MILTON'S SATAN AND IQBAL'S IBLIS: 
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

SUBMITTED BY
SAQLAIN HAIDER

TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

A DISSERTATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF 
MASTER'S DEGREE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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I certify that all the material in this dissertation borrowed from other 
sources has been identified and that no material is included for which a degree has 
previously been conferred upon anybody.

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Dedicated

To my grandfather, whom I desperately missed especially while working on Iqbal, and to the haunting memories of scorching summer days spent in hell-hot Cabin 15 of the Central Library, IIUI.
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INTRODUCTION

It is generally held that if there is any hero in *Paradise Lost*, it is Satan, while Iblis in Iqbal's poetry is, though not a pronounced hero, yet not much inferior, and his role in the making of the hero cannot be overlooked. Yet Satan and Iblis are universally exposed to pinching criticism, hatred and abhorrence in the comparative socio-religious scenario at large. This research is an attempt to answer the question regarding the factors which led to such envious presentations of the fallen, detested and eternally damned soul, besides deciding the extent to which Milton’s influence motivated or facilitated Iqbal in this regard.

It is important to note that no mention of Milton is found in Iqbal’s poetry. He wrote poems on prominent Western figures like Thomas Arnold, Shakespeare, Byron, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bergson, Schopenhauer etc. along with dedicating a full work to Goethe. There is hardly any verse about Milton, which can suffice to answer the question of influence; however, he expressed his aim of writing a poem on the pattern of *Paradise Lost*, which does not let us overrule the influence totally.

Both the Persian mystic poet Jalal-ud-Din Rumi and the German philosopher-poet Goethe indisputably influenced Iqbal. It is Rumi whom Iqbal
acknowledges as his literary mentor, and his poetry speaks volumes for the scintillating influence of the master. Iqbal idealized Rumi to such an extent that he paid tribute to him in these words:


Translation:
... though without prophetic fame,
Has an inspired book to his name.*

Rumi’s influence played a vital role in the development of Iqbal’s genius and he declares himself a disciple of Rumi in his poem Pir wa Murid (The Mentor and the Disciple), where the master answers the queries of the disciple. There are various similarities in the ideas of the two, and S.A. Vahid delineates the following parallelisms as particularly noticeable:

(i) Their admiration for a life of ceaseless endeavour
(ii) Mysticism
(iii) Faith in Love
(iv) Conception of God
(v) Free-will
(vi) Creative Evolution
(vii) Production of Perfect or Ideal Man. ¹

* All the Persian verses are taken from, Kulyai-i-Iqbal Farsi (Complete Persian works of Iqbal); Sheikh Ghulam Ali and Sons, Lahore, 1986.
* All the translations of Payam-I-Mashriq are taken from; A Message From The East, translated by M. Hadi Hussain, Iqbal Academy Lahore, 1977.

¹
It is Iqbal’s ardent admiration of the life of ceaseless endeavour that he idealises Iblis and declares it vital for the amelioration of man’s potentials.

Rumi scorns passivity thus;


c2

Translation: Even a useless activity is better than passivity.

While Iqbal believes in perpetual action, irrespective of whether it is right or wrong:

Translation:

Good and evil, virtue and sin
Are myths created by your Lord.
Come, taste the joy of action and
Go forth to seek your due reward.

The work is consecrated to the character study in particular, being least religious or biographical, for these similarities or differences are taken for granted at large. It is strictly concerned with the two presentations of one figure – the Devil, who is addressed with two different names in order to avoid misunderstanding.

This study is not confined to specific books or poems, but is rather an overall bird’s eye view of the Paradise Lost, and the complete poems of Iqbal on Iblis both in Persian and Urdu.

The research paper is divided into three chapters, the first two dealing with Satan and Iblis respectively, and the third a comprehensive conclusion.

