## "IBLIS" IN IQBAL'S PHILOSOPHY

Riffat Hassan

The figure of Satan or Iblis occupies a considerable portion of Iqbal's religious philosophy. As Professor Schimmel observes, there are tendencies towards the development of the Iblis-figure in the traditional way, and yet towards a completely original re-formulation of it.<sup>10</sup> On the whole, in his treatment of Iblis, one can see many of Iqbal's brilliant "flashes" of poetic and philosophical insight.

Iblis as the principle of activity:

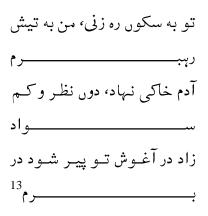
Mani had regarded Satan as a principle of activity, Iqbal refers to this fact in his thesis: "In darkness - the feminine principle in nature-were hidden the elements of evil which, in course of time, concentrated and resulted in the composition, so to speak, of the hideous-looking devil, the principle of activity."<sup>11</sup> Perhaps this is the germ of the idea which figured prominently in Iqbal's later thought, namely, that the movement of the world and the evolution of humanity is possible only through the conquest of darkness and the powers of Chaos.<sup>12</sup> In fact, in Iqbal's opinion, Satan is not far from the truth when he asserts in "Taskhir-e-Fitrat"

تو به بدن جان دېږي، شور بجان م

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Schimmel, A. M. "The Figure of Satan in the Works of Muhammed Iqbal" (consulted in the manuscript by courtesy of the author).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Iqbal, M,, The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, Lahore, 1964, p. 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Schimmel, A. M. Gabriel's Wing, Leiden. 1963, pp. 209-210.



The stars' bodies were made by you;

I am their motive force.

I am the substance of the world;

I am life's primal source.

The body draws its soul from you

But I arouse the soul.

While you waylay with blissful peace, I lead with action's call.

That low-born creature of earth, man,

Of mean intelligence,

Though born in your lap, will grow old

Under my Vigilance

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Payam-e-Mashriq, p. 98.

(Translation by Hussain, H., A Message from the East, Karachi, 1971, p: 43)

It is Iblis who leads human beings on from conquest to conquest, who shows them the way to knowledge and perfection.<sup>14</sup>2 The words of Iblis when he tempts Adam could very well be the words of Iqbal himself, and that is hardly surprising because, in one sense, both Iblis and Iqbal are prophets of a new world. First Iblis praises a life of action, of perpetual excitement and challenge - a marked contrast to the effortless case of parasitical living.

زندگی سوز و ساز، یه ز سکون دوام فاخته شاهیں شود، از تپش زیر دام کوثر و تسنیم برد، از تو نشاط عمل تمرز میناے تاک، بادۀ آئینه نام<sup>15</sup>

A life of struggle, strain and stress

Is better than eternal rest.

When a dove strains hard at its nest

An eagle's heart beats in its breast.

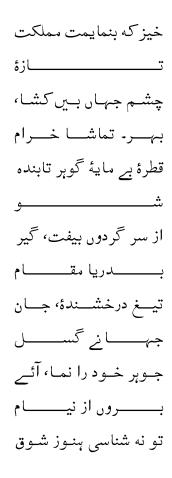
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Maitre, L. "Iqbal : A Great Humanist" Iqbal Review, April 1961, p. 28.

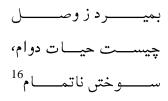
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Payam-e-Mashriq, p. 98.

These streams of milk and honey have Deprived you of the strength to act. Come take a hearty draught of wine From the cup of the vine direct.

(Translation by Hussain, H., A Message from the East, p. 43)

Then he urges Adam to open his eyes and reach out for a new world - a world in which there are untold opportunities for his manifold potentialities to manifest themselves and acquire maturity. Iblis becomes Adam's guide to a new world.





Arise, for I will show to you The prospect of a whole new world Unveil your eyes and look around; Go forth and see it all unfurled. You are tiny, worthless drop; Becoming a shining, priceless pearl Descend from Eden's halcyon heights And plunge into the life stream's swirl. You are a brightly shining sword; Go dip into Creation's heart To prove your mettle issue forth And from your scabbard's bosom part You have not learnt this lesson yet; Fulfillment dooms desire to death. You know what is eternal life? To burn anew with each new breath

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Payam-e-Mashriq, p. 99.

