

The Humanistic Note in Iqbal

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What Is Humanism?

Like any other “ism,” humanism is a term of vague and varied usage, perhaps finally identifiable, but one from which certain aspects may be picked out.

Humanism, as a term for a certain attitude of mind, has a somewhat curious historical genesis. I say curious, because the attitude itself is much older than the period by which it was given this label – is, perhaps, as old as human nature itself. However, as a term of historical genesis, humanism came to be applied to the view of life that began to oppose and be contradistinguished from the older medieval view of life (since called “divinism”) from the time of the European Renaissance. Here, I can do no better than quote almost *in extenso* Professor Ramsay Muir’s description of the essential difference between the divinism of the Middle Ages and the humanism of the periods both before and after the “divinistic” interregnum:

The best men of the Middle Ages thought of the world as a place of struggle and discipline in preparation for another world; the Greeks thought of it as a place of wonder and beauty which ought to be explored and enjoyed, and they thought little and vaguely about the idea of another world. ... for the best minds of the Middle Ages the highest duty of Man was to conquer his passions and to subordinate his arrogant will to the will of God by obeying the rules of life set forth by God’s Church. For the Greeks, Man’s highest duty was to make the most of himself and to develop all his powers of mind and body in the most harmonious way, so that he might enjoy the beauty of the world and be able to seek the truth.

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To put the contrast in a single phrase, “self-repression was the highest ideal of the medieval world, self-expression of the ancient world.” What Professor Muir has said about the attitude of the ancient world toward life, as opposed to the corresponding attitude of the medieval world, applies with no very great difference essentially to the contrast between the medieval and the modern attitudes to life. Humanism is, therefore, roughly the ancient and the modern attitude, while divinism, against which modern humanism was a protest and a reaction, was the medieval attitude.

So much for a description of humanism. I shall now quote two well-known passages that may be regarded as specimens or products of modern humanism. One is that very famous apostrophe which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Hamlet and which runs:

... this goodly frame, the earth, ... this most excellent canopy, the air,
took you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted
with golden fire, ... What a piece of work is Man! How noble in reason!
How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable!
in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty
of the world, the paragon of animals!

This passage expresses both the essential notes of humanism – a sense of the wonder and beauty of the world and the universe, in other words, of the human situation; and a sense of the dignity and worth of Man himself. The other is an utterance in Latin which runs: *homo sum: humoni nihil a me alienun puto* and, roughly translated, means: “I am a Man: nothing pertaining to humanity do I consider alien to myself.” This saying strikes a note of sympathy with and interest in all that pertains to Man, thereby giving words and importance to everything that Man does or happens to him – another deepening note of humanism.

From an interest in all things human and a sense of Man’s worth and dignity, it is a natural and logical step to exalt Man, to apotheosize or raise him to a god – to exalt his place, his nature, and his potentialities. It is in this vein that Marlowe makes his Doctor Faustus say:

O, what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence
Is promised to the studious artisan!
Here, Faustus, tire thy brains to gain a deity!

Shelly sings of the perfectibility of Man, of Man as a being of infinite capacities and destinies. In a sense, this is the acme and the culmination of

humanism and, broadly speaking, it is at this pitch that the humanistic note enters into the poetry of Iqbal.

The Quality of the Humanistic Note in Iqbal

I shall now examine the humanistic note in the poetry of Iqbal with a view to assess, insofar as possible, its quality. What strikes one immediately in his works is the central and evolutionary place Man is given. His view of Man is, without doubt, one of the most exalted that at least I have come across. In the following lines I shall merely illustrate some of the features of that view.