It is expected that this humble effort will not only pave the way for further research but also open the eyes of the readers to an ignored facet of the Devil.
Endnotes


2 Ibid., p.102.
CHAPTER 1

SATAN

Milton is mainly known for his *Paradise Lost*, and the poem is marked by a rarely grand style. The grandeur which the poem is equipped with has been widely reciprocated, and has contributed a lot to the overall image of the poet. Milton tried his hand on prose also, but he is mainly recognized as a poet, owing to the abiding significance of his major work, *Paradise Lost*. It is a unique epic poem, having no parallel in English literature, and, “it is not the greatest of the heroick poems [on the whole], only because it is not the first”. The poem is as exalted in subject matter as in style, focusing on the Original Sin, employing unusual but befitting characters like Adam, Eve, Satan and God, in particular, besides numerous other agents of good and evil of relatively less importance. The poem has sustained its interest because of the debate about the hero, as some critics hold Adam, others God, and numerous others Satan the hero. Satan is so prodigiously presented that all other characters of the poem, however great they may be in isolation, are outmanoeuvred in his presence. Regardless of his evil nature and apparent unsuitability for being the hero, he is the most competent contestant for the said status, as both of his adversaries have greater shortcomings.

An epic is basically fabricated round one major venture of a towering figure and his endeavours in overcoming his opponents in the way of the task.
On the basis of this definition, Satan is the most befitting figure to be given this status, as the poem revolves round the Fall of Man, which results from Eve’s succumbing to the insinuations of Satan. Satan dominates the scene right from his first appearance, which is, though in no way enviable, yet impressive. He is in deep waters for having lost all luxuries because of his pride and now he is lying vanquished, “rolling in the fiery gulf” (Bk. I, 52) beside, “his horrid crew” (Bk. I, 51). His immortality has further aggravated the situation, reserving him “to more wrath” (Bk. I, 54), leaving him with the tormenting thought of lost glory. Someone else, trapped in such a bleak situation, would seek forgiveness; but pain, affliction, depression and dismay (Bk. I, 57) cannot win his compromise on the previous resolution. Satan takes the reader into trance from his very first appearance, in coming out of the lake of liquid fire. His resolution and courage are revealed in his address to Beelzebub. Despite “huge affliction and dismay”, he still retains his “obdurate pride and steadfast hate” (Bk. I, 58) for God and is not prepared to retreat, but is zealous to fight more and more. Although he has lost one field, his real asset, that is, “the unconquerable will” (Bk. I, 106), still remains:

\[
\text{What though the field be lost?}
\]
\[
\text{All is not lost-the unconquerable will,}
\]
\[
\text{And study of revenge, immortal hate,}
\]
\[
\text{And courage never to submit or yield:}
\]
\[
\text{And what is else not to be overcome?}
\]

(Bk. I, 105-09)

* All the textual references, in this work, are taken from; The Works of John Milton, published by The Wordsworth Poetry Library Denmark, 1994.
Satan is the prototype of courage. His strong attachment to his cause has infused an indomitable courage in him and he wants to cultivate this passion with the same concentration in the hearts of his disciples. After waging war against God, in the Heaven, he carries it on even at the cost of the loss of archangelship. He is more belligerent after his downfall and vows to continue an eternal hostility open or beguiled. In his address to Beelzebub, he says:

We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war
Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe,
(Bk. I, 120-3)

With this commitment, he addresses his comrades, rather sarcastically, clarifying the available options, of either enjoying the same abject slumber, or, rising for revenge.

Compromise on the cause is alien to Satan. He is not prepared to part with his liberty, though knowing that he will have to contend with Hell as a price of liberty. Satan is the first to pave the way for others on the road to liberty. He willingly chooses Hell as his platform for noble struggle. The bleak atmosphere of hell cannot prove an impediment in the way of his cause, as he is the “one who brings/ A mind not to be changed by place or time” (Bk. I, 252-3), and he believes that:

The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
(Bk. I, 254-5)
Satan has an unshakeable belief in liberty, and possesses an indomitable courage and unconquerable will to win that ideal. He has a due regard for the liberty of his accomplices too, and he assures them of full liberty in his kingdom-Hell, quite opposite to God's kingdom, Heaven, where liberty of none was assured. Both Satan and God are rulers of opposite clans one through his unquestionable authority, while the other through winning the hearts of the ruled. He assures his disciples of complete liberty and safety from the tyranny of Heaven, since the Almighty has no interest in this deadly dismal land and he would not interrupt them, even out of envy, for there is nothing to be envied:

What matter where, if I be still the same,  
And what I should be, all but less than he  
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least  
We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built  
Here for his envy, will not drive us.

