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Conjunction of Indian Philosophy and Western Mysticism in the Poems of Beat Poet Allen Ginsberg

Dr. Taybul Islam Mollah*

ABSTRACT : *The Beat writers are primarily quester for even 'on the road', in search of a philosophy that would rehabilitate man as an integral part of the cosmos. Their quest for a total philosophy of life brings them close to the Indian philosophic and religious systems, Buddhism, Zen Buddhism and Vedanta from where they adopt a number of concepts like those of the Karma; the four noble truths, spiritual enlightenment through meditation and nirvana etc. His poetry instead is a text that is inextricably bound to the immediate socio-political situations and treats virtually of every significant aspect of the life. The Oriental philosophies, together with Blake's visionary poetry and the robust native tradition of Whitman and Williams, have decisive say in shaping the Ginsberg's vision of life.*

Keywords: Philosophy, Religion, Life, Poetry

Introduction

The Beat movement began in the middle fifties and began dying in the sixties. The Beat were anti-establishment people, they were against conformity and 'tradition'. Above all, they were anti-academic and anti-intellectual. They disliked every facet of 'square' American society. They disliked the established institutions like religion, family life and marriage. Even the man-woman relationship was a subject of hate to them. They openly took drugs and even justified their drug-addiction. Similarly, when Ginsberg was asked what exactly his religion was, he answered he was probably a "Buddhist Jew" with attachments to Krishna, Sive, Allah, Coyote, and the sacred Heart¹. Then he adds that he was more of a Buddhist Jewish 'pantheist'. The shrine near Ginsberg's bed would be a curious collection of things taken from different religions of the world. Particularly Ginsberg has been influenced by at least three oriental religions- Zen Buddhism, Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism. Ginsberg's poetry is a metaphor of quest. In fact, his poetry is a prism where the colors of Zen Buddhism, Indian philosophy of Karma, Chanting of Mantras, forays into consciousness by drugs, Blakean vision and Whitman's transcendentalism. He is a quester in route and tries to explore his within and beyond. The Oriental philosophies, together with Blake's visionary poetry and the robust native tradition of Whitman and Williams, have decisive say in shaping the Ginsberg's vision of life. Ginsberg is not one of those poets who stay withdrawn unto themselves and whose poetry requires no referring back to the social texts.

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