
"Many Truths Make the Big Truth.": Vedic Philosophy in O. V. Vijayan's *The Legends of Khasak*

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Abstract:

Hailed as the proponent of Magic Realism in Kerala, O. V. Vijayan is best known for his first novel, *Khasakkinte Itihaasam (The Legends of Khasak)*, which was published in 1969 after twelve long years of tremendous literary effort. It created a great literary revolution in Malayalam literature and divided the history of Malayalam novels into the Pre-Khasak and Post-Khasak eras. Besides *The Legends of Khasak*, he has authored six novels, nine short story collections, and other general literature. Through its complex rhapsody, Vijayan's first novel, *The Legends of Khasak*, reveals his spiritual crisis for which he tries to find a solution. Vijayan has authored many volumes of short stories, which mainly deal with puzzling philosophical problems of human life. This paper attempts to examine the spiritual dimension of the novel from an Indian context. With particular emphasis on the influence of Vedic Philosophy, the paper explores Vijayan's spiritual orientation and the novel's transcendental approach to human life. The study further employs the philosophical framework of Upanishads to textually analyze the blend of natural and supernatural, real and surreal, from an Indian perspective.

Keywords: Magic Realism, transcendentalist, Vedic Philosophy, fantasy, Upanishads.

O. V. Vijayan's *The Legends of Khasak* was first published in Malayalam in 1969 under *Khasakkinte Itihasam*. In 1994, the author himself translated the book into English. Interestingly, Vijayan's

masterpiece was published just two years after Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and over fifteen years before the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Even though it has not achieved the same level of international fame as many of Rushdie's writings, it remains one of the most significant regional literary texts in Malayalam literature. K. Satchidanandan, in an article for *Frontline*, describes the literary significance of the novel in the following words:

This novel revolutionized Malayalam fiction. It is interweaving of myth and reality, its black humor, its newness of idiom with its mixing of the provincial and the profound and its combinatorial wordplay, its juxtaposition of the erotic and the metaphysical, the crass and the sublime, the real and the surreal, guilt and expiation, physical desire and existential angst, and its innovative narrative strategy with its deft manipulation of time and space together created a new readership with a novel sensibility and transformed the Malayali imagination forever.

In an obituary to O.V. Vijayan, *The Creator of Legends*, Sunil K Poolani writes, "So, who was Vijayan? For the uninitiated (which is unlikely if you are a connoisseur of Indian literature, political cartooning, or journalism), he is, to put in one sentence, one of the greatest writers the world has ever produced. What raised him to that pedestal was his first and best novel, *The Legend of Khasak*, published around the same time as Gabriel Garcia Marquez's path-breaking *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Hence, one could fairly conclude that two of the twentieth century's greatest writers evolved simultaneously, changing the course of Malayalam and Spanish literature, making the two individual works the benchmarks in their respective languages". Many critics compared him with Salman Rushdie since they both employed the mystical elements of Magic Realism. Moreover, he was a political cartoonist for leading newspapers like 'The Hindu,' 'Statesman' and the 'Far Eastern Economic Review.'

A common feature that a critic can observe in almost every major work of Vijayan is its spiritual perspective. He was highly spiritual from his childhood days. However, his vibrant spiritual

dynamism remained dormant for many years while he was under the influence of Communism. The Stalinist claustrophobia melted away his faith in Marxist ideology. His mind had never trusted the bloody revolutions after that. Disillusionment and despair led Vijayan to the imaginary hamlet of Khasak. Khasak, as a wise individual, clarifies his uncertainties regarding life, death, and mortality. In his subsequent works, he begins his spiritual journey in Khasak, ultimately making results a Vedanti or a spiritual nomad. He enjoyed the permanent bliss of spiritual truth and longed to attain self-realization until his death.

