

**TRACING THE DIMENSION OF NON-DUALITY IN MIKHAIL NAIMI'S *THE
BOOK OF MIRDAD***

by

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partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in English

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing the Masters degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

Tracing the dimension of Non-Duality in Mikhail Naimi's *The Book of Mirdad* submitted by
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Summer, 2019 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
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Abstract

There are very few literary works which have put all their attention and efforts to express what is commonly referred to as non-duality or non-dual consciousness, the unalloyed and uncharted dimension of existence. Usually in the field of spirituality and religion, and to a certain extent in the sphere of philosophical studies, the concern of non-duality is addressed through contemplation and exploration. However, there are some rare literary works which do address the issue of non-duality, both as a concept and as a reality of being. Amongst those literary works some are deemed with reverence whereas others have remained hidden in oblivion, but nevertheless still contain immense potential as literary works. One such work is Mikhail Naimi's *The Book of Mirdad* which is infused with rich allusions of non-duality, metaphysics and spirituality. Non-duality can be said to be the essence of all religion and all earnest practices of spirituality. *The Book of Mirdad* is significant as a literary work that has the ability to bridge the gap between duality and non-duality through some illustrative pointers and wisdoms. The narrative of this book is pervaded with these pointers which can help the reader to contemplate upon the deeper dimension of being. As the contemplation upon the non-dual dimension of being deepens human beings can potentially move from a state of duality towards a profound non-dual recognition of being. This novel furthermore provides a domain of realization where the readers can feel the necessity of pursuing the quest of knowing one's true nature or self. This study will inquire into the conceptual dimension of non-duality, as far as intellectual understanding is possible, and differentiate between the esoteric and exoteric attitude of seeing and positioning religious teachings through which the concept of non-duality can be more maturely perceived. In addition to that this study will aim to establish the possibility of contemplating the non-dual

dimension of being, which remains as the Absolute, through the relativistic position of the human mind and the intellect in order to express how a literary work can carry the potential of transmitting profound and essential spiritual teaching. In the final analysis this paper will attempt to sieve out elements of non-duality from all the concepts and elements which the author of this study has found to be important for understanding the reality which Mirdad himself represents through his existence, the reality of human beings as indivisible consciousness. The analytic standpoint of this study would be a conceptual exploration, firstly, of the teachings of Mirdad and its conveyance of Consciousness as the true nature of human beings, and secondly, the virtues mentioned by Mirdad which are required to establish one's sense of existence not as a person, who operates in the field of duality, but as Consciousness, which is non-dual and the very base from which perception begins to function. In other words, this study will endeavor to bring forth an area of awareness through which readers can discern what they have been conditioned to identify with and what is the true nature of human beings, and this discernment can take place maturely and aptly with the teachings, understandings and virtues presented by Mikhail Naimi through *The Book of Mirdad* in the light of non-dual understanding.

Key Words-

Non-Dual Reality of Being; Pure Consciousness; Esotericism; Literature and Spirituality; Mirdad

Acknowledgement-

Salutations and Prostrations at the shrine of the great Sufi saint Hazrat Lokman Shah (R), the embodiment of the highest wisdom, love and grace, whose Divine presence and Light can dispel doubts and delusions and establish the mind in its true nature and original state. May His blessings, and all those who have dissolved themselves with the core essence of creation and have fully known their true nature, be with all beings of creation. I first dedicate this work to my Guruji, Akhtaruddin Mohammad Shah Saheb, and then to all those men and women who have an aspiration to know their true nature and who have the burning desire for Self- Knowledge.

I thank my parents, my supervisor, my friends, family members and all those who have helped me in creating my thesis. Thank you with a heart filled gratitude and prayer.

I dedicate this dissertation to all those who are a part of my life and to all those who have an internal urge to know their true nature.

God illumines the mind and shines within it.

One cannot know God by means of the mind.

One can but turn the mind inwards and merge in God.

-Sri Ramana Maharishi, The Sage of Arunachala

The truth that transcends the intellect will not be seen by means of the intellect. The point of action will not be reached by means of deliberate action.

If you want to achieve the point of non-action transcending thought, sever the root of the mind itself and rest in naked awareness.

-Tilopa, The Great Sage of Tibet

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Literature Review

The primary aim of this study is to explore non-duality, both as a concept and as an existential reality, and trace the elements of non-duality in Mikhail Naimi's *The Book of Mirdad*. This study will analyze *The Book of Mirdad* in an attempt to discover its main themes which are infused with rich spiritual expressions and allusions. This study will mainly interpret *The Book of Mirdad* from the perspective of non-duality in order to express the profundity of the teachings of Mirdad.

There will be four elements in accordance with which this study will undertake its analysis. First is the concept of non-duality and the inherent limitation of the human intellect to fully understand non-duality. The book *The Reality of Being: The Fourth Way of Gurdjieff* by J D Salzman and D T Suzuki's *Zen and Japanese Culture* will be used to show the limitations of the intellect and the importance for the intellectual faculty of the mind to silence itself in order to access/discover the non-dual dimension of being. The subject of silence plays a very important role in the conceptual exploration of *The Book of Mirdad* and the author will connect the insights of the two aforementioned books with Naimi's expression on the subject of silence and connect these two things in the light of non-dual understanding. This study will give immense importance to silence as in *The Book of Mirdad* this remains one of the most important teachings of Mirdad, to silence the voice of the ego with patience and faith in order for human beings to have some access to the non-dual reality of being. Non-duality can be intellectually grasped as, firstly, recognizing that there is a duality of the subject and object, which is the common mechanism regarding the operation of our perception, and secondly accepting that there is something non-dual behind the functioning of this duality of subject and object, mainly an awareness of this

duality. This study will use D T Suzuki's *Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra* in order to illustrate the point that there remains an intelligent awareness which recognizes this duality, and hence the awareness of this conscious intelligence discerning and separating itself from the duality is what this study will assert as non-dual reality of being. Furthermore, this study will attempt to trace elements of this non-dual reality of being through a conceptual analysis and contemplation on *The Book of Mirdad*.

The second important element of this study will be the differentiation between esotericism and exotericism and how these two approaches have different perspectives and readings of spirituality and religion, and more importantly, human being's relation to non-dual reality of being or the Absolute. This study will take help from the book *The Transcendental Unity of Religions* by an eminent religious scholar Frithjof Schuon. In the book there is a clear division between the esoteric and exoteric position. The exoteric position maintains the dual nature of 'I', which can be referred to as the seeker, and 'Thou', the Supreme Being or Absolute. Maintaining this differentiation closes the possibility of unification of human being with God or the Absolute reality. As a result, religion or any spiritual establishment becomes detached from the living process of creation and what remains is only orthodoxy without any substance. On the other hand, the esoteric position states that 'I' am 'Thou', and through this position there remains a potentiality and a possibility for human beings to know their true nature. This potentiality is reflected in *The Book of Mirdad* and this study will attempt to explore this dimension of the novel. Furthermore, this paper will also express the non-dual reality of being as 'Pure Consciousness', and will consult books which have used words such as the aforementioned one, in addition with names such as God or the Absolute, for two reasons. The first reason is in *The Book of Mirdad* Naimi has used "Primal Consciousness" to indicate the reality of that which is

generally being referred to as the Absolute in addition with words such as God or Supreme Being. The second reason for this study to express the non-dual reality of being with words such as Pure Consciousness or Absolute Awareness is these terms are more relatable to the readers than words such as God which are generally limited within the field of concepts and often are culturally conditioned. *The Book of Mirdad*, on the contrary, seeks its readers to overcome all type of conditionings and look at the raw sense of being from the position of Consciousness, not only as a concept to think about, but also as a sphere within the human intelligence through which a profound realization can be possible inside the field of human awareness.

The third element which this paper will attempt to express is extending the claim of the esoteric position in order to show how the mind, which itself is in a relativistic position, can unify with the Pure Unalloyed Consciousness. In order to show the process, or to be more precise, the way of this unification, this study will use the teachings of an Advaita (Non-Dual) Master named Mooji. The author of this study will use one of his satsangs available on You Tube and his book *The Invitation* to show that both the seeker, i.e. the one seeking to be unified with Consciousness or the non-dual reality of being, and the thing which he/she seeks, appear within a larger space of Consciousness, which in this context can also be termed as a higher altitude or higher state of Consciousness. Understanding and recognizing this space as one's own reality of being, which is indivisible and complete in itself, can help the mind to transcend its relativistic position and unify with its own true nature as Pure Consciousness. Non-duality, as can be seen in the teachings of Mooji and other esoteric scholars such as Rene Guenon, is not a concept but an inescapable position from which all human beings operate, yet they remain unaware of it. This study will trace those issues present in *The Book of Mirdad* through which the awareness of the non-dual reality can be felt and sensed by human beings. The perception of any phenomenon is

conditioned by space and time. However, that from which perception begins its functioning and perceives a phenomenon in different modes of spatiality and temporality, is not a part of space or time or any phenomenon. As a result, the non-dual consciousness remains unknowable as an object, yet its presence can be accessed by human beings if they become aware of and establish in their true nature as pure non-dual indivisible consciousness. This study will attempt to read *The Book of Mirdad* as a text which invites the readers to explore their own reality of being.

The last element which this paper will use in its analysis is the virtues which Mirdad preaches throughout *The Book of Mirdad* so that his disciples, and along with them the readers of this book, can establish themselves strongly as non-dual Consciousness instead of being in the fluctuating position of the ego. In order to assert the credibility of the teachings of Mirdad this study will use some issues stated by Idris Shah in his book *The Sufis* and Frithjof Schuon's book *Understanding Islam*. From the two aforementioned words this study will particularly look at some of the mystical elements which Naimi has used behind the depiction of Mirdad. The author of this study will interpret this mystical association as an expression of the fact that Mirdad himself is the bearer of the ancient eternal truth preached by all sages of all religions and spiritual traditions. In addition to that, through this mystical allusion it can also be assumed that Naimi has depicted Mirdad as the messenger of the non-dual reality of being for the people of the modern era since *The Book of Mirdad* has within itself a condensed expression of the essence of the true nature of human being as pure Consciousness.

Through the four aforementioned standpoint this study will attempt to trace the elements of non-duality in Mikhail Naimi's *The Book of Mirdad* and in this process of analysis will attempt to provide a fuller understanding of what is non-duality in relation to Consciousness, not only as a concept for mental contemplation but also a reality which one can be aware of and abide by in

order to find out and appreciate the sphere of realization provided in *The Book of Mirdad*. The final part of this study will concern itself with explaining the importance to read *The Book of Mirdad* without the eclectic nature of the mind, since this novel is not informational and does not preach anything new. In order to realize the potential this novel carries, one must willingly put aside all his/her mental and intellectual conditioning and read this novel from a position which E M Forster, in his book *Aspects of the Novel*, terms as being woken up from the sleep of Newton. “The Sleep of Newton” implies the rational structure of our mind which essentially fails to acknowledge the true nature of the mind as Pure Consciousness. To wake up from this sleep requires immense sacrifice since the conditioned self, the ego, must be put aside for the true Self to emerge within the field of human intelligence in the form of profound existential realizations. Due to this E M Forster in his aforementioned book talks about some novels which cannot be interpreted with the eclectic nature of the mind, and other means of human intelligence such as intuition must be used. This study will also confirm, within the progression of its analysis, that *The Book of Mirdad* is a novel which must be read putting aside the eclectic nature of the mind and recognize the non-dual reality of being offered by this book in a more intuitive manner. As a literary work *The Book of Mirdad* contains the potentiality to create seekers out of its readers to introspectively ask questions such as ‘Who am I’, or what is the source of the ‘I’ consciousness, and the answer which this book provides for such seekers are not linked to any specific phenomenon. On the contrary, this novel provides answer to such questions in a timeless perennial fashion by directly announcing the significance of the reality of the ‘I’ which exists within all human beings, and slowly progresses towards establishing the source of this ‘I’ as the non-dual reality of being. Therefore, any type of overly eclectic reading of this work is likely to result in an obstruction towards an actual understanding of this book.

Thus, the sole focus of this study will be to construct a field of perception through which *The Book of Mirdad* can be read and its significance be realized, to its fullest extent, in the light of the non-dual understanding.

Chapter-1 An understanding of non-duality and its inherent relation with *The Book of Mirdad*

Every human being has in the depths of his consciousness heard the question “*Am I not your Lord?*”- Imam Al Ghazzali, *The Alchemy of Happiness*

In the book, *The Sufis* author Idris Shah has written that “Sufi mysticism differs tremendously from other cults claiming to be mystical. Formal religion is for the ¹Sufi merely a shell, though a genuine one, which fulfills a function. When human consciousness has penetrated beyond this special framework, the Sufi understands the real meaning of religion.” (Shah 26). The significance of this quotation is vital for this study, as it aims to contemplate the core essence of the reality of human being as non-dual Consciousness, which is beyond all “framework” and functions, and furthermore use this to create a field of perception to understand *The Book of Mirdad* in the light of non-duality. However, the approach this study aims to undertake in order to contemplate the core or essence of the true nature of human beings, which is presented by all religious and spiritual traditions, is not through studying each individual religion, for almost all religions at present only exists as “a shell”, fulfilling certain functions of the society. On the other hand, this study will first contemplate the essential element of human consciousness and the prime force behind human subjectivity, which announces itself with the expression I-Am. By looking at this I-Am, or the reality behind this I-Am, which is the pure sense of “beingness”, this study will undertake its analysis of the non-dual reality of being and trace its relation with Mikhail Naimi’s *The Book of Mirdad*. What is being indicated through this

¹ The word Sufi in this quote does not only mean the Gnostic practitioners who belongs to the wider field of the religion Islam, but all those practitioners who aims to unify with their true nature through seeking the source of their consciousness.