One of the ideas that run throughout Iqbal's various works is the idea that Man is the supreme creation and that he is the over-lord in all nature. Thus, in his book *بلبل جویراں*, he makes the spirit of the Earth greet the prototype of all humankind, Adam, in these terms:

ہیں لہجے تصرف میں یہ بادل یہ گیلاں یہ گنبد فلک پہ خاموش مضائق
 یہ کوہ ، یہ صحرا ، یہ سمندر ، یہ ہوائیں تہیں پیش نظر گل تو فرشوں کی لہلائیں
 آئینہ ایام میں آج یہی انا دوکہ

خوردنید جہاں تاب کی ضرورتے ضرور میں آباد ہے اک تازہ جہاں میرے ہنر میں
 چہکتے لہجے بخشے ہوئے فرسوں نظرم میں جدتِ نوری پہاڑ ہے لہجے خون جگر میں
 اے پیکر گل ، کو شش پیہم کی جزائیکہ

These billowy clouds thy ministrants and thine
 The vaulted sky, these azure silences!
 These hills and stretching plains, this rolling deep,
 And this vast, circling atmosphere: all thine!
 Seraphic radiance hadst till now beheld,
 To-day thou in Time's crystal gaze and see
 Thine own bright majesty unfold itself.
 The ray of th' world-illuminating sun
 Is but a spark of thy Promethean fire;
 And thy creative faculty doth hold
 The germs of many a new world yet unborn.
 Thou wilt not prize a conferred Paradise,
 For thy true Heaven is naught but in thyself
 And in that precious gift of thy life-blood.
 O clod of earth! Witness the rich reward
 That crowns all ceaseless effort; strive and see!

Elsewhere in the same book, Iqbal makes Man address the physical world around him thus:

علم آب و خاک و باد! سرچن ہے تو کہ میں؟
وہ جو نظر سے ہے تہاں اس کا جہاں ہے تو کہ میں؟
تو کف خاک و بے ہوسر، میں کف خاک و خود نگر
کائنات وجود کے لئے اب روان ہے تو کہ میں؟

O world of earth and water, air and fire!
Art thou the living Miracle or I?
Art thou the world of Him who lives unseen
By eye or mortal sense, or that am I?
A handful of blind dust thou art, no more!
I, too, am just that handful, yet, behold,
I see and feel and know myself, though dust!
I therefore ask of thee that which of us
Feeds as the vital stream the plant of Life?

Or, again, says he to Man:

تہ توں میں کے لئے ہے نہ آسمان کے لئے
جہاں ہے تکرے لئے توں جہاں کے لئے
رہنکاراں و نیاں و فرات میں کب تک
تیرا سفیلہ کہ ہے بحر یکران کے لئے؟

O Man, thou wast not made for earth nor sky;
The world was made for thee, not thou for it.
How long thy ship will hug the banks of Nile
And ply o'er Ravi and the Euphrates,
That for the boundless ocean was design'd?

Or says Iqbal in his poem **نصہ** in his book **بل جبریل** :

Thy self is like the sovran lion who
Is king of all the world and preys on all;
Whether it be the solid globe of earth,
Or e'en the azure and ethereal sky –
It holds them all, neath his all-mastering sway.

Or, once again, Man is addressed in the following manner by the poet in his long poem **تلمع و تخاص**, which occurs towards the end of his first collection of works called **بلنگ درا** :

کھوں چمن میں بے سنا منگ رہا ہے تو اب کٹھا ہو جا، سروڈ بریڈ عالم ہے تو
اب کس کی لڑو توارہ رکھتی ہے تجھے؟ راہ تو رہو وہی تو رہی تو بھی تو ملن بھی تو

Why weeps't like dew in silence mid the flowers?
 Open thy lips, for verily thou art
 The rising paoen at the heart of Life!
 Alas! What seekest thou so feverishly?
 For know that thou in thyself art the way.
 Wayfarer, guide and destination – all!

The same idea of Man's supremacy is expressed by Iqbal in another place thus:

تیری عظمت اس میں ہے ممکنات زاد گالی کی جہاں کے جوہر مضمر کا گریبا استعمال تو ہے
 ہلگ درا

Garners thy nature like a treasure-store
 The vast potentialities of Life –
 Fair promise for the future that it holds;
 Thou are the anvil whereon Providence
 World's latent mettle does propose to prove.

