# An Introduction to the Relationship of Mystical Experience and Psychology

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Abstract— "Experience" as basis understanding or knowledge derived from sense perception (outward or inward), is accounted for most of the human knowledge. One variety of experience, mystical experience is unmediated encounter with the sacred and the spiritual, in the human conscience and the world and Intuitive perceptions, spiritual states of heart, revelations, ecstasies and the waking or dream events are happened to be included. A mystical experience is the knowledge of Unitarianism and contrary to the common belief can be expressed in the language of mystics. Based on the results of recent studies in psychology and meta-psychology and mysticism, such as verifiability to sensory experience, visibility compliance with the conditions and preparations (which are difficult to find), is accessible to everyone. This article suggests allocations in areas such as psychology and mysticism in the fields such as mystical experience, perfect human, the knowledge of self-consciousness and the study unconsciousness.

*Index Terms*— Unitarianism, Inner Experiences, Sensual Knowledge, Introversion, Psychotherapy, Perfectionism

#### INTRODUCTION

In this paper an analytical and phenomenological approach was used to explore a mystical experience and both fields of psychology and mysticism have been incorporated. Mystical experience contains the essence of Gnosticism, so far as it is used in the definition of mysticism. The definition of mysticism says: « It is an unmediated experience of the interaction and the relationship between humans and the Lord » or « in theological doctrine - Metaphysical Absolute is the potential union of the soul with the ultimate truth, i.e. The God» (Eliade, 1998, V.9, P.83) Mystical path has an immediate supervision over the experience and

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intuitional knowledge through the purification and cleansing the inner soul. Gnosticism is broadly defined as the experience of mystical meanings hidden behind the superficial and materialistic phenomena, as themysticism of Thomas Aquinas' calls it understanding of God through experience » (Scholem, 1995, P.4) and simple intuition of truth » (Gove, 1999, P.491)

On the other hand, as the mysticism is the knowledge to the inner soul, knowledge of psychology is the study of human behavior and the human conscience. As a matter of fact mystical experience has become very essential subject in psychology and meta-psychology, especially in the Christian, mystical Gnosticism mainly meant to have mystical experiences (James, 1370, p 62; Stacy, 1358, p 16), the experience of unity, attainment, perfect binding and absorption that is a key to understanding the mental of perfection has become a major issue. So it can be argued that one of the common areas between psychology of mysticism has called upon the mystical experience. Psychology and Gnosticism are close together in various aspects that should be studied separately. Such as symbolism, dreams, dream interpretation, introspection, love, psychoanalysis, interpretation and spiritual issues and the like that are counted as common knowledge. Their results are applicable and useful for both because mystical experience is he important component of mysticism and in Christian mysticism addressing with the same experience one can be a Gnostic and the union with absolute reality is focused upon, more than other topics are of interest to psychologists and comments have been given. To the extend that among the branches of psychology reached mystical psychology and they studied it in detail. James Leuba (James Leuba) and his book "Psychology of Religious Mysticism" is of such a kind that is known as mystical experience (Leuba, 1999, P.1). The new branch of psychology is also an important step towards linking mysticism and psychology and it is need to be expanded. studiessuggest that the mystical teachings with scientific laws are not in conflict and in some cases mysticism and psychology come to aid to testify each other's findings. If mystical experience is investigated as the interdisciplinary field, it becomes clear that, contrary to popular opinion, the experience with the help of psychology, will be verifiable, explicable, Visible and attainable for everyone on the condition that the mystic language and specific requirements for of mystical experience are discussed and the claims practically put to scientific test and laboratory investigation. Then, the effect of love, dreams, faith, focus, and purity on psychology and meta-Psychology somewhat shows the verification of these claims.