Vijayan was in an extreme spiritual dilemma while writing the 'The Legends of Khasak.' In the mythical landscape of Khasak, he attempts to evoke his spiritual consciousness through various self-experimentations. At multiple instances of his life journey, Vijayan found spiritual solace in Karunakara Guru of Pothankode Santhigiri Ashram. Karunakara Guru, also known as Navajyothi Sree Karunakara Guru, was a Vedantist who embraced a worship structure based on faith in one Universal God- the Brahman. During the Vedic Period (1500 BC- 600 BC), 'Mantras,' 'Brahmanas,' and 'Upanishads' flourished and prosperously enlightened Indian philosophical thought. 'Mantras,' 'Brahmanas,' and 'Upanishads' are the three integral organs of Vedic literature which are inter-connected and inter-dependent. 'Mantras' or hymns are the creations of Vedic poets intended to be recited during religious rituals. 'Brahmanas' restricted the Vedic wisdom to the boundaries of worldly rituals, which regulated the quest for self-realization and spiritual salvation. 'Upanishads' emerged as a reaction against the highly ritual-centric 'Brahmanas' whose burnt offerings to 'agni' darkened the spiritual aspect of Vedas. Upanishads continued the spirit of Vedic wisdom and converted the ritualistic traditions of 'Brahmanas' to an insightful philosophical meditation. In a narrow sense, Vedanta Philosophy is the collective outlook of all Upanishads. In a broad sense, it encapsulates the multiple viewpoints rooted in the Upanishads and other organs of Veda, which emerged as a protest against the ritual-centric 'Brahmanas' and 'Samhitas.'

In the treasure house of Indian Philosophy, there are 108 Upanishads, of which 10 occupy chief positions. 'Brihadaranyaka,' 'Chandogya,' 'Taittiriya,' 'Aitareya,' 'Kena,' 'Isa,' 'Katha,' 'Mundaka,'

'Mandukya' and 'Prasna' are the supreme ten in the scholastic landscape of Indian philosophy. As Paul Deussen rightly points out: "The Great Upanishads are the deep, still mountain turns, fed from the pure waters of the everlasting snows, lit by clear sunshine or by night mirroring the high serenity of the stars" (Deussen 5). These works of insightful philosophical thoughts form the concluding portions of the Veda and are, therefore, called the Veda-anta or the end of Vedas. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, a stalwart in Indian Philosophy, describes the magnificence of Upanishads in the following words:

Tentative solutions to metaphysical questions are put forth in dialogues and disputations. However, the Upanishads are essentially the outpourings or poetic deliverances of philosophically tempered minds in the fare of life. They express the restlessness and striving of the human mind to grasp the true nature of reality. They reveal to us the wealth of the religious mind of the times. In the domain of intuitive philosophy, their achievement is a considerable one. Nothing that went before them for compass and power, for suggestiveness and satisfaction, can stand comparison with them. Their philosophy and religion have satisfied some of the greatest thinkers and intensely spiritual souls. (Radhakrishnan, 138-39)

Upanishads depict the spiritual pilgrimage of a highly disillusioned soul who searches for cosmic secrets and self-actualization. A profound disillusionment and discontent at worldly possessions drives an individual to carry out a spiritual pilgrimage, ultimately resulting in self-realization. During this journey, the soul becomes indifferent to all worldly aspirations and goals. It is the spiritual path through which one can realize the emptiness of worldly desires. Another necessary precondition for one to reach the higher world is sacrifice. For instance, 'Isopanishad' proclaims the gospel of self-sacrifice. It asks one to gain through sacrifice, not through greed. It reveals the transient nature of life. There is nothing in this Universe which is permanent. Hence, it requests all wise men to renounce their worldly possessions to reach a higher order, which is the ultimate reality. Through sacrificing aspirations and possessions, one can

protect the purity of the soul. It is not the renunciation of one's duty but the abandonment of desires to reach an all-embracing absolute.

O. V. Vijayan's *Khasak* is a mystical and mysterious landscape. The harmonious blend of myths and superstitions, truth and fallacy, illusion and disillusion, fantastic and realistic, finds its manifestations in the imaginary hamlet of *Khasak*. As T P Rajeevan puts it in his article "Spiritual Outsider," "Everything in this novel -the theme, the style, the narration, the way myth and reality, realism and fantasy mix-was ingenious and unprecedented in Malayalam" (The Hindu; May 01, 2005). As the miniature of any other village in Kerala, *Khasak* is the home of various socially, politically, and culturally different communities. Even though they are complex and diverse, there is a sense of unity in the spiritual realm of their existence, which binds them together. Despite the religious differences, Vijayan puts all the characters in a Hindu Vedic wisdom and spirituality framework.