I-Am is the non-phenomenal recognizing point within the vast sphere of human consciousness through which all other phenomena can be recognized and perceived; in other words, the I-Am remains as the beginning point of perception. The very possibility and operation of perception begin with the conscious presence of I-Am in each and every human being. However, the I-Am, which can be said to be the most intimate expression of human consciousness through which a human being begins to become conscious of one's self and the internal world of thoughts and mental images, as well as external worlds of forms, objects, and relations, cannot be comprehended intellectually. This can be illustrated with an example presented by author D T Suzuki in his seminal work *Zen and Japanese Culture*. In a chapter titled "Zen and Haiku" D T Suzuki mentions parts of a poem by the English poet Alfred Lord Tennyson. The title of the poem is *Flowers in the Crannied Wall* and the lines of the poem, as quoted in *Zen and Japanese Culture*, are "Flower in the crannied wall/ I pluck you out of the crannies,/ I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,/ Little flower- but if I could understand/ What you are, root and all, and all in all/ I should know what God and Man is." (Suzuki 264) After quoting this poem the author further writes, "Tennyson is here quite inquisitive, philosophically speaking. He thinks, if he could know what he has in his hand- the little flower, root and all-he would also know what God and man is." (Suzuki 264). The nature of the intellect is exactly like the approach which Tennyson took in the aforementioned poem; the human intellect wants to dissect and look at things objectively which is symbolically represented in the poem by plucking the flower from its living source and holding it in the hand. However, as Tennyson wanted to know the flower and God intellectually, which perhaps might represent both the creation and the creator, he plucked out the flower which separated it from the rest of creation and hence separated the oneness of it. However, the mystic's viewpoint is that creation is one indivisible whole rather than many

separate individual parts, and furthermore knowledge of creation and the creator can only be known by being silent and opening one's being to the true nature of one's own existence, which, as a part of creation itself, is an indivisible whole. The nature of the intellect is to discriminate between objects through dissection and separation, and its first step is to create a separate identity of the one who is discriminating, who is known as the discriminator or in common human usage this is referred to as "the subject". In case of approaching towards understanding the human consciousness, the one who approaches itself is a part of the consciousness he/she is trying to approach or understand, and therefore through the means of the intellect the true nature of consciousness cannot be comprehended or realized. In addition to that as human consciousness is not an object hence it can never be dissected intellectually, and as a result any attempt to understand human consciousness in its totality would be impossible solely by the means of intellect. The human intellect is useful but to a limited extent. In the context of this study human intellect is useful as it can receive pointers, through language and words, and realize the importance of diving inwards within one's existence in order to have an experiential realization of the true nature of I-Am, the fundamental or essential nature of human consciousness. ²However, after diving inwards the human mind will have to recognize its own limitations and silence itself in order to be more receptive of creation and its indivisible process. The first thing which the human mind or the intellectual dimension of the human mind needs to comprehend is that all that is known to the mind is external and therefore separate from the mind. In other words, in order for knowingness to operate, our field of perception must have a significant gap with the object it perceives, and out of that contact which takes place within that gap between the perceiver and the thing perceived, recognition occurs in the form of

² As will be shown in the further chapters of this study this is exactly what happens between Mirdad and all his disciples, and through this Mikhail Naimi has shown that keeping aside one's sense of ego, silencing one's internal self and surrendering to a master is essential for spiritual self-realization.

knowingness. It is in the process of knowingness where the human mind categorically identifies objects and gives them certain quality along with names and forms to distinguish it physically. However, as the human consciousness is formless and beyond any category, to identify it in the traditional process would be quite impossible. When this human consciousness will undertake any attempt to know itself or realize itself via the means through which the human mind operates, no amount of intellectual endeavor can provide any actual answer because intellect can only grasp those things which are separate from itself and cannot know the very basis of its own existence. From the standpoint of non-duality, the intellect cannot know its own source, yet it can “be” conscious of its own position being inside the larger space of what is generally indicated by the word consciousness. This study’s purpose is to assert the importance of human consciousness through reading *The Book of Mirdad* from the perspective of non-duality. In addition to that, it is primarily because of the inherent limitation of the intellect that a thousand-year-old tradition of Western philosophy beginning from Aristotle to Bertrand Russel could not provide an answer to the most fundamental question within the human kingdom, which is “Who am I” or who is the “I” within this body and mind. Prior to all forms thinking, all division of subjectivity and objectivity, and all intellectual pursuits to comprehend the world and outer spaces, is the presence I-Am, and after this I or the I-Am all other forms of knowledge has developed. As a result, due to not knowing one’s fundamental nature, human beings remain dependent on external situations and conditions due to which, it can be assumed, an innate sense of incompleteness hovers around all human endeavor. It is due to this that human beings have remained a slave to outside peripheral circumstance. The more a human being is dependent on outside situations and remains a slave to outside circumstances, which are transient and ever passing, the more fragmented he/she will be, and this internal fragmentation of being will

increase resulting in one's self to be susceptible to psychological anxiety and deep feelings of dismay. Therefore, all religious and spiritual traditions aim at establishing the human mind in the pure knowingness of its own true nature, which pervades all internal and external phenomena, and expresses itself in the form of I-Am. However, as mentioned before, this I-Am cannot be realized solely by the means of intellect. In order for this realization to take place, human being has to shift his/her attention from external objects of names and forms, as well as his/her internal sensations of thoughts and feelings, and channel it towards the interior core of consciousness, and the most important action to take in order for attaining to this realization is dis-identification of one's self, or the perceiver, from all that one perceives. Through this process of dis-identification, an individual as a perceiver can separate one-self from all external and internal phenomena and can gradually silence his/her intellect and mind, and through this process enter into a dimension of pure unperturbed silence. In this context silencing of the mind can refer to not letting one's attention move from the I-Am into I am this or I am that, just simply abiding in the interior core of human consciousness. Jeanne De Salzmann in her book *The Reality of Being: The Fourth Way of Gurdjieff* writes, ³"I learn to listen to the unknown in myself. I do not know, and I listen, constantly refusing each known response. From moment to moment, I recognize that I do not know, and I listen. The very act of listening is liberation. It is an action that does not flee the present, and when I know the present as it is, there is transformation." (De Salzmann 163)

The important element in the aforementioned quote is the of the act of listening which implies with it a mode of pure receptivity. This receptive state of being can only be attained by an individual when his/her mind is in a state of undisturbed silence and is not hankering towards

³ When De Salzmann is writing the word I in the mentioned quote, she is, it can be assumed for the purpose of the context of this study, not referring to a personal I but rather to I as the first expression of human consciousness common to all human being.

thoughts and feelings, as well as names and forms. In the mode of pure listening and receptivity the core of human consciousness becomes accessible within the range of human attention, and when human attentiveness, with its entire intelligence, becomes silent and receptive, and is directed towards the core of the reality of being, which is Consciousness, a centering within the fragmented being starts to take place. As a human being begins to realize, that the “I” within them, the most intimate place of their sense of being or existence, does not know itself and cannot know itself through external knowledge, and that this external knowledge is a form of conditioning which is only useful to play a certain set of roles in society, and furthermore fails to provide any actual existential answer, he/she becomes more aware of the fact that beneath all these layers of conditioning there is the pure sense of being-ness where consciousness recognizes itself intuitively in the form I-Am. *The Book of Mirdad* contemplates the importance of self-knowledge and encourages its readers to attempt to seek out for themselves the reality of their being.

The Book of Mirdad begins with the importance of this recognition of the I-Am, and as the book progresses it reveals the place of faith and love in human existence as the pivotal standpoint through which understanding of the ‘I’ can be made possible for human beings. Mirdad labels this understanding of ‘I’ as “Holy Understanding”. The character Mirdad in *The Book of Mirdad* is not a representation of a personality, rather Mirdad has been shown by Naimi as an individual who has established himself in the non-dual reality of being. The very existence of Mirdad announces his purpose, which is to make the mind and being aware its own true nature. Mirdad endeavors this by creating a sphere of understanding through which the potency of the ‘I’ can be made aware of. Hence it is written in the *Book of Mirdad*, “As is your Consciousness, therefore, so is your I. As is your I, so is your world”. (*The Book of Mirdad* 3).

As can be seen in this quotation, Mirdad states that the extent to which human beings are attuned with the sense “I” within them decides their quality of existence, and depending on the quality of their ‘I’, which is synonymous with Consciousness, the world as an appearance of subjective perception takes on name and form and a particular set of qualities for each individual. As a result, the ‘I’ existing within each human being determines their quality of experience. At this point it is important to mention that spirituality and mysticism and religion, in its ⁴esoteric dimension, which can also be called as the inner dimension of religion, is fundamentally concerned with the unification of the subjective realities of a human being. Thus, when Mirdad states to his disciples that their “world” takes shape according to their “I”, and their “I” according to their consciousness, he does not mean that the physical world will take shape and change according to human consciousness. Rather Mirdad has implied through the quotation that the quality of experience and the conditioning of perception of the phenomenal world are determined by conditioning of one’s nature of consciousness. For example, if one’s consciousness is stable, then he/she will experience all the experiences of the world in a stable manner with patience and understanding, and if one’s consciousness is absolutely outward bound and fluctuate with the changing situation of the world, then his/her experience of the world will also remain in a flux and swing between different emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, etc. For example in *The Book of Mirdad* it is written, “Yours is a world divided ‘gainst itself, because the I in you is so divided” (*The Book of Mirdad* 4), and through this quote Mirdad makes the disciples aware of the fact that they need to have an integrated and holistic experience and a complete realization of the ‘I’ to realize the inherent oneness of creation, and through this realization the disciples can have the authority over the quality of experiencing of the world as well as realize the unity of being. It is this oneness of “I” which can be expressed as the core

⁴ The Esoteric dimension of religion has been elucidated in the next chapter of this study.

teaching of non-duality, and this study will attempt to trace out various concepts contributing to the understanding of non-duality presented in *The Book of Mirdad* in order to construct a field of perception through which contemplation of Consciousness as the indivisible existential reality of being can be made. Author D T Suzuki in his seminal work *Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra* writes, “The duality of subject and object is fundamental, but this dualism is impossible without assuming behind it something which is not dual” (*Lankavatara Sutra* 196). The aim of this paper is to explore this “something which is not dual”, the subtle silent space-like awareness within which the “I” and “Other” arises, making the play of subjectivity and objectivity possible, through which human beings experience the world of objects and forms outside them as well as the world of thoughts sensations and feelings within them. This study aims to discover the presence of this “non-dual” state of being present in *The Book of Mirdad*. Through this discovery *The Book of Mirdad* can provide a clear and lucid understanding of the core of human subjectivity, and furthermore perhaps through creating an intellectual framework provide an indication towards that “something which is not-dual”. In addition to that, this study will also look at the way Mikhail Naimi has proposed in order to realize the true nature of being. Naimi writes,

Let not your hearts be faint. But like the sea be broad and deep, and give blessing unto him that gives you but a curse. And like the earth be generous and calm, and turn impurities of men’s heart into pure health and beauty. And like the air be supple and free. The sword that will would you will finally tarnish and rust. The arm that would harm you will finally weary and halt. And Understanding shall carry the day. (*Book of Mirdad* III)

As can be seen in the quoted passage above, the “Way” of Mirdad is the way of understanding, and through this “Holy Understanding” perhaps human individuals can emancipate themselves

from the conditioning of the world which is filled with divisions and differences rather than unification and integration. All these differences have conditioned human beings and created within them a fragmented state of mind and being. This internal sense of division or duality can be transcended through knowing and existentially realizing the non-dual dimension of being which exists in the form of “I” in each and every human being, and through knowing the non-dual space, or the source of “I” within them, human beings can be more loving and generous towards themselves and towards each other, and have an attitude of acceptance and understanding. If human beings are fully integrated in the way they perceive themselves and “are” themselves, moving away from the fluctuating states of being and reside in their natural state as “Pure Consciousness”, then it can be assumed that existentially human beings will be filled with an inherent sense of completeness and blissfulness. In the modern times human beings have immensely prospered outwardly, however inwardly they have starved due to which the “world” inside each human being has immensely suffered from various discrimination and polarities. Through realizing the nature of one’s own consciousness which itself is unified and non-dual, and present inside each human being through the sense of “I” within them, human being can be more inclusive and free internally. Therefore, this study will trace the dimension of non-duality in *The Book of Mirdad* and the ways Mikhail Naimi has offered the readers of *The Book of Mirdad* to realize the importance of self-knowledge. It is due to the presence of non-duality within human consciousness Imam Ghazalli writes that every human being, inside the deepest recess of their consciousness, has heard the question who is their lord, and the only evident answer available to them was the sense of “I”, not “I” as an ego or person, but the “I” as Pure Consciousness, as this state is the ultimate or core point from which all experiences and identification takes place. The way this study will achieve its claim is by analyzing certain

concepts and incorporating these concepts with the elements present in *The Book of Mirdad*, and connect them with non-duality.

This study will be divided into three main parts; the first part, which is the next chapter of this study, will attempt to present the importance of having a “esoteric” sense of perception through which human individuals can avail for themselves a profound understanding of life from the perceiving point of “non-duality”.

The second part of this study, which will be the third chapter of this study, will attempt to illustrate how despite being in a relativistic position, the human mind and intellect can have a strong chance of directly realizing that which has been expressed by the author of this study as the “Absolute”, or “the non-dual reality of being”.

After illustrating these two subjects of inquiry, the third part of this study, which will be the fourth chapter of this thesis, will deal with the means provided in *The Book of Mirdad* through which human beings can receive a spiritually profound invitation to seek their reality of being and be integrated in the root of “beingness” as Consciousness. The profoundness of *The Book of Mirdad* exist in its invitation to experientially recognize the non-dual reality of being, and to make this evident is one of the aims of this study.

The last part of this study will deal with exploring the dimension of spirituality in the field of literature and certain ways of reading through which texts like *The Book of Mirdad* can be read and comprehended in the light of non-duality.

Chapter-2 Duality of Exotericism and Non-Duality of Esotericism

“Thus the principle of universal manifestation necessarily contains multiplicity, all the while being one and even being unity in itself...”- Rene Guenon, *The Multiple States of Being*

In the first chapter of this study it has been mentioned that the presence of non-duality exists in all the religions of the world, not in its exoteric or external function through which it fulfills a social role, but in its esoteric or internal dimension where the prime teaching of all religions focus on self-knowledge through a profound understanding of the fundamental nature of human consciousness. In all the world religions there has been explicit mention of the importance of self-knowledge and the variety of ways and means to have a direct experience into the true nature of ‘I’ or Consciousness. This study will not be discussing the ways and means which different religions suggest, in the form of practice, meditation and prayer, to attain self-knowledge, but will aim to show the strong presence of non-duality in the esoteric dimensions of religion as a whole through which the importance of non-duality can be fully asserted by the readers of this study.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the dimension of non-duality present in *The Book of Mirdad* is vital for a full comprehension of the book as this literary text provides a brilliant and insightful way through which the importance of realizing the true nature of human consciousness can be contemplated. *The Book of Mirdad* pursue the readers to question their assumed identity of being the body and mind, for prior to this body and mind there exists the space of awareness without which human beings would not be aware of the fact that they have a

body and mind to begin with. Human consciousness misses this subtle process of an automated identification with the body and mind and starts to function with it. However, in spite of this process of identification, the fact remains that the core condition less reality of human being is Consciousness and not the body and mind with which he/she identifies with. Within the space of this awareness, there exist a dimension of pure consciousness expressing itself through the sense of 'I'. Usually in the case of most human beings this pure consciousness, which can be sensed as the 'I', gets superimposed by an identity. The first identification is the identification with the body, and then gradually the 'I' goes on accumulating other identities such as an individual having a particular gender, having a particular skin color and name, a nationality, being a Muslim or Hindu, etc. The author of this study intends here to state that there is nothing wrong in these identifications, however, if these external forms of identification replace one's true and inherent nature as consciousness, then human beings will be victims of external situations and outside forces causing them only to explore the peripheral dimensions of life and miss out to realize the fundamental nature of existence. This will gradually will make an individual existentially poor and fragmented. The essence of all religions of the world is to remind human beings the importance to use this "I" not only as a means to only perceive the outside world of names and forms, as well as having superimposed a constructed identity upon the 'I' or consciousness, but also to realize the source of this 'I' as consciousness which exists within them beyond the mental layers of the mind. The reason for all religions, in its esoteric dimension, to offer humanity various ways and means to realize the source of consciousness is that the whole of creation is one single indivisible happening, the essence of which cannot be described or represented verbally or through any means of the mind. As creation, according to the esoteric context, is one single whole, human beings have the opportunity of realizing this wholeness of

creation through using various dimensions of their intelligence by following the guidance provided by prophets and sages throughout the ages from ancient history till present, and *The Book of Mirdad* represents one such guidance. Physicist Max Plank has said science cannot solve the mystery of the natural world due to the fact that the one (the solver) who is trying to solve this mystery is itself a part of this mystery that he/she is trying to solve and therefore will have to give up his/her scientific and logical approach in order to understand the existential reality of their very own consciousness. Hence, not through the usual means of the intellect, but by being patience and open human mind can know its own source of being as non-dual Consciousness. Due to the lack of patience and perseverance of the human mind, human beings now fail to ask and discover the most fundamental existential question of life, which is “Who am I”, or where is the origin or source of this “I”. As humanity has been living a life which lacks the true recognition of one’s own self or true nature, a person suffers from fragmentation resulting in anxiety, fear, and dread in various stages of life. In addition to that, due to religious differences, which are only superficial and are mainly concerned with some ritualistic differences which are the “outer shells” of religions, people wage war and harbor negative thoughts amongst each other. The true purpose of religion is to unite human beings with their true nature, not to create differences and create polarities in the world by mixing superficial religious ideologies with nationalism and creating a poisonous situation, which if perpetuated, will become very hard to be redeemed from. For example, the very fact that only Jewish people can have inheritance to the land of Israel or only Muslims will be allowed to live in Saudi Arabia, and the Indian BJP government’s action of advocating the philosophy of Hindutva, are absolutely absurd attempts to make on the grounds of religious identity because religion, in its truest sense, is concerned with the interior dimension of mankind not physical or geographical dimension, and that interior

dimension is exactly the same in all human beings throughout the globe. This chapter will, as it proceeds, endeavor to illustrate and urge the readers to contemplate deeply the fact that the main purpose of all the religions is one for two primary reasons, the first is that all religions belong to one single creation which in itself is single, indivisible and whole, and the second is that all religion is one in its essence as all religions aim to take human beings from an ⁵experiential world of duality to a dimension of non-duality through understanding and self-integration. For example, Islam preaches non-duality by acknowledging and worshiping only one God, the source of creation, through contemplation and prayer and development of one's own character to purify the position of the ego or *nafs* in relation to Consciousness, whereas some sections of Hinduism, although it is widely varied in its aspects and has various approaches, preaches to worship a form through which the formless can be realized. In both Islam and Hinduism establishing oneself in the position of non-dual Consciousness is the main concern, and in accordance with this view it can be said that both these religions are one in essence and henceforth the same, only the means and ways to reach the unity of being with the Supreme are different and are acknowledged by different names such as Allah or Brahman. However, this study would like to argue here that it is not because of different expression that people perceive Islam and Hinduism, or any religion, to be different from one another, or they are perceived differently because of their different means to reach the Divine. It is because both these religions are viewed from an exoteric point of view that despite recognizing their inherent oneness, only the differences can be seen and acknowledge by human mind. In order to recognize unity between two things and see them as part of a single thing, the perceiver must have an internal sense of oneness within him/herself. Without having this quality of oneness within them, human beings cannot experientially recognize unity in things and concepts. The exoteric position rejects

