

Role of Spiritual Practices and Mystical Concepts in Societal Development with Emphasis on “The Secret Miracle”

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Abstract

Mysticism and spiritual thoughts will be elaborated in the short story “The Secret Miracle” by Jorge Luis Borges. Mysticism is the good use of religious sanctity as a means to arrive at spirituality. Religions such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism always preach for humanity, spirituality and mysticism. Though the circumstances should be of any type and strict we should never restrain the true spirit of mysticism and spirituality. In the short story “The Secret Miracle” Jorge Luis Borges shows that through spiritual practices one should enjoy the gifts of God. Who will be more spiritual; will more near to God and his every wish will be fulfilled. But the one question for us is why miracles do not appear for common people. The answer is that we do have not such a level to enjoy the saintliness of the miracles. Hazrat Uzair is the best example quoted in the story of The Secret Miracle will be discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Mysticism, Spirituality, Secret Miracle, Religion, Holiness, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Hazrat Uzair.

Introduction

Jorge Francisco Isidoro Luis Borges Acevedo was an Argentine poet, essayist, translator, and short story writer who is regarded as a significant figure in Spanish-language and international literature. The 1940s saw the publication of his two best-known works, *Ficciones* (translates as "Fictions") and *El Aleph* (translates as "The Aleph"), an anthologized collection of short stories that explore a variety of subjects including mythology, visions, labyrinths, whim, infinity, archives, mystics, and mirrors. In addition to philosophical and fantasy literature, Borges's writings had an impact on the magic realist movement in Latin American literature during the 20th century. He was born in 1899 in a religious atmosphere. His works became classics of 20th-century world literature. Originally from Buenos Aires, Borges eventually relocated to Switzerland in 1914 to attend the Collège de Genève with his family. In addition, he was a public speaker and librarian. He was named professor of English literature at the University of Buenos Aires and head of the National Public Library in 1955. At age 55, he went entirely blind. According to academics, his growing blindness enabled him to use creativity to construct novel literary symbols. His writings were widely translated and published in Europe and the United States by the 1960s. Borges spoke multiple languages with ease. His father and mother made him habitual to read and learn the themes of English novels. Most of the time was in reading novels, enjoying in zoo and observing things and colors. That's why his stories like *The Library of Babel*, *The God*, *The Immortal* and *The Secret Miracle* consisted of the themes of Magical realism, natural things their inner importance and the mystical thoughts of the universe. When the family moved to Geneva he studied Latin, French and German. Borges was greatly impressed by the works of Walt Whitman and Schopenhauer. His short stories became the root of his fame in the literary world. His themes

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metaphysical thoughts and plots of short stories filled the minds of readers in reality. He gained recognition on a global scale in 1961 after sharing the inaugural Formentor Prize with Samuel Beckett. He was awarded the Jerusalem Prize in 1971. In the 1960s, García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the Latin American Boom, and the increasing number of English translations all contributed to the consolidation of his international renown. The *Conspirators*, his last composition, is dedicated to Geneva, Switzerland. About him, essayist and writer J. M. Coetzee stated:

"He, more than anyone, renovated the language of fiction and thus opened the way to a remarkable generation of Spanish-American novelists."

By reading his short stories one can judge the world and its meanings and the importance of man in the universe and God's mercy at the same time. In addition, his uses of paradoxes add a glorious touch to his themes of short stories. Borges biblical parables and moral conflicts leave the reader to distinguish between reality and dream, man's truthfulness and his way near to God are also explored in the short story *The Secret Miracle*. Mysticism is one of the great themes that the Borges explored in his short stories *The Immortal* and *The Secret Miracle*. Borges's most renowned stories deal with themes of time ("The Secret Miracle"), infinity ("The Aleph"), mirrors ("Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius"), and labyrinths ("The Two Kings and the Two Labyrinths", "The House of Asterion", "The Immortal", "The Garden of Forking Paths"). According to Williamson, "His basic contention was that fiction did not depend on the illusion of reality; what mattered ultimately was an author's ability to generate 'poetic faith' in his reader." His stories frequently feature fantastical themes, such as a library that holds every text conceivable in 410 pages ("The Library of Babel"), a man who remembers everything that happens to him ("Funes, the Memorious"), an artefact that allows one to view the entire universe ("The Aleph"), and a year of still time granted to a man who is facing execution ("The Secret Miracle").