Experience from the standpoint of empiricism, in short, is a sensory experience and this limited view leads them to the fence materialism; while experience, including any direct, unmediated encounter with something that is experienced and one of the encountering types is of sensory impacts. If the external world is the physical reality that can be experienced, the inner world of man is a reality that can be the subject of the study through experience. It is claimed in mysticism that the outer world and the inner world of man do not have only the physical aspect, but both have immaterial aspects which could also be experienced. There is no contradiction with the materialistic and scientific laws, but are their complementary. It is Interesting that immaterial realities, is undeniable and in the field of parapsychology and even other areas have also been proven through scientific and sensory tests. Psychology more than other sciences realizes the immaterial facts and influences of spiritual impact and they have been used for mental health and psychotherapy. (Nejaty, 1387.1372, pp. 353, 273; Wolf, 1386, p 257)

Sensory experience is known as common among public; mystical experience is also something everyone encounters like some kinds of material issues that can be experienced in some specific laboratories under substantial and special conditions, mystical experience in its own terms and principles are practical to all people, too3. If experience means experimenting and examination testing, observation of a repeated sequence of the relationship between two issues leads to causation and necessity or that kind of experience is called inaction and passivity in mystical experience complying the necessary arrangements the

same characteristics are seen as well, and can be proved. As mystics in all cultures and at all times acquiring the necessary premises have achieved such experiences. Mircha Alyadeh has proven that this experience existed among the early people (Alyadeh, 1373, pp. 134, 1375, p 12). The materialistic view that considers experience just as sensory is clearly violable with evidence including such "true dreams" that do not have any material justification, while they are not deniable in psychology and meta-psychology, examples abound exit in all cultures that person has dreams of future events. Likewise, the revelation experiments revealed that people like the prophets who have the supernatural senses, or illumination or enlightenment experience, or experience an inner revolution, and many other examples of mystical experience that happened to many people and everyone shall be eligible for such experiences to achieve.

Materialist studies in regard to mystical experience came out with contradicting claims which are unscientific and unreasonable. Bertrand Russell called it an emotional affair and Stacy called it a perception. (Stacy, 1358, p 2) Constructionist like Steven Katz call it as the outcome of cultural background and non-cognitive. They often rely on speculation and with skepticism have raised the possibility presented no reason for them that shows unfamiliarity of the mystical experience story. They are forced to justify their materialistic principles before any scientific investigation based on their assumptions, and in their contingency plan sufficed with a few poor ones.

### **Experience and Mystical Experience**

In modern times, the experience is equivalent to observation active of reality and phenomenallegislations under planned conditions, while from the philosophical view point, experience is the outcome of sensory perception (outward or inward sense) and is considered a as priori base for recognition understanding from sensory perception or or all inductive reasoning. (Great Islamic Encyclopedia, Volume 14, Article 5782). The same trivial sensory experience is an introduction to get to the general issue. Islamic philosophers have often known it as full induction, but as for an experience have believed in a kind of hidden analogy.

In modern science, experience is used in the field of discovery and gathering information and the field judgment and Francis Bacon (1561 - 1575 AD), relying on experience and induction, wrote "New Organon" against "Judas" of Aristotle. They explore empirical orders and laws of causality to obtain ways (consensus methods, in contrast, changes in time, residuals) to from the complex inductive. Logical positivists, found meaningfulness only in empiricism significantly verifiability and Karl Popper introduced the measure of empiricism in being falsifiable (Popper, 1370, p 56). The experience in new sense is no only the perception of sensory experience, but it was sensory observation with specific measuring instruments, a designed laboratory experiment to look for mathematical numbers and patterns. If the issue was frequently observed repetitively, to reach scientific evidence to a point where it was called a scientific document and was considered as a law.

