

“Nature Is What We See”: Spirituality in Emily Dickinson’s Nature Poems

Ali Arian, Ph.D.

Full-time Faculty Member of English Language and Literature Department,

Azərbaycan Şahid Mədani University, Tabriz - Iran

Abstract

Nature and every parcel of it, needless to say, can be the sign of her Creator, God, for keen observers of her. As it is mentioned in the *Holy Quran* over and over again, one can see the traces of God not in unknown mysteries but in concrete signs around one. As God Himself says, “I am nearer than your jugular to you”, then one can find Him through Nature around. Undoubtedly, Emily Dickinson was one of those who could find God through Nature and not in the church. Therefore, the present study would like to indicate how Dickinson’s spiritual Journey led her from naive nature mysticism through disappointment, to a sacramental approach to God. She thought of nature as a model for transcending the limitations of physical reality. Also nature is one element that frequents Dickinson’s poems as a means of conveying message of life. Through the inclusion of familiar aspects of wildlife, such as bumble bees and flowers, she is able to paint a picture that portrays the hopes and anxieties found throughout every life. She asks that if God is in the world, informing and vitalizing it, what better endeavor one could engage in than to seek out ways to establish a closer relationship with him through nature.

Key Words: Nature, Spirituality, God, Dickinson

Introduction:

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson, regarded as one of America’s greatest poets, was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, on December 10, 1830. Dickinson was the second of three children, a year younger than her brother, William, and three years older than her sister, Lavinia. As Robert J. Forman (1991) writes, “She was born in a large house built by her grandfather, Samuel Fowler Dickinson; except for absences of about a year for her schooling and seven months in Boston, she lived in it all of her life and died there at precisely 6:00 p.m. on May 15, 1886” (612).

Both parents raised Dickinson to be a cultured Christian woman who would one day be responsible for a family of her own. Her father attempted to protect her from reading books that might joggle her mind, particularly her religious faith, but Dickinson’s individualistic instincts and irreverent sensibilities created conflicts that did not allow her to fall into step with the conventional piety, domesticity, and social duty prescribed by her father.

“Edward was a man who had needed to stifle external emotions so many times that he had trouble expressing them at all. Despite his withdrawn nature and his long absences from home, he remained a primary figure in his daughter’s life and poetry”

(613). Though her relationship with her mother was not the same and Emily Norcross, who came from a family of farmers, was not intellectual by nature and barely understood much of her daughter's poetry, after death of her father they closed each other more and she nursed her mother from 1875 to 1882, through the paralysis which ultimately took her life.

"Dickinson's early relations with her only brother were competitive. In many ways they were alike; both were intellectual and ambitious" (613). The personality of her sister was like her mother, but there was no antagonism between the two sisters and "Indeed, were it not for her sister's efforts after Dickinson's death it is likely that a first collection of her poems would never have appeared" (613).

"Dickinson was raised in the conservative Trinitarian tradition of Jonathan Edwards. This contrasts her background with that of the liberal Unitarians, whose most famous minister was, at the time, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Dickinson remained, however, the only member of her family never to undergo a conversion experience. This was something of a disgrace given the heady zeal of Amherst, but Dickinson never compromised, though it meant being anathematized while in attendance at Mount Holyoke" (614). At the time she originally reads the book, when she is not yet twenty years old, she chooses to search for her own spiritual reality, not accepting the path to God spelled out for her by Mary Lyon at Mount Holyoke but following her own intuition. Jane Donahue Eberwein describes Emerson's viewpoint: "—Emerson defied orthodoxies that prevented people from

seeing nature freshly and tapping into the universal spiritual force he preferred not to identify with any personal deity" (87) and Wayne Teasdale (1999) mentions the American Transcendentalists including Emily Dickinson as nature mystics in American culture. "They possessed a penetrating understanding of the relationship between God and human identity in the context of natural world like Wordsworth before them; they were extraordinary visionaries on the fringe of society, although prominent and influential in their day"(182).