The literary practice of investing a symbolic meaning to express the abstract or the mysterious is a common feature that one can observe throughout the novel. Each word and phrase, character and story, myth, and folklore are symbolic but appropriate to the novel's thematic context. For instance, when Alla-pitch narrates the saga of *Khasak* to the children of his Madrasa, the harmonious blend of myth and reality becomes evident: "A thousand riders dismounted and pitched their camp in the palm grove. The people of *Khasak* trace their descent from those one thousand horsemen" (Vijayan 11). Mullah represents *Khasak*'s conventional pedagogic system. Against the Madrasa of Alla-pitch comes the single-teacher school of Ravi, which irritates the Mullah. As Vedic sages replaced the ritual-centric traditions with Upanishads, Ravi and his school challenged the conventional pedagogic style of Madrassas in *Khasak*.

Khasak is the meeting place of various discontented souls searching for the ultimate truth. The mullahs of *Khasak* are a line of orphans attracted towards the hillslope of Chetali in unusual circumstances. So, when Alla-pitch, the Mullah, found Nizam-Ali, he considered him his successor. With his abnormal nature, he neglects the priesthood of *Khasak* and takes a new path less traveled. As Vijayan puts it:

That night, a frenzied traveler stalked out of Khasak. No one saw him go. It was blacker than other nights, the skies low, laden with the imminent monsoon. The traveler caught glimpses of his path as lightning blazed and exploded. That was no path for men but for djinns and Griffiths. Nizam Ali strode on. Chetali was soon far behind him. (28)

After years of life in exile, Nizam Ali decides to leave his worldly desires in order to serve the world. He chooses a different path where the guiding principle is sacrifice, through which one attains liberation or Moksha. Truth, sacrifice, and liberation became the motto of his spiritual pilgrimage. In the prison cell, when Nizam Ali receives the vision of Sheikh, he finds his Guru in him. He begins a new journey in life, which he expresses in the following words:

Nizam Ali found himself standing on shaky legs before the Inspector.

'Yajman,' Nizam Ali said, 'I quit all this.'

The Inspector eyed the prisoner with curiosity.

'Wisdom dawns late,' he said. 'Isn't that so?'

'Yes, Yajman. Such is maya'. (Vijayan 32)

The doctrine of 'Maya' is one of the central concepts of Vedanta philosophy. Through Nizam Ali, Vijayan speaks of this 'maya'. Isopanishad describes 'maya' as a veil that masks the golden and absolute truth. Kathopanishad considers 'maya' as ignorance, which separates one from wisdom. According to Advaita Vedanta of Sankara, Brahman is the absolute truth. It appears differently, but ignorance keeps us from recognizing the truth. This ignorance is nothing other than 'Maya.' 'Maya' is the force that leads a man from completeness to incompleteness, perfection to imperfection, and infinite to finite. Only through surpassing 'Maya' can one reach the all-embracing absolute. Nizam Ali surpasses 'Maya' and attains wisdom. He is no more Nizam Ali of Khasak, but the Kazhi of Sheikh: "Outside, the Kazhi, the first one Khasak ever had sermonized to the faithful" (Vijayan 35). The conversation among the village elders of Khasak regarding Kazhi's truth is significant:

What is the Kazhis truth?" The troubled elders asked one another. They recalled the spell the Mullah had tried to cast

on Nizam Ali. They had seen the spell fail.

'The Kazhi's truth,' they told themselves, 'is the Sheikh's truth.'

'If that be so,' troubled minds were in search of certitude, 'is Mollakha the untruth?'

'He is the truth too.'

'How is it so?'

'Many truths make a big truth.' (Vijayan 36)

The ordinary residents of Khasak become extraordinary by engaging in deeply philosophical conversations where they discuss the nature of truth. The author's transcendental dilemma is evident in these philosophical conversations where all the ordinary residents of Khasak have been portrayed as mystical. Vijayan's mysticism and Vedantic quest speak in the magical realm of Khasak, where characters are mere tools to express spiritual anguish. When Vijayan discusses the nature of ultimate truth, he refers to Upanishads. For example, Brihadaranyaka Upanishad discusses the nature of truth and equates it with Brahman. It even equates truth with the dharma (the righteousness). Taittiriya Upanishad declares truth as the pathway of self-realization. It asks one to speak and act truthfully since both are quintessential for ultimate liberation, the Moksha. Upanishads exhort the universality and the monotheistic form of absolute truth. For instance, the following hymn from the Rig-Veda speaks about the universality of truth: "Ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti/ Agnim yamam matariscanam ahuh" (Radhakrishnan 35). This is one of the most widely recited Vedic hymns and the most beautiful beads in the flowery necklace of Vedic mantras. It declares the oneness of truth, and this truth itself is the Brahman or the God. Everything in this Universe is the manifestation of the same Brahman. Though multiple paths exist to reach that ultimate truth, the truth is the same for all. This monotheistic vision is what is emphasized by Vijayan in the statement, "Many truths make the big truth" (Vijayan 36).