(Translation by Hussain, H., A Message from the East, pp. 44-45)

Adam does not leave Paradise with "wandering steps, and slow"<sup>17</sup> I but joyfully. He sounds more like Columbus setting out on an expedition to discover wonderful lands than as exile who has fallen from grace. Iblis has indeed, been successful in arousing his enthusiasm.

چه خوش است زند کی را ہم سوز و ساز کردن دل کوه و دشت و صحرا به دمے گداز کردن ز قفس درے کشادن یے فضانے گلستانے ره آسمان نور دن به ستاره راز کردن بگداز ہائے پنہاں، به نیاز ہائے پیدا نظرے ادا شناسے بحریم ناز کردن ہمے سوز ناتمامم، ہمہ درد آرزویے بگماں وہم یقیں راکہ شہید جستجویم

O what a joy it is to make

One's life a constant, ardent glow!

And with one's breath make desert, hill

And plain like molten metal flow!

Open a door out of one's cage

Onto the garden's vast expanse!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Milton, J. "Paradise Lost" (Book XII) Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, Glasgow, 1952, p. 349.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Payam-e-Mashriq, pp. 99-100.

Roam in the spaces of the sky,

With secret yearnings, open prayers,

Cast look on Beauty's serulgio!

I burn in a slow-consuming fire.

I am an agonised desire.

I give up faith for living doubt;

I seek, I question, I aspire.

(Translation by Hussain, H., A Message-from the East, p. 46)

When Adam returns to the presence of God having conquered the forces of Nature, he is both triumphant and penitent. He is triumphant because he has fulfilled his mission on earth; he is penitent because he erred. He let himself be beguiled by Satan. But Iqbal's Adam could not be wholly penitent knowing that "error which may be described as a kind of intellectual evil is an indispensable factor in the building up of experience."<sup>19</sup>

He speaks of God with a curious childlike innocence which yet has a kind of dignity and self-assurance:

گرچه فسونش مرا بردز راه صواب از غلطم دد گذر عذر کنام پذیر رام نگر دد جهان تانه فسونش خ

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Iqbal, M. The Reconstruction of Reiigious Thought in Islam, Lahore, 1962, p. 57.

جز بکمند نیاز نازنه گردد اسیر<sup>20</sup>

I was deflected from the path Of virtue by the Devil's fraud. Forgive my error and accept My humble penitence, O God. One cannot subjugate the world Unless one yields to its allure For Beauty's wild pride is not tamed Untill it falls into Love's snare.

(From Hussain, M. H., A Message from the East, pp. 47-48)

True to some degree to the principle of Milton's Satan: "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven",<sup>21</sup> Iblis tells the righteous (perhaps also a little self-righteous) Gabriel that it is he who has made possible the drama of human evolution, that in a way God is more aware of him than of the eternally-pious Gabriel.

> سے میری جرات سے مشت خاک میں فوق نمیں وقت میں میرے فتنے جامۂ عقل و خرد کیا تار

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Payarn-e-Mashriq, p 101.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Milton, J., "Paradise Lost" (Book 1), p. 85.

In Man's pinch of dust my daring spirit has breathed ambition. The warp and woof of mind and reason are woven of my sedition, The deeps of good and ill you only see from land's far verge Which of us is it, you or I, that dares the tempest's scourge? Ask this of God, when next you stand alone within his sight Whose blood is it has painted Man's long history so bright? In the heart of the Almighty like the pricking thorn I lie,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Bal-e-Jibril, pp. 193-194.

You only cry for ever God, oh God, oh God most high!

(Translation by Kiernan, V. G. Poems from Iqbal, London, 1955 pp. 52-53)

It is worth mentioning that in regarding Iblis as the dynamic principle of life, it is very likely that Iqbal was also influenced by Goethe<sup>23</sup> (for whom, next to Rumi, he had the greatest admiration and affection) who in Faust shows the Devil as humankind's companion, forming human beings, working on them lest they slumber.