Mysticism means a devotion to God. God is always with man but it is a man who betrays from the Holy Path of Allah. So, for miracle's sake, a man should devote himself before Allah and do everything for the sake of God to follow his order, love Him, and never disobey God then he reaches the level of eternity. The eternity leads him to the level of mysticism and then miracles appear to him according to his wish. God always do good for the betterment of man so when a man devotes himself to God, then God also blesses his showers of mysticism on that person.

Research Questions

1. What is mysticism how did Jorge Luis Borges explore this term?
2. How the element of mysticism is portrayed in the short story *The Secret Miracle*?

Literature Review

Mysticism is a spiritual stream that leads a man towards eternity. The aftermaths of this stream appeared in the shape of miracles which appeared to that person who devotes his life towards God by heart and soul. The way of achieving the love of God is to love humanity then God will love you. The more you will pay more you will receive. Different writers see the short story *The Secret Miracle* from different angles but no one portrays the story from a mystic point of view; which is the gap which the researcher will fill.

Wheelock (1969) in his article *The Mythmaker: A Study of Motif and Symbol in the Short Stories of Jorge Luis Borges* expressed that mysticism is the intellectually provoking thought and

imagination of Jorge Luis Borges which he expressed in his works, particularly in the collection of short stories. He revealed this book as the fundamental exposure of the hidden meanings of the concrete terms associated with the intellectual and spiritual nature of Borges. Wheelock also revealed Borges's idealism in philosophy as well as his aesthetic view of intellect and its connection to spirituality. More he says that Borges has an influence on the fiction of *Rubaiyat* by Omer Khayyam. The main theme of this poem is concerned with the life-creating doctrine. This dogma is filled with the sense of piety and virtue resent in the human being and God gifted. It raises the philosophical questions of life and death so the Borges works reveal the universality.

Lydenberg (1979) states that plots of short stories of Borges are filled with metaphysical thoughts, and symbolic and parabolic styles. Although Borges himself condemns this idea that he is not a preacher of parables, many of his stories present otherwise. A parabolic thought distracts the reader from the one purpose of the story to the other. He goes on to say that biblical parables constantly leave the reader perplexed and create new avenues for understanding the universe and itself in all of its infinite complexity and exhaustibility. Similar to the characters in the stories, readers should have difficulty deciphering the parables' hidden meanings. These reversal patterns compound to form endless regression patterns.

Bowman (1987) accumulated that the labyrinth is the form of symbolism that is portrayed in the Borges stories. Symbolism is a core role like the numbers and colors in the stories. A labyrinth resembles a complicated geometric structure that is simple to enter but very challenging to exit. Borges himself stated that the labyrinth is

"One of the oldest and mysterious illustrations of the inner life of man."

A critic named Ernest (1980) asserts that the labyrinth encapsulates human fear and uncertainty over infinite time and space. He uses the short novel *The Immortal* as an example, explaining how the City of Immortals, with its various interwoven tangles, symbolizes a condition of perplexity. This demonstrates how males make decisions all their lives. Redekop feels that there is evidence of a "Borgesian labyrinth" in *The House of Asterion*, another tale. According to him, this story is not just about a stressed-out prisoner; it is also a lesson for the readers, who must deduce the prisoner's identity and the story's deeper connotations. As a result, the labyrinth is mentioned in both the storyline and, according to critics, in Borges' writings. He uses a parabolic and maze-like method to convey his metaphysical arguments on identity.

Islam (2017) from Berlin University wrote about Borges's issues of identity crisis. She also points out the key role of magical realism and paradoxes are frequently used in his short stories.