⁵ By experiential the author means a world where there is an experiencer separate from his/her experience

this sense of oneness and conditions human beings on the position of duality resulting in recognition of the differences only. The difference between exotericism and esotericism has been very lucidly expressed by the Swiss religious scholar and also a Sufi practitioner Frithjof Schuon. In his book *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*, he writes, “The exoteric way: I and Thou. The esoteric way: I am Thou and Thou art I. (*Transcendent Unity of Religions* 47). In the exoteric way, there is a clear division between human beings, the perceiver, and God, the perceived. The exoteric view of religion would be that human beings are creations of a creator and as a result only the creator known to people by their own religion can be the creator, such as only Allah is the creator or Bhrama is the creator of the universe. Since there is duality within human being themselves regarding their own religion manifesting through a sense of exclusion, and also from the whole of creation from an ontological point of view, through believing in the dual existence of “I and Thou”, human beings remain closed to the possibility to experientially realize the non-dual truth of their own existence and also the truth which exists in all religion from the esoteric point of view, which is “I am Thou and Thou am I”. As mentioned before, creation is one single indivisible whole and as a result the “creator”, in whatever way it is perceived, inherently exists in all aspects of the creation. As a result, from the esoteric perspective, the perceiver and perceived are thought to be part of one single indivisible reality, and through the possibility of endeavoring to be united with that indivisible reality itself, the esoteric dimension opens up the space of non-duality for genuine seekers of truth. If any human being knows the truth of their religion, which is equivalent to knowing the truth of one’s own true nature which expresses itself in the form of ‘I’, then he/she would automatically see no difference between any religions of the world because creation itself is not different in any of its aspect, being one indivisible whole. What is different is human being’s idea of themselves as

being different through superimposing on the pure consciousness a sense of separate identity, and alongside this separate identity having a religion which can hold the autonomy of truth. This creates a subtle layer of egoistic affirmation and creates an internal anxiety, as the ego positions itself as a separate entity from the rest of creation and hence needs a constant sense of security, which multiplies itself and results in hatred towards other religions. As written in *The Book of Mirdad*, “You are the tree of Life. Beware of fractioning yourselves. Set not a fruit against a fruit, a leaf against a leaf, a bough against a bough...nor set the tree against the mother-soil. That is precisely what you do when you love one part more than the rest, or to the exclusion of the rest.” (*The Book of Mirdad* 12). Mirdad in the aforementioned quote has expressed the esoteric viewpoint very clearly, that any human being must not separate themselves from their creation, and separation only happens when an individual prefers one thing over another resulting in division and conflict in their state of being. As a result, it can now be seen that the exoteric perception of religion has within it a profound sense of non-duality as it aims to unite, rather than divide, human beings from their true nature whereas in exoteric perception of religion there is a fundamental and an inherent divide between human beings and what they perceive as “the creator”. The difference between exotericism and esotericism has been further expounded by Schuon as,

Exotericism may be said to be found on the “Creature Creator” dualism to which it attributes an absolute reality, as though the Divine Reality, which is metaphysically unique, did not absorb or annul the relative reality of the creature and hence any and every relative and apparently extra-Divine reality. While it is true that esoteric also admit the distinction between the individual ego and the universal or Divine Self, it does so only in a provisional and “methodic” manner and not in an absolute sense; taking its

point of departure at the level of this duality, which obviously corresponds to a relative reality, it ultimately passes beyond it metaphysically, which would be impossible from the exoteric point of view, the limitation of which consists precisely in its attributing an absolute reality to what is contingent. This brings us to what is really the definition of the exoteric perspective, namely, an irreducible dualism and the exclusive pursuit of individual salvation-this dualism implying that God is considered solely under the aspect of His relationship with the created and not in His total and infinite Reality, in His Impersonality which annihilates all apparent reality other than Him (*Transcendent Unity of Religion* 47)

If God's, or the non-dual Consciousness's own reality does not annihilate all other realities, mainly the reality projected by the conditioned identity, which results in the creation of ego, then an inherent dualism is likely to remain within the perception of human beings. If this dualism, upon which exoteric version of religion has built its foundation on, remains, then the true essence of any religion, as well as the true essence of human consciousness, can never be realized by humanity. The divine reality, which the exoteric claims, must be wrong, and it is wrong in the sense that this divine reality cannot be experienced by human beings since the divine reality of the exoteric is maintaining the duality of creator and creature, and hence human beings are only thinking of a God which remains only as a concept and not an experiential reality. The claim of the exoteric versions of religion, and unfortunately the world religion is largely dominated by these exoteric perspectives, never surpass the dual nature of their viewpoint and hence a split remains within this perspective resulting in confusing the absolute with the contingent. The secularists reject anything that which can have an attribute of being an absolute, whereas the orthodox religious people who have embraced the exoteric perspective by confusing the

absolute with that which is dual and hence having the quality of ⁶impermanence. However, the esoteric version of religion, for example, the Kabala tradition in Judaism, the Gnostic tradition in Christianity, the Sufi tradition in Islam etc. claims that the duality is a mode of perception within every human being and from being in a state of duality each individual can merge in the supreme source of all creation through various ways. For example the way which Mirdad suggests is “Holy Understanding” and this must not be confused with mental apprehension, for mental apprehension is only to intellectually grasp the words of Mirdad but whereas what Mikhail Naimi has suggested through this literary work that if like the seven disciples of Mirdad any individual absolutely surrender to his Master, which can also be expressed as Guru or Murshid, then an individual can silence his mind and become receptive of the Supreme Reality whose presence, according to all the major religious texts, pervades the whole of creation. However, the exoteric denies this fundamental truth of religion, and it is because of this that the eternal truths of the religious scriptures were always in need to be revisited by the sages for countless centuries. In addition to that it is precisely for this reason as well that Mirdad had to revisit the Ark which once was built by Noah in order to secure him and his family so that the human race can prolong after the destructive flood. From an esoteric perspective the authenticity of the Abrahamic version of the tale of Noah is not important historically, on the contrary what is important is to realize that the truth which Noah carried within him which is timeless and available for human beings for all generations to realize. Noah had the authority of experience in his relationship with the Supreme, which, as mentioned before, is not separate from Noah nor from the rest of creation, as the Supreme is the cosmic indivisible intelligence pervading the

⁶ That which is dual must have within itself a conceived or ideational separation and a particular form or attribute through which it is differentiated, and as a result it must, as a form or an attribute, have a beginning and an end. As a result that which has a beginning and an end is inherently impermanent. Only the formless essence within all forms can be said to have any form of permanency and the attribute eternal or absolute can be associated with it.

whole of Existence abiding in all forms of creation all the while itself being formless. Mirdad appears in the very same Ark which is considered to be very holy by the people because this was the Ark which was once built by the Prophet Noah. However, the reason for the appearance of Mirdad in this Ark is because the truth which Noah experienced and preached, and established in his Ark has been corrupted by lust for power and material possessions amongst those beings who are the present caretakers of the Ark. *The Book of Mirdad* begins with the mention of the eight caretakers of the Ark and with the lines, “One of the ancient rules for Companions was to avoid, so much as possible, the use of the word I in their speech. Companion Shamadam was boasting of his achievements as Senior...In doing that he made excessive use of the forbidden word” (*The Book of Mirdad* 1). What can be seen from this quote is that the use of the word I have been forbidden as a “rule”, and the caretakers of the Ark do not know why this word is forbidden and whether there is any significance behind this rule. When an experience of one becomes a rule for others without proper understanding, human beings become estranged from the truth and as a result only superficially follow religious doctrines. Shamadam, the head of the caretakers of the Ark, himself use the word I and boast egoistically about his achievements because he has, along with the others, being distant from the truth which was the experience of Noah. In order to make them realize the timeless truth of Noah, Mirdad’s arrival at the Ark was necessary in order to realize the real significance of the ‘I’ as non-dual Consciousness. It is important to mention that Mirdad did not, throughout the events mentioned in *The Book of Mirdad*, gave any new dogmas to the caretakers of the Ark. He only illustrated the significance of the truth of being by giving pointers to the caretakers, who later on became disciples of Mirdad, for the reason that someday they themselves, like Mirdad, will dissolve the sense of duality within them and uncover the

⁷Supreme Lord who exists within all creation, not as an abstract theory conjured up by human

⁷ It is important to mention here that the word “Supreme Lord” does not mean any abstract concept in the context of

imagination or intellect, but as the core reality of the seeker themselves. “But till you pierce the shell of Time and cross the bourn of Space let no one say ‘I AM GOD’. Say rather, ‘GOD IS I’. This keep you well in mind lest haughtiness and vain imagining corrupt your hearts and militate against the Holy Spirit’s work within you” (*The Book of Mirdad* 92). Mirdad warns here that in the path of being unified with the Supreme through the process of Understanding, there is a chance of the ego to claim itself as being the part of the godly principle and hence strengthened its dominance over consciousness. This results in human beings being a slave of their egos in a stronger way. However, this becomes possible when the Absolute, known by many names such as the Holy Spirit or the Supreme Lord, is only grasped intellectually and abstractly. Due to this one can say “I AM GOD”, and as a result Mirdad forewarns the fact that the ‘I’ as ego, which exists only in the form of thoughts, being stimulated and created out of desires such as lust and anger, must be totally surrendered to God and one must say “GOD IS I”. If the “I” is surrendered to God, only then can the discovery of the unification of human beings with the Absolute becomes possible. The unification must start from the position of duality, the position of person with all its fragmented desires, but must end in non-duality, the position or sole presence of the Absolute. The exoteric perspective rejects this, and the esoteric perspective of religion has put all its significance on this unification.

Dissolving this sense of duality has been the primary purpose of Mirdad, and this chapter has been aimed to express the importance of having an esoteric perspective towards the fundamental truth common to all religions in order to realize the non-dual presence within the multiplicity of creation so that human beings can at least acknowledge a process through which self-integration is possible from a fragmented sense of being. This process of integration from

this study and can be said to abide in the consciousness of human beings which expresses itself in the sense ‘I’ or the sense of being through which one can intuitively recognize oneself as ‘I Am’.

fragmentation will result in human beings to abide and perceive from the true place of their being, which is consciousness, the single unchanging background of all thoughts and experiences. It is this process of self-integration, with a pristine clarity of understanding, which runs through the narrative of *The Book of Mirdad*, and by introducing the standpoint of non-duality through the esoteric perspective, the author of this study hopes that the language and events of *The Book of Mirdad* can be comprehended in its proper significance in the light of non-dual understanding.

Chapter- 3 Introspection of the Absolute in Relation to the Mind

Surely the great Architect of the Universe could hardly have built a stairway that leads to nowhere- P J Saher, *Zen-Yoga*

Osho, who is known as one of the greatest mystics of the late 20th century, states in one of discourses on the Sufi mystic Hakim Sanai, which was later published as a book under the title *Unio Mystica*, “Life cannot exist without polar opposites. Life is a dialectical process between man and woman, between darkness and light, between life and death, between good and bad. Life cannot exist without this duality. Manifestation is not possible without duality.” (*Unio Mystica* 116). Osho further states in this talk, “Plato used a beautiful word for truth. The word is *althea*, it means non-forgetting, not forgetting. It means remembering, it means constant remembering. Truth is a constant remembering.” (*Unio Mystica* 140). The first of the two aforementioned quotes state that existence, and as a result any sort of existential experience or understanding, is impossible without duality. The very reason for human beings to have a separate sense of existence is due to the fact of this dual nature of life allows human beings to experience life and death, pain and enjoyment etc. However, the question this study is primarily concerned with is whether within this dual nature of life is there something which is non-dual, and which makes this duality of life possible. In addition to that, this study also aims to contemplate within the various aspects of human intelligence what part of the conscious intelligence recognizes this duality of life, for prior to the duality of life, which is mentioned in the aforementioned quote, there must be someone or some intelligence which recognizes this duality. Is that intelligence itself is a part of that duality which it perceives, or there is a non-dual dimension within the very intelligence of human beings? Another question now emerges in the

present line of contemplation that is whether the very intelligence which recognizes the dual nature of life can, by the very same process, recognize its own source of intelligence. For example, if there is a perceiver and the object he/she perceives, then the act of perception becomes an experience within the sphere of duality, as the modality of perception can only take place between the perceiver and the object he/she perceives. The perceiver cannot perceive his/her source of perception in the same manner through the same process with which he/she perceives the outside objects with the usual modality of perception. However, there is another sphere within the space of human intelligence which is very much present within each experience of life and that, as shown in the second of the two aforementioned quotes by Osho, is termed as “althea” by Plato. Althea or truth, which in the previous chapters of this study has also been expressed as the “Absolute”, “Supreme” or “God” is not an abstract term with many names. Truth, according to the quote of Osho, is that which always remains as something unchanging and is never forgotten, and hence Althea or Truth can be said to be that which itself is not dual in nature, but which remains “one” within the intelligence of human beings, and the only thing which remains constant (one) in the changing experiences of human beings is the very awareness of the perceiving of these changes. In other words, non-dual reality of being can be defined as that “one” element, which is beyond the sphere of forgetting and remembering, beyond the sphere of the two modes of time as past and future, and hence beyond the dual nature of life in its conditioned mode of spatiality and temporality, which can only be the ‘I’ or Consciousness as it is only this which remains as the only constant *presence* in all the experiences of human beings in their participation of life through its grand and varied manifestation. As that *presence* remains absolute or constant in all human experiences as awareness, it can be said that the conscious awareness of human beings is the Absolute or as Plato has called it Althea. It is vital for this

study to be as lucid as possible in its expression and vocabulary to not let terms such as “Absolute” or “Truth” to be perceived as something abstract for the reason that the foundation of *The Book of Mirdad* exists upon this non-dual state of being. Mirdad’s whole effort was to create an awareness of the presence of this non-dual aspect of existence within the life of his eight disciples. In the third chapter of *The Book of Mirdad*, Mirdad talks about the three important aspects of human existence and the perfect balance of these three aspects through which unification of human beings with one single indivisible reality becomes possible. As mentioned before, human intelligence operates on the conditioned plane of duality, and that very same intelligence cannot recognize the non-dual aspect of its own source through the same means with which it hitherto experienced the dual nature of existence and manifestation. Hence human intelligence cannot operate or experience or perceive, without duality. However, Mirdad’s “Holy Triune”, which includes “The Primal Consciousness”, “The Word” and “The Spirit of Understanding”, carries the potential for human intelligence to realize the Althea or Truth of human existence. As expressed by Mirdad, the “Primal Consciousness” is the source of the sense of being or ‘I Am’, “The Word” is ‘I’, which is a direct reflection of untouched and timeless “Primal Consciousness”, and the ⁸Spirit of Understanding is the willingness of human beings to know themselves, not in terms of the conditioned knowledge of life which operates on the modality of duality, but in terms of that truth which is the foundation of creation as one single indivisible whole, which Plato has called Althea. Furthermore, Mirdad mentions about the “Perfect Balance” through which human beings themselves can unite this triune consciously and experience the oneness of being. However, one very important thing which exists in *The Book of Mirdad* is Mikhail Naimi’s approach towards introducing to his readers the timeless fundamental truth. Mikhail Naimi, through Mirdad, provides an invitation rather than a commandment or

⁸ This will be illustrated in details in the next chapter of this study.

mandate, regarding the process of understanding the reality one's internal core of being. *The Book of Mirdad* provides an invitation of such a heightened understanding which can make human beings aware of their own reality as indivisible unalloyed consciousness. Realizing one's own true nature can make human beings more integrated and open to the dimension of recognizing the reality and essence of existence. The presence of non-duality alone can make all religions of the world have a common space with which human existence can have an apprehending ground to embrace all the religions of the world as various expressions of one single reality, the source of which remains hidden inside the Consciousness which expresses itself through human beings in the form of 'I'.