And yet again:

یہ ہندی وہ جرمانی ایسی لفظی وہ تورانی
 تو امہ شرمندہ سلطان اچھلکر بیگراں ہو جا
 گزر جاہن کے میل نقد رو کرہ بیا ہاں سے
 کھلساں راہ میں آئے تو جوئے نصہ جوں ہو جا

Turani this, that Indian, yon Afghan.
 A fourth of Khorassan; – thou stream confined
 And hedged by margent banks which prison thee,
 O'erflow thy banks and be the boundless One!
 O'er craggy rocks, in brambly wilderness
 Hew thy swift way in roaring torrents wild;
 When passing flowery dales and fields a-bloom,
 Become the languid, lampid, warbling rill.

Finally, in a poem entitled *صبح توحید* in *پیام بشری* Man, in the person of Adam, appears before God on the morning of the Day of Judgment and recounts his own deeds and glories thus:

زورہ گرفتار من ، ماہ پر ستارہ من
 من بہ زمیں درخشم ، من بظلمہ بر تلم
 عقل کلاں کاز من بہر جہاں دار و گیز
 بستہ جادوئے من ذرہ و میر سلیر

Venus I hold in thrall; the pearly Moon
 Doth worship me; and reason's own great self
 To master and control the world I forged.
 Deep down within the solid earth I went,
 And thence shot up with winged speed until
 The azure lay beneath my flaming feet,
 A carpet rich and velvet-smooth to tread.
 Sand-grains and the effulgent sun himself
 Obey me as the genii the magician.

Besides this idea of Man as the supreme creation, there runs another in the poetry of Iqbal. This is the idea that Man's role in the universe is complimentary to that of God and often that Man is the agency through which the divine purpose is achieved. It is a point to which I shall return later; for the present, suffice it to say that this idea, which implies an identification of the human will with the divine purpose, is of considerable importance as being a special contribution of Iqbal to the humanistic attitude. It is also an unusual note in the humanism generally met with in literature – particularly the Persian and Urdu literary tradition, of which the poetry of Iqbal is an important and integral part. In his Persian work *پیام مشرق*, the poet has a poem in the form of a dialogue between God and Man in which Man tells God:

سطلان گوردی لیاخ آردم
 غیا بان و گلزار و باغ آردم

تو شب گوردی ، چراغ آردم
 بیا بان و کھسار و راغ آردی

Thou did'st create the murky Night, whilst I
 Did make the Lamp a jeweled pendant bright
 Adorn the swarthy beauty of the Night.
 I pour'd into the earthen bowl, thy gift,
 My soul – intoxicating, luscious wine.
 Thine are the forests, deserts, mountains high,
 And mine the lawns, the gardens, ripening fields.

Or, says the poet in *بال چیراہل* in *سالی نضہ* the following about *Khudi*, for which it is very difficult to give any exact English equivalent, except that it corresponds to “nature” in the Aristotelean sense. In other words, it means the true Self of things, the sum of these vast potentialities, as these would be realized in the long process of their development. In Iqbal, of course, it is a most central theme to which he has devoted a whole long poem of the *مثنوی* genre called *اسرار و رموز*. In the piece quoted here, the *Khudi* referred to is that of Man. Thus:

Khudi the secret of the heart of Life;
 Khudi is Universe awakened wide;
 Khudi there was when nothing else there was,
 And will survive when all has passed away.
 In dire conflict she tossed ere Time began,
 Assumed at last the earthly form of Man.
 That thou may's't see thy Khudi face to face
 Drive on the wheels of destiny and time.

Or witness the following, addressed to Man in the poem **شاعر و شاعر** in **ہنگ درا**:

بے خبر تو جوہر کتنا اہم ہے تو زمانہ میں خدا کا تیری پیغام ہے

O still oblivious of thine own true self!
 Thou art the peerless Virtue which uncovers,
 As through a mirror, all the convolutions
 Of Time from first to last; know that thou art
 God's last word in the chronicle of Life!

