can listen to it without feeling amazed thereat. The mystery of Pāna is no longer a mystery for those who purge their minds for the Vision Splendid. The mystery reveals itself to those who willingly undergo the purgatorial discipline of Tapas, and at the same time keep the fire of love alight in their hearts.

1. सूर्य दास, (सं, लघु) p. 3461
2. अरुण (सं, केशवदास) p. 21 (राहुल)
3. भगवान (32.1-4), p. 65-
It is wrong to keep the Sagunites out of the mystic fold on the
ground that while they believe in a religion of authority,
mysticism is the religion of the spirit. There is an impression
that the mystic acknowledges no authority save the witness of the
inner spirit while the Sagunite is an institutionalist.
Institutions conceal the spiritual impulse and prefer the corporate
idea to the 'flight of the Alone to the Alone'. We have, however,
to bear in mind that mysticism and institutionalism are not exclu-
sive of each other. Institutions do not always thwart the
growth of the mystical spirit. On the other hand, it is rather
difficult to grow into the mystical life without conscious
participation in some sort of traditional communion or allegiance.
It is the nature of spiritual consciousness to embody itself in
some sort of corporate or institutionalized life, although the
experience itself an individual achievement. But paradoxical as it
may seem, it breaks down the barriers of what we ordinarily
identify as our empirical personality, and overflows into the
life of others, fertilizing the inferior levels of human conscio-
seness, so that they, too, are transformed and come to bear the
rich fruitage of spiritual life.
In the history of mysticism this corporate aspect of mystical
experience can hardly be ignored. Mystical life cannot grow in
vacuo. We often hear it said that Kabir and the Nirqunites
"Somewhat live an inner spiritual life within great
religious traditions and institutions, attain to a more
volume and richness of religious insight, conviction
and reality." (Von Hugel: "External Life", p. 372)
repudiated all ties with tradition but this is too sweeping a generalization. They do ignore certain important aspects of the rich Indian tradition but not all the values embodied therein. Indian Protestantism has a long history, dating from the times of the Upanishads.

While the institution incarnates and bears witness to the spiritual impulse, it also tends to ossify, to stiffen and become rigid so that it comes to emphasize not the free, creative, spontaneous character of mystical experience but only its doctrinal scaffolding.

Is it possible to make a direct approach to the Spirit, or to achieve the mystical status unaided? We are aware of the importance of the Guru in Nirgunite Gadhana. This Gadhana is handed down in pupillary succession and the Guru is the vehicle or mouthpiece of one tradition or the other. If he does not advocate one set of traditional values and attitudes, it is because he advocates another.

It is true that the seeker after God has to practice some sort of mortification and to retire from the ordinary life of comfort and craving but this gesture does not exhaust the entire range of mystical consciousness. The mystic in his cloister is not as solitary as he seems. The experiences gleaned by the