The Book of Mirdad is a text which provides human beings an invitation to realize the importance of knowing themselves in a world where human beings are becoming fragmented due to increasing institutionalization and commercialization of almost all aspect of human lives. Regarding this particular issue, Mikhail Naimi in his book *Seventy: Story of a Life*, which in Lebanese is "*Sab un: Hikayat Umr*", writes, "Whenever I thought of the new World, I felt that a wide gulf existed between me and it. For the dollar, which attracted millions of people from all corners of the earth, did not attract me because I was looking for thing that the dollar could not buy." (Naimi 68) From this quote the experience Naimi had in his stay in Boston, United States, for 21 years from 1911 to 1932 can be seen. During this period Mikhail Naimi witnessed the modernization of human lives and the mechanization of all the activities of human beings. Alyn Desmond Hine in his PHD thesis titled "Russian Literature in the works of Mikhail Naimi" mentions a quote of Nadim Naimi which states,

His [Mikhail's] utter devotion to the cultivation of his inner life has increasingly both immunized and antagonized him in every other respect against the challenging and novel

impact of the world without and fostered within him a feeling of intellectual self-sufficiency. Viewing things through the eyes of a convinced mystic, he has come to feel that the type of world he retired from can have little or nothing to teach him, while he has everything to teach both himself and that world. (Hine 109)

What can be sensed from the aforementioned quote is that Mikhail Naimi had to internally prepare himself before writing a work like *The Book of Mirdad* and in order for that Naimi had to give up “the dollar” and all that is associated with commercialization, for Naimi was intuitively very much perceptive and aware of the mechanization of human beings through commercialization and mechanization of all human activities related with the blind endeavor of material pursuits. It can be assumed that Mikhail Naimi’s own journey of realizing the importance to find some absolute ground of being in life has triggered when he saw, in his days at America, the mechanization of human beings resulting in slavery to the commercial system which, instead of serving human beings, was controlling them. Only those human beings who through various negative experiences, has realized the limitations of abiding in the state of duality, has earnestly endeavored to make some effort to move towards the non-dual reality of being, and Mikhail Naimi himself was such a person. Naimi offers through *The Book of Mirdad* not a form of escapism or some trip of Romantic imagination through which human beings can temporarily escape from their monotonous lives and clutches of materialism, as many might assume. On the contrary, *The Book of Mirdad* provides an invitation through which human beings can recognize the presence of something Absolute in the relative or dual dimension of their lives and can be encouraged, like Mikhail Naimi himself, to seek the true significance and splendor of human existence. When this inspiration or profound enthusiasm develops within human beings, the hyperbolic meaning and significance that they hitherto associated with

materialism and material purists automatically falls away. However, it can be assumed that this will only happen to some individuals and not collectively as a whole in human societies due to lack of sufficient inner contemplation and also due to the fact that the collective human consciousness is immersed in the realm of duality craving for experiences rather than understanding of being. Regardless of that, the dimension of non-duality is the most important aspect present in *The Book of Mirdad* through which Naimi has expressed the timeless quintessence of all world religions and also an encouragement for human beings to become more conscious of who they truly are in the most fundamental non-dual and holistic sense.

The human consciousness expresses itself within human beings in the form of 'I', and through having a direct experience or recognition of that space of intelligence human beings can gradually access that which has been referred to by prophets and sages for countless generations as the Absolute. This access of the Absolute is only possible because the relative can only exist in its relation to something which is not relative, and hence the Absolute, whereas the Absolute is self-sustaining and exists by itself and also within all that is relative. As there is a relation of the relative with the Absolute, the relative carries within it the potential to be merged with the Absolute, and to turn this potential into an actuality has been the aim of all spiritual traditions. Rene Guenon, a French spiritual practitioner and scholar, and an ardent pursuer of esoteric dimension of the spiritual traditions of the world, writes in his book *The Multiple States of Being*, "Universal Possibility, which contains all, cannot be contained by anything, unless it be by itself, and it contains itself 'without this containing existing in any way whatsoever'". (Rene Guenon 83). Through this quote it can be seen that the Absolute cannot be contained by anything, which also implies that human intelligence cannot contain the Absolute in relation to itself. However, the Absolute can contain itself, and although this containing is self-sufficient and self-sustaining,

it pervades all of creation which includes human intelligence. As a result of this inherent connection of the relative with the Absolute, a connection of the human intelligence with greater all-pervading intelligence, human beings have an opportunity, in a potential way, to realize the Absolute, which again is synonymous with the non-dual reality of being or Pure Consciousness. This very same expression has been articulated by another spiritual scholar of a rare kind, Soren Kierkegaard. In his book *Fear and Trembling* he writes about Abraham's unification with the Absolute. Kierkegaard writes,

Faith is just this paradox, that the single individual as the particular is higher than the universal, is justified before the latter, not as subordinated but superior, though in such a way, be it noted, that it is the single individual who, having been subordinated to the universal as the particular, now by means of the universal becomes that individual who, as the particular, stands in an absolute relation to the absolute. (*Fear and Trembling* 64)

Therefore, according to the contemplation of Kierkegaard, the individual does have an opportunity to stand in an "absolute relation to the absolute" as the direct manifestation of the absolute through transfiguration of the 'I' from being in a limited state of body and mind to a freer and unfettered space of pure Consciousness. However, the important part is Kierkegaard's mention of faith, for it is faith and a complete surrender towards a higher power through which the sense of individuality can be merged with the Absolute and make this potential unification into an actuality. As mentioned in the first chapter of this study, it is through surrender that a human being having a strong sense of individuality can silence the process of mind and intellect which operates on the basis of duality, and as the silence deepens human beings will be able to move into a state, or a stateless state, of pure unalloyed and undefinable Consciousness. That which is indicated through the words "undefinable Consciousness" is synonymous with the word

‘Absolute’ used by Kierkegaard writes in the aforementioned quote. In *The Book of Mirdad* the disciples of Mirdad move into this realm of developing faith from within, a faith which is not borrowed from conditioned knowledge of existing religions but a faith which gradually develops within the disciples of Mirdad resulting from their interaction with Mirdad. It is this which makes the disciples ripe for the all-pervading Absolute to descend onto their being, and through this Naimi has illustrated to his readers that by faith, trust and surrender the mind or ego, which operates on the dualistic mode of being, can be absolved with its own source of existence and unite with the non-dual indivisible reality of being which pervades all state of being and remains constant in all human experiences as untouched *presence*.

In further exploring the dimension of Consciousness, the author of this study has visited a spiritual master and consulted his discourses and lectures and books for further concrete clarification, as much as it was possible in order to present these things in a clarified and lucid manner of verbal expression. The author of this study went to India to attend ⁹*satsangs* of an ¹⁰Advaita spiritual master belonging to the tradition of ¹¹Janana yoga. Janana or Gayana (knowledge of the Absolute) yoga concerns itself with the method of understanding the true nature and the source of consciousness. This form of yoga advocates that through ¹²knowing the source of Consciousness unification with the Supreme becomes a possibility, and it is this Consciousness which has the potential to make human beings realize the Absolute. The name of the spiritual master is Mooji, and he offers perhaps the most direct experience of what this study has termed as the Absolute through the ancient, simple yet effective, method of self-inquiry. In

⁹ Satsang is a Sanskrit word whose translation, in an Upanidashic sense, means association with Truth or the Absolute through sitting with a Guru and attending a spiritual discourse.

¹⁰ Advaita means non-duality.

¹¹ Janana Yoga means union with the Supreme Being or Lord through sacred and spiritual knowledge of the interiority of being.

¹² In Janana Yoga there is no difference between pure knowing and being, for knowing becomes the reality of being and as a result there remains no gap between being and knowing.

the ancient spiritual tradition of India, the basic “yoga sadhana”, the basic means of accomplishing union with the Absolute, of almost all spiritual disciplines has been to realize one simple fact of human existence which is, whatever a person can be aware of he/she inherently cannot be that, and as a result one must dis-identify oneself from all that he/she can be aware of. If a person gradually realizes that he/she is aware of his/her body, then according to the basic yoga sadhana of almost all spiritual traditions, it would mean a person cannot be his/her body since he/she is aware of it. This has been lucidly described by one 20th century mystic known by the name of Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj. In the book titled *I Am That*, which contains within it the quintessence of non-duality, writes,

That which makes you think you are a human is not human. It is but a dimensionless point of consciousness, a conscious nothing; all you can say about yourself is” ‘I am’. You are pure being-awareness-bliss. To realize that is the end of all seeking. You come to it when you see all you think yourself to be as mere imagination and stand aloof in pure awareness of the transient as transient, imaginary as imaginary, unreal as unreal. It is not at all difficult, but detachment is needed. It is clinging to the false that makes the true so difficult to see...The real is always with you; you need not wait to be what you are. Only you must not allow your mind to go out of yourself in search. (*I Am That* 316)

In the above quoted passage, Nisargadatta Maharaj has provided a verbal portrayal of the process of the basic “yoga sadhana”, which is mentioned in the first few lines. That which enables the recognition that someone is human is itself not human, it is consciousness which is “dimensionless” and “nothing”. This, as mentioned in the previous two chapters as well, can only be experienced by the sense of being, the I-am. After this Nisargadatta Maharaj has stated that one must not let the mind dwell outside the reality of its own substance, which again is the

dimensionless Consciousness. When this subtle recognition takes place within the dimension of human intelligence, the sense of 'I' within them is likely to change its position from the identity of the ego towards positioning itself as pure Consciousness. All that an individual experience in his/her life span is inherently related with his/her body, and dis-identification with the body is one of the vital steps which a human being can attempt to make, even within the realm conditioned intelligence. Understanding the reality of one's own being as fundamentally a space of awareness starts an internal process of deconditioning, and this has the ability to make human beings step away from the position of the person, with all its complexities and problems. Resulting from dis-identification with the body the mental phenomenon of thoughts and sensations are also related with an identity or ego which comes with having a body, and the individual is also aware of his/her ego and all its thought process. As a result, a human being also can, along with his/her body, dis-identify with his/her mental activities and complex thought processes. After dis-identifying with the body and the ego identity, a human being is left with a pure sense of 'I' as consciousness only, not conscious of anything in particular but remaining only as consciousness. Mooji in his satsangs directly points the audience and his listeners to look at the 'I' and not the experiences which the 'I' has attached itself with by being identified with a body and mind. Mooji states in one of his ¹³satsangs in his visit to India in Rishikesh on March 3rd 2019,

...What is this person? Is it original? It is just what we are, are we all persons, and each one a unique person? If we have seven and a half billion unique person we probably have seven and a half billion unique problems, how we going to sort it out? What I found out is everything comes back to this 'I' feeling inside us. And nobody questions it, nobody

¹³ The title of this satsang is "I will not start with your problem, I will start with You" and this Satsang has been recorded and posted on You Tube, the link of the You Tube video of this satsang is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaV2yJ_sUmE

questions the 'I'. We take the report of the 'I' as the starting point, as the fact place and say 'this is my problem'. We want to fix the problem but nobody looks at the 'I' who has the problem. It does not seem to occur to us what is the 'I' who has the problem (Mooji 33:10-34:23)

In a later part of the same satsang session Mooji further states,

...because of the momentum of habit [the identification with the body and mind and all the mental processes concerning the ego which Mooji refers to as "being a person"] comes back and when it comes back...and the moment it comes back...again what has happened is that something from your formlessness seemingly has pulled back into shape, into the form of a person...and when that identity flares up again, it feels real onto itself. What are you to do, and who am I referring to you as ¹⁴"you"...are you and the experience of your true nature separate? No. And yet when the mind comes you will feel separated from there...But the important thing is that you ...know when the mind comes back "I can observe it, and I cannot be the thing I can observe"...you remember those steps and gradually you find yourself back in your ¹⁵open space (Mooji, 1:02:56-1:05:11)

What can be noticed from the quoted words of Mooji is that a direct guidance has been provided for the human mind or intellect to directly grasp the formless nature because only one absolute element remains which is formless and pervades all creation and that can be hinted at with the word 'space' or 'emptiness'. Human intelligence, through using some simple pointers, can directly realize this formlessness, which is the essence of creation and which has been termed as

¹⁴ Mooji refers the "you" not as a person but as the space of pure awareness and presence within which the identity of a person can be witnessed, and Mooji states that this presence of awareness has timelessly remained as the true nature of human beings.

¹⁵ Open space here means the formless nature of human beings which is usually grasped by the dynamic consciousness as awareness and within the space of this formless nature human senses and intellect can operate and the act of perception can take place

the highest attribute of the Supreme, through just a simple process of not identifying with anything, not even the 'I' because the 'I' itself is a thing which human beings, through deep introspection and contemplation, can be aware of, and hence is a part of duality and not of that which Plato has called Althea. What is left when the body-mind identity and all the thought processes associated with it are dis-identified from is pure consciousness, and it is this pure consciousness which Mirdad has called "The Primal Consciousness" or "God" in various instances in *The Book of Mirdad*. Mooji in one of his guided meditation book known as *The Invitation* asks some insightful questions through which again a clear establishment can be made between the Absolute and what is termed as the relative because the relative is an inherent part of the Absolute. Mooji asks, "Can the mind function outside of What Is? Can there be an outside of ¹⁶Is-ness or awareness? Can the recognition of Is-ness happen outside or apart from the Is-ness itself? Finally is there any distance between what You are and What Is?" (*The Invitation* 25). The Is-ness is what only exists throughout all creation, the single formless Reality pervading all forms of manifestations, self-existing and self-sustaining. Human beings are also one of the forms through which the Absolute expresses itself, and through the ability of the awareness innate in human beings, one can discern his/her true nature of realizing that only the Absolute exists through all forms and throughout all creation, not only intellectually as is expressed in this study, but experientially through undergoing a process of self-inquiry and exercise of sharp discernment. The method of applied by Mooji is the most direct way through which one can realize the non-dual reality of being.