(Bk. I, 256-60)

Liberty and equality are the reasons of unanimity among the devils. "Devil with devil damned/Firm concord holds"(Bk. II, 496-7), because there is no hierarchy and gradation in Hell. Before devising the strategy for "another battle ....to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven"(Bk. II, Argument), consultation takes place in the Pandemonium, where everyone is given ample opportunity of expressing his point of view and final decision of attacking a newly created, "race of upstart creatures, to supply / Perhaps [their] vacant room" (Bk. II 834-5) is unanimously accepted.
Satan thumbs his nose at the authority of God for the freedom of himself and his accomplices and, later on, pumps the same longing for freedom in the heart of Eve, who makes the trespass of achieving knowledge and awareness. This was the maiden exercise of liberty and the maiden transgression of divine command. Satan accepts eternal damnation for his freedom and Eve accepts it on the toll of immortality. Satan here does not match with the traditional conception of the Devil who is always bent upon persuading man, rather he appears to be a well-wisher of mankind. He is described thus by Sir Walter Raleigh:

Satan unavoidably reminds us of Prometheus, and although there are essential differences, we are not made to feel them essential. His very situation as the fearless antagonist of Omnipotence makes him either a fool or a hero, and Milton is far indeed from permitting us to think him a fool.\(^2\)

The Greek god Prometheus is known for his benignity towards mankind, irrespective of its consequences for himself. "Zeus denied man the gift of fire, ... fearing that its use ... would cause mortals to consider themselves the equals of gods".\(^3\) Prometheus did not like this tyranny so he "stole fire from the hearth of Zeus and carried it to earth".\(^4\) On violation of the autocratic code of conduct, "Zeus ordered Prometheus chained to a rock on Mt. Caucasus, where he underwent the daily torment of an eagle devouring his liver, which grew back each night".\(^5\)

Prometheus and Satan share a wide range of similarities in terms of courage, resolution, belief in the possibility of beating the respective
adversaries and the problems of liberty, service and Fate etc. “What [further]
strengthens the resemblance is the divine or rather semi-divine, nature of the
protagonists in both cases”. Both are incurably courageous and extremely
resolute in their will. While Satan is satisfied in the hell with his
“unconquerable will” (Bk. I, 106) and “courage never to submit or yield” (Bk. I, 108), Prometheus thus communicates his determination:

... I will fortify my heart
Until the wrathfulness of Zeus abate* (Prometheus Bound, 377-8)

Satan is an optimist in his belief that he will win the battle against God:

Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once
O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine, he shall hear
Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his Angels, and his throne itself
Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire,
His own invented torments. (Bk. II, 60-70)

Not less spirited is Prometheus when he says:

Nothing care I for Zeus ...
Let him do what he will and sway the world
His little hour; he has not long to lord it
Among the Gods. (951-4)

Both Satan and Prometheus hold firm belief in liberty and hate to serve.

Satan prefers ruling in Hell to serving in Heaven in order to uphold his liberty:

* All the references of Prometheus Bound, cited in this work, are taken from Great Books of Western World, Vol.5 edited by Robert Maynard Hutchinson, Encyclopedia Britanica Inc. 1952
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven  (Bk. I, 262-3)

Prometheus too equally hates subservience:

Of my free will, my own free will, I erred
And freely do I here acknowledge it  (267-8)

Both have been close to the respective deities but, after severing on
differences in opinions and priorities, they never consider pacification. Their
immortality is the consoling factor for them, because they know that they
would never perish. Satan is satisfied with his

empyreal form
Incapable of mortal injury,
Imperishable...  (Bk. VI, 433-5)

The same is the contenting feature with Prometheus:

“What should I fear, predestined not to die?”  (965)

Prometheus gave fire to mankind and he is much glorified for this gift
while Satan who extended “consciousness, thought and knowledge”, the
qualities ascribed to fire, is denied any reward. It is strange that, “the most
‘unromantic’ critics, while strictly adhering to the orthodox condemnation of
Satan, nevertheless exhibit a markedly positive and ‘romantic’ response to the
figure of Prometheus.”