O.V. Vijayan depicted all the characters of Khasak as his spiritual progenies. His spiritual temper resonates in all the creatures of Khasak. When Ravi tells how the female spiders eat their mate after making love, Karavu stands up and says, "The male spider was paying for his sins in an earlier birth. The children knew it was karma"

(Vijayan 59). The village parrot, the loveable idiot, Appukili, symbolizes the monotheistic vision of Khasak even through his idiotic actions: "The parrot was to be allowed the freedom of both religions. For certain days of the week, he could be a Muslim. For the rest, he could be a Hindu. Hindu, Muslim, and Parrot are necessary all simultaneously" (164). Through Appukili, the parrot, Vijayan declares the Vedantic gospel of 'Ekam Sad,' which means truth is one. One may call Him the absolute truth, as Agni, Yama, Varuna, or various names. One may approach Him through different ways or dharmas. However, He is one, though we call Him by different names or approach him through different means.

Ravi, the novel's protagonist, is a mystic seeking meaningful living beyond the ordinary world. He is an undergraduate dropout, and his field of interest is Astrophysics. He comes to Khasak after rejecting a bright academic career and research offer from Princeton University. He did a dissertation on the connection between Upanishads and Astrophysics. As Prof. J.S Mackenzie points out, "The earliest attempt at a constructive theory of the cosmos and certainly one of the most interesting and remarkable is that which is outlined in the Upanishads" (Radhakrishnan 289). 'Maya' brings Ravi to Khasak, "Maya, of course, cosmic delusion" (Vijayan 6). Ravi's arrival in Khasak is portrayed as being pre-planned by some mystical forces or 'Maya.' As the author puts it:

When the bus came to its final halt in Koomankavu, the place did not seem unfamiliar to Ravi. He had never been there before, but he had seen himself coming to this forlorn outpost beneath the immense canopy of trees, with its dozen shops and shacks raised on piles; he had seen it all in recurrent premonitions – the benign age of the trees, the river bark and roots arched above the earth. (Vijayan 1)

The reference to Swami Bhodananda's ashram at the novel's beginning partially reveals his spiritual connection, and a Vedanti in Ravi ascends during his conversation with the old luggage carrier. "Isn't that Maya, kutti?" Maya, of course, the cosmic delusion; Ravi knew it was his saffron! For a moment, he had a frivolous impulse to play the mystic; he smothered it. No, not on this journey of many lives

but of incredible burdens. Let me reach my inn, the village called Khasak" (Vijayan 6). Ravi was in a state of spiritual dilemma when he came to Koomankavu. Khasak enlightened his spiritual path through various inner dialogues, and he gradually gained spiritual wisdom. "Like the Mullah, he wondered too: what karmic bond has brought me here? What purpose, what meticulous pre-determination? Then came a gust of wind which threw open the window behind him" (43). The mysterious land of Khasak invites Ravi to spiritual experimentation. He enters into an inner meditation, which clears his vision. He figuratively describes his life pilgrimage while narrating the story of two spores.

Long before the lizards and dinosaurs, two spores embarked on an incredible journey. They came to a valley bathed in the placid glow of sunset. My elder sister said the little spore to the giant spore; let us see what lies beyond. This valley is green, replied the giant spore. I shall journey no farther.

I want to journey, said the little spore I want to discover. She gazed in wonder at the path before her. Will you forget your sister? Asked the giant spore. It was never, said the little spore. You will, little one, for this is the loveless tale of karma; there is only parting and sorrow in it. (Vijayan 61)

As a mystic, Ravi speaks through symbols, and the essence of such symbolism rests on the belief that all things in nature have something in common. For instance, during 'The Inspection,' Ravi represents himself as a transforming soul after one year of spiritual experimentations in Khasak. He reads about his past life, dilemmas, and journey through the heart of Khasak. When the Inspector asks: "'Where are you from Maash?' Ravi did not answer. Where am I from and where am u now, he asked himself, whose face do I see and whose is this black and silver stubble" (Vijayan 88). The events of the past that drove Ravi to the mysterious land of Khasak throw light on Ravi's connection with Vedanta. He did his honors in Astrophysics at The Christian College, Tambaram, and his dissertation connecting Upanishads and Astrophysics received much academic attention. As a mystic, he found it difficult to neglect the Hindu philosophical outlook of the Universe in his Astrophysical research.