¹⁶ The Is-ness/What Is has been defined as:

Mooji uses these terms spontaneously and interchangeably to point to the wordless, formless Reality that all beings know intuitively to be themselves, though they may not as yet be consciously aware of the profundity of this understanding. Since it is indefinable, 'Is-ness' or the 'What Is' must be experienced inside the heart as if it were a kind of 'formless noun'. It points to the ultimate Self we already are...and known by many other names such as Truth...Supreme Spirit...Pure Consciousness, Pure Mind, the Self or the Absolute (*The Invitation* xv)

However, not all human beings possess the same faculty of intelligence and as a result for some human beings, rather than discernment, it is faith, as advocated by Kierkegaard, which can make them access the non-dual reality of being. In this light *The Book of Mirdad* is of immense significance as it advocates for both faith and understanding (see quotation on chapter 4, page 64) in order to realize the non-dual reality of being. All spiritual exercises advocated by all the religions of the world, in its esoteric aspect, such as deepening one's faith through devotion, undergoing physical austerities and exercising yogic postures and breathing techniques, disciplining oneself in the daily actions of life, or through mental discernment of dis-identification of all that one is not and abiding in one's own true nature, ultimately leads to the one formless awareness or the "Is-ness". "Is-ness" in Buddhist terminology has been labelled as "tathata" which can be translated as "suchness" or "Is-ness" of existence, which is empty and formless yet all-pervading and is One Single Indivisible Whole. This is perhaps the most apt expression of the "Absolute", the very ground of being. In Islamic and Shik terminology the Oneness of this "Is-ness" or the Absolute has been given prime focus. For example "La Sharik Allah Hoo", which is perhaps the highest attribute which can be given to Allah, or the Almighty, by human expression, means, "¹⁷Allah, the One alone, without any partner (sharik)", or without anyone else, Allah alone exists as the non-dual formless Reality. In the Japuji Saheb of Guru Nanak, the main text of the Shiks, Guru Nanak begins with, translated into English, ¹⁸"He is One, He is Omkar, the Supreme Truth. He is the creator, beyond fear, beyond rancor. His is the timeless form, Never born, self-creating". The Absolute is the only "One" who exists in all creation through many forms and also through a formless Consciousness, and the Absolute is

¹⁷ For further authentication of this translation, any English translation of the Second Kalima of Islam, the Kalima-e-Sahadat, can be look at which will give the same sense of meaning in all of the translated versions.

¹⁸ The lines from Japuji Granth Saheb has been taken from this link: https://www.oshorajneesh.com/download/oshobooks/Indian_Mystics/The_True_Name_Volume_1.pdf

One without fear, who has never been born and will never die but who creates itself through the various forms of its own creation. The sages of the Upanishads also expressed the Absolute, under the name of Brahma, by words which resonate the very same meaning as the aforementioned attributes or aspects given to the Absolute, or the Supreme Reality, by various religions and spiritual schools through various names. In the Keno Upanishad it is written, the translated version is taken from Joseph Campbell's book *Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, "That [which is beyond every name and form] is comprehended only by the one with no comprehension of it: anyone comprehending, knows it not. Unknown to the knowing, it is to the unknowing known." (*Inner Reaches* 86-87). To the mind which wants to know the Supreme truth, it becomes unknowable. Yet beyond the dimensions of the "known" remains the vast field of unknown, which itself is beyond and also within every form of creation or every dimension of that which can be known, and this "unknowing known" is beyond and at the same time within duality. This can only be understood by human beings through the countless ways offered by sages and prophets from the ancient times to the present by a total negation of all that exists psychologically within the realm of the mind, including the sense of 'I' as a person. Only with the total negation of everything observable and witness-able can the essence of that which is termed here as the Absolute come into the realization of human beings in its most concrete way without the apparently seeming paradox, and it is this which the Keno Upanishad has termed as the formless "unknowing known". When Mooji in the aforementioned quoted words of the satsang, urges to abide in the formless space of pure awareness from which perceiving of all phenomena, including the phenomenon of 'I' as a person with an egotistic identity occurs, he means to abide in that which cannot be "known" as mentioned in the quote of the Upanishad, yet without which no knowing would ever have been possible. This seeming paradoxical reality

defined as the “unknowing known” is exactly what is termed by the Abrahamic religion as God, or the Highest Principle or the Absolute. It is the existence of this “unknowing known” which Mirdad attempts to make his disciples and also the readers of *The Book of Mirdad* realize, however not as a concept or as a religious idea to be worshipped, but as a living reality within human beings which they can access through what Mirdad calls “Holy Understanding”, which is to understand one’s own true nature as an indivisible whole within the immense infinite existence. Mirdad says, “God’s oneness is God’s everlasting law. It is self-enforcing law. Nor courts nor judges does it need to publish it abroad or to uphold its dignity and force. The Universe- the visible of it and the invisible-is but a single mouth proclaiming it to all who have but ears to hear” (*The Book of Mirdad* 17), and elsewhere in the *Book of Mirdad* Mirdad states to his seven disciples,

Till all your thoughts be quarried from one quarry, and all desires drawn of the selfsame well, your words, though honest, shall be lies. When your *I* and mine are one, even as mind and God’s are one, we would dispense with words and perfectly commune in truthful Silence....The silence I would user you into is that interminable expanse wherein non-being passed into being, and being into non-being. It was that awesome void where every sound is born and hushed and every form is shaped and crushed; where every self is writ and unwrit; where nothing is but IT (*Book of Mirdad* 24)

Mirdad’s quotes cannot be understood without the context of that Absolute non-dual all existing formless truth which, as this study has attempted to show, is the essence or core of existence. When the ‘I’ of the disciples of Mirdad becomes one with the ‘I’ of Mirdad himself, which has become ¹⁹silent and has discovered its true nature as Pure Consciousness and is established in its

¹⁹ Becoming silent here implies Mirdad has transcended the mental noise of his ego and has merged with the Reality of the All-pervading Absolute.

unification with God or the Absolute, and therefore has totally been immersed with its own source as the formless “Is-ness”, then the disciples will also be what in spiritual traditions has been termed as “awakened beings”, or beings who have awakened to their own true nature and is aware, experientially, of the non-dual oneness of creation. It is a silent space, fully alive yet in perfect stillness of pure presence, where ²⁰ “being and non-being”, in short all forms of duality passes into existence and non-existence. However, that which truly is the Absolute cannot be expressed or represented into words, only pointed at through some of its aspects. *The Book of Mirdad* is full of these pointers pointing to the nondual Supreme Reality, and the aim of this chapter has been to provide an introspective contemplation, as much as it has been possible through words, of the possibility and potentiality of the unification of the relative dual state of being with the Absolute non-dual reality of being. The author of this study believes that without a certain level of understanding of the non-dual Reality, the esoteric aspect of religion and the immediate presence of the Absolute within the human intelligence as formless awareness or pure consciousness, the words in *The Book of Mirdad* will not carry the significance with which Mikhail Naimi wrote it. The words of Mirdad are not only words on the pages of a book, but they can be read as a spiritual guidance through which human beings can discover the quality of godliness within them which is timeless and eternal. A full realization of the “timeless” non-duality creation is equivalent with experiencing the greatest freedom which the sages and prophets have experienced, and *The Book of Mirdad* exists as a profound invitation for human beings to seek out that freedom for themselves.

²⁰ A detailed illustration of this has been provided in chapter 4 of the study.

Chapter- 4 The Mystical Dimension in *The Book of Mirdad*

If we extrapolate from Swendenborg's favorite analogy- God as a formless, radiating sun- the Lord may be understood as a *potentiality* that achieves form only in his creation- D. T.

Suzuki, Swedenborg: *Buddha of the North*

It has been mentioned in the previous chapters that the conversion of the human potentiality of self-realization into an actuality is the prime purpose behind the literary creation of Mikhail Naimi's *The Book of Mirdad*. Mikhail Naimi has offered various instances in this book through which he has stressed the importance of discovering within one's self the non-dual reality of being. Naimi has included in *The Book of Mirdad* some important aspects of being and qualities and wisdoms through which a human being can consciously participate in the process of attaining this realization. This chapter is dedicated towards establishing those elements present in *The Book of Mirdad* through which Naimi has provided an invitation to the readers to realize the importance of their true nature as Pure Consciousness. The whole process of Mirdad, as will be illustrated in this chapter, is a process of deconditioning, through which the true nature of human beings becomes evident naturally. This chapter will focus on Mirdad's emphasis upon Freedom, ²¹Silence, Surrender, Faith, Understanding, Love and Patience. Through these aspects and qualities of being, which are interrelated and contribute towards the holistic understanding of non-duality through direct experience, Naimi has illustrated how human beings can establish themselves as pure Consciousness. The spiritual instructions offered by Mirdad is fundamentally an approach, or it can also be viewed as a stepping stone, through which human beings can enter the core of their being, or to be particular, to perceive the non-dual reality of being, and

²¹ In the context of this study, the thing indicated by the word Silence is a profound state into the depths of being where human Consciousness remains only conscious of its own Consciousness resulting in a spiritual awakening of the hitherto outwards bound mind to recognize its true nature.

recognize themselves not as body or mind or the complex processes which involves within the body and mind, but as Consciousness, which manifests itself in all human forms through the sense “I”. The “I” is treated by Mirdad not as a mere word which indicates the ego of human beings, but as a potential and a direct medium through which human beings can associate and recognize themselves as an integral part of the whole universe. If human beings existentially realize the core of their being, the ground of their perception, and the source of their conscious intelligence, to be an alive intelligent and formless presence which is completely free from the dependency on external conditions like the body and mind and the situations and events which are exposed to the body and mind, then as a consequence of this realization human beings can experience life not from the stand point of duality as a perceiver (subject) perceiving (objects), but as a part of a greater whole which pervades all manifestation of the Universe. This results in recognition of an inner freedom where human beings are naturally more peaceful and content. The freedom which Mirdad advocates for is not freedom as is used in the general sense of the term. Spiritual freedom does not mean a person being free from the external conditions of the world and the bondages of his/her mind, rather spiritual freedom aims to free the consciousness (which is the true nature of human beings) from its imagined self as the person (ego) and establish the hitherto imagined sense of individuality (sense of I with a body and mind) as the universal consciousness. However, from the standpoint of the mind, such statements, particularly when perceived from the position of the intellect only, will not surpass the sphere of concepts and may result in seeing terms such as Consciousness as abstract models for higher thinking without any experiential reality. On the other hand, if these statements are viewed from the standpoint where intellect recognize its limitation and is open for higher understanding, than a different quality of comprehension of this can take place within human minds.

As mentioned in the previous chapter of this study, what is termed as Absolute or all-pervading also pervades the relative position of human mind. As a result, if the human mind, which operates upon duality in order to experience and understand the world, silence its dualistic mode of thinking and perceiving, which it can only be when it truly has recognized its own limitation, then within this silence a higher form of intelligence enters. Furthermore, as is also illustrated in the previous chapter, this silence can be experienced by seekers through either giving up their ego to the all-pervading Absolute through Faith, as Abraham did, or through attempting to know and discern one's true nature through spiritual exercises such as understanding one's internal nature through abiding in Consciousness. Through Faith and Understanding human beings can experience the highest quality of freedom available in the human kingdom, freedom from one's own constructed self as ego. It is due to this that Mirdad's first words to his disciples begins with the importance of realizing the significance of the word "I", and that which is indicated through the word "I", which is "Primal Consciousness". As written in *The Book of Mirdad*,

The Primal Consciousness- The Word- The Spirit of Understanding-behold O monks, THE TRINITY OF BEING, The Three which are One, The One which is Three, co-equal, co-extensive, co-eternal; self-balancing, self-knowing, self-fulfilling, Never increasing, nor decreasing. Ever at peace. Ever the same. That is, O monks, THE PERFECT BALANCE. (*The Book of Mirdad* 5)

In the aforementioned quote, that which Mirdad terms as "The Perfect Balance" can be said to be synonymous with what this study terms as the "ISness" of creation. Being another name of the Absolute, that which "IS" is itself co-extensive and co-eternal, it is ever the same and ever at peace with everything. Furthermore, according to Mirdad, the realization of the Absolute can be achieved by his disciples through a process. This process is having the spirit of understanding of

that which is the non-dual source of life, the primal consciousness. Mirdad says, “Man, too, therefore, is such a holy triune; a consciousness, a word, an understanding. Man, too, is a creator like his God. His *I* is his creation.” (*The Book of Mirdad* 5). However, alongside this quote Mirdad also states “Man is a god in swaddling-bands. Time is a swaddling-band. Space is a swaddling-band. Flesh is a swaddling-band, and likewise all the senses and the things perceivable therewith.” (*The Book of Mirdad* 8). In the former quote Mirdad says through understanding the reality of their own being as Pure Consciousness, human beings can achieve oneness with the Absolute. However, in the later quote Mirdad says man, as a potential, has the quality of godliness, however he/she is in a swaddle and has mistaken his reality, which is consciousness, with the reality of the swaddle, which is the body and mind. The problem lies not being in the garments or swaddle, the problem which Mirdad highlights through the latter quote is that human beings have become attached with what is external to him/her resulting in them embracing a false identity. This false identity results in duality, and as Mirdad says, “Does Man in truth divide the Indivisible? God forbid. The Indivisible no power can divide...Man’s immaturity imagines the division” (*The Book of Mirdad* 5). It is only imagination, or a conditioning through habit, which has made human beings oblivious of their true nature as Pure Consciousness and has chained them to transient “swaddling bands” such as time, space, flesh, and all things perceivable. Human beings are the perceiver of all these things, and flesh and mind are only a medium through which this perception takes place. However, due to identification with these “swaddling-bands” human beings have forgotten the god-self which exists within them in the form of non-dual and indivisible reality of Pure Consciousness, and *The Book of Mirdad* aims to free human beings from these false identities. Mirdad repeatedly states to his disciples in *The Book of Mirdad* to pray only for Understanding of the reality of God and the true

nature of being, as only existential understanding can free human beings from their conditioned self, which has been too deeply ingrained to be easily rejected. As a result, *The Book of Mirdad* treats human beings as a potentiality to experience freedom and achieve the highest quality of existence, the quality of godliness. This experience of godliness is very hard to put forth in words and much of *The Book of Mirdad* contains the process and insights through which readers will be invited to look and seek their own ways to achieve this experience. However, Mikhail Naimi did provide one of the highest attributes of this experience of godliness. Mirdad expresses this as,

The silence I would usher you into is that interminable expanse wherein non-being passes into being, and being into non-being...It is that Silence I would have you roam, that you may shed your old tight skin and move about unfettered, unrestrained...It is there I would have you crawl out of the dark and stifling shell of self into the light and free air of The Self (*The Book of Mirdad* 25-26).