The poet's exalted conception of Man leads him on to consider the latter as superior even to the angels and other celestial beings. Though it is only a subsidiary point and therefore not widely met with in most poems, nevertheless the following few quotations will amply evidence the presence of this strand in the thought of Iqbal:

پہرہ لعل ، آن سوئے اولاد ہے جسکی نظر
 گد سبوں سے بھی مقاصد میں ہے جوہا میزہ تو
ہنگ درا

And Man with gaze averted to the skies,
 With aims and thoughts that in their loftiness
 And purity out-soar those of the angels.

چھتے نہیں گلچنگ و حمام نسکی نظر میں
 جہریں و سرالقیں کا سبب ہی عومن
ضرب کلیم

Sparrows and pigeons are poor game indeed
 For one that Israfeel and Gabriel hunts.

حور و فرشتہ ہیں اسیر میرے تخلیقات میں
 میری نگاہ سے خالی تیری تخلیقات میں
ہنگ درا

I hold within the meshes of my thoughts
 Houris and angels, helpless captives all;
 Even the boldness of my peering glance
 Disturbs the glorious radiance of Thy Light!

But the logical culmination of the humanistic note in Iqbal is reached with the apotheosis of Man. Not only is he the supreme creation, the divine agent, the superior of angels, but he is a god in the making and the becoming. This bold idea finds various expressions in the poem, now in the identification of the lover with the beloved, of the traveler with his goal and now of the sudden lifting of the mystic veil of separation. As a prelude, witness the universal repercussions of the advent of Man, of the birth of Adam in the poem **تسخیر فطرت** or the conquest of Nature in the beginning of Iqbal's celebrated **پیام بشری**:

نعرہ زد عشق کہ خونیں جگرے پیدا شد
 حسن لرزید کہ صاحبِ فطرے پیدا شد
 فطرتِ تقدت کہ تر خاک جہاں مجبور
 خود گرے ، خود شکے ، خود نگرے پیدا شد
 خبرے رفت زگر دون بہ مہستانِ ازل
 حد لہ پردہ کھل پردہ درے پیدا شد
 نوزو بیخبر از خویش باخوش حیات
 چشم و لکر دو جہاں نگرے پیدا شد
 زندگی گنت کہ خاک لایم ہمہ عمر
 تا از لہ گند دین بہ درے پیدا شد

... This sanguine Passion incarnate behold!
 Cried Love; and beauty trembled and turned pale.
 Amazed that Nature that from passive clay
 One that examined, fractured and re-made
 His Self to its true form was born at last.
 Unto primeval twilight and the realm
 Of the first dim beginnings of all things
 Traversed through starry void the dread report:
 "All ye inscrutables of Heaven, beware,
 The renderer of your mystic veils hath come."
 Desire that lay lapp'd in the arms of Life,
 As yet oblivious of herself, did ope
 Her eyes and lo! a wondrous and new world
 The very instant started into view.
 Quoth Life: "Forever have I in the dust
 Grovelled and writhed to find me and vent
 Out of this over-arching dome of sky!"

Similarly, this idea of the apotheosis of Man is rendered by the poet in terms of the union of the lover and the beloved, of the merging of the lover into the being of the beloved, in another place in **پیام مشرقی** thus:

چوں نام ننگہ سزا ناز می گردد نیاز تپیں را لیلی همی نامند در سحر لایے من

The Paramour, when perfect, doth not woo,
But is wooed; even as the weary traveller
Is made one with his goal – his consummation!
Hence in the clime whose denizen I am
Lailah they often call by Majnun's name.