Satan is declared evil incarnate by the religious school of thought but
there are certain situations which move the reader morally and win applause
for him. “Milton’s Satan is not presented in a moral vacuum”. This fact is
most clearly revealed in comparison with God. There are certain places where Milton’s God is in dire need of justification. In this context, John Carey remarks:

Milton’s efforts to encapsulate evil in Satan was not successful. ... those readers who have left their reactions on record have seldom been able to regard Satan as a depiction of pure evil, and some of the most distinguished have claimed that he is superior in character to Milton’s God. ¹⁰

John Carey mentions three episodes in particular, where Satan is at the height of morality. “The first occurs in Book I when he weeps at the sight of his fallen followers and cannot speak for tears”.¹¹ On seeing the plight of his cronies he is so much dominated by the passions of sympathy that for the time being he forgets his own agony. His own suffering could not bring such a degree of dejection and helplessness which he is passing through now. His peerless courage dwindles, though momentarily, and he is temporarily bereft of the power of speech due to overwhelming sentiments of commiseration for his followers which lead to an outburst of tears, finally followed by a series of stammering motivational utterances:

Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,  
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last  
Words interwove with sighs found out their way (Bk. I, 619-21)

It is the height of irony that this evil incarnate weeps out of sympathy but Michael, the good ángel, is so stout-hearted that he keeps on showing the tormenting visions of the plight of mankind on the new planet to Adam without least passions of sorrow. Adam shudders at the sight of events like one brother slaying the other, along with other horrible visions of “lazars and
patients of epilepsy, catarrhs etc” and bursts into tears while “dry-eyed”

Michael remains unmoved:

Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
Though not of woman born: compassion quelled
His best of man, and gave him up to tears  (Bk. XI 494-7)

“Fowler annotates the lines with a quotation from Marvell [that] ‘only humane Eyes can weep*2, which is at variance with Satan’s nature, who, if placed in this situation would definitely weep, quite in accordance with his earlier practice.

The second incident occurs in book IX when he is found in a state of indecision before tempting Eve. Eve’s beauty leads to compunction and a conflict emerges in his mind, whether or not to seduce her. He is “so enraptured by her beauty that he becomes momentarily good, ... deprived of his fierce intent”.13

Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture or least action, overawed
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.
That space the Evil One abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remained
Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.  (Bk. IX, 459-66)

But this state does not last long and he recollects his malice, though not natural;

Thoughts, whither have ye led me? with what sweet
Compulsion thus transported to forget
What hither brought us? Hate, not love ... (Bk. IX 473-5)
These passions of sympathy, though momentary, for an enemy about to suffer at his hands, reveal Satan's moral goodness, aptly remarked by John Carey in these words:

Satan's natural tendency, when caught unawares, is to love. Beauty and delight are his natural element. Hatred is an effort of his will".  

The third incident occurs in Book IV where Satan's stunning ambivalence towards his enemies, Adam, Eve and God, leaves the reader spell-bound. Satan, who is considered devoid of finer feelings, shows a neglected facet of his dynamic personality, displaying sentiments of love for the earthly couple, created in the image of God. The archangel Satan is still alive, that is why he develops a longing to love them for their resemblance to God Who is, no matter, his staunch enemy now.

...what do mine eyes with grief behold?  
Into our room of bliss, thus high advanced  
Creatures of other mould – Earth-born perhaps,  
Not Spirits, yet to Heavenly Spirits bright  
Little inferior – whom my thoughts pursue  
With wonder, and could love; so lively shines  
In them divine resemblance, and such grace  
The hand that formed them on their shape hath poured.  

