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OVERCOMING NIHILISM THROUGH HUMAN PERFECTION: A STUDY INTO THE PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT OF ALLAM MUHAMMAD IQBAL¹

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ABSTRAT: This research attempts to argue that one of the central concerns of Iqbalian thought is to counter nihilism in the world of Islam, which he felt is responsible for causing the decadence, decay, and downfall of the Muslim world. During his philosophical speculations, Allama Muhammad Iqbal grasped the presence of nihilism in the world of Islam, which exists in different shapes and forms. Iqbal through his poetry and prose attempts to demonstrate that the Islamic world is under the glooms of metaphysico-ontological, epistemological, religio-mystical, moral, and political nihilism, and his poetic-philosophical thought is a reply to these various dimensions of nihilism. Nihilism in these various moods has resulted in causing rigidity, orthodoxy, and stagnancy in the world of Islam, which finally led it towards depravity, dissolution, and decadence. Iqbal's main aim is "the renaissance of the dormant Muslim community by countering the forces of decadence", (I.Khan, 1977, p.4) which the research scholar argues is nothing but nihilism. To

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realize this objective of countering and overcoming nihilism in the world of Islam, Iqbal has introduced his famous ideal, the *Mard-e-Momin*, since he thought that humanity in the present era requires superior and unique individuals as the world again has developed into an idol house. Due to certain unique characteristic features and attributes, these specially superior and unique individuals would be capable to fight against the nihilistic forces of disintegration and dissolution.

KEYWORDS: Decadence, Faqar, Ideal Man, Insan-e-Kamil, Khudi (Self or Ego), Nihilism, Orthodoxy

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of philosophy, various thinkers have attempted to present their thoughts about nihilism, for the problem of nihilism falls among the central debates of philosophy. Allama Muhammad Iqbal too has assigned a significant portion of his poetic and philosophical thought to understand the nature of nihilism in the world of Islam, although nihilism for him is a global phenomenon. Nihilism represents a situation where “the highest values are devalued” (Allison, 1977, p.121). It is a phase in the history of humanity when mankind attempts to radically deny the higher and nobler values of life along with the denial of meaning and desirability for life. Nietzsche defines nihilism “as a radical repudiation of values, meaning and desirability”, or a period in human history where the “highest values devalue themselves”, or it is the belief that life is absurd or ridiculous, that is to say, it is “not worthwhile” (Nietzsche, 1968, pp.7,9,23), or to say simply that “life is meaningless or not worth living” (Reginster, 2006, p.8). It can also be taken as a form of strain and tension resulting in an imbalance between what we need or want and how the world appears to be (Carr, 1990, pp.85-104). The mood of this nihilism would be the tiredness of life, finding everything shallow, empty, and meaningless (Melchert, 2019). To conclude, nihilism is a situation in the life of the people, when religious, ethical, social, political, and aesthetic values are gone from their society (Zada & Ahmad, 2022, pp.59-71). It represents a phase in human history, when life has become meaningless and people have lost their desirability to attain the nobler values of higher form. It is like a vacuum in the general life of humanity where people would fail to make progress; hence, it would be very destructive for the human society.

Iqbal was conscious of both the advent as well as the actual presence of nihilism in the world of Islam. He thought it as an existing reality in various shapes and forms of metaphysical, epistemological, religious, moral, and political nature. These various moods and shapes of nihilism have given birth to the forces of destruction with reference to the Muslim world, for the very nature of nihilism is destructive. The actual roots of the downfall of the Islamic world, Iqbal believes, are grounded in the problem of nihilism, and with his prophetic vision and mission, Iqbal has attempted to counter this enormously damaging phenomenon, nihilism. To overcome nihilism, he has presented his concept of the perfect or ideal man, the *Mard-e-Momin*.