The attribute of the experience of godliness is Silence, and through freedom from the constructed “self”, the ego, this quality of godliness can be experienced. As a result, the very same identity which manifested in the human lives as ego, or the sense “I am this body”, transfigures into a “space-like” Silence where Consciousness becomes aware of its true nature. When this awareness becomes established in human beings, they are referred as “enlightened beings” or “awakened beings”. William Blake in his poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* writes, “If the door of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, Infinite (*Blake’s Poetry and Design* 93), and *The Book of Mirdad* offers exactly such an invitation where the readers, much like the disciples of Mirdad, would be encouraged to seek out that non-dual reality of being which is the source of perception. Once the “doors of perception” are cleansed through surrender, faith and understanding, human beings would experience all things in creation,

including themselves as the body and mind, as one whole organic unity. That experience of non-duality has been expressed by Mirdad as the God or the All-pervading Absolute, which is beyond all limitations and manifestations, where “being and non-being” passes into each other in a vast unconceivable space-like Silence. The “Silence” which Mirdad mentions in the aforementioned quote is directly associated with “spiritual freedom”, freedom from all conditionings through which “the doors of perception” of human beings can be cleansed. However, that is a mystical state which can only be indicated by words and only through experience can such a state be actually realized. In the book *The Sufis* by Idris Shah there is mentioned a statement by one Sufi master (murshid) by the name of Pir-i-Do-Sara. The author considers his statement to be vital in order to understand what is indicated by the word “Silence” in *The Book of Mirdad*. In *The Sufis* it is written, “Can you imagine a mind observing the whole of itself- if it were all engaged in observation, what would it be observing? If it were all engaged in being mind, what would do the observing? Observation of self is necessary while there is a self as distinct from the nonself part” (*The Sufis* 53). In this quote it has been stated that if the mind functions only as being an observer, i.e. if the human mind dis-identifies from all that it perceives and remains in its essential non-definable state, then the mind, by this very process of observing, would negate its own position (existence) because the human mind itself is nothing but an accumulation of conditioning, and if that very accumulation of conditions can be observed, then the mind would transform itself or negate itself and only the perceiver or the observer would remain. This state of remaining only as the perceiver is synonymous with abiding in the pure state of Consciousness. This state, or a stateless state, can be defined as the Absolute as there would remain no duality in this state. Therefore, this state or “stateless state” would be one where human Consciousness will be immersed in its own true nature and will enter the dimensionless space of “Silence”, which

Mirdad mentions in the aforementioned quote. In this state, the consciousness would also be free from all that it has attached itself with, and that includes the most intimate sense of identifying one's self as a person. This great Silence can neither be perceived in the conventional dualistic sense of recognizing an object or a phenomenon, nor can it be comprehended by "doing" anything since this "great Silence" is beyond the causal sphere of space and time. Being itself changeless, this "Great Silence" is ever present, or is pure *Presence*, in all the manifestations of change, and it is this Silence which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Plato has termed as Althea. Before moving onto the other qualities stated by Mirdad, the author of this study intends to further contemplate the ideas of "Being" and "Non-being" in relation to non-duality. In the book *The Multiple States of Being* Rene Guenon writes, "...just as Unity (Being) is nothing but metaphysical Zero (Non-Being) affirmed, so speech is nothing but silence expressed...but, inversely, metaphysical Zero (Non-Being) while being Unity unaffirmed, is also something more (and even infinitely more)..." (Rene Guenon 24). As a result, it can be seen that there are, conceptually viewed, two movements, from Being to Non-being, and then from Non-Being to Being. However, both the sphere of affirmation and non-affirmation are happening in the larger space of "Silence". The Silence is beyond duality where Unity and "metaphysical Zero" can pass into each other, or in other words where all duality can move inside spontaneously and freely. Through the process of negation human beings can achieve that state which is a "metaphysical Zero" or "Non-Being", and which is infinitely "something" more than "Being". However, both "Being" and "Non-Being" implies within them a perceiver to perceive this "Unity" and "Metaphysical Zero", and therefore is not the true nature of human beings as it is perceivable. Recognition of this formless intelligence within the life span of human beings is the fundamental quest of spirituality, and for ages through various religions and spiritual masters, this non-dual

truth has found diverse and rich expressions. It is this non-dual truth which Mirdad expresses as Freedom and Silence in *The Book of Mirdad*. However, it can be asked that how did Mikhail Naimi depicted in words such a thing which cannot be conceived and hence also cannot be verbally expressed in a literary work. The genius of Naimi lies in the fact that, and herein also lies the mysticism of *The Book of Mirdad*, that Naimi has expressed, firstly a direct insight into the Absolute from the relative standpoint of the mind by illustration of Freedom and Silence, and secondly a collection of wisdoms through which the Silence, or the non-dual reality of being, can be recognized by the disciples of Mirdad, and therefore by the readers of *The Book of Mirdad*. Mikhail Naimi has expressed some of the important elements through which human beings can endeavor to explore within their own being the non-dual reality of the true Self, or the Absolute. As mentioned before, the path of Mirdad is not one filled with commandment or conquest, it does not involve suppression of the bodily emotions or other functions for aspire for spiritual experiences. Mirdad does not tell his disciplines to have a preference of spiritual aspects of existence over worldly life, and particularly because of this reason at the end of the story, Mirdad takes his disciples down to the human societies away from the Ark sitting at top of the mountain. Mirdad's teachings involves direct understanding and insight through which human beings can realize the non-dual nature of their real Self or Consciousness, and through concretizing and establishing in that space of pure unidentified Consciousness, human beings can live anywhere and naturally be in the state of absolute freedom. However, Mirdad states that in order to realize this freedom one must strive towards self-integration to strengthen one's faith through remaining in a constant state of surrender, with patience and love, to the supreme ²²Law of existence, and

²² The Supreme Law of Existence here is used by the author as another name for that which has been termed in the previous chapter of this study as "The Absolute" or "Isness".

abide in life ²³not by identifying with the limited aspects of being the body and the mind only, but by identifying with the Consciousness, the true nature of the Self. Mirdad's words have within them a bridge for the human intelligence through which it can overcome its position as functioning within a relative plane and enter the non-dual absolute reality of being. Mirdad writes, "A Crucible is the Word of God. What it creates it melts and fuses into one, accepting none as worthy, rejecting none as worthless...Whereas a cribble is Man's word. What it creates it sets at grips and blows. It is forever crippling this as friend and casting that away as enemy...Thus rages on the cruel and the fruitless war of Man against himself" (*The Book of Mirdad* 7). Mirdad here states that as the non-dual Consciousness, as the "Word of God", no discrimination is possible as all things created have a purpose which it will fulfill at its own potential time. However, the position through which human beings operate is not from the standpoint of Consciousness but from the position of ego, or the conditioned sense of having a limited body and mind, with which the ego accepts certain things for its own convenience and rejects other things which it dislikes. This acceptance and rejection, if made on the basis of necessity, can be seen to be normal human behavior needed for the survival of the body. However, when this acceptance and rejection are made on the basis of preference, then necessity turns into possession and Consciousness, whose true nature is free and beyond all limitations, becomes limited and confined due to the preferences and possessions of the ego. As a result, in the existential realm, human beings remain in a constant state of conflict as it tries to find

²³ It has been mentioned by the author of this study that the Absolute pervades all creation, and by inference it also pervades the human mind. Furthermore, the author of this study has also claimed that the essence of all creation, including human beings, or the reality of being, is non-dual and already existing in all forms of creation. From these statements the reader might question that if the Absolute is inherent in all forms of creation why is a process required for human beings, from the standpoint of the ego, to realize the ISness of creation. The reason is that the ego operates in duality, and is habituated and conditioned of identifying itself from the position of duality. As a result, when the ego suddenly goes through a process of self-integration through which it can realize the non-dual nature of all creation, or the non-dual reality of being, and hence negate its own sense of autonomous existence, the ego (or the conditioned sense of self) becomes a hindrance which every seeker of truth has to overcome.

unending happiness in the transient world of names and forms, and the only way through which human beings can transcend this world of conditioned duality is through realizing the oneness of their reality of being. The profoundness of this oneness has been described by Mirdad as,

Nor is the light in your eyes the light of you alone. It is as well the light of all that share the Sun with you. What could your eye behold of me were it not for the light in me? It is my light that sees me in your eye. It is your light that sees you in my eye...All those that breathe, or ever breathed the air are breathing in your breasts" (*The Book of Mirdad* 5-6).

The lines of Mirdad shows the non-dual reality which has always immersed the whole of creation, yet human beings, due to their false identification as ego, has lost in touch of the living reality of life. Mirdad's words directly points towards the inherent relation of God and human beings. In the ninth chapter of *The Book of Mirdad*, Mirdad was asked who he was in reality since he arrived to the prestigious Ark as a cook but was delivering sermons related to truth and freedom to the people who were the assigned caretakers of the Ark. Mirdad was asked to prove if he was the new Stowaway of the Ark, and in reply to this question Mirdad answered, "You have too many ears; therefore, you cannot hear. Had you but one that heard and understood, you would require no proof" (*The Book of Mirdad* 17). What Mirdad has suggested through the aforementioned quote is that each human beings are enforced to experience life from a dualistic point of view, and hence judge reality on the basis of proof and logic, due to the fundamental fact that he/she is split from within. There are many voices which dominates a human being, and as a result, there are many 'I's within them which causes consciousness to remain in a state of contradiction and self-created suffering. Therefore, when asked for the proof of Mirdad about who he is in reality, or in another words what is the reality of being of Mirdad, Mirdad answers the questioner that through unifying the many voices which dominates consciousness and

integrating them into one indivisible whole, to make “too many ears” into “one ear”, the reality of being which Mirdad represents can be intuitively known by his disciples. This process of self-integration as advocated by Mirdad is through two qualities, which are patience and willingness of Understanding one’s own true nature by having faith in the words of Mirdad and at the same time by diving within one’s self to verify the words of Mirdad which are of a single intent pointing to the non-dual reality of being. By remaining in the state of Pure Consciousness, which in other words means being empty and unidentified from all that is perceivable, a profound sense of Love arises within human consciousness. This Love is not a love which is generally experienced by human beings from the position of duality as having a certain attraction for the opposite sex, neither it is a love which is mere feeling of empathy. All these feelings are external from the fundamental nature of human beings, and the Love Mirdad states can only be realized when human beings have totally absolved themselves with the Absolute, which is their own reality of being. Yet through a certain analogy Naimi has attempted to express this Love,

Just as a mighty river emptying itself in the sea is e’er replenished by the sea, so must you empty yourselves in Love that you may be ever filled with Love. The pool that would withhold the sea-gift from the sea becomes a stagnant pool. There is nor ‘more’ nor ‘less’ in Love. The moment you attempt to grade and measure Love it slips away leaving behind it bitter memories. (*The Book of Mirdad* 23).

Mirdad here is stating that Love is like the sea which always makes the river filled with water, and if the river withholds itself from the sea then the river would die. In the same way if human beings withhold themselves from Loving all the beings in the rest of creation, then human lives would become barren of all significance as they would be separated from the life force which is making them alive and conscious. If one compares this with T S Eliot’s *The Wasteland* where

due to the absence of any living spiritual dimension life becomes like a barren wasteland devoid of fertility and value, and only through compassion and love can the wasteland again be fertile, then Mirdad's statement on Love may become comprehensible. Again, the Love which Mirdad states is not an emotional induced feeling which human beings usually experience from the standpoint of duality. This Love can be experienced by human beings from an overwhelming power of fullness and contentment, and this can make the true nature of human beings become aware of other dimension of intelligence within them such as compassion. When Mirdad says that the air his disciples are breathing and the light through which they are seeing is the same air and the same light which Adam used when he experienced the world (quotation on page 53), it means the whole of creation is interdependent providing many beings in creation all the necessary elements to experience life. This act of creation sustaining itself and all its creatures requires tremendous Love and Compassion, one which is beyond the comprehension of the ego, and only through a deep attunement with the living indivisible process of life can human beings experience this Love. It is this Love which Mirdad urges his disciples to be drowned into through which they can rid themselves of their imagined sense of conditioned self and discover the indivisibility of creation. Mirdad states to his disciples that not by having a preference of one thing over another, nor through possessions but through a non-discriminatory openness and humbleness can human beings realize their true nature because human beings are also a part of the very same creation which, as mentioned a couple of lines before, is interdependent and constantly is providing its own sustenance. If such an insight can be experienced by human beings not only intellectually through words, but through a deeper intuition, experientially, with patience and faith, then one can realize that the whole existence is self-sustaining through an enormous unimaginable activity of compassion. It is this compassion which Mirdad terms with

the word Love. In addition to that, as the story proceeds Mirdad lets his disciples become aware of what is known as the “Omniwill”. The Omniwill can be defined as the formless intelligent life force behind all activities and non-activity (Being and Non-Being) of creation. Mirdad urges his disciples to surrender to this vast life force and keep their faith intact to the Omniwill, till the Omniwill itself makes the Understanding of the disciples mature to know the greater mysteries of life and existence. What Mirdad does when he talks about the Omniwill is he provides an explanation to the minds of his disciples that they need to surrender their limited intellectual faculty to a higher functioning faculty of intelligence until their inner chaos becomes quiet. Through the intention and attempt to surrender one’s sense of conditioned being to the “Omniwill”, the internal conflicting voices of the conditioned sense of being or mind can be quietened and gradually the conditioned sense of self will be merged with the formless reality of being, or the non-dual Self. Mirdad states to his disciples, “I say to you, ²⁴accept The Omniwill if you would turn defeat to victory...Accept them with the will to understand their value and their meaning. And once you understand the hidden ways of your will, you understand The Omniwill...Let your will be a maid to The Omniwill till Understanding make The Omniwill a servant to your will.” (*The Book of Mirdad* 48). Here Mirdad states that although The Omniwill is not separate from the will of Mirdad or the disciples of Mirdad, yet they must at first learn to make their will a servant to the Omniwill, which means to have complete unconditional faith in the Omniwill, until then when the higher faculties of intelligence start to work through them. Then with understanding of the reality of being the Omniwill will conjoin with what is generally known as the “will” of human beings. However, by the time the Omniwill will conjoin with the will of the disciples of Mirdad, their will power will lose its association with the egotistic identity of a person and convert itself into compassion because the intelligent function behind the

²⁴ The word “accept” is synonymous with the word “Faith”.

whole of creation is of the nature of giving and transforming rather than owning and destroying. When human consciousness becomes aware of this process, human beings will become more compassionate and creative, however not necessarily through the process of “doing” since the “doer” of actions implies an ego. Rather than being a doer, human beings will naturally “be” more creative and compassionate by their very existence, and their existence will be a spontaneous expression. One such example has been given Naimi himself in *The Book of Mirdad* through the interaction of Shamadam and Mirdad. Shamadam is the chief caretaker of the historic Ark which was once built and used by the prophet Noah. However, the truth which Noah had within him when he built the Ark has been lost, and through the generational passing on of successors, Noah’s wisdom and virtue was replaced by greed for wealth and power. Shamadam could not accept Mirdad because Mirdad entered the Ark as the ninth member as only a cook. Due to the class gap of Shamadam and Mirdad, Shamadam could not leave his authoritarian position as the head of the Ark and surrender to a simple man like Mirdad who has come to preach the path of self-knowledge through the means of understanding and his own experience. The word and actions of Mirdad were constantly interrupted by Shamadam to the extent that Shamadam attempted to kill Mirdad, but as the story shows, through some mystery Mirdad arrived to the Ark again and again repeatedly and quiet spontaneously, with an attitude of compassion and love. Mirdad urged Shamadam to leave his egoistic voice and surrender to the words of Mirdad which only points to the path through which the caretakers of the Ark can experience the highest quality in existence and the timeless realization of the non-dual reality of being. Mirdad has been presented by Mikhail Naimi as the beacon of compassion, love and patience. These virtues are absolutely necessary for all spiritual seekers, and Naimi has shown the tremendous quality of being when these virtues are present within one’s life through the

words and actions of Mirdad. The mysticism of Mirdad exists in his very presence of being and Naimi has further provided certain hints through which the spiritual ²⁵authority of Mirdad can be realized.

It has already been mentioned that Mirdad was the ninth member of Ark, and before his arrival there were eight members. Mirdad being the ninth member does have a deep and profound spiritual connection. In the book *The Sufis* author Idris Shah states, “Eight symbolizes the number of perfect expression, the octagon, representing among other things, the cube. The figure also covers eight of a total of nine squares...eight is the way to the nine. Nine stands in Arabic for the letter *Ta*, whose hidden meaning is ‘secret knowledge’” (*The Sufis* 191). In the mysticism of Islam, ²⁶the Kabba is considered to represent the highest spiritual attainment and has been revered by the esoteric Sufi practitioners throughout ages. Frithjof Schuon in his book *Understanding Islam* has revealed some important aspect of the Kabba through which its presence can be linked with the current subject of contemplation of this study. In the first chapter of the book titled “Islam”, Schuon has written, “...the *shahadah* indicates in the final analysis- and it is the most universal meaning which interests us here- discernment between the Real and the unreal and then, in the second part, the attaching of the world to God in respect both of its origin and of its end....through the ritual orientation of the prayer towards the Kabba...”