Iblis as a principle of evil

In Iqbal's thought, Iblis is never wholly evil. He is the symbol of the eternal "la" (negation) but for Iqbal, "Id" implies "ilia" (affirmation) and is "an absolutely necessary constituent of a perfect social order."<sup>24</sup> Iblis himself, says:

Under the veil of "No" I murmured "Yes"

What I have spoken is better than what I never said.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Schimmel, A. M., "Mohammad Iqbal and, German Thought" Mohammad Iqbai, (The Pak-German Forum), Karachi, 1960, p 97)

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Khayal. T. M., "Iqbal's Conception of Satan" Iqbal, July 1953 Volume II Number I, p. 9.
<sup>25</sup> Javid Namah, p. 158.

(Translation by Arberry, A. J., Javid Namah, London, 1966, p. 184) Milton's Satan aims out of good still to find means of evil.<sup>26</sup> As God's representative, it must be Adam's endeavour to "seek to bring forth good,"<sup>27</sup> from his evil. In Javid Noma Shah-e-Hamadan says:

> بنده کر خویشتن دارد ,\_\_\_\_\_\_; آفریند منفعت را از ض\_\_\_\_\_ را بزم با ديو است آدم را و بـــــال رزم با دیـو است آدم را حمــــال! خویش را بر ابرمن بایــــد زدن تو ہمہ تیخ آں ہمہ

The man who is fully aware of himself

Creates advantage out of loss.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Milton, J., "Paradise Lost" (Book 1), p. 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid.

To sup with the Devil brings disaster to a man, to wrestle with the Devil brings him glory.

One must strike oneself against Ahriman;

You are a sword, he is the whetstone.

(Translation by Arberry, A. J., Javid Namah, p. 117)

True, however, to tradition, Iqbal identifies Iblis with whatever evil he sees in the world. Iblis is loveless which leads to the betrayal and destruction of humankind. One of the traditional symbols for Iblis is the serpent, and this symbol is suited to Iqbal's identification of Iblis with (negative) reason, for when attacked, a serpent defends itself with its head.<sup>29</sup>

Iblis also comes to stand for what Iqbal perceived to be Western values and attitudes e.g., materialistic creeds and indifference to the individual's higher self. In one poem, Iqbal says to God about Western politics:

> بنایا ایک ہی ابلیس آگ سے تصوبے بنائے خاک سے اس نے دو صےد ہزار ابلے یس!<sup>30</sup>

You made just one Satan from the fire,

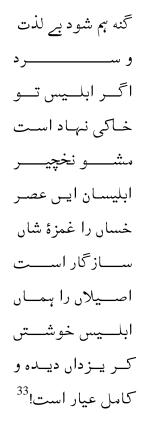
It has made two hundred thousand satans from the dust

Iqbal regards most European politicians as devils in disguise. Furthermore, they are not creatures of fire but merely devils of the dust

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Javid Nam p. 186.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Schimmel, A. M., Gabriel's Wing, p. 216. 3. Zarb-e-Kalim, p. 144.

incapable of anything but scheming and base maneuvering. The politician - Iblis of "Iblis ka farman apne siyasi farzandon ke nam,"<sup>31</sup> and "Iblis ki majlise-shura"<sup>32</sup> has no element of the grandeur possessed by the proud worshipper of God. He is repulsive even as Milton's Satan is repulsive when he is shown gloating over his triumph in Book X of Paradise Lost. For Iqbal, the devils of modern civilization are far more unsatisfactory than Iblis who had been in the company of God for so long. He says,



Sin itself becomes cold and unsatisfactory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Iqbal, M., Zarb-e-Kalim, Lahore, 1949, p. 148.

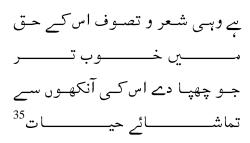
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Iqbal, M., Armaghan-e-Hijaz, Lahore, 1948, pp. 213–228.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Armaghan-e-Hijaz, p. 182.

As soon as your Satan is formed only of dust.

Do not become game for the devils of this time since their glance is directed only towards the inferior.