THE CONCEPT OF IDEAL MAN IN PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT:

The study of human beings, since time immemorial, has attracted many philosophers, religious scholars, saints and seers, who paid great attention to understand humanity and its place in the universe. Man according to many thinkers and mystics is a mystery; hence, it becomes very difficult to apprehend his origin, nature and final destiny. Almost every thinker has assigned a major portion of his philosophical thought to the origin, nature and purpose of human's life. Human nature is the pivotal point, around which, many philosophies revolve. The multidimensional nature of human beings has been a significant point, discussed in almost every Western and Eastern scripture and philosophy. The ancient era provides us with mythical explanations about the nature of humanity, which, with the passage of time have been replaced by mystical and rational explanations given by mystics and philosophers. Both philosophy as a form of rational inquiry and religion as a form of understanding or a form of explanation, in their own respective systems attempt to know and understand the universe and its origin along with the origin, role, and place of man in it. Both

proceed in different modes as Iqbal tells us: “The one [i.e., philosophy] grasps Reality piecemeal, the other [i.e., religion] grasps it in its wholeness” (Iqbal, 2004, p. 10).

Iqbal too has attempted to give a detailed philosophical account of the nature of man and his position in the cosmic universe. In that respect, he has introduced his concept of Ideal Man, which occupies a significant position in his philosophical thought. Being a vitalistic and existential thinker, Iqbal’s philosophy can be considered to be the philosophy of life. He is interested in understanding the reality and ultimate nature of man in its first place and then explaining how man can make the most of his present transient and momentary life. Iqbal was not satisfied with the present condition of man; hence, he presented his philosophy about an evolutionary journey of man from the present ordinary stage towards a higher and nobler stage of a Perfect Man.

THE CONCEPT OF PERFECT MAN IN THE ISLAMIC RELIGIO-MYSTICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT:

In the Islamic world too, there have been philosophers, theologians and poets, who evaluated the nature, position and place of man in the Divine scheme. All have attempted to give their explanations in religious manner. To create perfection is the ultimate aim of religious life. This perfection is achieved when the self is developed by attaining higher values and abandoning disvalues on the one hand, and “by experiencing God and knowing the reality of the universe on the other hand”. Being a highly developed ego because of his self-realization, the Perfect Man experiences religion in its higher form (Qaiser, 2004, p.245). From the very beginning, the idea of the Perfect Man has been part of the teachings of Muslim Sufis, who identified Prophet Muhammad with the Perfect Man. The idea of the Perfect Man as a doctrine, is first formulated by Ibn-e-

Arabi, who introduced the term *al-Insan al-Kamil*. The Ideal or Perfect Man of Ibn-e-Arabi is an absolute reality in minute form, that is to say, a microcosm or miniature reflecting all the attributes and characteristics of the macrocosm or cosmic universe, in other words, the Divine Being (Malik, 1983). Ibn al-Arabi considers man as a bridge between the Creator and its creation. The Perfect Man is “the intermediary who fills the gap between the Absolute Being and absolute nothingness” (Chittick, 1989, p. 30). Shaikh Abdul Karim al-Jilani also writes, that the perfect or exceptional human nature essentially shall stand midway between Divine nature, which ascends upwards and human nature, which descends downwards. By sharing the Divine as well as human attributes in himself, the Perfect Man being a joining link must be the god-man, for he receives on the one hand, illuminations from all the indispensable names of the Absolute, while on the other hand, all attributes of the Divine reappear in him (Sherwani, 2015). Though Ibn-e-Arabi and al-Jilani have propounded the theories of the Perfect Man, but for both of them, the Perfect Man is a mere metaphysical being (Qaiser, 2004); hence, their theories have less pragmatic value.

Jalal-u-Din Rumi is perhaps the first Muslim Sufi thinker, who has presented the portrait of the Perfect Man as a concrete physical reality. Man, according to Rumi, possesses the qualities of highness. Rumi says that “though philosophers call man the microcosm, divines call him the macrocosm” (Rumi, 2001, p. 262). In Man’s infinite spirit, the whole universe is contained, thinks Rumi (Nicholson, 1989). The Perfect Man is an individual, who attains “the power to control the spiritual world to the extent that his wish becomes the command of God, though he retains his separate individuality” (Qaiser, 2004, p.256). Rumi says that God has deposited the Perfect Man in order to display the Divine attributes to mankind (Nicholson, 1989).