Murtaza (2021) in his article "Portrayal of Human Suffering" said that Borges tries to enhance the reader's interest by using the technique of magical realism and paradoxes. It increases the weightage of his short stories.

Analysis

Mysticism means a devotion to God. God is always with man but it is a man who betrays from the Holy Path of Allah. So, for miracle's sake, a man should devote himself before Allah and do everything for the sake of God to follow his order, love Him, and never disobey God then he reaches the level of eternity. The eternity leads him to the level of mysticism and then miracles appear to him according to his wish. God always do good for the betterment of man so when a man devotes himself to God, then God also blesses his showers of mysticism on that person.

Mystics perceive spiritual occurrences that are not visible to the senses, reality as mystics interpret it is not limited to the physical world as revealed by sense perception. While some mystics believe

that the spiritual is already present in the world of ordinary sense perception, others reject the material world as an illusion and believe that only the spiritual is real. The hidden nature of the spiritual is a key aspect of mysticism, regardless of the exact details of how the extrasensory and perceptible are related.

Acts, when a person experiences a oneness with a believed Supreme being (or beings), are considered to be an aspect of mysticism, which is typically understood to require a certain belief system. We are drawing nearer to God's heart as we approach the mystical heart of Christ. We transcend this world by letting go of all judgment and making room for this straightforward and peaceful mental state. Numerous actions when a person experiences a sense of oneness with a higher force might be considered mystical. Praying, meditating, or reciting specific mantras are a few instances of mysticism. Mysticism itself is not a component of any one religion. Numerous religions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, have been known to exhibit mysticism.

Mystics hold that their experiences reveal the presence of an extrasensory element to reality, revealing phenomena that are invisible to the senses but become visible during mystical experiences. However, the statements made by mystics regarding extrasensory realities vary greatly. This is a mindset that acknowledges Christ within and transcends the battlefield. Your mind becomes focused on God like a light beam when you offer your heart to Him and declare, "Here I am, Lord."

The Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) is a contemporary master of the short story genre. His 1943 work, *The Secret Miracle*, is one of his best works. The story revolves around a guy residing in Nazi-occupied Prague who receives a firing squad death sentence. The playwright begs for a one-year reprieve from execution so that he can finish the play he is working on. 40-year-old Czech resident Jaromir Hladik is in Prague when the Nazis invade the city. The dramatist has openly signed a statement denouncing the German Anschluss, or annexation, of Austria. On his mother's side, he is a Jew as well. He is detained by the Nazis and given a firing squad death sentence as a result.

The opening lines of the story, *The Secret Miracle* are:

"...And God made him die for a hundred years and then he revived him and said How long have you been here? A day or part of a day", he replied.

As miracles are the results of mysticism. A mystical person goes near to God and the outer flames of the world do not disturb his attention from God. A miraculous condition of mind, or an attitude of miracle preparation, is the source of miracles. The miracles are the manifestation of consciousness within. So, the Borges quoted the incidence of Hazrat Uzair A.S. as he was very near to God. He was near to God by his mind and soul. So, when he thought to see the infinity of time which will pass after the death of a person then during a journey God put Him to death then awoke Him after one hundred years and asked how long you have slept; he replied a day or part of day. Then he learned that time stopped during this long interval. A person who goes beyond the closeness of God never enjoys the results of mysticism in the shape of miracles.

Mystic Experiences Hiddenness

One who is innocent and has faith in God by heart; for him time stopped and his every wish is fulfilled. Since mystics perceive spiritual occurrences that are not visible to the senses, reality as mystics interpret it is not limited to the physical world as revealed by sense perception. Mystics typically comply with the seclusion of the spiritual by keeping their details private and

experiencing spiritual events that are hidden from the senses. Some mystics withdraw inside themselves. While some people talk freely about their spiritual concepts and beliefs, others keep their ecstasy experiences private. Some are even less covert, revealing merely a specific method—like a dogma, chant, or spiritual name—for achieving different levels of awareness. While some mystics believe that the spiritual is already present in the world of conventional sense perception, others reject the material world as an illusion and believe that only the spiritual is real. The hidden nature of the spiritual is a key aspect of mysticism, regardless of the exact details of how the extrasensory and perceptible are related. The same is the case with Hladik the protagonist of the story, an innocent who is caught by the soldier having no sin. He was caught only by being a Jew and put into a death cell. Though for him the time was so short he was doing something good according to his wish. As he was innocent God fulfilled his wish also and on the last night in a dream, he completed the play *The Enemies*.