For those who are noble that Satan is better who has seen God and has a perfect standard. I; hal also shows Iblis as an advocate of the life-stultifying art and mysticism to which he was so bitterly opposed. In the confrontation of Zoroaster and Ahriman in Javid Nama, Iblis "defends the pure spirituality of mysticism and self isolated asceticism against the prophetic activity which manifests itself in the community."<sup>34</sup> Iblis urges his counsellors to preach that which weakens the life-urge in human beings and makes them strangers to the inner turmoil of life.



That poetry and mysticism is best for it (humanity) which obscures its vision of the theatre of life.

But, as Professor Schimmel has observed, "whether it is as a seducer to useless dreams, fruitless mystical seclusion and in social flight from the world, or as a protector and defender of a civilization which is devoid of divine love, Saian is, in all these aspects, always a necessary partner of the Perfect Man."<sup>36</sup> That is why Iqbal says

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Schimmel, A. M., Gabriel's Wing, p. 217.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Armaghan-e-Hijaz, p. 228.

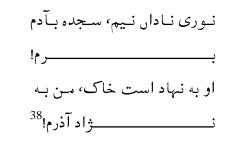
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Schimmel, A. M., Gabriel's Wing, p. 219.

مزی اندر جہانے کور ذوقیے که بزدان دارد و شیطان ندارد<sup>37</sup>

Do not live in such an ill-devised world where there is a God but no Satan.

Creature of Fire versus Creature of Clay

Iblis is nothing if not proud. He does not doubt for an instant that he is superior to Adam. He is a creature of fire while Adam is made of dust. Iblis says to God justifying his disobedience



I am not creature of mere light That I should bow to man.

He is a base-born thing of dust, And I of fire am born

(Translation by Husain, H., A Message from the East, p. 42)

Iqbal's Adam is not the one to let himself get the worst of an argument not even when his adversary is the ingenious Iblis, and so in his turn he retorts

جهاں تا از عدم

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Payam-e-Mashriq, p. 154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

بیروں کشیدند ضمیرش سرد و بے ہنگامے دیدنے دیدنے بغیر از جان ما سوزے کجا بود ترا از آتش ما آفریدنے۔۔

When they brought forth the world from non-existence, they saw that its heart was cold and lifeless.

Where was fire save in my heart?

They created you out of my fire!

Professor Schimmel observes that the contrast between fire and clay "leads back to early Islamic discussions about the prefer-ability of earth (of which the Ka'ba is made) to fire (the element brought into the discussion by admirers of Persian fire-worship):

Satan becomes, thus, the inventor of the misleading comparison of incomparable objects."  $^{40}$ 

Iblis and Predestination

In a poem called "Taqdir"<sup>41</sup> (which Iqbal acknowledges was inspired by Ibn Arabi)<sup>42</sup> we see another Iblis - not the proud lover and adversary of God

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Armaghan-e-Hijaa, p. 177.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Schimmel, A. M., Gabriel's Wing, p. 213.

for whom one can feel some admiration but a moral coward who is trying to attribute his wilful act of disobedience to God's will. Mystics and theologians have sometimes differentiated between God's Command and God's Will<sup>43</sup> According to Hallaj, 'the command is eternal whereas the will and foreknowledge of God concerning it, whether it shall be obeyed or disobeyed, is created, and therefore subordinate. God wills both good and evil, but commands only good."<sup>44</sup> Iblis though he disobeyed the Word of God nonetheless obeyed God's inner command which forbids prostration before any but God.

The poem begins with Iblis seeking to justify his disobedience by the plea that he knew it to be predestined

اے خدائے کن فکاں مجھ کو نے تھا آدم سے بیّر آہ! وہ زندانئ نزدیک و دور و دی دی رو زود حرف اشکبار، تیرے سامنے ممکنن نے تھا ہاں مگر تیری مشیت میں نہ تھا میر اسے ود!

God, Creator; I did not hate your Adam,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Zarb-e-Kalim, pp. 42-43.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Schimmel, A. M., Gabriel's Wing, p. 211.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Nicholson, R. A., The Idea of Personality, in Sufism, Cambridge, 1923, p. 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Zarb-e-Kalim, pp. 42-43.