(*Understanding Islam* 33). As a result, the *shahadah*, which has been shortly discussed in the

²⁵ Here the author would like to distinguish between the words authority and authoritarianism. Authority comes with experience the person having the authority can, through compassion and love, pass on that experience towards other beings. Authoritarianism, on the other hand, is an attitude which people exercise when they lack the authority of experience yet intend to dominate people through violence and other demeaning means. This has been shown by Naimi through the contrast of Mirdad and Shamadam, Mirdad has authority based on experience which radiate through his presence as compassion and virtue, whereas Shamadam’s existence is full of greed and lust for power and dominance.

²⁶ This study does not attempt to create a link of Islamic mysticism in particular, with Mirdad. However, as Mikhail Naimi’s mother tongue was Lebanese, which is a certain extension of the Arabic language, the Arabic expression of mysticism does have a considerable amount of significance in Naimi’s expression of the spiritual aspects of Mirdad. As a result, the author of this study has particularly attempted to associate Mirdad, in this case, with the expression existing in the mystical dimension of Islam not for the particularity of the religion, rather for the familiarity Naimi had with the Arabic language.

third chapter of this study regarding its implication of the non-dual reality, has a direct connection with the Kabba. Through “the ritual orientation of the prayer”, a spiritual aspirant can have a direct connection with the non-dual reality of being through the physical structure of the Kabba. The Kabba, symbolically, can be used as a means through which one can “penetrate into another dimension of cognition” (*The Sufis* 64), and if the Kabba can be viewed from this perspective, and be related with the aspect of the number nine, *Ta*, the number which represents “secret knowledge”, then an inherent relation between Kabba and Mirdad can be deduced. The relation exists not in the physical aspect of the Kabba, but in the non-manifest formless aspect. There are eight points in the physical structure of the Kabba, the bearer of its physical existence, and the ninth is the non-physical presence which gives the Kabba its spiritual significance and holds the essence of creation. Mirdad in a similar manner is the ninth member of the Ark, and is the bearer not of the physical structure of the Ark of Noah, but the non-manifest formless essence of life, the bearer of the non-dual reality of being, “the secret knowledge”. As the Kabba provides shelter for many spiritual seekers, Mirdad similarly has provided solace and has given his disciples a prospect through which they can realize the formless and timeless essence of creation. One example of this can be seen in *The Book of Mirdad* where Mirdad in various instances states “So taught I Noah. So I teach you”. This statement symbolically shows that Mirdad contains within him something which is essentially timeless. It has to be mentioned that Mirdad, as a physical human being, was not the “teacher” of Noah. Rather, it is the timeless “I” as Pure Consciousness which has found its highest potential in Mirdad, and as a result the voice which speaks through the body of Mirdad does have the authority to state that ‘I’ within him, which has found its timeless essence, has taught Noah. The true nature of this ‘I’ did not fade with time since it is timeless and formless, all-pervading non-dual reality of being. The process

of the conversion of turning the potentiality of “I”, which is being in the highest state, or the stateless state, into an actuality, is the main theme of *The Book of Mirdad* and the mysticism of Mirdad exists in introducing this process and express it through words in as much a lucid and vivid manner as possible. As a result, due to the fact that Mirdad is the ninth member of the Ark, the member who carries within him the “secret knowledge” of non-dual self-realization, secret in the sense that within the conditioned mind the non-dual reality of the Self cannot be comprehended. As a result, perhaps it can be said to be deliberate for Naimi to make Mirdad the ninth character. Furthermore, in a ²⁷letter written by Naimi to one of his friends, he mentions that the word Mirdad has the Arabic root which means “to return”, much like an avatar, or someone who eternally returns to announce to people the truths of life and existence. An avatar is generally associated with someone who comes again to preach humanity some fundamental truths of existence and being. Thus behind the very construction of Mirdad and his pointers towards Freedom and Silence there exist the quality of Love, Surrender and Patience. With these qualities a seeker can achieve the realization of the reality of being and be absolved, or one, with the non-dual reality. Mikhail Naimi has provided many mystical references to highlight the significance of Mirdad as the carrier of the eternal non-dual truth which finds its expression again and again in the realm duality of the human kingdom. Mirdad has stated,

...Faith so purified and triumphant shall lead you to the boundaries of the eternally green Summit and there deliver you into the hands of Understanding. Having discharged its taks, Faith shall retire, and Understanding shall guide your steps to the unutterable Freedom of the Summit which is the true, the boundless, the all including home of God and the Overcoming Man. (*The Book of Mirdad* 80)

²⁷ This information has been taken from the web link <https://spiritualtexts.academy/2016/07/06/what-is-the-meaning-of-the-name-mirdad-and-do-the-characters-in-the-book-of-mirdad-have-a-name-with-a-meaning-that-fits-their-nature/>

As can be seen in the quote, the Freedom and Silence of Mirdad can be experienced through first Faith, and as Faith strengthens it will lead to Understanding. This is equivalent with the disciples having a faith in the words spoken by Mirdad initially, till their own understanding makes it evident of the authenticity of the words spoken by Mirdad which is pointing to the timeless truth of the non-dual reality of being. After Faith Understanding will gradually starts to lead the human mind from its relativistic position of duality to a non-dual dimension of unity, The “unutterable freedom”, the “home of God” is synonymous with the “great Silence” which transcends all forms of duality, and this can only be experienced by the “Overcoming Man”. The “Overcoming Man” is the ultimate vision of Mirdad, and “The Overcoming” man is a symbol for those human beings who have immersed themselves with the knowingness of the reality of being, and resulting from such profound knowingness they can truly be said to have become free from all the constraints and limitations of the dual nature of life since all duality of life, including the perceiver of this duality, and have been totally absolved and immersed into one single indivisible Absolute. However, due to the profundity of such a state of being, if it can be termed as a state, it cannot be described or depicted or expressed and Mirdad only hinted at the elements which are important to be present in one’s life if he/she aims to become a spiritual seeker of the reality of being and experience this Freedom. Alongside these wisdoms and aspects of being Mirdad urges his disciples, “Be not in haste...and bide your time. Where I breathe freely, there you gasp for breath. Where I walk lightly, there you pant and stumble. Keep your hold on Faith; and Faith shall perform the gigantic feat.” (*The Book of Mirdad* 80). Here Mirdad is telling his disciples to have a steady Patience, for it is Patience which at the right time will make human beings realize their true nature. Spiritual realization of any kind is beyond the nature of the physical, and that which is beyond the physical does not follow any law of causality. It is not

through doing certain exercises that anyone can attain to that state which has been indicated by Mirdad, and due to this one can see in *The Book of Mirdad* a tremendous amount of importance is given to Patience alongside faith and the willingness to understand. Naimi has focused on sincerity and patience, faith and love, and most importantly having a pure heart of understanding, which is having the willingness to accept one's own limitation and having an internal aspiration to seek the true reality of one's own existence. In the path of God or Self-realization if a seeker has to give his greatest possession, he/she must be willing to do that knowing the fact that all things in nature are impermanent and having a faith, filled with patience, that a higher intelligence will provide grace in its ²⁸due time. Such a strong patience and faith is inconceivable to the ego sense of human beings, yet it is possible with a heart filled with love and a mind filled with earnest willingness and conviction to understand the all-pervading formless conscious intelligence. This reality announces itself in the human kingdom through the sense of 'I' as consciousness, and to seek the source of this consciousness is to convert the highest potentiality of human beings into an actuality. Likewise, to have a misidentification of one's own true nature and associate the 'I' solely with a body and mind and the "swaddling-bands" is to destroy that potentiality. Due to this, when Mirdad first arrives in the Ark, he states, "When you say *I*, say forthwith in your heart, God be my refuge from the woes of *I* and be my guide unto the bliss of *I*." (*The Book of Mirdad* 3) The meaning of this prayer of Mirdad is that when the 'I', which is pure Consciousness, identifies itself with the body and mind, the 'I' sets for itself conditions and limitations beyond which it cannot exist. As a result of this limited sense of existence, human beings are considered to be creatures of suffering and hence Mirdad has called it the "woes of I". However, the 'I' in itself is a pure potentiality which can be turned into an actuality by making

²⁸ As mentioned before the highest spiritual state, the Absolute reality of being, has been said to be outside the law of causality and therefore having the virtues mentioned by Mirdad to his disciples, a spiritual aspirant and wait until being totally submerged by the Divine Principle. Only then

the 'I' realize its true nature. This recognition of the reality of one's self as non-dual reality is the "bliss of I" as here human beings can be free from all limitations and conditions, including the limitation set by their imagined self as ego.

The main aim of this study has been to highlight the aspects of non-duality present in *The Book of Mirdad* through which Mikhail Naimi has tried to gift to the people of the modern world the timeless gift of the possibility to experience the highest kind of freedom, freedom from the ego. This has been the prime teaching of all the spiritual and mysteries schools throughout the ages and also the essential message of sages and prophets across time and place. The author's intention was to provide, through all the chapters of this study, an interpretation of *The Book of Mirdad* not only as a literary piece of work but as a stepping stone through which a clearer and lucid understanding of the non-dual realm of human existence is possible. Thus it can be asserted that as a work of literature *The Book of Mirdad* offers an invitation for human beings to seek out for themselves the most fundamental position of their reality of being, and this study's aim has been to construct a field of perception, through certain conceptual contemplation, by which this novel can be read in the light of non-dual understanding.

**Chapter-5 On Some Aspects of the importance of *The Book of Mirdad* and Non-Duality in
Relation to Literature**

**When the 'I' is recognized and embraced fully as the Self (Consciousness), man becomes
truly free- Mooji, *Before I Am***

The term non-duality refers to an experience, which implies there is an experiencer and an object being experienced. However, when non-duality transforms itself from being a conceptual term to a reality for the experiencer, non-duality can be understood as the consciousness in which there is only experiencing taking place without the division between the experiencer and the experienced. As mentioned before in various instances of this study's conceptual contemplation on non-duality and *The Book of Mirdad*, the moment duality ceases to exist it transcends the dimension of the intellect. Mind divides itself in order to perceive the world and thinks itself outside of the world it perceives, whereas non-duality puts forth the proposition that through searching for the source or substance of the mind, the intellect itself, the prime instrument of the mind, becomes silent as it gradually realizes its own limitation. The intellect is itself a part of that very same reality which it perceives, and this whole activity is perceived from a larger space of consciousness. When this is realized and recognized by the intellect as a fact, it surrenders to Consciousness, resulting in human beings resting in the position of the non-dual reality of being. Thus, from this point of view, mind and matter can be seen together as one inside a larger space of consciousness which does not have any quality or attribute, and hence can only be expressed as Isness, or Suchness or the Absolute. Intellect can act as the initial step of understanding this, however, the intellect must be transcended at one point in order to turn the non-duality as a concept to a reality of being. Yet, if the thing referred

by the word “Absolute” eventually transcends the faculty of the intellect, what importance does it carry in the field of academic investigation? One importance which non-duality carries in the field of academic studies is that it invites an investigator to recognize the limitations of duality and hence it urges the field of the intellect itself to expand beyond its limit. Author Idris Shah in his book *The Sufis* writes,

The Sufi tradition has it that Sufism is a leaven (“Sufism is yeast”) within all human society. If it has never been removed from the field of academic study this is because it was never made available to scholasticism as a subject of investigation. Its very diversity prevents it from being systematized in the semi-permanent manner which would make it static enough to investigate. “Sufism”, according to the Sufi, “is an adventure in living”...The Sufi does not need the mosque, the Arabic language, litanies, books of philosophy, even social stability. Their relationship with humanity is evolutionary and adaptive (Shah 50)

As can be seen from the aforementioned statements, the Sufi, which in this context would be an expression of all the esoteric spiritual practices which is single in essence, is so closely infused in all human persuasion, including the field of academic studies, in such a manner that it cannot be separated and taken as subject of investigation. The formation of a subject implies that there is a perceiver perceiving the subject which is separate from it, and only through this process can an investigation take place. Sufism, and all esoteric spiritual teachings, might begin with the standpoint of duality, but this is only because it aims to unify the perceiver with his/her true nature as Pure Consciousness. As a result, Shah writes that Sufism is a living process, “an adventure in living,” which does not necessarily need any language, philosophy or even a social context. True esoteric and spiritual teaching, no matter through which tradition it manifests,

transcends all these spheres of human functionality and takes the perceiver in the place of the harmonizing non-dual consciousness. Due to this, Mikhail Naimi does not provide any specific setting, time frame or location, in the literary construction of *The Book of Mirdad*. Besides, Mirdad does not identify himself to any particular religion and the only reference the readers get by reading *The Book of Mirdad* is Mirdad's relation with the Prophet Noah which carries within it a profound dimension related to non-duality.

In the epilogue of *The Book of Mirdad*, Mikhail Naimi mentions the story of a man who attempts to reach the Alter Peak of a place known as the Milky Mountains where it is heard that there exist "The Ark" once built by the Prophet Noah. After the flood Noah and his family drifted and placed itself upon the Milky Mountain. Noah states that there are nine persons in his Ark, the ninth can only be seen by him alone which is a stowaway, and who Noah prophesizes will return at such a time when "...men shall in time forget the Flood and the lusts and wickednesses that brought it on. They shall also forget the Ark and the Faith that bore it in triumph for fifty and one hundred days over the furies of the revengeful deeps. Nor shall they be mindful of the New Life that issued of that Faith whereof they shall be the fruit" (*The Book of Mirdad* I). When the eternal and timeless virtues which saved Noah and his family from the wrath of the great deluge, both physically as well as metaphysically, is forgotten by the majority of humanity, the same stowaway who was with Noah will return to teach that same eternal knowledge which once gave Noah the "New Life". This stowaway is Mirdad, the meaning of whose name is "to return", and who was the ninth member of Noah's Ark. What is important in order to understand *The Book of Mirdad* is the existence of a profound interior dimension of realization within the outer layer of metaphor present in the story. One reading of The Great Deluge could be the flood of duality arising out of the desires of human beings: lust, both physical and mental, anger, fear etc.

primarily arising out of the inability of human beings to recognize their true nature. Mirdad states in the last chapter of the book, “Are you prepared to float, or shall you be submerged?” (*The Book of Mirdad* 99). This shows the clear purpose of Mirdad’s teachings – human beings must not be blindly identified and submerged in the flood of desires but learn to establish themselves as consciousness. Furthermore, Mirdad states, “But above all learn to seek out the sources of the flood, and train your will to dry them one by one. Then surely will the flood abate and finally spend itself” (*The Book of Mirdad* 99). Since the original position of human beings is consciousness as s/he is first aware or conscious of all things of whose existence is acknowledged by him/her, then spiritual seekers are also conscious of their desires and, as a result, cannot naturally be that desire except if he/she identifies with it. If the sources of all desires are sought, then human beings will eventually arrive at the ever present Absolute Consciousness, for it is out of this Consciousness that the recognition of these desires and all other states of being takes place. The experience of human beings cannot surpass their true position; the reality of being of all human beings starts from and ends inside Consciousness. It is due to this that Mirdad states, “To be the masters of your hearts knead all your passions-good and bad-in the single trough of Love that you may bake them in the oven of Holy Understanding where all duality is unified in God” (*The Book of Mirdad* 100). Through Love and Holy Understanding, and all the other virtues preached by Mirdad (discussed in chapter four), human beings can be established in and as their true position by being in the state of pure Consciousness, which is another name for that which is indicated by God. The Ark of Noah in *The Book of Mirdad* extends itself to the point that it transcends its metaphorical dimension and stands as a symbol revealing the reality of non-duality – a profound existential reality of humans. The Ark becomes a space of unification in the field of human consciousness where spiritual

seekers can abide in as they gradually attempt to dis-identify from the flood of desires and urges. Focusing on the dis-identification with one's own desire singlehandedly could cloud the original position of human beings, which is non-dual consciousness, and in order to discover the true position human being must liberate themselves from the position of being a slave to their desires. Hence the metaphor in *The Book of Mirdad* exceeds the limit of the function of a metaphor and provides realization inviting the readers to seek out the non-dual reality of being.