1. The Protestant voice is heard in many verses of the Upanisads, in the Mahābhārata, in Yoga, and the radical outlook of Sāṅkara Velanta towards Kāraṇa Kānda, in the Tantra, in Buddhism and Jainism.
earlier mystics and garnered in the national tradition are part of his environment and sustain him on his upward journey. While there is a reaching out for the Divine in earnestness and dedication, an unrelaxing effort for the achievement of a new dimension and orientation, the mystic is upheld by the unseen arms of a tradition incarnate in a book, a Guru or an Avatar. While the mystic may retire from social life for a while this recession is, more often than not, temporary, and he returns towards his social environment with a new accession of vitality and impregnates the social life with newer and nobler ideals and visions. Thus we see that if Kabir and other Nirmite saints do not belong to one tradition it is because they belong to another, the Protestant tradition within Hinduism, the tradition embodied in the lives and works of those who regarded all book-love and formalism as an en on their way to the Divine. Spiritual life can flourish neither in total alienation from tradition nor in absolute dependence upon it. Even in Vaishnavism, all is not tradition and orthodoxy. The dawn of Bhakti leads to the snapping of the bonds of caste for the one criterion of high caste is whether the Bhakta has drawn near to the Lord. The Vaishnavas, too, want first-hand experience of the Real. But one would say that for them every step to the Presence is a fore-taste of the bliss to be. (This is true even of "Yoga").
Thus social reference and historical affiliation are obviously implicit in the origin, sustenance and consummation of mystic effort. If there is a Puṣṭimārga to incarnate the message of a Vallabha, Kabārapāth tries to bear witness to the vision and achievement of Kabārā. As a matter of fact, the later development of the Nirguna creed is characterized by a pronounced tendency to express itself in various fraternities and orders. The Nirguna thus does not seek his private salvation. It is true he deliberately tries to reject the earlier symbolism and thus seems to run counter to the social mind that entertains and upholds the symbolism, but that does not turn him into an individualist. Śukla tries to categorize the Nirguna as mystics because they appear to him to be individualists up in arms against the social milieu, concerned solely with their private visions and ecstasies, avert their eyes from the contemporary scene and fix their minds on the Beyond. But this is to take a superficial view of the nature of mystical consciousness and its expression in social and historical institutions. The mystic who has achieved the summum bonum may react to the social scene in various ways. Even while keeping aloof from the social environment he may bear witness to values that are essential for the conservation of society. The detachment, the serene calm and the gushing springs of love he carries within him are essential for the health and sanity of any society that is really living.

"He it is who, dyeing to themselves, become capable of perfect action and are made the instruments through which divine grace is dedicated to those whose unregenerate nature is inferior to the delicate banner of the spirit."

( Aldous Huxley: The Perennial Philosophy, P.306 )
The distinction Sukla seeks to make out between the Nathists and devotional mystics like Kabir is not tenable. According to him one type is Nathists and the other is Nathists; that is, while the Nathists have recourse to certain well-defined measures, the other category is committed to an emotional love of God. The suggestion seems to be that the devotional mystics revel in their emotions and theirs is the facile way of songs and genuflexions while the Nathists and their kindred are a more hardy and persistent lot. As a matter of fact both of them are Sadhanas, ways to Godhead consecrated by tradition. The way of the Bhakta is not all lush sentiment and lubricity; the Bhakta is not an effusive person with no moral backbone to his ecstasies. The cultivation of moral virtues is not neglected although human life does not reach its fulfilment in moral life alone. Morality should flower in the love of the Lord; otherwise it is apt to degenerate into a rigid formal code for the conduct and satisfaction of self-centred life. The way of love is not a primrose path; the emotions have to be weaned from their attachment to temporal objects, purged and re-dedicated to the Divine. The soul has to temper itself through Sadhana before it can achieve the necessary strength for enthroning the Lord in the heart of its affections.

Moreover, the above division on the basis of \( ^5_m \) and \( ^n_q \) blurs the ontological status of both types. The Nathists are not mere miracle-mongers or peddlers of esoteric Yogic lore although many dimwits entered their fold who went after Siddhis ignoring the end. Nathism has a definitive ontological content which is not concerned with the acquisition of super-normal powers. Nor again, are the devotional mystics fond of luxuriating in their emotions for the sake of emotions only. Both of them contend that they are in touch with the Real or seek to be in touch therewith. The emotions of the Bhakta and the arduous efforts of the "athist refer to something beyond themselves. They originate in a certain conception of the Real or the Good (they mean one and the same thing here) and the desire to approach him or to attain to consubstantiality with Him.

Both of them are practical-minded, that is, men who know what they want and the way that leads to the fulfilment of that want. If the Nirguna is led to the altar by "Bhavana" then we have to acknowledge that Bhavana too is a Sthadana. It requires all the energy and perseverance that the human mind can summon to change the direction of one's desires and to give them new objects for their seeking. It is a hard way, much harder than that of the man who seeks to give a new orientation to his thought alone. Sukla-view seems to be that the way of feeling or devotion makes no demands on our inner resources. This is hardly correct.