That captive of Far-and-Near and Swift-and-Slow; And what presumption could refuse to You Obedience? If I would not kneel to him,

The cause was your own fore-ordaining will.

(Translation by Kiernan, V. G., Poems from Iqbal, p. 64)

God asks Iblis

کب کھلا تجھ پر راز؟ افکار سے پہلے کے بعد<sup>46</sup>

When did that mystery dawn on you? before, Or after your sedition ? (Translation by Kiernan, V. G., Poems from Iqbal, p. 64) and Iblis answers

بعد! اے تیری تجلی سے کمیالات وجیسود!

After, oh brightness

Whence all the glory of all being flows,

(Translation by Kiernan, V. G., Poems from 1qbal, p. 64)

By saying that it was after his act of disobedience that he felt it was predestined, Iblis betrays himself for he is admitting indirectly that when he

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

refused the prostration he felt free to choose. God then turns to the angels and says

See what a groveling nature taught him this

Fine theorem! His not kneeling, he pretends,

Consuming fire he calls a wreathe of smoke.

(Translation by Kiernan, V. G., Poems from Iqbal, p. 64)

"It is Satanic short-sightedness," observes Professor Schimmel, "which ascribes any decision which leads to disaster to divine predestination and unchangeable laws."<sup>49</sup> This poem also indicates that the Iblis whom Iqbal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Schimmel, A. M., "The Figure of Satan in the Works of Muhammad Iqbal".

admires is not the one who denies the freedom of his will. Iqbal's interpretation of liens as a lover of God is based on the assumption that Iblis was not predestined to disobey but that his disobedience was a willful act.

Iqbal also mentions Iblis in an, there context of predestination and freewill It was through Satan's seduction of Adam that human beings acquired free-will. To Adam Satan said

> ہیچ نیاہد ز تو غیر سجود نیے خیز چو سرو بلند، اے بعمل نرم گرام زشت و نکو زادۂ وہم خداون۔۔۔ د تس۔۔۔۔ لذت کردار گیر، گام بنہ ج۔۔۔وئے کے۔۔۔ام

O you are fit for nothing but Abject obeisance like a slave, Like a tall cypress stand erect, O you which not act not crave. Good and evil, virtue and sin, Are myths created by your Lord

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Jayam-e-Mashriq, pp. 98-99.

Come taste the joy of action and

Go forth to seek your due reward.

(Translation by Hussain, H., A Message from the East, p. 44)

In Javid Mama Iblis shown as a sad old man, speaks to the sons of Adam in words touched with pathos:

Flames sprang forth from my sown field;

Man out of predestination achieved free-will. I displayed my own hideousness

And have given you the joy of learning or choosing, (Translation by Arberry, A. J., Javid Namah, p. 104)

Iqbal as a Unitarian

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Javid'Natttah, p. 159.

According to Hallaj, "Iblis" is God's lover and one of the two true Unitarians in the world, the other one being Muhamntad.<sup>52</sup> As a strict believer in God's Unity, he refused to prostrate himself before Adam saying, 'Has somebody else taken away the honour of the prostration from my heart so that I should prostrate before Adam ?"<sup>53</sup> Iqbal seems to be sympathetic towards this view and the words of Hallaj in Javid Noma seem to speak also for him:

> عاشی در نار او وا سوختن سوختن ہے نار او نا سوختن! زانکہ او در عشق و خدمت اقــــدم اســــت آدم از اسرار او نا محرم است! چاک کن پیراہن تقلید را تا بیا موزی از و توحید را<sup>54</sup>

Love is to burn in his fire;

Without his fire, burning is not burning

Because he more ardent in love and service,

Adam is not privy to his secrets.

Tear off she skirt of blind conformity

That you may learn God's Unity from him.

<sup>53</sup> Baqli, R. quoted in Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Schimmel, A. M., Gabriel's Wing, p. 210.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Javid Namah. p. 155.