Mystical experience has been introduced with Shlayer Makher Friedrich (1768 - 1834 AD) and William James (1842 - 1910 AD) and they also developed the experience in the same sense of cognitive science which is considered brought by the senses. But the meaning is that the inner experience is the matter of spirituality related to heart that the person acquires it from a higher source and brings a sacred aspect to a

person that is so attractive that overshadows all the attention and human life. This experience is something sacred and divine in many religions have called it heavenly and related to the God who has the attributes of both immanent and purification. The experience that brings knowledge, and gets your intuitive perceptions and your heart to an elevated condition has a kind of relation with sacred matters. Shlaver Makher considers this relationship as a kind of sensation (Scholem, 1995, P.1). Rudolf Otto (1869 - 1937 AD) and William James also believe such a feeling and love, but the idea that they have called it as an inexplicable mystical experience is open to criticism. Because every human perception being in every field of science has its special language is metaphorically called the language game and in mysticism also been expressed over other perceptions, and in practice has not been inexplicable. States, events, ecstasies and revelation are the best examples of mystic experiences that have been expressed with frequent evidence in all kinds of mysticisms and people in similar circumstances have had a similar experience and it shows that the language of mysticism is different from other languages, but it could be expressed. In Islamic- Iranian Gnosticism, these experiences are well stated with poetical and romantic teachings with common codes. They heard orator's voice with, subtle and frightening sounds, lights and color, the ascension experience and meeting the old and the like mentor jointly have been expressed with its special language.

In Christian mysticism, this mystical exp t erience, is expressed as emotional which is inexplicable that is pro to criticism. As we see in the other mysticism specially Islamic mysticism, the experience is applied with knowledge and consciousness and they are describable and can be received by ear and eye and many have got the experience while awake and alert that is named 'Revelation'. Although sometimes occurs during sleep, it is still well informing and explicable. These mystical experiences, like other experiences have been common given specific conditions are accessible and for it lawful grades and ranks are identified and considered (Ghazali, 1359, p 719).

Mystical experience is to some degree of acquired knowledge and presence knowledge but also the stages of Elm-Al-Yaghin, Ein-AlYaghin and Hagh-Al-Yaghin (presence and certainty, and ultimate truth). Although many parables are presented, for example of the moth in dark that goes out to the light of the candle and sees objects under its light. This is the scientific stage in terms of the certainty and to say it Elm-Al-Yaghin. Then, it sees itself on fire flame during on the pilgrim around the candle. This level is beyond science and is called the certainty of knowledge, Ein-Al-Yaghin. Finally, the moth will be burned in the fire at a moment is the same as fire itself and this is the

ultimate truth, i. e. Hagh-Al-Yaghin. The amount of understanding in the mystical experiences has also been expressed in poetry using the analogy of drinking wine. Then it gets close to the wine and this is the stage of ecstasy. Then the wine is the tasted and this state is like the immersion of a diver in the sea. At this time, the knowledge is received, but the seeker is not aware of the received understanding. Last stage, drunkenness and self-destruction are like a burning of the butterfly in the fire. Another analogy that is related to the relationship between wine drinking experiences is that the seeker is going to the convent and it meant destruction of human traits and experience stepping out of the realm of the worldly property and stepping in nowhere (Poor Javadi, 1384, p 95).

Mystical experience is with the special language and is understandable that should be presented to the public through special metaphor and meaning along with identification or with its lawfulness so that it can be utilized by the public and for all enthusiasts as the tendency toward mysticism spread in the New World and it can be privileged of a quasi-mystical experiences or false ones.

There is not only a transcendental union in mystical experience, but also there are cognitive and perceptive aspects which are explicable. With the same characteristics there are also numerous branch of psychology that are comparable. And in order not to be confused with the false experience in Islamic-Iranian Gnosticism it is bound by two main conditions and that is the doctrine of religion (Sharia') and the other one is not to be opposed to reason. As the "rational behavior" is a stage in mystical experience tour, there has always been reconciliation between lawful tour and religious doctrine. These two measures will well prevent the deviations from the mystical experience.