The question arises how a creature of this high nobility who, even after having gone astray, is far superior on moral grounds to the universally acclaimed good angel Michael, could extend evil to the universe at large? He beguiles others to commit wrongs but did someone seduce him or force him to do so?
These and numerous other episodes create the impression of helplessness on the part of Satan. He appears to be constrained to adopt a predetermined line of action already devised by fate. His will is at variance with God’s Will and what God wills, will be the Fate, declares God, while entrusting the creative powers with His Son after the expulsion of Satan from Heaven, which Raphael so discloses to Adam;

I am who fill
Infinitude, nor vacuous the space,
Though I, uncircumscribed, myself retire,
And put not forth my goodness, which is free
To act or not, Necessity and Chance
Approach not me, and what I will is Fate. (Bk. VII, 168-73)

“He (Satan) admits that God is omnipotent and his revolt unjustified”, yet he is somehow compelled to carry on his evil designs, regardless of his own inclination. The problems of free will, determinism, divine foreknowledge and Fate are inextricably interwoven in Milton’s cosmos. God, ‘beholding from His prospect high’, with absolute certainty, tells His Son about the Fall which is to happen in future, divulging that the creatures themselves would be responsible for their downfall;

I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all th’ Ethereal Powers
And Spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell. (Bk. III, 98-102)

He further says;

... authors to themselves in all
Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
I formed them free, and free they must remain
Till they enthrall themselves: .... (Bk. III, 122-5)
God neither wants to compromise His foreknowledge nor confirms the
dominance of Fate, rather He holds the trespassers (Satan as well as Adam and
Eve) solely responsible for their doom, and unconvincingly asserts;

....? [They] nor can justly accuse
Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,
As if Predestination overruled
Their will, disposed by absolute decree
Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed
Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown. (Bk. III, 112-19)

It is difficult to reconcile the labyrinthine problem of the coexistence of
God’s foreknowledge and free will of the creatures. The absolute certainty of
God’s foreknowledge further perplexes the interrelation declaring that
“creaturely freedom ... has to be willed by God”,¹⁶ that is;

Only God does all things with absolute freedom, angels and
men, who do things through reason and deliberation, act freely
only on the hypothesis ... of the divine will, which in the
beginning gave them the power to act freely [.]¹⁷

while all other creatures are bound, no matter willingly or unwilling, to tread
the path of God’s choice, be it contrary to their own conviction. It is strange
that “good and bad angels have the same Nature, happy when it adheres to
God and miserable when it adheres to itself”,¹⁸ yet they are labelled as good
and bad according to the respective tasks assigned to them. Shelley advocates
Satan’s helplessness, glorifying his moral goodness thus;

He (God) turned his good into evil, and, by virtue of his
omnipotence inspired him with such impulses, as, in spite of his
better nature, irresistibly determined him to act what he most
abhorred, and to be a minister of those designs and schemes of
which he was the chief and the original victim. He is forever
tortured with compassion and affection for those whom he betrays and ruins; he is racked by a vain abhorrence for the desolation of which he is the instrument, he is like a man compelled by a tyrant to set fire to his own possessions, and to appear as witness against, and the accuser of his dearest friends and most intimate connexions; and then to be executioner, and to inflict the most subtle and protracted torments upon them.  

He is a puppet in the hands of Fate, who on one hand is unable to change his own doom, and, on the other, persecutes others by the consent of "all-ruling Heaven", so as to further aggravate his own pathos by heaping damnation on himself;

________________________the Arch Friend lay,
Chained on the burning lake; nor even thence
Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shown
On Man by him seduced; but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured. (Bk. I, 209-20)

God connives at Satan's entering Paradise stealthily and predicts his success over the human couple who is kept unaware of the nature as well as the occurrence of evil. William Empson relates this attitude of God to that of "a parent who foresaw that the children would fall and then insisted upon exposing them to the temptation",  accentuating total indifference with the outcome, and indicting them for the consequences, declaring it "neurotic", if not anything worse. Though sufficient precautionary measures are taken to safeguard Adam and Eve, Satan succeeds in his venture, because;
The chains of Hell, Sin, death, Chaos and an army of good angels hold Satan back, but all this stage machinery is arranged by God to collapse as soon as he advances upon it.\textsuperscript{22}

This is perhaps because God did not want to confine their freedom "to fall" (Bk. III, 99), already promised to all the beings, to which Empson remarks;

God cheats his own troops to make certain that the Fall occurs [and] what God means by saying that none of his busy activity affects their free will, ... [is probably] that he does not actually hypnotize them ...; though he lets Satan do to Eve as much as a hypnotist really can do.\textsuperscript{23}