In the section titled "The Story of the Book", a man climbs up the Milky Mountain to reach the Alter Peak where rests the physical Ark of the Prophet Noah. Yet, upon reaching the Alter Peak, the man, who is also the narrator until the Book of Mirdad begins, finds a book rather than the Ark of Noah. Naimi has separated *The Book of Mirdad* into two sections. The first one is known as "The Story of the Book" and the second one as "The Book". In the first section of the book the narrator goes in search of the Ark but finds The Book of Mirdad written by Mirdad's disciple Naronda, and before the book begins it is written "This is the Book of Mirdad as recorded by his Naronda the youngest and the least of his companions, a lighthouse and a haven for those who yearn to overcome. Let all others beware of it!" which clearly indicates that only those who have an internal yearning to overcome the position of duality and become unified with the Supreme, can realize the true significance of this book. Before the narrator of the section, "The Story of the Book" finds the Book of Mirdad instead of the Ark of Noah upon the Alter Peak, all his belongings, his clothes and his food had to be given up. This action of giving up, letting go of one's possession is of immense significance in the light of present context of this study. Possession implies a possessor, and only the ego wants to possess as it differentiates and divides the world into haves and have-nots according to its preference. Before the 'I' can realize its true nature as Consciousness – the reality of being of the 'I' – it must be ready to sacrifice itself from

the position of the ego. Only when the possessor is ready to give up all his possessions, both material as well as immaterial, can he be open to something higher and ready to be embraced by new sphere of possibilities. Only those readers who can give up identifying with all their internal structure of thoughts opinions and judgements and mental conditionings, as well as external material possession such as being attached with objects, can be open enough to acknowledge and realize the significance of the non-dual reality of being which cannot be grasped by the mind or intellect, and hence openness, patience and willingness to accept and understand is needed. All of this has been shown by Mikhail Naimi by the simple action of the man, the narrator, giving up all his possessions before he starts to read the words spoken by Mirdad with significance equaling that of Noah's Ark, as both carry within them the same truth of the non-dual reality of being. The words of Mirdad only address the importance to realize the non-dual reality of being, and the process through which human beings are unified with their true nature. In *The Book of Mirdad* Naimi makes it evident that only through the conversion of Mirdad's words into experience can the readers realize and feel internally the importance of the invitation given by *The Book of Mirdad*. Consequently, *The Book of Mirdad* deals with the what Idris Shah has called the "yeast" within all human society and persuasion, the most fundamental and unchanging element, the only true reality existing within all human beings, which again is non-dual Consciousness. This reality of being is ungraspable and inconceivable, yet its presence cannot be unacknowledged as the very awareness of all existence is possible because of this. As a result, despite remaining incomplete if only treated as a subject matter of investigation, the issue of non-duality must not be left out from the subject matter of investigation as it can push the intellectual faculty of the mind to discover its limitation and explore other forms of cognition such as intuition. *The Book of Mirdad* challenges the traditional ways of reading a text because it

invites the reader to seek the reality of the reader himself, and hence the relationship of the reader with this book must be a very intimate one where interpretations must take place not from the traditional ways of reading and thinking, but by exhausting the means of the intellect and entering the domain of inner realization where the intellect makes way for higher forms of intelligence, such as feeling and intuition, to understand the profundity and the splendor consisting within the words of Mirdad. The aim of this study has been to focus on the essential teaching and theme of *The Book of Mirdad* – the non-dual reality of being – and construct a mature field of perception with which this literary work can be read and understood in the light of the essence of spirituality. Through recognition and acknowledgement of this fact, readers of this book may find it easy to understand the words uttered by Mirdad and the rich existential dimensions behind these words. It can now be vividly noticed that the words of *The Book of Mirdad* had only one intention regarding its conveyance – portraying the formless invisible non-dual reality of being conceptually expressed through words as an indication. All the words in *The Book of Mirdad* indicated towards that formless reality of being which Mirdad represents, not as an individual, but as a living force who carries within him the eternal truth realized by the Prophet Noah and other Sages.

Throughout the ages, literature has attempted to capture that which can metaphysically be perceived as God or the Absolute. Novelists and creators of epics such as Homer, Dante Alighieri, John Bunyan, Miguel de Cervantes, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Rabindranath Tagore, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, and poets such as Holderlin, Yeats, Blake etc. produced numerous works of literature which bears the fact that in literature, contemplation of the Absolute has taken place and has been given a considerable and significant space. This can be seen in works like *The Divine Comedy*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Don Quixote*,

Faust, The Brothers Karamazov, Geetanjali, The Waste Land, Ulysses, Autumn, Phases of the Moon etc. In addition to that one of the most prominent novelist and literary scholars of the 20th century, E. M. Forster, in his seminal work *Aspects of the Novel* has devoted a chapter titled “Prophecy”, where Forster has explored in his analysis the means through which one can judge whether a fiction is prophetic or not: “It [prophetic fictions] demands humility and the absence of the sense of humor. It reaches back... to pity and love. It is spasmodically realistic.” (Forster 125). Furthermore, the author has proposed a way of reading what he has labelled as “prophetic fictions”. Forster writes, and this is immensely significant for this study, quoting a line of William Blake, “May God us keep/ From Single vision, & Newton’s sleep!... Few will agree with Blake. Fewer with Blake’s Newton. Most of us will be eclectics to this side or that according to our temperament. The human mind is not a dignified organ, and I do not see how we can exercise it sincerely except through eclecticism” (Forster 132-133). Here Forster zeroes-in on one of the most profound subjects of contemplation. If the human mind is essentially eclectic in its operation and function of perception and interpretation, and as literature itself is not a subject which belongs to the dimension of science nor philosophy but consists of a sphere where novels and poems can act as indicators towards a holistic form of understanding various aspects of existence, then it can be concluded that the eclectic mind does not qualify to understand all forms of literature. The author of this study is not implying that eclecticism is positioned in a lower faculty of human intelligence, but rather implying the fact that eclecticism is fundamentally formed by opinions, judgements and sources that are separate from the being itself. If literature is only treated as information bearing historical documents or political commentary, perhaps the eclectic approach is apt. However, if literature provides a scope to explore the various dimensions of being and existence, then instead of solely relying on the

intellect, other spheres of human intelligence such as Intuition or ²⁹Imagination must be used alongside the intellect. The human mind is an accumulation of information; accumulation from culture, from one's own environment, accumulations from bodily conditions and finally from a vast field of knowledge. The human mind operates on what it already knows and accepts, and therefore becomes conditioned in a certain manner. After the human mind has become conditioned, it only receives new knowledge not on the basis of what that knowledge is attempting to extrapolate, but upon the conditioned knowledge it has already acquired. Perhaps Nietzsche's statement that there are not facts only interpretations, much embraced by the postmodernists, is valid, because human mind, with its eclecticism, is primarily conditioned and only functions on the basis of its conditioning. It remains important to wake up from the "sleep of Newton", which can be viewed as waking up from the presupposition provided by the dominant field of logic and science and its limited definition of what a human being is, in order to explore and contemplate the deeper dimensions of existence and seek the core essence of the existential reality of human beings. The Pure Consciousness can be treated as an abstract term, yet its reality cannot be rejected by any human being as in all state of being and experience Consciousness remains as the only constant element in the reality of human beings, and upon necessary contemplation it becomes evident that Consciousness is the only true unconditioned position of human beings. *The Book of Mirdad* ushers the readers into exploring the dimensions of Consciousness and recognize its reality as being non-dual. The prime purpose of this study has been to show this fact as lucidly as possible with contemplation on certain concepts.

²⁹ By the word Imagination the author of this study means that faculty of human intelligence which can perceive other dimensions of reality which are independent from the sense perception. Here Imagination is referred to as Khayal, which in a mystical sense indicates the gradual moving away from external reality governed by external sense perception and moving within oneself to that point where the perceiver, the perceived and the act of perception, which happens within the space of the Consciousness, becomes one.

From Aristotle to Descartes, and then from Kant to Sartre, the Western thinkers have immensely contributed towards attempting to know the nature of existence of human beings; yet all these thinkers have used the means available to their minds – the limited faculty of the intellect to offer a definition of the human being. However, the problem lies in the fact that from the standpoint of the mind, one can only speculate and contemplate and meditate on a thing which is separate from itself. As a result, it can be assumed that the Western thinkers, from Aristotle to Sartre, were not really contemplating the nature of existence and mankind, but the idea they have of existence and human beings. As a result, philosophy could never highlight the interiority of being, yet through certain works of some Western philosophers the limitations of a purely intellect based approach can be sensed. In a book titled *Tertium Organum* by P. D. Ouspensky it is written,

In *A Critique of Pure Reason* Kant says...What may be the nature of objects considered as things in themselves and without reference to the receptivity of our sensibility is quite unknown to us. We know nothing more than our mode of perceiving them. . . . Supposing that we should carry our empirical intuition [sensory perception] even to the very highest degree of clearness, we should not thereby advance one step nearer to the knowledge of the constitution of objects as things in themselves. . . .(*Tertium Organum* 19)

In the aforementioned quote it can be seen that Kant denies absolute reality to external objects and state that human beings can only comprehend the external world according to the “mode of perception”. Hence Kant’s words shows the limitation of the mind to know the nature (constitution), the basic fundamental source, of objects. Objects does not exist in themselves, the meaning which objects hold exists in the mind of the perceiver, and the significance of this statement can be found in the texts of Immanuel Kant. Furthermore, if human beings are unable

to have “the knowledge of the constitution of objects as things in themselves”, it can be asked what is the basic nature of this intelligence which recognize the limitation of the mind. Apart from consciousness it is impossible for the mind to have any other knowledge, in the sense which Kant refers, because even without the functioning of perception mind rests within the sphere of consciousness and is the reality of being of human existence. Jean Paul Sartre in his book *Being and Nothingness* makes a distinction through which the significance of abiding in the state of consciousness can be realized. The distinction which Sartre makes is between good faith and bad faith, and Sartre writes that being-in-itself, i.e. abiding in the state of pure sense of being is good faith whereas being-for-itself, being existing or things which are separate from itself or apart from itself is bad faith. However, at one point of the book Sartre writes,

If it is indifferent whether one is in good or in bad faith, because bad faith reapprehends good faith and creeps to the very origin of the project of good faith, that does not mean that we can not radically escape bad faith. But this supposes a self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted. This self-recovery we shall call authenticity, the description of which has no place here. (*Being and Nothingness* 94)

Sartre writes that it is impossible to abide in in good faith, or being-in-itself, because the very assertion of abiding in being-in-itself would create a separation from being and the one who is asserting (hence Mirdad’s emphasis on Silence) resulting in the occurrence of bad faith. Be it as it may, Sartre writes there is a way through which an individual can “recover” from bad faith, and this way has been expressed by Sartre through the word “authenticity”. Although Sartre does not define what he means by this word, however from an etymological perspective the word authenticity comes from the Greek word “authentikos”, and one of its meaning is principal. As a result, it can be assumed that through abiding in the principal of being or existence, human

beings can recover from bad faith and move towards knowing their reality of being. Both Kant and Sartre shows the limitation of human enquiry, through the means of the intellect, to understand the reality of being or existence. However, they also indicate towards something, Kant calls it *numenon* and Sartre calls it authenticity, through which human beings can be move towards the core of their perception and being. *The Book of Mirdad* states that it is consciousness which is the source of being or existence, and without understanding the nature of consciousness it is impossible to know the reality of existence. This is a work of literature which, through a story, invites the readers to seek and be aware of the true nature of human beings, not through the faculty of mind and intellect, but through providence of a non-dual recognition of the reality of being through consciousness as consciousness (a deep unification between the one who is understanding and the thing being understood). Mikhail Naimi's *The Book of Mirdad*, as a work of literature contains, in the words of Massimo Scaligero in his review:

In Deluge time-like our time is-it is no question of opposing the Deluge, what would be neither prudent nor possible, but of building the Ark...not only as it proposes again, in terms which are actual and usable by the moderns, one of the essential themes of the Genesis, but also for its poetic and nobly mystical form. It seems to us that the value of the work consists above all in its flowing from a lively, personal experience of the Author and therefore being expressed with the power of enthusiasm and persuasion. (Scaligero 55)

The Absolute does not have a quiddity to the extent that there remains no experiencer of the Absolute. Inside the stateless state of the Absolute, no sense of I as a separate entity remains only pure oneness of being. The possibility of this hidden splendor of existence has been expressed by *The Book of Mirdad* in a poetic and mystical manner and for a time where an Ark of faith and

understanding is required amongst the deluge caused by decadence and blind desires of human beings so that human beings can move towards being “authentic”, in the Sartrean sense. The author of this study has attempted to highlight non-duality as a concept and the means through which it can be recognized as a reality of being, its importance in order to understand *The Book of Mirdad* and the potential this literary piece of work carries both in the field of literature as well as in its rich aspects of mysticism. Whereas Western thinking and philosophy limits itself to recognizing the limitation of the intellect, the esoteric ways attempt to pursue and understand the reality of being through various means in addition to the intellectual pursuits (some of which are mentioned in the previous chapter of this study) for which surrendering to a master, also known as guru or murshid, is necessary. In relation to the tradition of surrendering to a master to know the reality of being, author Frithjof Schuon in his book *Understanding Islam* writes,

In the sight of God we are either nothing or everything, depending on the point of view, but we are never “apart”, we are...a part in relation to the Universe...which is the Universal Man (Al-Insan Al Kamil) of which the human manifestation is the Prophet, the Logos, the Avatara. The Prophet –still envisaged in the esoteric and universal meaning of the term-is thus the totality of which we are a fragment (*Understanding Islam* 117)

The reality of the Prophet is the reality of the Logos, and the very same reality has been carried by prophets and sages throughout ages. One such Logos is Mirdad himself, and regardless of how one views Mirdad, acknowledging the limitations of the intellect and surrendering to the Logos to become integrated and one with the reality of the Universal Man, which is not a person or an individual, but the non-dual reality of being, has been heavily emphasized by *The Book of Mirdad* and all religious traditions in its esoteric aspect. *The Book of Mirdad* carries with it this age old tradition, and furthermore it aims, through the voice of Mirdad, to tear apart all

conditionings of human being and makes human being question their blind acceptance of the conditioned knowledge forced upon them by culture, society and religion, in its exoteric aspect. Only when human beings have rejected all that they have known and all that they have been conditioned with, then true integration of intelligence is possible which can redeem human beings from their internal sense of fragmentation, and it is because of this Mirdad begins his words of wisdom with the invitation to ponder what is the 'I' which exists within all human beings and what is the true nature of this 'I'. The author ends this study with the hope that ³⁰“As long as the Eastern breeze blows through the leaves of the cypress trees” (Qasida Burda Sharif), may the timeless non-dual reality of existence become visible and expressible and accepted by human beings with the intent of generosity, forbearance and love.

30 Qasida Burda Sharif is a thirteenth century ode of praise for Holy Prophet Muhammad composed by a Sufi mystic name whose was Imam al-Busri. The Sufi mystic's shrine is at Alexandria. The meaning of this line is 'as long as creation is being sustained' This line has been taken from the following web page

<https://sahibulsaif.wordpress.com/2018/09/22/the-way-of-sacrifice/>

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