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## SHAIKH SA'DI ON HUMANISM

ہفت کشور نمی کنند امروز  
بی سعد مقالات انجمنی

Keeping in mind the quoted couplet, which is quite relevant till today, and prior to presenting a paper on the above title, it seems necessary to cite some explanations of the term "Humanism". (بشرنوازی/انسان دوستی).

The most tender, finest, revered and essential trait of human personality is "HUMANISM". It is not confined or limited to the mankind only rather this quality is found in all the living creatures. "New Columbia Encyclopaedia" explains Humanism as under :-

Humanism is "Philosophical and literary movement in which man and his capabilities are the central concern. The term was originally restricted to a point of view prevalent among thinkers of renaissance ( 14th - 16th century A.D.) This distinctive characteristics of

Renaissance humanism was its emphasis on classical studies or the humanities and conscious return to classical ideals and forms. The movement led to a restudy of the scriptures and gave impetus to the Reformation. Modern usage of the term has had diverse meanings, but some contemporary emphasis are on lasting human values, cultivation of the classics and respect for scientific knowledge." (7)

We see that the philosophical and literary movements centered at the human being and their abilities have been acclaimed as Humanism. Among the philosophers of the renaissance period this terminology remained limited only to the human society and classical studies.

In the "Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics", James Hastings has defined Humanism as below :-

"Humanism in philosophy is opposed to Naturalism and Absolutism. It designates the philosophic attitude which regards the interpretation of human experience as the primary concern of all philosophizing and asserts the adequacy of human knowledge for this purpose'.

'The humanists were one and all scholars, with a great love for learning and a genuine appreciation of beauty of form and thought with the generous belief that nothing which had ever interested the human mind could

wholly lose its vitality...They rebelled against the barrenness and dogmation of medievalism."(6)

While J.A.Cuddon has presented the meaning of Humanism in the "Dictionary of Literary Terms" as below :-

"In its more extreme forms humanistic attitudes regarded man as the crown of creation'.

'At its best, humanism helped to civilize man to make him realise his potential powers and gifts and to reduce the discrepancy between potentiality and attainment. It was a movement that was at once a product of and a counteraction to a certain prevalent scepticism, a way of dealing with the disequilibrium created by the conflicts between belief and doubt. Humanism turned out to be a form of philosophy which concentrated on the perfection of a worldly life, rather than on the preparation for an eternal spiritual life". (5)

In the New Columbia Encyclopaedia, the human being and their talents have been taken as the central point while in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, the interpretation of human experience and its reformation is the main concern, whereas according to J.A.Cuddon in the Dictionary of Literary Terms, the movement or progression of Humanism has served to educate and civilize the human being and arouse the responsiveness of their hidden and dormant capabilities and ultimately to



bring perfection in this transitory life. He has denied the preparation for an eternal spiritual life which negates the basic principle of religions.

The instinct of Humanism is more or less found in every individual but its purposeful and broader implementation by the ruler, the social organisation or the individuals in power, is commendable for the welfare of the human being, the most beloved creation of the Almighty.

Right from the beginning of human life on earth, the two rival powers- the "Good" and the "Evil" have been enveloping the life, but ultimately the "Good" succeeds. This exhortation has been elaborately discussed by the Prophet, Zoroaster, around the 6th/ 7th century B.C.

Islam is the first religion on earth in which Human Rights have been given serious protection. The Holy Quran ( قرآن ), the most authentic glorious and religious codified document is available without any modification, alteration, amendment or change what-so-ever. And the Holy tradition / narration of Qur-an, i.e. the Hadith ( حدیث ) are the illuminating stars for the proper guidance of Humanity to the real most and truest path leading to eternity. On the eve of last Haj pilgrimage ( حجۃ الوداع ), the Holy Prophet Hazrat Mohammad ( SAW ), Peace be on him, had delivered a memorable sermon ( خطبہ ) which

contained the perpetual and global declaration i.e the Charter of Human Rights. It was the gist of the Heavenly document i.e the Quran.

The Emperors, Kings, rulers and men of power that be, have always been exploiting the humanity for their personal gains. As per the available document, Iran is the first country in the world where Cyrus ( کوروش بزرگ ), the great ( 550-528 B.C.), the founder of the Achaeminian dynasty, had approved and declared the Human Rights. In 1878 A.D. in the excavation of Babilonia a mud built baked column has been found at the place named Oor ( اور ). On this 45 cm column, there is an inscription in Babilonian language and cuniform script ( خط سنجی ) which contains the moral virtues and Humanist declaration of Cyrus, the Great. This written document has been accepted as the First Charter of Human Rights by the United Nations Organisations and has been translated in all the languages of the United Nations in 1971. (2)

The literature of Iran, all through the history, has contained this pious and virtuous human quality i.e. the love and respect for human values. After the spread of Islam it got wider and more popular literary pursuits. Islam completely negates all the discriminations of caste, creed, nation and language etc and in the flashlight of aayat- (1)

ان اكرمکم عند اللہ القلی کم (آیت)

All the distinctions, manifest or hidden, material and others disappeared from the scene of Islamic way of life.