The devils are ordained to spread evil and concede punishment drawing similar doom to those pre-doomed to answer their biddings. Their role is thus merely instrumental in serving the Will of God, so put by Beelzebub;

\begin{quote}
our Conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be,
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep? (Bk. I, 143-52)
\end{quote}

Milton is absolutely in defence of the rebel Satan who is purged of the charge of treason levied by the scholastics, who do not consider Fate as the governing feature of his actions. He undertakes his excursion to earth, though knowing, that, "of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue", he has no other way out for "he cannot escape the terms of the fiction he finds himself in".\textsuperscript{24} He has to resolve to his "fictional function",\textsuperscript{25} which is "to make hostile
moves: he is the fiend, the enemy, 26 by fate, fated to duel not only with God but also against his dearest creation.

He is not free of evil, though many look down upon him considering him evil incarnate, yet his being consecrated to drawing evil at large in the universe, is mitigated when approached with this view of all pervading Fate. He is disdained and detested for having fallen to pride, the leading sin in Christian doctrine, which prompts him to treason and pugnacity against the Almighty. He is further abhorred for injecting Eve with same narcissism and deceiving her descendants in the long run. But he is purged of his crime when Christ too commits this crime. "The ringing repetition of ME in the speech of sacrifice of the Son is a little too grotesque", 27 which is, "at least a splendid reply to the argument that pride is the basic fault of all the characters who fall". 28
Endnotes


4 Ibid., p.652.

5 Ibid., p.652.

6 Werblowsky., p.133.

7 Ibid., p.137.

8 Ibid., p.130.


11 Ibid., p.132.

12 Carey, p.138.

13 Ibid., p.139.

14 Ibid., p.139.

15 Rajan, p.110.


17 Ibid., p.7.


21 Ibid., p.40.
22 Ibid., p.41.
23 Ibid., p.41.
24 Carey, p.138.
25 Ibid., p.136.
26 Ibid., p.136.
27 Empson, p.46.
28 Ibid., p.46.
Iqbal is a poet as well as a philosopher. It is difficult to decide whether he is more a poet or a philosopher, but one thing is certain that in his poetry a poet and a philosopher reciprocate to create enviable works of art. "He avoided calling himself a poet", 1 but "did not mind calling himself a thinker or even a seer" 2 despite the fact that "the poet in him had got the better of the philosopher". 3 Being a student of philosophy, he shows great interest in abstractions and metaphysics. His presentation of Iblis (Satan) and illustration of good and evil differ from orthodox religious illustrations, where good is blindly advocated and evil is preached to be avoided. He acknowledges evil as the prerequisite of man's nature, a yardstick by which man's virtue can be measured, and it is a motive that drives him to action. Iblis, a fascinating figure of Iqbal's poetry, perceived as the personification of evil and thus doomed to be hated by an orthodox theologian, is endowed with such a grandeur that presents him as an "unfortunate hero" 4 of the Divine drama of the creation of man. Iqbal is not prepared to accept a world having God but no Iblis, for it would be devoid of all charms:

زی اندیش گرور من گردننده
کنارد ورتکش شیطان بدر

Translation:
Never live in a world devoid of joy and zest,
Where God exists, but Satan does not exist.
The nature of Satan or Iblis is one of the secrets of the universe which poets, philosophers and mystics have tried to unveil in their respective domains. Mystical literature gives a varied range of interpretations regarding Iblis. He is a fallen angel prone to rebellion, the greatest monist, the greatest materialist and an eternally damned being; but for Iqbal he is the soul and spirit of the universe, a pivot round which the whole universe rotates, an impetus which sets everything to action.

In *Taskhir-I-Fitrat* (Conquest of Nature), a remarkable poem in *Payam-i-Mashriq* (The Message of the East), Iqbal has dealt with the Original Sin of Man and its challenges in the aftermath. The poem is divided into five parts; *Milad-i-Adam* (The Advent of Adam), *Inkar-i-Iblis* (Iblis' Refusal), *Aghawa-i-Adam* (Temptation of Adam), *Adam az Bahisht Baroon Amda ni Goed* (Adam's Speech after Expulsion from Paradise) and *Subh-i-Qayamat* (The Dawn of the Day of Judgement), and it can be called a *Paradise Lost* in miniature, as it gives a comprehensive account of Man's birth, his Fall owing to Iblis' temptation, his arrival in a new world along with his return to God and his trial on the Day of Judgment, a theme not dealt with in *Paradise Lost* or *Paradise Regained*. The poem is a compressed and condensed version of "the whole drama of Man – his creation, his fall and his redemption."

