

The Veil

The soul, as bride, is pining in separation from her Bridegroom, the Lord. The two are not distant from each other, but there is a curtain or a veil between them, which does not let them unite. This veil is of the ego, which gives a false sense of independence to the soul. The soul is incomplete without the Lord. It is also the ego, which produces ignorance and delusion. So, unless the veil of ego and ignorance is removed, the soul can never be in peace. Bulleh Shah says in a *kafi*:

1. You abide near, but You reveal not your abode,
Where shall I go to seek You?
Dwelling in the same house together,
Before whom shall I scream?

1. Ravan, the ten-headed villain of *Ramayana*. Here, he stands for the ten senses, which have to be tamed for realizing God.

2. Out of neglect you did not repeat His Name.
 In your negligence the Beloved kept hidden.
 That Supreme Being abides within you,
 But you are wont to relish carnal desires.

Guru Arjun conveys the same idea in these words:

They live together in the same house,
 but they talk not to each other.
 For the Invisible cannot be known,
 when the veil of ego intervenes.¹

Bulleh Shah counsels man to rise above his ego and ignorance to attain union with the Lord. No amount of external piety in the form of rituals and pilgrimages can yield the desired fruit :

By going to Mecca the mystery is not solved,
 So long as the ego is not annihilated.
 By going to Ganga the mystery is not solved,
 Though you may take a hundred dips into it.
 By going to *Gaya*² the mystery is not solved,
 Though you may offer many rice-cakes³ at funerals.
 O Bullah, the mystery will be solved only,
 When the "I" (the ego) is completely eliminated.

So long as the senses are not tamed, the false husband, (the mind) is not killed and the heresy of duality is not removed, union with the Lord is not possible:

[Expressions, such as killing, vanquishing, subduing, eliminating and annihilating the mind, mean controlling the mind. This is

1. *Adi Granth* : p. 205.

2. A place of Hindu pilgrimage.

3. A ball of rice is offered at the funeral rites (shradhas) to the deceased's relatives, according to Hindu custom.

achieved by removing the various coverings that bind the soul, and thus liberating it from the slavery of the mind.]

O Bullah, I have been married to the yogi;
 Ignorant people have no knowledge of it.
 I am his property, having tamed the five *pirs*¹
 I have sacrificed unbelief from my heart with my head
 on my palm.
 Fortunately I have killed my false husband (mind),²
 administering poison (nectar)³ to him.

The Tenth Door

Where shall we look for the Lord within the temple of our body? In the manner of other seers and saints, Bulleh Shah also states that in the house or courtyard of the body there are nine doors or outlets. They are: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth and the two lower orifices. It is through these apertures that connection of the soul with the outer world is established. But, there is a tenth door which opens into the inner spiritual world. This tenth door⁴ is, in fact, the

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1. The five *pirs* are generally believed to be : Ghazi Mian Salār Mas'ud, Zinda Ghazi, Sheikh Farid, Khwaja Khizar and Pir Badar. From the spiritual point of view, Waris Shah has called the five exteroceptors (eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin) as the five *pirs*. In Sufi thought, it would not be far-fetched to call controlling the five senses as "taming of the five *pirs*."
 2. Mind, the agent of the Negative Power, which holds the soul under its sway.
 3. The Nectar of the Name of God, which redeems the soul, proves fatal for the evil tendencies of the mind.
 4. It is at the tenth door where the soul is knotted together with the mind, and wherever the attention of the mind goes, there the soul has, perforce, to go also. And the mind, in turn, is lured by the senses and drags the soul along with it. But when the attention of the mind goes from the tenth door upward, it is no longer a slave of the senses and can travel towards its own home along with the soul. Then the soul is free to go on to the Father's House, it's own source. Thus the mind is happy in its home, and the soul enjoys everlasting bliss with the Father.

seat of the mind and soul in waking consciousness. Descending from this point she passes through the nine doors and gets in touch with the world outside. In the process she is enslaved by the pleasures of the senses. She is ignorant of the bliss of the spiritual world and of union with the Lord. Bulleh Shah stresses that so long as the soul is ignorant of the tenth door or the tenth lane from where the path to the Lord's mansion commences, she can never get united with Him:

This courtyard has nine doors, and the tenth
has been kept hidden.