1. "The final aim of the Natha Siddhas was the attainment of Siva-
heard in and through the attainment of Nirguna.
( S. Bh. Gupta: Observe Religion, Cult, p. 250)

"Siva is their Supreme God and salvation consists in union with the Divinity through Yoga."
( L. P. Tezioni: "Yoga (Kabatha) in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, X11, 832"
That the Sagunite conceives of and contemplates the Lila of Para in many ways shows that he does not regard it as a merely historical event, of an unrepeatable pattern, that has been once and is not going to be again. The mystic does not take time seriously; it is significant only in so far as it is the moving image of Eternity. If there had been nothing to the story of Rama and Krsna than what meets the eye, or what is discovered by the literalist, we would not have been told that it is something esoteric, shrouded in mystery. That the Sagunite recognizes its immense mystery—that there is a dimension to it which is not explicable in terms of discursive thought or logic. To see the inner in the inner may be mysticism, but to see the inner in the outer, the spiritual as enrobing and interpenetrating the physical, is if anything, the greater mysticism. It is wrong to think that the historical is the sole content of the Real. For the Sagunite history symbolizes God as Act, and its true significance is discovered not in a concatenation or sequence of facts but in what is revealing itself through those facts. If the Kirgunite is a mystic because he discovers God in the recesses of the mind, if the Sufi is a mystic because he discovers God in Nature and her pulsing life, then the Sagunite, too, is a mystic because he discovers God in the process of history. It is vain to protest

1. W.R. Inge: Mysticism and Religion

He says: "Time is the form which the soul creates when it wishes to translate the eternal ideas into vital laws." Mysticism and Religion, p. 58.

2. See supra p. 134
that the Avotara is an anthropomorphic concept.

The Sagusites deny that he is a mere man. Moreover, anthropomorphism there—although in a comparatively less accepted way—in the petitionary prayers and yearnings of the Hirugnite. You cannot address the Vast Nihil and observe wearing vigils for the Sunya. Nor can one vow unfailing fidelity to the bloodless Absolute, immobilized in self-sufficiency.

Mysticism is hardly the fruit of man's intellectual quest alone. It engages all the levels of human consciousness—knowledge, feeling and will. The mystic is not a theoretician, a cartographer of the spiritual realm. He is primarily a treader of the path. He integrates the Self and puts an end to the civil war in members for what he knows that he loves and he engages in action, mental (as in prayer) and physical (as in religious ceremonial) to unite himself with what he loves. Wherever we see the hard discipline of the spiritual life gladly accepted, we have the mental make-up of the mystic. The object of the Quest may be the Personal God who superintends the order of the universe, the impersonal Absolute the realization of which dissolves the hard configurations of egoistic existence in calm and joy, or an incarnate form that bears witness to the action of the Divine in time. What matters is not the nature of the Real we seek but whether we are in earnest about the search or want to have merely the thrill of spiritual emotions without paying the price in terms of a purgatorial discipline. Such earnest seeking leads to experience and is the sine qua non of mysticism, We have this seeking in the Sagusites and the response of the Divine thereto.

How can, for instance, one all the Immovably Nought.

K. G. P. 18 (Roads of the Creator)
Symbolism is necessarily bound up with mysticism since mysticism is essentially on experience, and from the point of view of experience it can be articulated through symbolic forms.

In regard the various events of Tamm's life with his studies in and about Shambhala, Life, with particular regard to his designation as Guru, the personal and historically held thought in the biography of Tamm is one of the rare stuff as it is of any other social, in that case the significance of these events goes not beyond their enactment in space and time. But when we treat them as symbols indicating the nature of the Divine and of His transactions with the human soul we enter the realm of the mystical. It is of the essence of mysticism to recall the historic as a comment on the condition of the gnostic as that which is ever is.

It is thus and thus alone that we can express the essential truths of the Gagana school from the change of a man historical condition of production, but these truths become the Dharma or of Dharma as being symbolized in the way of the condition.

The various types of Tamm—his types of human culi cultivation at various stages of growth.