Dickinson, however, withdrew not only from her father's public world but also from almost all social life in Amherst. She refused to see most people, and aside from a single year at South Hadley Female Seminary one excursion to Philadelphia and Washington, and several brief trips to Boston to see a doctor about eye problems, she lived all her life in her father's house. She dressed only in white and developed a reputation as a reclusive eccentric. Dickinson selected her own society carefully. Like her poetry, her relationship to the world was intensely reticent. Indeed, during the last twenty years of her life she rarely left the house. Her excellent biographer, Richard B. Sewall states she stopped going to church by the time she was thirty, but she still imbibed a great deal of the Christian heritage.

Today, Dickinson is regarded as one of America's greatest poets, but when she died at the age of fifty-six after devoting most of her life to writing poetry; her nearly 2,000 poems were unknown except to a small numbers of friends and relatives. Dickinson was not recognized as a major poet until the twentieth century, when modern readers

ranked her as a major new voice whose literary innovations were unmatched by any other nineteenth-century poet in the United States.

Dickinson neither completed many poems nor prepared them for publication. She wrote her drafts on scraps of paper, grocery lists, and the backs of recipes and used envelopes. Early editors of her poems took the liberty of making them more accessible to nineteenth-century readers when several volumes of selected poems were published in the 1890s. The poems were made to appear like traditional nineteenth-century verse by assigning titles, rearranging their syntax, normalizing their grammar, and regularizing their capitalizations. Instead of dashes editors used standard punctuation; instead of the highly elliptical telegraphic lines so characteristic of her poems editors added articles, conjunctions, and prepositions to make them more readable and in line with conventional expectations. In addition, the poems were made more predictable by organizing them into categories such as nature and love. Not until 1955, when Thomas Johnson published Dickinson's complete works in a form that attempted to be true to her manuscript versions, did readers have an opportunity to see the full range of her style and themes.

Dickinson's poetry is challenging because it is radical and original in its rejection of most traditional nineteenth-century themes and techniques. Her poems require active engagement from the reader, because she seems to leave out so much with her elliptical style and remarkable contracting metaphors. But these apparent gaps are filled with meaning if we are sensitive to her

use of devices such as personification, allusion, symbolism, and startling syntax and grammar. Since her use of dashes is sometimes puzzling, it helps to read her poems aloud to hear how carefully the words are arranged. What might seem intimidating on a silent page can surprise the reader with meaning when heard. It's also worth keeping in mind that Dickinson was not always consistent in her views and they can change from poems, to poem, depending upon how she felt at a given moment.

Emily Dickinson seems to have been a poet in conflict between religious dogma and the enlightenment of science and the facts of the natural world, as nature thrilled her more than going to church. She contradicted her own religious beliefs which she held as a child and a girl, and as she grew into womanhood and maturity, she became in love with science and began to contradict her own religious beliefs, though she kept and maintained a spiritual feeling about creations and goodness and kindness and beauty as truth.

There are obvious references to religion in more than only Dickinson's nature poems, for example her poems on the life of Christ, but this study deals with her poems on nature, focusing her request for knowledge of the divine.

So, for being familiar with her spirituality and her view about nature some of her poems including her spiritual attitudes will be analyzed here. (The most of the cited poems in this paper are from PoemHunter.com, the world's poetry archive which is in PDF format as I couldn't

collect the available books on Dickinson's poetry due to banking sanctions in Iran.)

“THE Gentian Weaves Her Fringes”

THE gentian weaves her fringes,
The maple's loom is red.
My departing blossoms
Obviate parade.
A brief, but patient illness,
An hour to prepare;
And one, below this morning,
Is where the angles are.
It was a short procession,—
The bobolink was there,
An aged bee addressed us,
And then we knelt in prayer.
We trust that she was willing,—
We ask that we may be.
Summer, sister, seraph,
Let us go with thee!
In the name of the bee
And of the butterfly
And of the breeze, amen! (803)

Helen Vendler considering the last stanza as a separate poem states that “In this tiny poem we see a first, second, third, and fourth effort of imagination”. (27)

First, the poem invents the idea of a parody of a Christian form of words, while retaining a trace of its source in its closing ‘Amen.’ And second: the poet decides on the three nouns to be substituted for the three Persons of the Trinity. And third: the poet has to make her trinity of nouns ‘mean something’ in relation to one another (as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are related). While Bee and

Butterfly are named and capitalized living things (as are the Father and the Son), the Breeze is a motion of air (as was the Holy Spirit at Pentecost). And fourth: the nouns chosen must have a ‘spiritual’ quality, must be symbolic as well as ‘real’; the Bee (for Being), the Butterfly (Psyche, the resurrected Soul), and the Breeze (the Spirit) all fit that criterion. While the imagination is doing its work, a parallel investigation is being carried out by the ear, creating a link of sound—Bee, Butterfly, Breeze—to substitute for the ‘familial’ links of the Trinity.