(Translation by Arberry, A, J.. Javid Namah, p. 101)

Satan in the Poetry of Milton and Iqbal

Both Milton and Iqbal had a fiery, restless spirit and an intense religious consciousness. With all their individual differences the works of the two poets convey an impression of power. It is hardly possible to read their poety without realizing the temperamental affinity between them. It is interesting to know that Iqbal had deep admiration for Milton, and In his youth wanted to write an epic similar to Paradise Lost.<sup>55</sup>

A number of writers have pointed out the similarity between Satan and Iblis. This statement needs a qualification (or a clarification) at the very outset Milton's Satan is not a uniform character. The Satan of the first two books of Paradise Lost is quite different from the Satan of the rest of the poem.<sup>56</sup> The reason most commonly given for this is that Milton was a man divided against himself, "a Promethean, a renaissance humanist in the toils of a myth of quite contrary import."<sup>57</sup> His explicit purpose was to justify the ways of God to man but the Satan he created, the Satan of Books I and II, the leader of the fallen angels, became such a formidable obstacle for him, that he had to "transform" him from indomitable rebel who could say in the face of eternal damnation to a wailing creature who could gaze tearfully at the sun and say

What though the field be lost?

All is not lost; the unconquerable will:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Iqbal's Letter quoted by Vabid, S. A., Iqbal : His Art and Thought, London, 1959, p. 7. <sup>56</sup> This opinion is not universally accepted, but it finds support in a number of writers and seems to me to be valid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Willey, B., The Seventeenth Century Background, London, 1934, p. 255.

And study of revenge, immortal hate,

And courage never to submit or yield:

And what is else not to be overcome?

That Glory never shall His wrath or might Extort from me<sup>58</sup> O then at least relent: is there no place Left for Repentance, none for Pardon left:<sup>59</sup>

Iqbal's Iblis is also not a uniform character in the sense that the Iblis portrayed in various poems is not the same figure. Since Iqbal did not undertake to write a long poem in which Iblis appears as one of the chief characters, he was not obliged to be consistent in his treatment of Iblis. So we see different aspects of Iblis, sometimes a totally new Iblis, emerging in different poems. Therefore, when it is said that Satan resembles Iblis, it must be made clear that the Satan of the first two books of Paradise Lost resembles, in the main, the Iblis of "Taskhir-e-Fitrat",<sup>60</sup> "Jibril-o-Iblis" and Javid Nama, and that there is some resemblance between the degenerate Satan of the later books of

Paradise Lost and the politics-afflicted Iblis shown in "Iblis ka farman apne siyasi farzandon se" and "Iblis ki majlis-e-shura".<sup>61</sup>

The first point of similarity between the "heroic" Satan and Iblis is the splendour of their reckless courage. They are "sinners" but one cannot help admiring their unbroken spirit, their tenacity of purpose in the face of insuperable odds. Such qualities as they have would make a hero out of a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Milton, J. "Paradise Lost" (Book I) p. 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Ibid., (Book IV) p. 147.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Iqbal, M., Payam-e-Mashriq, Lahore, 1948, pp. 97-101.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Bal-e-Jibril. Lahore, 1947, p. 148.

rebel. A second point of similarity between them is that they are completely unrepentant. Even if they could, they would not retrace their steps.<sup>62</sup>

There are differences too, between them, and these are not often remarked upon. Satan is an adversary of God and hates God, Iblis is not an enemy of God and loves God Both Satan and Iblis are painted in brilliant colours but while those of the former glitter, those of the latter glow. We admire Satan but our heart does not go out to him as it does to Iblis. Satan is proud and belligerent, Iblis is proud and heart-broken. In the last analysis, despite all their similarities Satan and Iblis are very different - as different from each other as hate is from love. It is possible to build up a case for Satan as a tragic hero, but there is no doubt at all, Iqbal's Iblis - the Iblis of Bal-e-Jibril and Javid Nama - is a tragic hero.<sup>63</sup>