There are some pleasing for the Lord, again, there are others entering the bliss of union with Him. In the rich variety of spiritual life consits in seeking the Dharma being enacted within the human, there is nothing that this is true of Tamm and


1. Indra p. 201-2
2. Indra p. 229
It appears that for Sukla the mystic sense can be nourished only in alienation from the world and its concerns. He recognizes that the devotees of Krsna leaned towards mysticism when they overlooked other attributes of their God and came to concentrate on his love and beauty only. When that is to say, they offered their devotion to the Gay Dancer of Vrndavana, the fluting lover of cow-herd maids and lost sight of the Krsna who rid his people of the terror of Raksas and preached the deathless Gospel of Action on the battlefield of Kuruksetra. This is to say the least, a highly unsatisfactory view of the social utility of mysticism. According to Sukla Tulsi is greater than Sura because Rama is out to improve the state of affairs in the outer world while no such ideal seems to animate Krsna of Sura or those devotional mystics, particularly those of the Astacchapa school, who revel in the charm and gaiety of their Lord. Krsna seems to him to be devoid of that passion that leads us to wage unceasing war against the social evils that disfigure our environment. It is doubtful if any mystic or a person with even a modicum of insight into the spiritual nature of reality and of the human self, sets out deliberately to better the lot of the world. A man who works in the name of that cant is still subject to the conceit of a perduring empirical ego, a law unto himself that has an independent will and the necessary power to execute it. The mystics never do

Sukla: Jayanti Granthakali, p. 161
1. Sukla, Gouverdhan Bhasa, p. 32-33
whether they are Sagunites or Nirgunites. To aim deliberately at the social good is the part of the social reformer. Both the Sagunite and the Nirgunite regard contemplation, the deliberate cultivation of devotion to the Divine as the end of human life. It is wrong to ignore the volitional aspect of the Sagunite endeavour and to regard it merely as an affair of the emotive.

The Sagunite ethos is a sustained act of the will, detaching the affections from the lower objects and lifting them Godward.

Here too we find an unremitting and ruthless denial of the creaturely Self.

It is relevant to ask: what is the ideal society according to Sūkra? He has nowhere given a clear account of his ideas on this subject but Indian sociologists are in no doubt on this issue.

An ideal society is so organized that its members can easily pursue the four ends of life, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksa. Of these Moksa is the supreme, and others are well lost if this be gained.

The dichotomy of love and action, of mysticism and Dharma, that Sūkra finds in Pārśavata and Kṛṣṇavata schools is false. Action is biased only if it is grounded in vision. There is an

1. तैरे नेपाने बूढ़ा बा कहिने जै नर अन्य अन्यति ये थोरे, तिन थे तया उठते रहिए।
   क-6. पर २५२

2. कागे हैं दोरी रोम लगेह। क-9. पर २५२

3. नेवल की धनि थे चंद्रका, जो मुंकु ढ़ुमरेरे १४ साले।
   निधि कित्ते मैं लेने सबी, कूल्ले किमा किंग-रो ने भागे।
   भगवान के जै यह आर्यकाओं तुलने हेर-हेर करते तुलन-रहे।
   मर तेरे जे है ज्याओं, तैरे, चालन नाहीं बुपरावें जाने।
   (श्रीकृष्ण महाराज ३५२)
an insufficient emphasis on secular activity in Krsnavata but
then there are numerous passages in Tulsi also where the way
of the ascetic is belauded. This is in accord with the ancient insight that there is no absolute ethic for all, and
there are at least three ways to the Divine and that love and
dnowledge are as good agents for mystic fruition as action.
The mystic bears witness to values which the pursuit of which
neutralizes the poisons of life. If he engages in action it is because he seeks thereby to lift the veil that divides
human beings from the supreme good. He should not be judged by the quantity and number of temporal goods he has won for himself, since he has seen through their worth and abjured them.
He should not be expected to try to win for others what he has himself renounced as not conducive to the ultimate good.

राज के विचार ि वेय ि पपा 16 ि विचार ि वो पीपिं।
ि उत्तरी के साथ हो साइपु ि हो पीपिं।
ि साइपु, राज 2.
ि जों ने पीपाना अपा मना। रिति निरंतर नाग नाग पिं
ि नाग अपा मना नूर। रिति निरंतर क्षण नाग नाग पिं
ि नाग, अपलकी 10 प. 10 7