Dickinson keeps a secular Sabbath in the open fields, her ear open to the bee's hum, her eye open to the butterfly's flight, and her skin open to the caress of the spring breeze; but she sanctifies them by making them “match” the Christian Trinity. “It is her own imaginative effort that Dickinson is baptizing here, calling on the authority of Nature, not of God” (28).

One more poem to trace out spiritual points of it can be the following poem.

“Growth of Man — Like Growth of Nature”

Growth of Man — like Growth of
Nature —
Gravitates within —
Atmosphere, and Sun endorse it —
Bit it stir — alone —
Each—its difficult Ideal
Must achieve—Itself—
Through the solitary prowess
Of a Silent Life—
Effort—is the sole condition—

Patience of Itself—
Patience of opposing forces—
And intact Belief—
Looking on—is the Department
Of its Audience—
But Transaction—is assisted
By no Countenance— (1232)

She has written this poem when she was thirty-three and indicates that she finds in nature a pattern and a model for man's fulfillment. She sees the growth of nature similar to spiritual growth of human and specially herself. External influences in an individual's life play the role that air and sun play for nature and growth can be achieved through solitary and silence as the way she lived for her life was anything but silent.

Then she finds the attainment of her difficult ideal not as matter of genius but of character. Patience is required in dealing both with her own demons and with individuals who oppose her. Thus the 'intact belief' she requires most likely refers to belief in her own power. The poem's conclusion shows on one hand a proud assertion of independence and also a great loneliness, which both convey her spiritual growth and her desolation. Referring to nature as an inanimate nature she witnesses the process of growth and development in the world of nature, paralleling to the growth of the world of human beings.

Somewhere else she chants:

“NATURE Is What We See”

NATURE is what we see,
The Hill, the Afternoon—
Squirrel, Eclipse, the Bumble-bee,

Nay—Nature is Heaven.
Nature is what we hear,
The Bobolink, the Sea—
Thunder, the Cricket—
Nay,—Nature is Harmony.
Nature is what we know
But have no art to say,
So impotent our wisdom is
To Her simplicity. (592)

In three stanzas of four lines and the first word of each is Nature. Reading the poem, the reader can feel her appreciation of nature. It suggests that nature is anything but simple and at the same time it is mysterious, magnificent and inexpressible. The surface meaning primarily suggests that nature is natural and simple in theory, but exploring the underlying meaning, one sees how she uses various patterns to describe the diversity in nature.

In the first stanza Emily Dickinson looks at nature as a painting and guesses that it is a foretaste of Heaven. She starts her poem in reference to sight, with distinctive objects such as hill, squirrel and bumblebee, all obvious things people can clearly see and visualize. She adds the abstract things like heaven and afternoon.

Then, in second stanza she listens to the sounds of nature as a music lover and guesses that it is emblematic of the harmony of the spheres. She uses the sounds, which people can hear easily such as sound of bobolink, the sea, thunder,...which are all indications of her attempt to define nature through senses.

Finally, she admits that though she knows what nature is, she cannot unpack this

deeply-held belief any further. She compares nature to heaven, which suggests that both are mysterious and impossible to describe. So, impotent our wisdom indicates that humanity lacks the ability to understand the powers of nature. The mystery of what she sees and hears in nature leads her to God, where the task of explanation is still impossible. Dickinson believes that nature itself is heaven and would bring people closer to God.

In conclusion, she wants to say that human doesn't notice to simple things in life, which can lead them to God easily. 'Nature is what we know' reflects on the notion that nature is a powerful mystery and it will always remain indescribable.