In the darkness he addressed himself to God, To bring this drama, which may serve me to justify me, to justify You, I need one more year. Grant me that year, You to whom belongs the centuries and all time. It was the last, the most atrocious night, but ten minutes later sleep swept over him like a dark ocean and drowned him.

When he was standing before the firing squad for him time stopped and he completed the last lines of his book before his death. All miracles are the results of love with God and love arises during mysticism. Naturally, love manifests itself in the shape of miracles, and the source of love is mysticism. The love that motivates them is the true miracle. Everything that originates from love is miraculous in this sense.

The confidentiality practices

A mystical person always conscious and unconscious has only one way to God and nothing betrays him. Mystics frequently adhere to the mystery of the spiritual by being secretive themselves, as they witness mystical experiences that remain concealed from the senses. Some mystics withdraw inside themselves. While some people talk freely about their spiritual concepts and beliefs, others keep their ecstasy experiences private. Some are even less covert, revealing merely a specific method—like a dogma, chant, or spiritual name—for achieving different levels of awareness. Life is the source of all miracles, and God is the source of life. His voice will give you precise instructions. Everything necessary will be disclosed to you. It is natural to experience miracles. If they don't happen, something isn't right. This implies that mysticism has a resultant effect on miracles. A mystical person never does wrong consciously. Jaromir Hladik was enjoying such results of mysticism and miracles due to his innocence and all we know God is always with innocents as mentioned:

“....After an indeterminate length of time he fell asleep. On waking, he found the world still motionless and numb...He had asked God for an entire year in which to finish his work: His omnipotence had granted him the time. For his sake, God projected a secret miracle: German lead would kill him, at the determined hour, but in his mind a year would elapse between the command to fire and its execution.”

James (1960) expressed in his book *“Varieties of Religious Experience”* that the philosophy behind mysticism mainly focused on pure distinctive knowledge. For a mystical person knowledge, nature and experiences render indications for the truth of mystical assertion. So, after mysticism one can be rightful for miracles and everyone has the right to miracles, but first they must undergo purification.

Difference between Zionism and Judaism

Although the phrases "Judaism" and "Zionism" are sometimes used interchangeably, they refer to rather different ideas with unique historical, cultural, and—most importantly—political connotations. Zionism is a political philosophy centered on Zionism, whereas Judaism is a religion and cultural grouping that has developed over millennia.

Hladik was a Jew who believed in God by heart and soul. He has no other expectations from God. So, he was enjoying the miracles. Though he was innocent he was behaving the persons of the firing squad as human beings. He was not blaming the, He was thinking that they were only performing their duty.

Conclusion

Mysticism is related to thoughts. Thoughts may be subjective or objective. Subjective thoughts are of a higher level and the results of spiritual experiences performed by a holy person. Those spiritual experience leads towards miracles and time becomes finite or infinite according to the wish of that personality. One should devote his every day to miracles. The main purpose of time is how it is used constructively in a meaningful way. When time is no longer helpful in promoting learning, it will end. Miracles are blessed by the giver. God only blessed that person with miracles that were bestowed before him and respected his humanity. Only a mystic person can understand and get the taste of miracles. Miracles are as the service of one render. He loved others without considering their duty as he loved himself. Hladik is the person in *The Secret Miracle* who loved the soldiers though they were ready to kill him he was not considering them killers but he was saying they were only performing their duty. Thinking correctly can lead to miracles because it aligns your views with the truth as it was intended by God.

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