According to him, the Perfect Man is an exceedingly developed ego; hence, he is the last fruit of humanity (Qaiser, 2004). Dr. Nicholson explains, that when the individual soul is infused by the overflowing or brimful radiance (*tajalli, fayd*) of the “Universal Spirit”, it harvests the Perfect Man, “who is the pearl and final cause of existence” (Nicholson, 1989, p. 283 verse 1183). The Perfect Man is the one by whom the “Truth is verified and made evident to every one capable of receiving it”. Being the Spirit of Humanity (Nicholson, 1989a), he is the “Universal Spirit in which all the individualities disappear” (Nicholson, 1989b, pp. 287, 290 verses 1320, 1397). The pre-eminent manifestation of this Universal Spirit is reflected in Prophets and saints (Nicholson, 1989a). Rumi like Ibn-e-Arabi also uses the concepts of ‘microcosm’ and ‘macrocosm’ but with a different interpretation. According to Rumi, the Perfect Man is an archetype of both microcosm and macrocosm, which synthesizes all levels of reality in its own being. “The microcosm is the external form of” the Perfect Man, while “the macrocosm is his inner essence” (Malik, 1983, p.119).

IQBAL ON NIHILISM AND MARD-E-MOMIN:

Man occupies a central position in Muhammad Iqbal’s writings too and is at the core of his poetic and philosophical thought. These lines taken from ‘*Stray Reflections*’ can demonstrate Iqbal’s concern for the understanding of man, “For centuries, Eastern heart and intellect have been absorbed in the question- Does God exist? I propose to raise a new question- new, that is to say, for the East- Does man exist?” (Iqbal M. , 2012, p.152). Iqbal, being a process philosopher has presented the idea of the Perfect Man, which he referred to as *Mard-e-Momin*, *Mard-i-Kamil*, *Mard-i-Mujahid*, *Mard-i-Hur*, *Mard-i-Haq*, *Faqir* or *Qalandar* (Rastogi, 1987), (Qaiser, 2004). Since Iqbal’s ideal, the *Mard-e-Momin*, holds his grounds in his philosophy of Khudi, the Self or

Ego; hence, some passages are assigned to his philosophy of Khudi.

IQBAL'S PHILOSOPHY OF SELF OR EGO (KHUDI):

To understand Iqbal's Ideal Man, it is important to understand his philosophy of human Self or Ego, which he named as *Khudi*. The entire philosophy of Iqbal revolves around the concept of Self (Ahmad, 1986). The philosophy of Self or *Khudi* provides foundational grounds for his concept of Ideal Man. The authenticity of man depends upon the level and degree of the realization of *Khudi* in him. Human ego refers to self, mind, psyche, soul or personality. As a small spark of life, it is a combination of individual and social elements, which helps a person to go over from "an unconscious, spiritually empty existence to the role of God's vicegerent on earth". It leads an individual to the ultimate heights of perfection by giving him awareness and realization of the great goals mankind is to accomplish (Malik, 1983, p.7).

Iqbal defines human ego or *khudi* to be a series of purposive acts. *Khudi* in its metaphysical sense is the ultimate ground of all existence (Mir, 2008). Being a primordial force, it determines the creation and recreation of things in the universe. Self or ego being the most comprehensive principle of life and universe gives origin to all activity and movement, whether theoretical or practical (Khatoon, 1963).

Iqbal says that the Ultimate Reality or Ego "is a rationally directed creative life or 'will'" (Iqbal, 2004, pp. 59,61). Purpose and aim constitute an important part of Iqbal's philosophy as he writes, "life is only a series of acts of attention, and act of attention is inexplicable without reference to a purpose, conscious or unconscious" (Iqbal, 2004, p.52). Iqbal further says that "the body is not a thing situated in an absolute void; it is a system of events or acts. The system of experiences we

call soul or ego is also a system of acts” (Iqbal 2004, p.95).