In the same poem Iqbal goes on to address Man as prophet, the nearest human approach to the divine, and to link-up the human and the divine as but different manifestations of the same reality. He says, for instance:

بخدا در پردہ گویم ، بتو گویم آشکار یا رسول اللہ! اوینہن وتولی ہدائے من

With God commune I secretly, with thee
In open; therefore, O Apostle of God,
Thou art my actual, He my hidden self!

The boldness of his thought encourages the poet to give expression to an idea, the full implications of which perhaps he himself did not clearly realize. The metaphor of lassoing the Deity – while still a harmless metaphor, yet has the startling significance behind it that the courageous lasso-thrower must be one greater than his noosed victim (i.e., the Deity). How far this was intended to be the meaning of Iqbal as a serious thinker is a debatable point, but I think Iqbal the poet has employed the bold metaphor to express poetically, at least, some such idea. This, then, can be seen to be the highest water-mark of the humanistic note in Iqbal. Here is Iqbal's own couplet, as found in **پیام مشرقی** :

تو کفایت جہنم من جبریل زبوں سیندے یزدان بگماد آو اے ہمت مردانہ

Gabriel himself is but a hapless prey
In regions wild of my mad, fierce Desire;
Bold and ecstatic courage! Let thee bring
Enmeshed the very Deity in thy noose!

The idea of the mystic union, an established convention in the Oriental literary tradition, is used by Iqbal to express the identity between the human

and the divine, as in his last collection, *نورمندان مجلہ*, where he says at one place:

لہ "من" رومی تسلیم من لہ "لو" را ولے نظم "من" اندر ہر "ار" است

I own no difference 'twixt the "He" and "Me":
This only know that "He" embraceth "Me."

He himself gives at least one source for this idea of the deification of Man, the source being that most famous of Persian mystics, Jalal al-Din Rumi, to whom otherwise too Iqbal is greatly indebted. In this connection, says Iqbal, in *پیام مشرق*:

شعبہ در گھرد زد برخص و خاشاک من مرشد رومی کہ گت منزل ما "کبریاست"

Rumi, revered master, that proclaimed
Highest divinity the goal of Man,
Set me, a handful of poor twigs, ablaze.

However, this apotheosis of Man in Iqbal does not mean that Man is a god here and now. Although it is the inevitable destiny of Man, yet whole cycles of evolution must first be completed. And, in this all-important evolutionary process, Iqbal gives Satan a most vital role. Employing this greatest of fallen angels is nothing new to literature. He was a common enough character in medieval morality plays and figured very prominently in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. But even Milton, who, above all, has been held responsible for a most sympathetic treatment of Satan, especially in the earlier portions of *Paradise Lost*, has, after all, treated him as an arch-rebel against the majesty of God, however grand or heroic as a rebel he may have painted him. Moreover, in Milton again, Satan undergoes a very rapid and constant degeneration, particularly toward the end of the epic of *Paradise Lost*, while he is almost unrecognizable as the same person when he reappears in *Paradise Regained*.

Iqbal's treatment and conception of Iblis (ابلیس), which is the name by which he refers to Satan, is far different. For one thing, his Iblis never degenerates into a mere despicable creature: he is satanic and villainous, but this is not overstressed. And for another thing, this rebellion, far from being a hindrance or a dislocation in the divine plan of things, is an integral part of it and plays a most important role in furthering it. Iqbal's resolution of the conflict between good and evil, God and Satan, reminds one of the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis of Hegelian philosophy, for Iqbal sees progress and

evolution as a process of the conflict of opposites, resulting at each stage in some sort of synthesis, that again goes into conflict with its opposite. Dynamism is at the heart of all evolution, thinks Iqbal, and all the sorrows, hardships, and the various trials and vicissitudes of life are the very stuff out of which the human mettle is forged and evolves. And it is Satan who has precipitated this dynamism. In Iqbal's view, Satan's is a catalytic role in the universe. Here are Iblis' own words to God in **پیام مشرقی** claiming for himself as much:

پیکر انجم ز تو ، گردش انجم زمین
تو بہ بدن جان دہی تو پورہ جان میں دم
جان بہ جہاں اندریم ، زندگی منصورم
تو بہ گون رہ زلی ، من بہ تہائی رہ ہریم
زاد تو آفرین تو ، پیرشود تو یرم
انم خلقی نہاد ، توں نظر و کم سواد

Their orbs the stars received from Thee, from me
They got their motion; and this living world
Because of me is vital; for I am
The Life that throbs and pulsates through all things.
Thou gavest the body life and in that life
Did I create the turmoil and the strife –
Dire agonies and exultations sweet:
thou move'st serene while I tempestuous live.
The earth-born Man, base-vision'd, fleshly-frail,
That in Thine arms was born will at my breast
Gow in the fullness of his wondrous powers.

Or similar thoughts did Iblis utter to Gabriel in their meeting recorded in **پیام مشرقی**:

اے جبریل تو واقف نہیں تیرے راز سے
تو گیا سرمست مجھ کو ٹوٹ کر میرا سپر
اب یہاں میری گزر ممکن نہیں ، ممکن نہیں
کس قدر خلوش ہے یہ عظم ہے کاخ و کو
ہے میری جزات سے مشیت خاک میں نوق نامو
میرے فتنے جملہ عقل و خرد کے تارو پو
دیکھتا ہے تو فقط سناہل سے رزم و خیر و شر
کون ملوثانی کے طما ہے کھار ہا ہے ، میں کہ تو
گر کبھی خلوت میں ہو تو پوچھ لہ سے
تسنہ تم کو دنگیں کر گیا کس کا لہو

Ah, Gabriel! This secret thou not know'st:
When that my bowl did brake it drowned me quite
In its rich, soul-intoxicating wine.
I cannot here return. I cannot, now!

Bleak seems to me your immaterial world!
 The glorious virtue of self-revelation
 That Man, this clod of earth, doth now possess
 My daring courage in him first call'd forth.
 Right through the very texture of Man's wit
 And reason run my wiles as warp and weft.
 From far those merely see'st the Armageddon,
 The dire and fateful grapple-unto-death
 Wherein the mighty powers of Death and Life,
 Of Good and Evil, like primeval Titans,
 Are fiercely interlock'd; I in the midst
 Of this cyclonic storm its buffets bear.
 Alone with God when those art, ask Him this:
 Life-blood of whom it was, O Lord of All,
 That Tale of Man enriched with its own hue?

True to his role as a catalytic agent, Satan thus advises Adam in a poem entitled **اھوائے آدم** or “The Abduction of Adam” in **پیام مشرق** :

لغت کردار گیر ، گلبنہ ، گم بنہ ، جوئے گم	زست و لکر زلدا وہم خداوند تست
چشم جہلی بین کشا ، پیر تماشا خرام	خیز کہ بنامت مملکت تتر
از سر گرانوں بیعت ، گیز بدر یا مقام	ظفر ہے مایہ ، گوہر تفلندہ شو
چہست حیثت تو لم؟ سوخاکن لالمام	تولہ تلماسی ، ہلوز تروق جمیرد زوہصل

Goodness and evil are but figments of
 The fancy of thy God; taste thou instead
 The dizzy raptures that from Action come:
 Set thee in motion, towards some Purpose strive!
 Arise! for I will now disclose to thee
 A brave new world, fresh vistas opening wide;
 Sally majestic forth and ope thine eyes
 This spreading panorama to enjoy.
 Thou art as yet a rain-drop of no worth,
 The vaporous clouds leave for the fertile deep
 That in its heaving bosom thou may'st be
 The pearly gem of “purest ray serene!”
 As yet thou dost not know that keen Desire,
 Fulfill'd in union, forthwith dies away.
 What is immortal life? Nought else but this:
 Ever to feed Desire's sacred flame!

General Observations

I shall conclude this paper with two general remarks on Iqbalian humanism at large.

