

# IQBAL'S JAVID NAMA

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Javid Nama is perhaps the only poetic work of the present century where the state of man is described within the perspective of a definite regeneration. It opens in a world picture which is overcrowded by ugliness, evil and death, and leads towards an emerging new world with the hope of a new Man, and a new version of life. In between these two points the story of mankind in the past two centuries is told expressly with reference to human destiny. Compared with the works of poetry produced during the present century, in Europe and the United States, the human image that appears in Javid Nama tends to approach the conditions of a higher form of life, and refuses to surrender to the compulsions of contemporary human situations. It is precisely in terms of its human quality, and its concern with the destiny of man that Javid Nama stands out as a work of extraordinary merit and enriches the creative wealth of World Literature.

Historically the poem belongs to the most difficult times in the life of the people of South Asia. It was composed in 1927-1931, and its first edition came in 1932. The political prospects particularly facing the Muslims of South Asia were extremely bleak and discouraging. In fact, it was a blind and closed world for all. For the independent movements the political struggle against imperialism had assumed a far greater significance, and the re-shaping of history through liberation needed a vision of man and his future destiny. In actual political struggle Allama Iqbal interpreted not only the political scene by his Allahabad Address (1930) for a separate homeland for Muslim nation in South Asia but also worked on the reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam to enable the Muslims to prepare for their future duties and obligations. In Javid-Nama, he transferred the scene from its physical and intellectual level to the realm of the spirit. Javid-Nama relates the

spiritual crisis in the life of the Muslims, and makes it a poetic document of man's spiritual crisis in contemporary history.

Javid Nama draws its structure and content from the celebrated traditional theme of the spiritual journey to regions beyond the world of senses. Its inspiration identifies it with the Mirajnamas, and as a matter of fact, the poem is a Mirajnama in its place and treatment. However, the heavenly geography which covers the firmaments of astrological worlds, gives the poem an extensive historical relevance, and the human world draws its interpretation from the wisdom of the higher spheres. The higher realms of the spiritual journey interpret the time movements in which the life of man is involved in a changing and unstable world. It is a spiritual journey conducted in the single person of the poet, with a hope and belief that the message of the journey can be shared by men, and the participation in its upward movement can also redeem suffering man and create a happy and better world for him. In other models on the same theme, particularly Dante's Divine Comedy, the experience remains unilateral ; it does not aim at any objectification of experience. In Javid Nama the objectification of the wisdom of the higher realms seems to be the major aim of the poem, and in this sense, it assumes a unique place among the models based on the theme.

The spiritual journey as it unfolds itself in the poem and while it passes through the regions between the Valley of Tawasin and the Divine Presence, encounters a universe where thought and action perpetually exist in a unitive state ; and the journey becomes a questioning and inquiring pilgrimage of a restless mind. Under the excellent poetry of the spiritual journey lie intricate webs of thought, and the emotional and intellectual life of man is portrayed in its conflicting tensions. In the language of the poet the predicament that man has faced in the modern world is that of the loss of his humanity, and this predicament can only be met with any success if the 'Self' of man is restored and integrated through his own effort. The history of man is nothing else but his struggle for Self, (Khudi/Ego) which has been damaged by imperialism, economic distress, and by intellectual stupor. Man has

reduced himself to segments of self-interest and the higher wisdom of religion has lost its hold on the conduct of man. Thus, the Quest for the Self of man has become the need of the present times! if the Quest fails, man would eventually be lost.

This state of affairs is fully illustrated in the lamentation of Iblis in the firmament of Jupitar. Mankind has failed in its identification with the good, and has provided an easy victory to Satan, who constantly laments the loss of a realm for one living man of faith. From this overall cosmic view the world appears to be peopled by a damaged human race, and the cry of ‘where is the man?’ rises throughout the regions of the heavenly world.

The spiritual journey begins with a sunset and view of the sea in the distance. In the company of Rumi, the poet enters the heavenly world, and meets persons belonging to various stages of human history. These stages represent the phases and periods of the development of human mind which finds its fulfillment, in the supreme example of human achievement which the poet meets under the guidance of Rumi. In the earlier stages of the journey the poet meets the ancient Indian sage Johan Dost who explains to the poet the primary questions of human condition. Towards the last stages of the pilgrimage, and before the higher regions of Paradise come into view the poet hears the Martyr King’s Message to the River Cavary which tells that immortality resides in the breath of life. The self of man is regarded to be the outcome of love on the pilgrimage of love. Without the fire of love, and the quest for the beloved, the self remains for ever unrealized. With these, and other far more important stages of wisdom, of action, and of insight ; the poem enters the upper regions of Paradise and the Divine Presence, and the whole world below suffuses with a light of dawn ; a new world appears in the vision of the poet set against the shining manifestations of the higher realms of heaven. Javid Nama portrays a journey from the darkness of the night to the glow of an early day-break; from loss of hope to hopefulness-from death to life. Death bestows upon him a new life who follows the much desired goal of the road of love. Javid Nama speaks to man in the language of love.

From a distance of more than fifty years the immediate world of Javid Nama and its environment in South Asia seem to be the world of miraculous possibilities. From within the depths of human suffering the appearance of such a vice as that of the poet of Javid Nama seems to represent the collective genius of the higher creative life of Islam and Muslim culture Javid Nama holds out a meaningful dialogue with man in every expected future. No popular definition of poetry can capture the spell and greatness of the poem. It is a poem and even more than a poem. Javid Nama is a creative work within its own creative definition. And even to-day who ever goes through its stages of love-quest can interpret the present world in the light of the poem's message. Even the present complexion of the world is found reflected in the visionary perspective of the poem. Javid Nama as a poem, remains a friendly voice for man in his earthly and worldly unhappiness. With Javid Nama the Muslim creative self has vindicated the birth of a new World in the thought and action of the Muslim people. The Visions of the poet and the picture of the times to come make Javid Nama the greatest poetic work of the world, a world that really needs a future for its children.