Khudi, self or ego is the totality of our experiences, decisions, likes and dis-likes. It is the essence of our being, hence; the center of all of our activities. It gives the sense of stability, permanency, individuality and uniqueness to man. Iqbal believes that action and struggle are the important prerequisites for the development of ego. He says that “the life of ego is a kind of tension caused by the ego invading the environment and the environment invading the ego” (Iqbal, 2004, p.93). Iqbal believes that dangers and hardships faced by an individual are blessings in disguise. The potentialities of an individual are revealed by facing dangers and difficulties as challenges of life (Qaiser, 2012). He stresses over the positive role of tension in our forward march during the development of our personality and says, “Personality is a state of tension and can continue only if that state is maintained. If the state of tension is not maintained, relaxation will ensure” (Iqbal, 2013, p.5). For Iqbal, “every act of a free ego creates a new situation, and thus offers further opportunities of creative unfolding” (Iqbal, 2004, p.109).

To prove the uniqueness of human mind or self, Iqbal seeks help from the *Quran*, and says that three things are perfectly clear from the *Quran*.

1. That man is the chosen of God.
2. That man, with all his faults, is meant to be the representative of God on earth.
3. That man is the trustee of a free personality which he accepted at his peril.

To summarize, one can say, that man is special and unique. Man as per his creative potentials and capabilities is eternal, though he breathes in the present world of space and time for a short period (W.Khan,

2020). Being a representative of God in this world, enjoying a free personality, he should not be treated like other objects of the universe.

Iqbal believes in the freedom of human ego or Khudi. He accepts the self-determined freedom of ego which according to him is determined from within. This freedom is “determined by the All-inclusive, All-comprehensive Unity, by the Divine Dynamic Creative Ego, namely God” (Khatoun, 1963, p.142). In short, Iqbal is in favor of a responsible and disciplined freedom of man. We are free, he believes, but our freedom is restricted in the framework of certain fundamental values. He writes, “Man’s first act of disobedience was also his first act of free choice... Now goodness is not a matter of compulsion; it is the self’s free surrender to the moral ideal and arises out of a willing cooperation of free egos” (Iqbal, 2004, p.79). This first act of disobedience resulted in the mythic Fall from Aden, which Iqbal takes symbolically. Iqbal believes that the Fall is an event, which has brought with itself, “new possibilities of human relations with the Divine”, the physical environment, and other humans. These relations are grounded on a free, conscious and rational choice as opposed to relations founded upon a naïve affirmation and acceptance of “the given” (Umar, 2009, p.199). Iqbal seeks help from German configuration or Gestalt psychology, Biology and *Quran* to prove the freedom of man (Iqbal, 2004).

Thinkers like Bergson and Iqbal have reacted against the mechanistic, fatalistic and deterministic interpretation of life. “Iqbal was a vitalist who believed in a dynamic, forward-looking approach towards life and life-problems”. Life for Iqbal is a forward assimilative process, whose essence lies in “the continuous creation of desires and ideals” (I.Khan, 1977, pp.x,11). Iqbal himself says in the *Reconstruction*, “There is a progressive formation of fresh ends, purposes and ideal scales of

values as the process of life grows and expands. We become by ceasing to be what we are” (Iqbal, 2004, p.54). He cites a verse from the *Quran* in his support in order to put the ego or *Khudi* on the course of eternal and perpetual progress:

And by the moon when at her full, that from state to state shall ye be surely carried onward (44: 38-39).