As George Whicher says, "the puritan conception of nature as a visible manifestation of God, which Jonathan Edwards and Bryant in many of his early poems overtly expressed, was so ingrained in her that she takes it for granted"(264).

In another poem which is cited from the book entitled *Emily Dickinson and Philosophy* she arranges words about nature as below:

"The Most Important Population"

The most important population
Unnoticed dwell,
They have a heaven each instant
Not any hell.
Their names, unless you know them,
'Twere useless tell.
Of bumble-bees and other nations
The grass is full. (Deppman, Noble
and Lee Stonum 225)

It seems that Emily Dickinson by this poem wants to invite the reader to pay more attention to nature and creations around in order to learn how to live. This poem like many of her other poems illustrates Dickinson's interest in natural history and her appreciation of the minor nation of insects. Although it was Wordsworth who spiritualized nature and made her a moral teacher, Dickinson's mind was similar to his.

The bumblebees which are perhaps the focal figure in Emily Dickinson's poems of nature, and nations of other small creatures which 'unnoticed dwell' are in fact 'the most important population' because they show us how to live with 'a heaven each instant.' Jed Deppman, Marianne Noble, and Gary Lee Stonum State that in this poem she "points to a realm of experience missed by ordinary ways of seeing and believing. Dickinson posits a pluralistic universe in this poem. It is one filled with nation of beings who follow ontological and spiritual structures we can only begin to understand (though never fully) by opening our schemes of experiential description to include them. She relates the uselessness of prescribed identification through naming as a form of knowledge on its own. If one is to know, one must experience. To know "bumble bees" by name is to know little indeed of them or their way of being. What Dickinson brings together in this poem and others like it is an intrinsically social quality to her conceptualizing process" (167).

"Heaven" Has Different Signs—to Me"

"Heaven" has different Signs—to
me—
Sometimes, I think that Noon
Is but a symbol of the Place—
And when again, at Dawn,
A mighty look runs round the World
And settles in the Hills—
An Awe if it should be like that
Upon the Ignorance steals—
The Orchard, when the Sun is on—
The Triumph of the Birds
When they together Victory make—
Some Carnivals of Clouds—
The Rapture of a finished Day—
Returning to the West—
All these—remind us of the place
That Men call "paradise"—
Itself be fairer—we suppose—
But how Ourselves, shall be
Adorned, for a Superior Grace—
Not yet, our eyes can see— (304)

In this poem which was written by Emily Dickinson when she was thirty-two, the speaker uses nature to remind us 'the place the man calls paradise'. She uses several elements in nature to recall heaven and paints a beautiful picture of what the afterlife may look like. It seems that Emily Dickinson once again finds signs of the hereafter world in nature. So she wants the readers to focus on nature to learn the truth about creation and there is no need of church going, the theme which is repeated in many of her poems.

Though she always finds nature reflecting the next world, she cannot find any evidence for how we ourselves shall be

adorned for that 'Superior Grace' of a fairer Paradise.

“NEW Feet Within My Garden Go”

NEW feet within my garden go,
New fingers stir the sod;
A troubadour upon the elm
Betrays the solitude.
New children play upon the green,
New weary sleep below;
And still the pensive spring
returns,
And still the punctual snow! (599)

Emily Dickinson has written this poem when she was twenty-eight. It is spring and she seems to have a new gardener, who works in solitude and just by a bird singing on an elm. To Dickinson, this is a type of Resurrection, one that each of us can experience annually. The first stanza here emphasizes the rebirth with spondees beginning with "New": "New feet" and "New fingers".

The children who are playing on the green are also different from those of last spring. But the recurring spring and winter are always the same, the spring giving us the cause for thought, and the winter punctual. She somehow refers to spring as the sign of our rebirth after death. Neeru Tandon and Anjana Trevedi taking this poem related to another one which starts with 'A light exists in spring' explain about the light existing in spring which slowly disappears and leave it 'pensive'. "The light that Dickinson speaks of is not the visionary gleam seen by the mystics. It is a colour which cannot be perceived by scientific observation but can

only be felt by those who have matched the change of seasons with loving care”(29). Emily Dickinson has used her views of her garden as a tool to get a sense of wonder how the world still continues after years have passed. She also makes an important connection of life and death in her poem,