Iblis as a tragic hero

According to Aristotle a tragic hero is an outstanding character whose fortunes suffer a sudden reverse and who is, in some measure, responsible for his (her) downfall. Were he not responsible, were his (her) calamity just the working out of an unrelenting Fate, his (her) situation though it would call for pity would bring about no catharsis. It would not, in fact, be tragic, at all, but simply unfortunate. To say of Iblis that 'he is fulfilling his allotted role in the scheme of things"<sup>64</sup> and that "the tragedy of Satan's life is that he cannot change his destiny, his inner helplessness and sheer inability to be other than he is,"<sup>65</sup>

is surely to misunderstand the Iblis nearest to Iqbal's heart. Although in most tragedies one is aware of a sense of predestination, of ominous agencies working against a character seeking to destroy him or her, yet - as has been said already - there is always something in the tragic characters themselves

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Iqbal, M., Zarb-e-Kalim, p. 148.

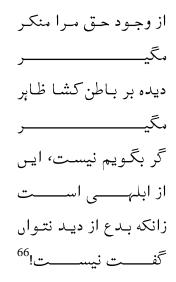
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Armaghan-e-Hijaz, pp. 213-228.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Vahid, S. A., Iqbal : His Art and Thought, p. 224.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

which brings about their tragedy Iblis is a free agent otherwise he would not have refused to obey God. The role he is fulfilling in the scheme of things is not an "allotted" one - it is a role he chose for himself and therein lies his tragedy - not in that he hates God and must serve God's ends, but that he loves God and has chosen forever to displease God.

Iblis denies the charge of being an infidel. His words,



Do not take me for one who denies God's existence;

Open your eyes on my inner self, overlook my exterior.

If I say, "He is not," that would be foolishness, for when one has seen, one cannot say "He is not".

(Translation by Arberry, A. J., Javid Namah, p. 104)

<sup>66</sup> Javid Namah, p. 158.

wrung from the agony of his soul, are reminiscent of the tortured Mephistopheles who, when asked by Faustus if he was out of bell, answered sorrowfully<sup>67</sup>

Why this is hell, nor am I out of it.

Thinkst thou that I, who saw the face of God

And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,

Am not tormented with ten thousand hells

In being deprived of everlasting bliss?<sup>68</sup>

It was the "tragic flaw" in the character of Iblis which brought about the eternal separation between him and his beloved. The traditional motive for the disobedience of Iblis is pride, but due to the influence -of Hallaj, Iqbal also gave to his Iblis the passion and tenderness of a lover. Milton's Satan would not return to Heaven because farthest from Him is best whom reason bath equalled, force bath made supreme Above His equals.

Iblis when asked by Gabriel about the possibility of his return

کیا نہیں مکمن که تیرا چاک دامن ہو رفو؟<sup>69</sup>

Is it not possible that the rent in your robe be mended?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Marlowe, C., Doutor Faustus (Edited by W. W. Gregh Oxford, 1961. (Act I, scene III) p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> Milton, J., "Paradise Lost" (Book 1), p. 84.

<sup>69</sup> Bal-e-Jibril, p. 192.

answers:

Ah, Gabriel; you do not know this mystery—by breaking, my glass made me intoxicated.

Now it is impossible that I should dwell here again how silent is this realm without palaces or lanes!

Whose despaire is the inner fire of creation?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 193-194.

Is not for him, "Despair" better than "Don't despair?"

(Of God's Grace), (reference to Surah Al-Zunar (39:53)

Thus so far from setting out as Satan does, to pervert God's purpose, Iblis is actually conscious of being God's instrument. He does not seek for God's grace because if he were to do so, the world which God made - the world of human beings would come to a standstill. Professor Schimmel observes that in presenting this viewpoint Iqbal has made "one of the most original contributions to the problem of Satan's destiny."<sup>71</sup>

The Iblis portrayed in Javid Nama is sad and old - like the Satan of Nietzsche. His heart is heavy with the burden of his sins - sins not against God who "sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven",<sup>72</sup> but against his Beloved. He begs human beings before whom he would not bow, not to sin any more, not to make his scroll any blacker.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Schimmel, A. M., Gabriel's Wing, p. 212.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Milton, J., "Paradise Lost" (Book I) p. 81.