#### Mystical experience and psychology

Mysticism and Psychology have been a kind of self-knowledge and have many common aspects. One of the common principles of psychology and mysticism is empirical testing and experiencing, i.e. what is counted as the criteria are the inner experiences and empirical tests that William James found it to be dealt with in his book called "Varieties of Religious Experience". Mystical experience is considered as a kind of religious experience that is discussed in the psychology of religion and tries to analyze and discuss the effect of 'Religion' on the human psyche and the impact of psychological aspect on religion and he also believes that Mystical experience is also structurally speaking psychological. Mystical experience has fourdimensional aspects psychological, phenomenological, epistemological and philosophical.

On the other hand, Western religion scholars consider even religion, revelation and faith in the

sphere of religious experience and mystical experience. Mystical experience revolves around discovery and intuition to get to the truth. Here, the experience is the unmediated knowledge and encounter with a holly person which is an inner, spiritual approach. On the other hand, it is the mental state of direct involvement and inner consciousness of an issue or situation (Heard, P.302). In other words, in order to experience, a direct exposure with the living presence and participation in events and sensual event in context are needed to exist.

Since the mystical experience is achieved based on attending to inner self and ignoring all external objects it is called introverted, and the mystic reaches within him the true and the sacred power which is the true human soul. The result is disconnection with whatever is outside and its connection with the mystic self. However, the mystical experience is called "unifying agent" which seems to have caused the mystic to look outwardly and sees the unity in diversity. This is sometimes having been named the extrovertive and introvertive experience. Rudolf Otto considers the experience of the sacred entity as frightening since it creates both aspects of attracting and repelling effect such as the glory and beauty of Islamic mysticism (Otto, P78). He splits the religious experiences as the mystical and the divine while expressing not very precise features about them. In total, the mystical experiences have features such as a feeling of absolute truth, freedom from time limits and space and individuality, unity, prosperity and peace.

William James used a cross check chain to investigate the mystical experiences and cited four characteristics, (which has been pro to criticism): « 1-Ineffability (inexplicability), the Mystical experience, as well as emotional states can not be properly represented in the form of words, so the only people who come to know them are those who have these experienced sensations(However, experiments must be taken to be inconclusive and be describable, 2 - Noetic quality(insight to knowledge), the mystical states of awareness and occur as deeply insightful and meaningful states. Additionally, the truth that is revealed to them is unknown in the normal state, typically lasting impression comes from the authority; 3 - Transiency (instability), mystical experiences are very short lasting, and their duration is at most one or two hours. Usually, when the mind is under normal conditions are not remembered, but leave a lasting impact on the inner life and if repeated will be immediately identifiable. (While many of the sensory experiences are short lasting and are not called ineffable or indescribable); 4 - passivity: Although mystical states can be actively facilitated through meditation and other spiritual practices, as soon as they occur, a person loses their sense of mastery. The mystic may even feel to be in a condition that the one with whom he has met has held him and kept him in its grip.

(James, P 302) » He also showed the following Spiritual Ladder his Chain Method of studying the mystical experience

Cosmic consciousness or mystical perfection Feeling the ecstasy of union with the deepest truth Elimination of sensory experience and anything but the abstract

Feel absorption in the unperceptive facts A sudden feeling of presence in a place never have been before

Feeling that a word or a stimulus has got a deeper meaning

One of the psychologists who have studied about mystical experience, Karl Albrecht (1902 - 1965 AD), who is a medical physician of internal diseases, was astonished observing value of the therapeutic exercise of the meditation, especially yoga, healing and consolidation of power of consciousness state represented through meditation, and began to study the mystical experience among many people and reached a phenomenological of mystical consciousness. He studied the two processes of absorption and the final state, i. e. the ecstasy. Albrecht says: « Submergence begins with conscious intention, including the idea of its purpose and exclusive approach. » The sign of submergence is a kind of slowing of the flow of life or stopping the connection with the world around and emptying the mind. The whole experience is associated with a state of tranquility and a great transparency that gradually fills the entire field of consciousness. The final outcome of submergence, i. e. absorption is a state completely and fully integrated of consciousness. The structure of this state is not only void of any content, but also has extraordinary transparency. The most organized structure that is known in human experience.