After a brief elaboration of Iqbal’s philosophy of ‘*Khudi*’, we now are in a better position to discuss his Ideal Man, the *Mard-e-Momin*, with reference to the problem of nihilism. His works, both prose and poetry, provide all the important details about his concept of Ideal Man, since in his writings, man occupies a central position and remains at the core of his thought. Iqbal has constructed his concept of the perfect individual, the *Mard-e-Momin* on the nobler values of *Quran*. His ideal of human perfection, the *Mard-e-Momin* is in fact *Quran*’s physiological living shape with a highly dynamic and active nature as he tells us, ‘No one is aware of the fact that a *Momin* (Apparently a *Qari*) is in fact a living role model of the *Quran*’ (Iqbal, 2011, p.573). Iqbal’s ideal of human perfection, the *Mard-e-Momin* follows, obeys and practices the nobler values and principles recommended by the *Holy Quran*. His Ideal Man believes in religion and God, thus plays an active and dynamic role in life with his religious temperament. He seeks the help and guidance of God in the complexities of life. Although man is gifted with the faculty of reason which plays a very important role in overcoming the challenges and problems of life, yet there are certain limitations of human reason, hence; man is often in need of divine guidance from God.

MARD-E-MOMIN AS A REMEDY FOR NIHILISM:

Iqbal felt the need of this ideal to counter nihilism in the Muslim world. Roy Jackson says that certainly, certain Muslim modernist thinkers thought that “parts of

the Islamic world had returned to the state of *Jahiliyya*”, i.e., of nihilism and decadence (Jackson, 2007, p.57). Dr. Javid Iqbal while comparing Rumi and Iqbal says that both Rumi and Iqbal lived in eras of extraordinary chaos and yet attempted to provide hope and comfort to the confused humanity through their poetry and thought. Rumi lived in the thirteenth century A.D., an era of spiritual and cultural decay, which “witnessed the collapse of the grand structure of civilization raised by Islam”. Theologians by becoming ritualistic had reduced the Quran to a mere treatise of dogmas, and the Sufis under the influence of Buddhism and Vedantic philosophy, had adopted “quietism, annihilation of the self and renunciation of the world”. Jurists had reduced Islam to a mere legal system and *Ulema* went out only for pedantic scholasticism and showed concern only with rational sciences. Moreover, Islam during this era has confronted “two of its most deadly enemies – the Crusader from the West, and the Mongol from the East” (Qarshi, Tanoli & Umar, 2012, p. 57).

Iqbal’s era (i.e., the last decade of the 19th and early part of the 20th century) like Rumi’s era was also a turbulent era of turmoil. “The glory of Islam was fast becoming a matter of past history”. The Ottoman empire was disintegrating and Turkey was deprived of her European provinces. From Eastern Europe, Muslims were being driven out and Egypt was under the control of Great Britain. Morocco had been seized by France and the Muslims of China and Central Asia had been engrossed into the Nationalist kingdom of China and Tsarist Russia. Afghanistan was controlled by Great Britain and Iran was almost collapsing. The Indian Muslims under the British Raj had been reduced to a ‘large minority’; hence, had given up all hopes of retrieving their lost freedom. Tripoli was invaded by Italy and Russia had bombarded Meshad. The Britishers had attacked and occupied Iraq, and even got the control of

Constantinople. France had taken over Syria and attempts were made for the partition of Turkey under the treaty of Sevres (Qarshi, Tanoli & Umar, 2012, p.63).

On the intellectual side, stagnation “had made the *Ulema* backward-looking and they had ceased to be original and creative in their thinking” (Qarshi, Tanoli & Umar, 2012, p.58). The Jurists had closed the gates of *Ijtihad* and decadent Sufism had killed the will to act. A deeper study of the history of Islam led Iqbal to infer that among other destructive forces, it was pantheism, which had suppressed the will to act in Muslims; hence, resulted in the decline of Islamic civilization. He believes that in Islam, pantheism had developed when decadence already had set in through the establishment of autocratic Sultanate and sterile *Mullaism*. Being a product of slavish mentality, it extolled passive virtues like humility, obedience and submission. The pantheistic God which was the product of such a slavish mentality, consequently was very different from the original Quranic rigorously alive and constantly willing God with a vigorous personality. Such were the political, moral and spiritual conditions of the world of Islam during the time of Iqbal. In short, we can rightly say that during Iqbal’s era, Muslims, generally speaking, because of the aforementioned reasons, were continually on the defensive and lived in past; thus, initiative had been taken away from their hands (Qarshi, Tanoli & Umar, 2012).