In the verses of mystics and sufi poets of Iran the most delicate and sublime thought of human values and humane qualities are abundant. Maulavi advises to foresake the outward world and superfluity for finding Reality and Unity :-

در معانی قسمت و اعداد نیست  
در معانی تجزیه و اعداد نیست  
اتحاد یار با یاران خوش است  
پای معنی گیر صورت سرکش است

Maulana-ye-Rum sees Truth and Reality ( **حقیقت** ) as the sun which is for all without discrimination :-

همچو آن یک نور خورشید سما  
صد بود نسبت به صحن خانه ها  
لیک یک باشد همه انوارشان  
چونکه برگیری تو دیوار از میان  
یک گهر بودیم هم چون آفتاب  
بی گره بودیم و صافی هم چو آب



چون گل از خار است و خار از گل چرا  
هر دو در جنگ اند اندر ما چرا

This feeling of oneness, unity of human being and the nice behaviour is an especial trait of the Iranians, Sanai (سنائی) expresses like this :-

این همه رنگ های بی رنگی  
خم وحدت همه کند یک رنگ

Hazrat Khaja Abdullah Ansari , presents the sea in a cup :-

”اگر بر اون فلک پری، کرکسی؛ اگر در اعماق دریاها روی، نحسی؛ اگر دلی بدست آری، کسی“

And then Sa'di sings :-

تا توانی دلی بدست آور  
دل شکستن هنر نمی باشد

The love for humanity and respect to the mankind of the Iranians had far reaching effects on literature so much so that Hafez-e-Shirazi sang the following couplet :-

جنگ هفتاد و دو ملت همه را عذر به  
چون ندیدند حقیقت روم افسانه زدند

And at another place he sermonises :-

مباش در پی آزار وهرچه خواهی کن  
که در شریعت ما بیش ازین گناهی نیست

And yet on another occasion he advises :-

چنان بزی که اگر خاک ره شوی کس را  
غبارِ خاطری از ره گذار ما نرسد

With these introductory lines, now a short but striking study of Sa'di's humanism is presented.

Sa'di-e-Shirazi (7th century A.H.) was a revered and internationally acknowledged man of letters as well as a bright and shining star in the literary horizon of the world. He was a stalwart poet and exhibited unparalleled and rare specimen of craftsmanship in his poetical works. He was an articulate prose writer par excellence, a recognized social thinker, a mystic, a moralist as well as an ethical preacher and above all a "Great Humanist" of his time. He was one of the most curious and captivating personalities, and a man who had a far reaching influence. The world literatures bear a distinct imprints and obvious effects of the contributions of Sa'di. Very few literary works of the world can boast of exercising such immense popularity, appealing to the deepest cubicles of human mind and as a result able to shape the destinies of humanity.



Sa'di was born with love for humanity and was a humanist and philanthrope by nature. It was only due to the instigation and inner provocation by this salient instinct that he composed Golestan (گلستان) and Bustan (بوستان).

Sa'di's paramount rhymed prose composition entitled "Golestan" is closely interspersed with ethical observations and deduction in verse. The philosophy of 'human common sense' and its application---a universally acceptable morale---were, according to K.Chaykin, "the real reason for the continuous success of the book in the whole of the Near East throughout many centuries and even up to the present day". The impact of his subject matter and style was direct and is still so today. Its language and expressions are possessed of the flow like running water as well as sweet, attractive, charming, pleasant and affable to the ears like the melody of a sweetheart

Sa'di creates a desired world based on justice and honesty, peace and reconciliation, asceticism and austerity, virtue and respect for human being. Addressing the Chengezi King Ankiyanu (آنکیانو شاہ چنگیزی), Sa'di says :-

سعدی چند آنکه میدانی بگوی  
حق نشاید گفتن الا آشکار  
هر کز خوف و طمع در بار نیست  
از ختا باکش نباشد وز تار

Our poet fearlessly advises the despotic rulers of his time to take care of the human values, as we find in his admonishment of Kesra to Hormoz ( کسری به هرمز ) and exhortation of Khusrau to Sheeroya ( خسرو به شیرویه ) :-

که خاطر نگهدار در ویش باش  
نه در بند آسائش خویش باش

نیاید به نزدیک دانا پسند  
شبان خفته و گرگ در گوسفند

رعیت چون بیخ اند و سلطان درخت  
درخت ای پسر باشد از بیخ سخت

مکن تا توانی دل خلق ریش  
وگر میکنی می گنی بیخ خویش

In view of the fundamental rights of the people, Sa'di attempts to impress upon the Kings that the Kingship is meant for the welfare of the society and state exchequer is the property of the public, not the personal wealth of the King. He very often applies the indirect method of narration :-

در آندم که چشمش ز دیدن بخت	شنیدم که خسرو به شیرویه گفت
که نفع تو جوید در آزار خلق	بداندیش تست او و خونخوار خلق
که از دست شان دست ها بر خداست	ریاست بدست کسانی خطاست
چه از فرزبای بایش گند پوست	مکن صبر بر عامل ظلم دوست