Albrecht defines the two experience groups that create this attraction. « First, the performance of various tasks such as thinking or remembering creates concrete and observable improvement that leads to order and clarity of the absorption. The latter phenomenon is "ripe" and is a term that refers to the whole complex phenomenon indicating a frame that gradually appears in a series of alert experiments. (Wolf, p 765) » The second phenomenon is known to be accommodated with video-like images, emotions, symbols and metaphors which are expressed with strange words and phrases along with overwhelming spiritual features and shows the feeling of attraction. This study suggests that whatever has been quoted from Islamic mysticism called ecstasies, discovery and intuitions or quoted by other great mystics have been on the basis of psychology.

Inner experience includes a broad range of mysticism and psychology. It includes any kind of inner feeling or unmediated perception a person receives that ranges from inspiration, self-analysis, hypnotic dream

and meta-psychology as well as the evil memories. But there are some special characteristics in mystical experience that psychology has taken great strides toward it. One of them is love and kindness which is a cure for human pains and mysticism maintains some kind of nobility for it and psychology also has realized its importance. Moreover, meditation, concentration, inner purification, the feeling of peace and joy occurs in a pure inner state. The other one is the different feeling and experience to achieve the unity and the annihilation experience that brings the person to the state of consciousness and spiritual relationship with all beings. Also experience is a variety of inner powers and knowledge of the dynamics of the inner layers of human, existence and the like which has become the new subject in psychology. Abraham Maslow (1908 -1970) self-actualization theorist believed that the self-actualized people are familiar with ecstatic moment and absorption of oneself and it is not dissimilar to deep religious experiences and can occur for almost any activity stance. Maslow termed these events as peak experiences in which ego (self) becomes noble and the person feels highly strong, confident and determined. Maslow differentiates self-actualized people based on their prosperous culmination of experience from one another. In this way they differ from each other in terms of quantity and quality of these experiences; self-actualized individuals called as climactic and those who are described as non-climactic. The former people have more mystical and religious experiences. Comparing the climactic non-climactic, the former are more poetic and holly and the latter more realistic and more interested in worldly affairs. Maslow pointed out that people who are not self-actualized can also sometimes have a peak experience (Schultz, p 353).

Behaviorists often do not believe in the authenticity of mystical experience and do not consider the introspection enough so as to identify feelings and emotions born of the interaction of cognitive and physical stimulation. Judgment is only based on observation of behavior. In response, it should be said, "Sensual states and emotions are unmediated and are personally understood on the presence, not through mental images and concepts. If the image and the mental concepts are considered as interfaces, first, the imagination of the fear and the real fear should not be different. While it is totally different. Meaning and the subjective form of fear does not cause any physical changes and reaction, but when people are really scared, its serious effects on their looks inside and out are noticed. Secondly,

where the intermediary concepts and the imaged have been selected wrongly no fear is realized but in reality we witness that the fear actually exists. "(Peraud foot, 342, 1383).

If the behaviorists were right and only from the evidence and the external behavior of people we can get access to the people's deep knowledge, so why would anyone can understand your anger before any external evidence. Stimulation of the body is after the occurrence of states the soul not before that. «Then, what social psychologists say in regard to ego believing that the ego is born of the modes of interaction between cognitive agents are physical stimulation, is false. Behaviorists say we have no way into the hearts and the inner soul of people. Man is just like a black box, and what should be taken into consideration is that the external behavior. There is no fear and that is only the trembling state which is visible to us. The words of feeling which are the outcome of the physiological changes are meaningless to them and one of the reasons for invalidity of this approach is that in most cases we try to hide the changes of our sensual states. » (Ibid., pp. 346) likewise, the man hides his shame, fear and other behavioral symptoms: furthermore, many feelings have similar symptoms in common and many other reasons. The two groups of constructivists and Essentialists object to the mystical experience. Essentialists believe that given accumulated perceptions in the mind of the mystic makes him suppose that he have had such experiences, i.e. the specific interpretation of the phenomenon as a form of mystical experience. While constructivists consider that the same experiences and beliefs make the mystical experience, they have equated mystical experience with the interpretations and reports of the experience. They do not believe in the reality of mystical experience and they believe that because the mystic is expecting to find such a state, he feel such a self-made emotional state such as high rate of the heart beat. However, any mystical experience has seven characteristics: a sense of objectivity and reality, a sense of wisdom, tranquility and excitement, consciousness of divine unity, a sense of sanctity, dignity and contradictions that the objections in this view are not questionable.