Both Rumi and Iqbal as religious poets with Prophetic burden attempted to suppress and counter nihilistic mischiefs in their contemporary eras, through their poetico-philosophical thought. Therefore, it can be rightly claimed that what Rumi accomplished in the 13th century, Iqbal, while seeking inspiration from Rumi, managed to achieve it in the 19th/20th century. Iqbal himself, while comparing his own era with that of Rumi’s, points out that “Rumi suppressed mischief in the

past whereas he is suppressing it in contemporary times”. The mischief referred to by Iqbal is nothing else but essentially nihilism in intellectual, moral and spiritual form, which has ensued from the “growth of a perverse type of materialism” (Qarshi, Tanoli & Umar, 2012, p.64). This nihilism has dragged the world of Islam towards decadence, decay and stagnation; hence, has deprived it from activeness, vitality and dynamism.

Iqbal’s poetical and philosophical thought is an attempt to counter stagnancy in the Muslim world by injecting the spirit of freedom, dynamism, activeness and vitality. Emil Ghitulescu says that through his fiery poetry, Iqbal has awakened the Muslims of the subcontinent by rekindling the flame of freedom in them. On the basis of all his poetic and philosophical works, he may be called the poet for the unity of Muslims and glory of Islam. His ‘Philosophy of *Khudi*’, which can also be termed as ‘Philosophy of Self-consciousness’, provides foundational grounds for his Ideal Man. Through his Philosophy of *Khudi*, Iqbal wanted to “create a strong character in the Muslim youths”. Moreover, while comparing Iqbal with Mihai Eminescu, a foremost national poet of Romania, Emil Ghitulescu writes that both Iqbal and Eminescu believed in the worth and dignity of human beings and “had searched for a new and better world, which should be spiritually strong, intellectually sound and practically viable” (Ghitulescu, 2002, p.28).

Iqbal ponders over the concept of Perfect or Ideal Man in his ‘*Reconstruction*’ (1930), and unlike most European thinkers, he traces the genesis of his conception out of an Islamic background. Iqbal’s conception of Perfect Man is fascinating and unique; hence, is of vital importance in understanding his approach towards Islam (Dar, 2013, pp.48-56). He gives us an active and dynamic concept about the nature and personality of man that enables him, (i.e. man), to feel and sense the

vitality of life even in death. Iqbal's ideal, the *Mard-e-Momin*, carries the Divine laws in himself; hence, is central to the comprehension of human nature in itself, and man's relation with the world and God.

Though Rumi has left deep influence upon the thought of Iqbal and both of them are inspired by the Islamic concept of the Perfect Man, yet Iqbal has his own distinctive position (Qaiser, 2004). For both Rumi and Iqbal, the Perfect Man is partly mystical and partly philosophical, yet there is a great difference of emphasis made by Rumi and Iqbal. Rumi emphasizes the mystical dimension of the Perfect Man, whereas Iqbal gives importance to its philosophical aspect. Rumi is more restrictive in his concept of the Perfect Man, for he does not accept any man as perfect, who does not possess all the attributes of perfection like highly developed ego, freedom, immortality, *ishq* and intellect, absence of fear, *faqr*, religious belief, intuition and sincere love for God; hence, Rumi's Perfect Man is only a Prophet or a Saint. Iqbal on the other hand although accepts these attributes of the Perfect Man, yet he gives wider parameters to this concept. He accepts any individual as *Mard-e-Momin*, who attains, though not all, but some of the characteristics of the Perfect Man. In Rumi's thought, we find only the emergence of the Perfect Man, while Iqbal envisages the emergence of the whole society. Being a highly developed ego with his power of absolute freedom, the Perfect Man has control over both the spiritual and material worlds. This power of control enables him to give codes of morality in order to bring about social and economic justice in the world (Qaiser, 2004) and lead mankind in the forward spiritual and material movement of life. Iqbal's *Mard-e-Momin* being a faithful Muslim is neither a mere reflection or replication of "Divine attributes" nor even an aspect or facet of the all-permeating reality. He simply is the man with a feeling, that the more he arrives at the nobler and