Moreover, Ravi's comment, "I have never been strong on my facts" (91), reveals his speculative nature, which is more appropriate for a Vedanti than an Astrophysicist. "He spoke within himself, what am I trying to accomplish scanning galactic distances and reading the bands of color split out of stellar lights by lowly prisms? Doesn't my sin lie within?" (92). The strange mystical path invited Ravi with its magical power, and he eloped from the hostel a night before his examinations, putting his bright academic career and research offer from Princeton University at stake. Thus, Ravi begins his journey through the untrodden path. "The journey took him through cheerless suburbs, through streets of sordid trades, past cacti villages and lost township of lepers and ashramas where, in saffron beds, voluptuous swaminis lay in wait for nirvana.

And at last, this respite, this Sarai in Khasak" (94). To attain the splendid chair of the holy mountain, one has to liberate oneself from the superficiality of sensual life. Ravi stood for this realization and began his journey by taking himself from worldly affairs. As Kenopanishad suggests, self-liberation is one of the necessary preconditions for realizing the ultimate truth: the eyes, the ears of the ears, and the souls of the souls. It is nothing other than the knowledge of Brahman. Similarly, Ravi's journey to Sarai in Khasak is a spiritual pilgrimage whose primary goal is to attain the knowledge of Brahman, the absolute reality.

When death invades the mysterious landscape of Khasak without any scruples, it throws Ravi into an existential crisis, and he laments over the meaninglessness of human life. Ravi's experiment with death during the spread of the severe smallpox epidemic, along with his explanation, "I wanted to experience death" (Vijayan 149), throws light into his internal spiritual conflict and his urge to experience ultimate calmness. Khasak, as a Guru, creates extreme disillusionment in Ravi and proselytizes himself into a new dharmic spectrum. As the author puts it: "I wish to escape nothing, Ravi answered from within his silence, I want to be the sand of the desert, each grain of sand; I want to be the lake, each minute droplet. I want to be the *laya*, the dissolution" (193). It is not the physical death that makes his journey possible. The death of worldly aspirations liberates

and enables him to go on a new journey. As Ravi puts it: "Father of my eventides, my twilight journeys, allow me to go. I leave of sown leaves, nest of rebirth" (202). His journey searching for the 'nest of rebirth' begins with a snake bite when the infant's fangs pierce his feet. With a pleasant smile, he lay down, waiting for his bus. With its mystic spirit, the Timeless Rain blesses him with a spiritual resurrection. The Timeless Rain has a purgatory role, a necessary precondition for an intensely spiritual soul to begin his journey. It is dark, complex, and simultaneously profound and vivid. As the author describes:

"The Rain, nothing but the Rain. White, opaque. The Rain slept; it dreamt. Ravi lay down. He smiles. The waters of the Timeless Rain touched him. Grass sprouted through the spores of his body. Above him, the significant Rain shrank as small as a thumb, the size of the departing body.

Ravi lay waiting for the bus". (Vijayan 203)

The Legends of Khasak is death-based but not death-ending. It ends with the beginning of a new, metaphysical, and transcendental journey. The ambrosial Rain symbolically neutralizes the fire of snake poison. The Rain represents both the elixir and the divine Amrita of life. Though the novel ends in melancholy, that melancholy attains another level of joy since it opens a pathway for the protagonist to embrace salvation.

In an afterword to the English translation of the novel '*Khasakkinte Itihasam*,' Vijayan wrote, "It had all begun this way: In 1956, my sister got a teaching assignment in Thasarak. This was part of a state scheme to send barefoot graduates to manage single-teacher schools in backward villages. Since it was hard for a girl to be alone in a remote village, my parents rented a little farmhouse and moved in with my sister. Meanwhile, I had been sacked from the college where I taught. Jobless and at a loose end, I had joined them in Thasarak to drown my sorrows. Destiny had been readying me for Khasak" (Vijayan 204).