“ARCTURUS Is His Other Name”

ARCTURUS is his other name,—
I'd rather call him star!
It's so unkind of science
To go and interfere!
I slew a worm the other day—
A 'Savant' passing by
Murmured 'Resurgam'—'Centipede'!
'Oh Lord—how frail are we'!
I pull a flower from the woods,—
A monster with a glass
Computes the stamens in a breath,
And has her in a class.
Whereas I took the butterfly
Aforetime in my hat,
He sits erect in cabinets,
The clover-bells forgot.
What once was heaven
Is "Zenith" now—
Where I proposed to go
When time's brief masquerade was
done,
Is mapped, and charted too!
What if the poles should frisk about
And stand upon their heads!
I hope I 'm ready for the worst,
Whatever prank betides!

Perhaps the kingdom of Heaven's
changed!

I hope the children there
Won't be new-fashioned when I come,
And laugh at me, and stare!
I hope the father in the skies
Will lift his little girl,—
Old-fashioned, naughty, everything,—
Over the stile of pearl! (15)

Emily Dickinson in one of her early poem stated that she had climbed the hill of science and often writes from a scientific standpoint. But she also makes fun of scientists. In this poem which was written by Emily Dickinson when she was 28, they give the stars classical names; they call a dead worm a 'centipede' and whisper to it in Latin 'I shall rise'; Dickinson is having entirely too much fun with science here. She particularly doesn't like the naming and classifying, and laughs at the conceit of considering all this scientific activity progress. The first stanza tackles astronomers. 'Arcturus' is actually a descriptive name, taken from the Greek 'Arktourus' which means "Guardian of the Bear." This is apropos as the star is positioned behind Ursa Major. Somehow, Dickinson would just rather call it 'Star.'

Then Emily recounts a past experience in which she killed a worm as a 'Savant', French for a person of high intelligence, was passing by, prompting the man to call the worm by its specific scientific name, centipede. The man then says to the now deceased worm, "Resurgam, Latin for I shall rise again, — Centipede". When the man says: "Oh Lord—how frail are we!" He

seems to be referring to how frail humans are compared to the seemingly ever living centipede.

In the 3rd stanza, she recalls another experience when she pulled a flower in the woods and refers to the botanist with a magnifying lens as "A monster with a glass" subjecting a poor flower to his invasive scrutiny and examining.

The 4th stanza describes how in the past, Dickinson was able to admire butterflies in their natural habitats without annoying scientists running around catching and classifying everything in sight. Now she can no longer marvel at the sheer beauty of butterflies in their natural environments. Instead, she now must think of butterflies as "scientific specimens" and not just simple butterflies. Also, she can no longer observe them in their natural habitats; instead she must look at them lying in cabinets and frames dead as can be.

In lines 17-21, Emily used to hope that when she died, she would get to heaven to which she refers again by its scientific name, Zenith, which used to be mysterious and unknown. But now heaven is no longer unknown, now it is "mapped and charted".

Then she states that she would not be surprised if they tell her that south is north and north is south.

At the end she hopes that heaven hasn't been similarly brought up to date, or, if it has, that God the father will still lift and old-fashioned girl like her over the stile into his kingdom.

As it is obvious Emily Dickinson respects to nature much more than science. She likes

everything in their natural form, complains about interfering of scientists in everything around her and believes that they are more beautiful naturally.

"A Science – So the Savants Say"

A science – so the Savants say
"Comparative Anatomy"—
By which a single bone—
Is made a secret to unfold
Of some rare tenant of the mold,
Else perished in the stone—
So to the eye prospective led,
This meekest flower of the mead
Upon a winter's day,
Stands representative in gold
Of Rose and Lily, manifold,
And countless Butterfly! (65)

In this poem she is more respectful of the savants of science than in the previous one. But still doesn't grant them any superiority over the ordinary observer of nature. Alike Barnstone notes that "the concern for strict boundaries between the voice of the self and the voice of culture is reflected in many of the poems' structures. She may begin these poems by presenting the sayings of others as a thesis, and then refuting the words of those others with her own antithesis". (6).