prouder stages of life, he becomes “the slave of God” (Schimmel, 2009, p.120). Rumi’s Perfect Man is a devoted lover of God, while Iqbal’s Ideal Man supplements spiritual devotion with social consciousness and finally devotes himself to social duties and obligations. Faith in God, search for God and apprehension of God, through the process of understanding the depths of one’s own soul are the main steps towards perfection according to Rumi, while Iqbal adds a fourth dimension of ‘realization’ to it, which consists in continuous practice of justice and mercy. Moreover, Iqbal’s *Mard-e-Momin* is more independent of God than Rumi’s Perfect Man, for he can be a creator himself by serving as the co-worker or fellow-fighter of God (Malik, 1983).

Iqbal gives a religious touch to the image of man as religious consciousness is the focal point in his thought. Being an ever changing reality with a heroic temperament, Iqbal’s Perfect Man finds his place between the tension of freedom and determinism. While living in the conflict of virtue and vice and getting tension due to continuous conflict with the universe, man becomes a spokesman of Divine Reality in action and thought and serves as a bridge in filling up the gap between the Absolut Self and human self. He is free from the bondage of space and time and love being his guiding principle enables him to merge the contemporary age with many other ages. By evolving a new idea of man which is resilient, vitalist and integral, Iqbal becomes a prophet of the new concept of man (Azimi, 1992).

Iqbalian Man is free to choose, which enables him to play an active, dynamic and vital role to shape and reshape personal as well as collective behavior. The universe is the product of God’s creative activity and the ideal of this creative activity is the realization of Perfect Man who is the real meaning of creation (Rafiuddin, 1960). Iqbal, like Bergson rejects the mechanical and

accidental interpretation (Ma'ruf, 1987) of the universe as a static and lifeless phenomena devoid of any activity. He quotes the *Quranic* verse “It needs not that I swear by the sunset redness and by the night and its gatherings and by the moon when at her full, that from state to state shall ye be surely carried onward, 84: 16-19” to justify, that in his inmost being, the *Quran* conceives man as a creative, inventive and ingenious activity, an ascending or mounting spirit, who while marching forward, rises from one state of existence to another (Iqbal, 2004).

Iqbal thinks that both the physiological and mental structure of the present man is not a complete fruition of biological evolution; therefore, he needs a journey towards perfection. Iqbal's *Mard-e-Momin* being an honest and true Muslim possesses the qualities of power, wisdom, vision and action, who practices religion in action and spirit as commanded by the *Quran*, in order to attain the highest degree of perfection. This picture of perfection can be noticed in the noble personality and character of Prophet Muhammad, who is the best example of *Insan-e-Kamil* (Dar, 2013, pp.48-56).

CONCLUSION:

The problem of nihilism falls among the prominent themes of philosophy; hence, various great minds have attempted to make a philosophical analysis of its ultimate nature, and its responsible causal factor/s. Moreover, these thinkers have also presented their thoughts with reference to the counter strategies, that may be used to successfully overcome the problem of nihilism, since nihilism, being a situation or a condition in the history of mankind, in terms of the radical denial of the higher and nobler values of life along with the denial of the meaning and desirability of life, will be highly destructive. Like Nietzsche in the West, Allama Iqbal in the East has realized the philosophical significance of this idea due to its highly destructive

nature; therefore, has assigned a major portion of his poetic and philosophical thought to it. He has grasped the presence of nihilism in various forms and shapes in the world of Islam, which as a by-product has given birth to the problems of stagnancy, decadence, decay, and downfall of the Muslim world. As a counter-strategy, Iqbal has presented his ideal of perfect man, the Mard-e-Momin, holding certain unique characteristic features of Divine perfection such as: unique individuality, self-affirmation or self-possession, freedom, immortality, intuition and intellect, power and courage, faqar, belief in God and love of God, feelingful & appreciative heart, and wisdom & vision. It is by cultivating these unique characteristic features in our beings according to Iqbal, that will enable us to successfully counter and overcome nihilism.

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