The mythical landscape of Khasak is the fictitious portrayal of Thasarak, a rural backward village in Palakkad. Ravi, the protagonist of the novel, is the manifestation of Vijayan's internal conflicts. While working as a faculty in the college, Vijayan published

two long stories depicting an imaginary peasant revolt in Palakkad under the influence of communist idealism and its liberating principle. At that time, P.T. Bhaskara Panicker, a comrade and the President of Malabar District Board, asked Vijayan to write something with more 'Inquilab.' In response, Vijayan told him he was working on something and wanted to fine-hone his pilgrim revolution to perfection. Panicker was pleased and said he would wait for his new book of more revolutionary flame. As T P Rajeevan points out in his article *Spiritual Outsider*: "For Vijayan, writing Khasak was a meticulous engagement with experiences and at the same time, a painful and prolonged drain out disengagement with the ideologies he had been subscribing to till then. This is evident when he took twelve years to complete Khasak.

Moreover, a communist party card holder that he was in the beginning, Vijayan, like his protagonist Ravi, comes to the interior of Khasak as a radical hunted by poignant memories of an anarchic past, changing into agonistic seeking spiritual truths and values such as compassion and eternal grace, by the time the novel was completed". He goes on saying that "The underlying ethos of Khasak is its existential angst. Ravi's inner disquiet, uncharted journey, and search for Sarai also become Vijayan's". Later, Vijayan, disillusioned by Marxism's futility and bloodthirst, turned away from the Communist movement in Kerala. He began his uncharted journey through the spiritual soul of Thasarak with a new mission and vision. He missed writing the revolutionary novel by a hair's breadth. As he puts it, "Had I written it, I would have merely made one more boring entry in Marxism's futile, repetitive bibliography" (Vijayan 206). He liberated himself from the chains of Marxism to the natural wilderness of Thasarak. Like a sage, Thasarak teaches Vijayan a new philosophy of life and wisdom. O.V. Shantha, Vijayan's sister and the teacher of the Single Teacher School of Thasarak, once remembered that while she was in Thasarak, she introduced many mysterious characters and stories to her brother Vijayan. At that time, she did not know how to teach, so she told many stories to the students. At the same time, they told many stories of Thasarak to their Shantha teacher. Vijayan heard all those stories with enough curiosity and portrayed them in the legend. However, it is unfair to consider the legendary novel "The

Legends of Khasak' solely as the story of an authentic village and the life around it. Some might doubt it as a 'realistic novel' with descriptions of real-life characters. Some attribute autobiographical elements to the work. It might be accurate, but the work's greatness lies in its harmonious blend of fantasy and reality. This harmonious blend of fantasy and reality in the imaginary landscape of Khasak makes the novel unique. What resonates throughout the novel is Vijayan's mystical vision through which he makes apparent things unfamiliar. As Victor Shklovsky rightly points out, "The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The art technique is to make objects unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty, and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end and must be prolonged" (Shklovsky 12).

"If anyone unacquainted with the psychology of the unconscious wants to get a working knowledge of these matters, I would recommend a study of Christian Mysticism and Indian Philosophy, where he will find the clearest elaboration of the antinomies of the unconscious" is how C.G. Jung praises Vedanta Mysticism (Jung 86). Many scholars and truth seekers have dived deep into the ocean of Vedanta in search of the absolute truth. Upanishads, with their fascinating philosophical thoughts, cleared their uncertainties and paved the way for spiritual redemption.

According to Ralph Waldo Emerson, a key figure in the 'New England Renaissance,' new art is always formed out of the old. The new artist learns his art from the old masters. So, every new work of art is the re-creation of the old or formed out of the influence of the past. The influence of Vedanta philosophy in the scholastic field is so tremendous that it influenced writers worldwide. We can infer the influence of Eastern philosophy in the works of great authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, and many others. Literature always depicts the age's cross-currents and the time's uncertainties. O.V. Vijayan wrote his magnum opus, *The Legends of Khasak*, in the 1960s after the Second World War. The experience of war as well as the Nazi despotism and mass exodus, had created an existential crisis and trauma in Vijayan. At the same time, he had also

lost his faith in the Communist movement due to the Stalinist dictatorship in Russia. As a final resort, he engaged himself with metaphysical experimentations in search of absolute truth.

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