By this poem she wants to show that a scientist from a single bone may be able to give a description of the whole corpse buried in earth or tomb, but similarly the observer of nature who is on the lookout for it can infer from a single flower the manifold glories of the spring which are to follow. Again here she believes that by

noticing to nature one can find everything and insists on the superiority on nature over science.

Daniela Gioseffi in her book entitled *The Story of Emily Dickinson's Master: "WILD NIGHTS! WILD NIGHTS!"* writes "the scientific terms in Dickinson's poetry—dealing with botany, chemistry, mining, gemstones, zoology—all specialties of Professor Clark—can be found by a study of the concordance to her poetry. She was part of the American enlightenment that espoused the observation of nature as a spiritual pursuit."

"LIKE Mighty Footlights Burned the Red"

LIKE mighty footlights burned the red
At bases of the trees,—
The far theatricals of day
Exhibiting to these.
'T was universe that did applaud
While, Chiefest of the crowd,
Enabled by his royal dress,
Myself distinguished God. (544)

She has written this poem in the age of 32. It is one of her famous poems about nature which needs no explanation. When one day the sunset showed her 'far Theatricals of Day' to the trees, with her redness glowing at their bases like footlights, Emily imagined that amid the applauding Universe she detected the figure of God by his 'Royal Dress.'

As Jane Donahue Eberwein points out "although Emily struggled to find God on the other side of the 'circumference' which

limits this world, she did sometimes feel his presence on this side of it."

"THESE Are the Days When Birds Come Back"

THESE are the days when birds come back,

A very few, a bird or two,

To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on

The old, old sophistries of June,—

A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that cannot cheat the bee,

Almost thy plausibility

Induces my belief

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,

And softly through the altered air

Hurries a timed leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,

Oh, last communion in the haze,

Permit a child to join

Thy sacred emblems to partake,

Thy consecrated bread to break,

Taste thine immortal wine! (912)

When was 28, Emily Dickinson, has written this poem and here she poignantly describes the days of 'Indian Summer.'

Adam W. Sweeting writes "the first stanza seems typical of what we have come to expect of the season, and indeed Dickinson's initial posthumous editors, who assumed that poems must have titles, named the poem Indian Summer in the 1890 collection that introduced her work to the general reading public". (133)

The skies, as beautiful as those of June, can delude us humans, though not the Bee, into mistakenly believing that proper summer has returned. It would be a mistake to think the blue skies and golden sun indicate summer's actual return. "Indian summer scene amounts to an unwelcome simulacrum, an imitation of an imitation". (134)

The slow solemnity of the pacing is in keeping with the tone and meaning. The poet is somber and sacramental as Indian Summer reminds her that fall and winter are on their way. These last days of summer have a sacramental quality, and are, as it were, the last bread and wine that Emily will receive from the communion table of summer until the return of summer the following year. She adapts the communion service she had known in church to her own simpler worship of nature, in which even a child like her can ask to join and clearly preferring the summer day.

It also relates the changing of seasons to the way we rush through life. In an unconventional way, though, her poem looks backwards. Those who are old are now looking back of their lives- they are the birds- and they realize it was a mistake to rush through so quickly. After all, when we are children we want to be adults but once we become adults we want to become children again. It is too late, the 'last communion', death, is in the distance and we are powerless to stop it and also conveys her hope that this "natural" sacrament will impart to her an assurance of immortality as Connie Doyle in a work entitled 'Experiment in Green': Emily Dickinson's Search for Faith writes "The final six lines

convey the idea that this illusory summer (Indian Summer) is more than just a ceremony of remembrance of summer, more than just a brief recapitulation of summer's warmth and color. The poet acknowledges that Indian Summer is a "fraud," a "mistake" that must give way to the relentless march of time. The falling leaves and seeds bear witness to the change of season, but the "ranks of seeds" also carry the promise of rebirth in the spring."