رخصت عصيان بش\_\_\_\_\_يطان دادهٔ

Deliver me now from my fire; Resolve, O man, the knot of my toil. You who have fallen into my noose And given to Satan the leave to disobey, Live in the world with true manly zeal,

As you pity me, live a stranger to me

Proudly disregarding my sting and my honey, So that my scroll may not become blacker still. (Translation by Arberry, A. J., Javid Namah, p. 104)

Although he suffers endlessly, yet Iblis does not wish to return to the presence of God. It is a part of the character of a tragic hero that having brought about his (her) end he (she) accepts it without flinching. When the poet asks Iblis to give up "this cult of separation,"<sup>74</sup> the latter answers:

گفت "ساز زندگی" سوز فیراق اے خوشا سر مستی روز فیراق!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Javid Namah, p. 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Adberry, A. J., David Namah, p. 104.

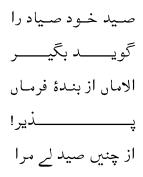
بر لبم از وصل می نایید س<u>خن</u> وصل اگر خواهم نه او مانه نه مین<sup>75</sup>

He said, "The fire of separation is the stuff of life; How sweet the intoxication of the day of separation. The very name of union comes not to my lips; If I seek union, neither He remains nor."

(Translation by Arberry, A. J., David Namah, p. 104)

These lines also bear the implication that Love does not mean union or the annihilation of identity. Thus in upholding the belief in separation, Iblis becomes a preserver of the principle of individuality.

"The Lament of Iblis" in Javid Nama is part of the most profound poetry Iqbal ever wrote. He shows a strange spectacle Iblis praying to God not for relief from pain or remission of his sins, but for a worthy opponent! In lieu of all his past worships of God, Iblis asks for a man who dares to resist him. He says:



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Javid Namah, p. 159.

The prey says to the hunts-man, 'seize me': save me from the all-too obedient servant'. Set me free from such quarry:

Remember my obedience of Yesterday. His nature is raw, his resolution weak, this opponent cannot withstand one blow from me.

I need a servant of God possessed of vision, I need a riper adversary!

(Translation by Arberry, A, J., David Namah, p. 105)

Iblis is weary of all his easy triumphs. Tormented as he is, by his separation from God, he has not even the satisfaction of measuring his strength against a person of God. Iblis would rather meet his death at the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Javid Namah, pp. 160.161.

hands of a man of valour than live for a millennium surrounded by weaklings and cowards;

I have become saddened by all my triumphs that now

I come to you for recompense;

I seek from you one who dares to deny me-

Guide me to such a man of God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Javid Namah, p, 161.

I need a man who will twist my neck,

Whose glance will set my body quivering

Grant me. O God, one living man of faith;

Haply I shall know delight at last in defeat.

(Translation by Arberry, A. J., Javid Namah, p. 105)

In this cry of despair one can see the world of tragedy, the world which lies beyond good and evil. F.A Bijiefeld writes,

"I must admit that the passages about Iblis above all others Satan's lament that he can hardly find a genuine opponent in Inc world, appealed to me more than a lot of enlightened quasi-Christian statements about the devil, and that these words will live in my spirit for a long, long time."<sup>78</sup>

In seeing Iblis as a complex character, a character torn between his pride and his love, a character who possessed all the lineaments of a tragic figure, Iqbal revealed one of his deepest poetic insights. This Iblis - or whom the poet confessed his heartfelt sympathy:

جانم اندر تن ز سوز او ت...\_\_\_\_د<sup>79</sup>

My soul in my body quivered for hia agony. (Translation by Arberry, A. J., Javid Namah, p. 103)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Bijlefeld, W, A. quoted by Schimmel. A. M., "The Figure of Satan in the Works of Muhammad Iqbal."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Javid Namah, p. 158.

is one of the greatest achievements of Iqbal's philosophic vision. This Iblis whose suffering brings catharsis is a much more profound and satisfying figure than the traditional Devil who leaves unexplained the greater part of the mystery of evil. It is true that Iqbal's presentation of the tragic Iblis is only very fragmentary, but even though it does not answer all the questions pertaining to good and evil, God and Satan, it does point to the close and complex relationship between concepts commonly held to be mutually exclusive.