I do not know the value of the lane, which leads to
the Lord's abode.

Kabir conveys the same truth in these words: "The woman (soul) who is deluded in the nine doors, does not obtain the incomparable treasure. Says Kabir, 'All the nine doors are cheats, the essence lies in the tenth.'"¹

The human soul is lying cramped in the prisonhouse of the body, with its nine doors. Not till it gets released from it through the hidden tenth door into the spiritual world within, can it get freedom and enjoy peace. Says Soami Ji:

You are imprisoned in the nine doors,
And not for a moment do you enjoy peace.
Open ye the tenth door, and revel in bliss.

Sar Bachan, p. 145

The Persian mystic Shams of Tabriz says: "Look not downwards to the earth like beasts. You are, after all, a

1. *Adi Granth* : p. 339

man; look upwards. When you recover from the swoon of this body, becoming a new being, you will attain a new world."

Khwaja Hafiz says it thus: "You who never come out of the house of your body, how can you ever enter the lane of Reality?" And, Rumi expresses it in these words: "So long as man does not rise above the senses, he remains deprived of a vision of the hidden face."

The tenth door behind the two eyes has been called by various names, such as door of the house and door of salvation. Bulleh Shah calls it the niche having a window which opens out into the palace of the Beloved, in the following *kafi*:

Play thou in the courtyard with joy!
 In this courtyard is a delightful niche,
 in the niche is a window.
 I spread my bed in the window and
 revel in play with my Beloved.

Hundreds of years earlier, Saint Beniji had proclaimed that by opening the inner window, man is awakened forever, and becomes the beholder of the three worlds: "At the top is the head, in the head is a niche, within the niche is a window. The one who attains to this window is forever awake, he never sleeps, and beholds the three worlds."¹

The eye that sees the Lord

Other names given to the hidden door by saints and mystics are: the eye, the inner eye, the third eye, the divine eye and Shiva's eye. In Arabic and Persian

1. *Adi Granth* : p. 974

languages mystics have called it “the hidden eye” or “the black spot”. In the *Bible* it has been referred to as “the single eye.”¹ Bulleh Shah says that vision of God is impossible so long as the inner eye remains closed.

O Bullah, the Lord is not separate from us.
But, alas! we do not have the seeing eye.
That's why life is a tale of suffering.

Indeed, without opening the inner eye man is no better than a beggar. Though his house is filled with spiritual wealth, he acts like a pauper. His condition is that of the one who sits on a seashore, but suffers from thirst:

Pearls, jewels and the philosopher's stone
are all near you.
Near you is the ocean, and you are dying of thirst.
Open your eye, and sit up, O you beggar.
Wake up at least now, O you dear traveler!

In another *kafi* Bulleh Shah has called it a hole in the head, through which reverberates divine melody:

The unstruck music is all-uniting, foe to none,
and it emanates from the orifice of the head.

In one of his famous odes, Tulsi Sahib, the great Saint of Hathras, has given a detailed account of the music emanating from the eye center as also the method of listening to it, to a Muslim divine, Sheikh Taqi:

1. “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” Matthew 6: 22.

Listen, O Taqi, seek not thy Beloved in the world
 outside;
 Within thine own self, behold His splendor.
 In the pupil of thine eye is a mole, wherein is hidden
 the entire mystery.
 Peep within and behold thou what lies beyond
 this dark curtain.
 The secret of the fourteen realms will, for certain,
 be revealed to thee.
 Let thy attention not slip, see that thou art ever
 vigilant.
 Listen! Thou art constantly being called
 from the Most High.
 The voice of thy Beloved ever beckons thee to Him.
 It is not meeting with the Beloved that is difficult.
 What is difficult, O Taqi, is that it is hard to behold
 Him.
 Without the grace of some realized Master, says
 Tulsi,
 The goal of salvation is distant, beyond thy reach.

In the following line from one of his hymns, Soami Ji
 gives a hint of the bliss that emanates from opening the
 third eye:

Abandoning the two eyes I reached the third;
 And perceived the resplendence of the pure Lord.

Sar Bachan, p. 252