“NATURE, the Gentlest Mother”

NATURE, the gentlest mother,
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest or the waywardest,—
Her admonition mild
In forest and the hill
By traveller is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.
How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon,—
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down
Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.
When all the children sleep
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky,
With infinite affection
And infiniter care,

Her golden finger on her lip,

Wills silence everywhere. (594)

In the 33rd year of her life, Emily Dickinson wrote this poem, which is one of her best nature poems. As in her other nature poems, but in a different way, she believes that human beings can learn the way of life by concentrating on nature. Each of her poems is somehow a reflection of an element of our daily life and also teaches us more. She always pictures nature as her hometown and gives an affectionate description of everything she was familiar with.

In this poem she tries to compare a mother and nature. First she describes how nature is kind and at the same time patient. Then the speaker defines natural behavior of the animals in terms of the disciplining methods employed by the “gentle mother.” The speaker intuits from animals’ behavior the tenderness, with which this natural mother guides and guards her children. Thus to her Nature is as the gentlest mother, loving and comforting her bruised children. Neeru Tandon and Anjana Trevedi believe that her sensitive mind “must have been influenced by the nature poetry of Wordsworth”. They remind us Wordsworth’s attitude toward nature where he says nature is “The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse The guide- the guardian of my heart and soul of all my moral being” and compare this with Emily Dickinson’s which is fascinated by common objects of nature, such as the season change, flowers and bird and continue: “She could well sing in tune with William Wordsworth: To me the meanest flower that blows can give Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears” (22).

Also she claims that whatever nature does is always fair to everybody, not just to one part of nature. She sees the power of nature as mentioned from line 13 to 16, when even the most unworthy flower or the smallest cricket follows all the wishes of nature. Nature is very patient when all her children, the whole of life in nature, fall asleep and she does not fall asleep until the last one is safe.

At last, Dickinson summarizes all that is true about nature and mothers at the same time. A mother would do whatever she can just to make sure her children are safe. ‘The golden finger to her lips’ makes the sign that calls for silence as the night enfolds her children everywhere allowing them to slumber peacefully in the stillness she bestows on them. She means everywhere you move and anywhere you go, nature always pays attention to you. Again, it seems that Emily Dickinson wants to remind the reader that nature is enough to teach you the life and you can find God through nature and church going is not necessary.

Conclusion:

As shown in her poems, Dickinson’s spiritual Journey led her from naive nature mysticism through disappointment, to a sacramental approach to God. She thought of nature as a model for transcending the limitations of physical reality. Also nature is one element that frequents Dickinson’s poems as a means of conveying message of life. Through the inclusion of familiar aspects of wildlife, such as bumble bees and flowers, she is able to paint a picture that portrays the hopes and anxieties found throughout every life.

She asks that if God is in the world, informing and vitalizing it, what better endeavor one could engage in than to seek out ways to establish a closer relationship with him through nature. It was especially in nature's forms that she tried to read an assurance of immortality. Theme of many of her poems, the principle of rebirth and renewal she witnessed in nature each spring, she tried to apply to her own fate after death.

Dickinson was familiar with the work of scientist and educators who found a connection between human and the spirituality by arguing that nature provides evidence of divine creator. One of them was Edward Hitchcock, who served as president of Amherst College (1845-1854). His presence and reputation in Amherst influenced the young Dickinson, who in one of her letter to Mr. T. W Higginson, spoke warmly of his work years later: "When Flowers annually died and I was a child, I used to read Dr. Hitchcock's Book on the Flowers of North America. This comforted their absence, assuring me they lived" (325). The images of resurrection in his book might have appealed to Dickinson and underscored her tendency to find solace in nature.

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Lowenberg writes about Hitchcock: "In addition to his geological studies and writings, he taught and lectured on chemistry, botany, zoology, physiology and, generally, on natural theology. With his great scientific knowledge, he became a pervasive advocator for the compatibility of science with religion; to know God through His works was the thesis woven throughout his teachings and writings (57). Following or honoring Nature was Dickinson's way of connecting to God. Nature being temporal and fleeting is mixed with her traditional religion of the deity of God which is eternal. Religion was not something that would bring her closer to God. She believed that nature was for that reason. Emily's religion did not appreciate her poetry, which is probably the reason why her poetry was not published until after her death. She saw Nature as a resource through which one might come to know the Deity and believed that the universe, created and ordered by God, reflected the divine mind and will. Human beings might learn of God not only through the Word of God but also through the Book of Nature.

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