In Golestan Sa'di advises a King:-

همان به که لشکر به جان پروری	نه کند جور پیشه سلطانی
که سلطان به لشکر کند سروری	پادشاهی که طرح ظلم فگند
که نیاید ز گرگ چو پانی	
پای دیوار ملک خویش بکند	

And again counsels the King in clear terms :-

پادشاهی کو روا دارد  
 ستم بر زیر دست  
 دوستدارش روز سختی  
 دشمن زور آورست



با رعیت صلح کن وز  
جنگِ خصمِ ایمن نشین  
زانکه شاهنشاهِ عادل  
را رعیت لشکرست

ای زبردست بر دست آزار  
بچه کار آیدت جهان داری  
گرم تا کی بماند این بازار  
مردنت چه که مردم آزاری

Sa'di condemn's a minister who extorts

money from the public :-

آتشِ سوزان نکند با سپند  
آنچه کند دودِ دلِ درد مند

At a place Sa'di prefers the ass to the lion in the  
guise of an oppressed and the oppressor :-

مسکین خر اگر چه بی تمیز است  
چون بار همگی برد عزیز است  
گاوان و خرانِ بار بردار  
چه ز آدمیانِ مردم آزار

And again gives a satirical pills to the inhuman  
people :-

نگی و گیاهی که درو خاصیتی هست  
از آدمی چه که درو خاصیتی نیست

One of the two sons of an Egyptian Chieftain learnt knowledge and the other hoarded the wealth, the scholar son says :-

من آن مورم که در پایم بمالند  
 نه زبورم که از نیشم بنالند  
 کجا خودشکر این نعمت گزارم  
 که زور مردم آزاری ندارم

In an anecdote of Bustan ( بوستان ), Sa'di seeks the attention of the King with regard to the traders and envoys :-

تبه گردد آن مملکت عنقریب  
 کزو خاطر آزرده آید غریب

In Golestan Sa'di gives a sermon :-

”درویش ضعیف حالی رادرتنگی پرس که چونی؟  
 الا به شرط آنکه مرهمی بر ریش نهی و معلومی بیش“

And at a different place he sermonises a wealthy person who was beating his slave after binding his hands and feet :-

”ای پسر! هم چو تو مخلوقی را خدای عز و جل اسیر حکم  
 تو گردانیده است و ترا بروی فضیلت داده، شکر  
 نعمت باری تعالی بجا آر و چندین جفا بروی مپسند که  
 فردای قیامت به از تو باشد و شرمساری بری“

و جای دیگر بنویسد

بر بنده مکیر خشم بسیار  
جورش مکن و دلش میازار  
اورا تو به ده درم خریدی  
آخر نه به قدرت آفریدی

The Shaikh very rarely eulogised the rulers or Kings  
rather says :-

هزار سال نگویم بقای عمر تو باد  
که این مبالغه دانم ز عقل نه شماری  
هممین سعادت توفیق بر مزیدت باد  
که حق گزاری و ناحق کسی نیازاری

Apart from his sermonized mathnavi Bustan, Sa'di's  
Qasaed, Ghazaliyaat, Qata'at, and

Rubaiyaat also contain ethical preachings. Sa'di  
stimulates the feelings of humanism in his ghazals a'o  
such as :-

بدو بهشت فردا نتوان شدن ز محشر  
همه عیب خلق دیدن نه مروست و مردی  
مگر از دیار دنیا که سر دوره داری  
نگهی بنخویشتن کن که تو هم نگلطی  
تو خود از نشان مردی مگر این کلاه داری  
ره طالبان و مردان کرمست و لطف و احسان

The social, ethical and didactic elements in his  
poetry are worthy of the greatest attention. Sa'di believed  
in Practical Ethics and hence dared to protect and



advocate the fundamental rights and welfare of the have-nots and the downtrodden and fearlessly targeted the kings, persons of power that be and the upper strata of the society in a very lucid language. It was a Himalayan task to face the circumstances in an age when the imperialism or dictatorship was on its height and was the only system of governance every where in the world. He was on the whole, less interested in abstract mystical speculation than in its application in everyday life.

The description of all such sweet thoughts meant for the welfare of the society or individuals may not be possible in this short paper. And hence some most relevant exhortative examples pertaining to the Humanism of Shaikh are quoted hereunder :-

عبادت بجز خد متخلق نیست  
به تسبیح و سجاده و دلق نیست

اگر توقع بخشایش خدایت هست  
به چشم عفو و کرم بر شکستگان بخشای

چو بنی یتیمی سراقنده پیش  
مده بوسه بر روی فرزند خویش

Shaikh Sa'di, a mystic, a lover of mankind and a humanist in true sense of the term, was well aware of his popularity in the times to come, and thus had the forecast :-

بعزاز وفات تربت ما در زمین مجوی  
در سینه های مردم عارف مزار ماست

And now, while summing up this modest paper, it seems very adequate to note the Qat'a of Shaikh Sa'di which adorns the lounge of the United Nations Organisation :-

بنی آدم اعضای یک پیکرند  
که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند  
چو عضوی بدرد آورد روزگار  
دگر عضوها را نماند قرار  
تو کز محنت دیگران بی غمی  
نشاید که نامت نهند آدمی

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