From the fairly wide variety of quotations cited above and from an independent study of the corpus of Iqbal's work, the impression is inescapable that, for all its loftiness and sublimity of tone, the humanism of Iqbal is rather narrow. In other words, while this work is a most glowing tribute to the immense potentialities of Man, there is very little by comparison of the appreciation for the more homely and every-day emotions, experience, and situations of Man. The range of such things depicted by the poet is very narrow as compared with the work of other poets, such as Ghalib. Except a little, perhaps in the earliest period, the poetry of Iqbal shows an absence of any interplay of the emotional and aesthetic sensibility to domestic relationships, to the domain of friendship, and to the extremely rich and complex realm of romantic love almost unparalleled anywhere in Oriental literature. But there are some exceptions, notably of the early period of **بلنگ درا**, when filial love, patriotism, and nature-description find some pieces of sheer and poignant beauty dedicated to them. But the later Iqbal has practically none. Nature-description in a poem on the Himalayas in **بلنگ درا** is thus depicted:

لہائی شب کیوں ہے نکلے جب زلف سیاہ
 نلمن دل کھیلتی ہے آبشاروں کی صدا
 وہ خموشی شام کی جس پر نظم ہو ادا
 وہ درختوں پر تفکر کا معنی چھلپا ہوا
 کاپٹا پھرتا ہے کیا ننگ شفق کو ہمدرد
 خورشمنہ لگتا ہے عازرے تیرے رخسار پر

When Night, the dusky Lailah, opens wide
 And spreads her flowing tresses lustrous black,
 The dreamy murmur of the cataracts
 In near-by verdant vales seductive tugs
 At my heart-strings; at eve the silence deep,
 So solemn that even the silvery speech
 Is mute with adoration. Motionless
 The tall trees stand in rows and silent brood,
 And on the brow of towering snow-capp'd peaks
 The lurid sun-set light doth fitful dance
 And trembling shakes, even as some passion's glow
 The milky whiteness of a maiden's face
 Blushful suffuses, which now comes now goes.

Another feature is that this humanism is no blind or facile faith with the poet, but is justified to him by his study of history as a truly evolutionary process slowly unfolding itself. Most of his utterances are replete with ref-

erences to historical, philosophical and scientific truths. It is, I believe, his conviction of the inevitability of the perfectibility of Man that, more than any other factor, accounts for the growing and increasingly optimistic note in his poetry.

But perhaps the most interesting observation to make is on one very important aspect of this humanism, an aspect on which I briefly touched earlier in this paper. Humanism, we saw, grew largely as a reaction against the over-weighing divinism of the Middle Ages. Hence, there inevitably crept in a conflict between the two; a conflict that has persisted almost unabated down to the present day and has been one of the most fascinating phenomena in the world of letters and human psychology. In the Urdu-Persian literary tradition, Iqbal is the first man to have fairly satisfactorily resolved this age-old conflict. He has achieved this in three ways. First, Iqbal has harmonized the exalted position of Man among the other creatures with the fact of the presence and dominance of God over all, by making Man God's vicegerent on Earth. Second, and from the point of view of the bulk of his poetry, the most important one is Iqbal's identification of the human will with the divine, to which I referred earlier. And third, there is the foreshadowing in some dim, undefined ways of the attainment or realization by Man of the godhood as the culmination of the process of evolution and perfectibility.

It may be argued that both the identification of the human will and the divine purpose and the loss of the human into the divine entity have always been the prized heritage of all mysticism. That, therefore, there is nothing new that Iqbal has achieved. But there is, and it lies in the difference between the mode of achieving either an identification of the human will and the divine purpose or the merging of the human into the divine. While the mystic, in common with the medievalist, has upheld these to be possible only after complete self-repression and self-annihilation (خودنی), Iqbal, like any true humanist, maintains that this is possible and possible only through self development or **خودنی**. Hence, my feeling is that Iqbal has made a real and original contribution to the vexed problems of humanism versus divinism.