According to these critics, the dream can be revoked because they claim that mystical experiences such as dreams, are made by a person's mind and are not authentic. While this is perhaps true about a lot of dreams, but about the dreams that their interpretation will occur later there is no response. How is it possible that holly Joseph saw in a dream, a vision of the future?, And thousands of dreams that can not be denied. Another error is that their physical characteristics such as reduced heart rate in the body of mystic relies on these factors and through them is to reach the mystical experience, while the same physical factors and other symptoms are also found and the reports of mystics are so great that there would be no accusation of being a coincidence or conspiracy on the occurrence of experience. Material-oriented psychologists who do not believe in the reality and objectivity of mystical experience, but it is assumed that is psychological issue and arbitrary, whereas if it is true all human experience have the same fault. Mystical experiences can be proved with intellectual arguments and like scientific experiences have their agent factors and causes. And they do not provide any measures of intuition and true or false. They reached the point today that they do not maintain any experience as authentic experience and even scientific experiments have been considered it as a "seemingly" and they have come genuinely to skepticism and doubt in all human sciences. One of the features of mystical experience is a positive and productive relationship with nature that the Mystic or Seeker finds and this is very important in psychology and paves a way to adaptability, life satisfaction and respect for nature. One of the terms in the domain is "nature mysticism," which means "a powerful experience that the owner feels the whole cosmos mixed and mingled with them. However, sometimes mystical experience of the cosmos or universe ha got a religious aspect, but in the religious experience an understanding of transcendence over all experience of cosmic unity overwhelms. Whether from the fully natural view, or the lead ruling the base foundation upon nature, all Descriptions by some Romantic writers such as John F. Cooper, William Wordsworth, John Paul, seem to have expressed a mystical sense of nature» (Eliade, V10, P250). These types of mystical experience brings mental peace to man and the life in nature becomes enjoyable.

Abraham religions have a mystical experience that is famous as the love mysticism where personal love of God has dominated them. In the Christian Gnosticism the School of Systrscy, Claire Bernard, Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Sinai, Ignatius Loyola and Teresa Avilla are all examples who had romantic experience. In the Islamic Gnosticism also love mysticism started with Rabia Adavie (185 AH) and in all centuries has had outstanding representatives. In both Christian and Islamic Gnosticism, the mystical experience reaches the unity and annihilation, while in Jewish mysticism, rituals of 'Ghebale' and mysticism of Safed tribe it is seen that the mystical experience of the love brought its the seeker to a spiritual evolution. Many new trends in psychology came to understand that the miracle of love changes and reforms humans and social relationships, and learned new things in this regard.

In conclusion, the new results that have been obtained from studies of modern psychology and meta-psychology, it can be argued that the materialistic view of the denial of mysticism and esoteric knowledge, have lost their credibility day to day and the knowledge gained from mystical experience has found their place and has proven their impact on modification and therapy of human behavior and has taken effective steps in the proximity and sharing between psychology

and spirituality that in the scientific view, the mystical experience status has been brought close to the sensory experience and recent studies in the field of philosophy of relativism and uncertainty has paved the way in this field. New mysticism with meditative exercises, meditation, concentration and introspection has found ways to make it accessible to everyone and have proved it in different training classes. Mystical experiences are pro to testing and provable with evidence as perfectionist Psychology by proving climactic mystical experiences and self-actualization has become close to a perfect human in mysticism.

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