*Milad-I-Adam* (The Advent of Adam) is an artistic description of man's marvellous features which distinguish him from other creatures as the crown
The quest for knowledge and the zeal and zest of unravelling the mysteries of the universe are the salient features of man but Man could not exercise his faculties in the granted Paradise, as he was bound to lead an idle life of extreme humility and obedience. Exploring the world needs freedom, and Man did not have that freedom until he left Paradise as punishment of
accepting Iblis' temptations and neglecting God's commands. Iqbal admires Iblis for the boon done for the betterment of humanity, and he is perhaps the second Prometheus. The Greek god Prometheus stole fire from the Olympus for mankind, inviting the wrath of Zeus, and Iblis gave fire of reasoning and rationality to man, imparting a charm to his life on the one hand and conceding eternal damnation for himself on the other. Prometheus' "gift of fire to man, in defiance with Zeus, came to symbolize enlightenment and resistance to despotic authority" while Iblis' gift of reasoning and rationality changed man's life altogether by acquainting him with unknown charms. A difference, however, between these two is that the former knew that some day Hercules would come and liberate him, while there is no such possibility in the case of the latter. An echo of Prometheus' sayings

"I took from man expectancy of death" ...
... "I planted blind hope in the heart of man" ...
.... "I conferred the gift of fire" ...
... "I gave men sense, possessed them of mind" ...
... All manner of arts, men from Prometheus learned"

(ll. 253,255, 257, 445-6, 508)

is noticed in Iblis' declarations:

Translation:
The blood in the veins of the world
is lit up by my flame.
The tearing speed of wind is mine,
And mine is thunder's boom.
I forge the atoms' harmony,
The elements' concourse.
I burn, but also shape: I am
The fire that makes the glass.
The things I make I break to bits,
And scatter in the dust,
In order to create new forms
From fragments of those lost.
This restlessly revolving sky
Is a wave of my sea;
And in my throbbing substance dwells
The shape of things to be.

It is not an exaggerated account of his contributions, but indeed all charm in
life is because of the constant struggle bestowed by Iblis. Iblis infused in man
the spirit of the conquest of the universe, and the hustle and bustle of life is, no
doubt, because of this spirit.

The element of Iblis is fire and it is this fire which is the secret of the
life of all beings. Ibn-al-Arabi's saying that the fruits of paradise need the
warmth of hell for ripening connotes the importance of hell. The element of
angels is light, which according to Iblis is inferior to fire for two reasons; first,
that the latter manifests life, and the second that the former itself is the
manifestation of fire.⁷

Addressing the Omnipotent, the Devil speaks of his due;

Translation:
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

No doubt God is the creator, but Iblis is justified in saying;
Translation:
The body draws its soul from you
But I arouse the soul.
While You waylay with blissful peace,
I lead with action's call.

Iblis does not challenge the creative powers of God because he openly admits that He is the Creator of stars and He gave life to man, but he is equally justified in saying that the movement of stars is pledged by him and also in his declaration that it is he who infused the elements of zeal and zest in the spirit of man. Life is not a static existence, it is another name for perpetual action. In "The Refusal of Iblis", the former archangel is of the opinion that "he is the principle of life and motion in the universe". Life is a series of actions where nothing is everlasting except change. God, no doubt, gives life but the spirit of change is attributed to Iblis. Man was "born in the Divine lap, but was destined to become mature in the world of perception", found by Iblis. If Iblis had bowed in front of Adam, this element of change would have been alien, leaving the life idle:
Iblis introduces Man with his worth in the third part of the poem. An orthodox theologian would perhaps call him a seducer and tempter but in fact he is the well-wisher of mankind; though his aim is not good, the outcome is marvellous. Iblis’ motive is to beguile man and defeat him for his own cause. Man’s falling prey to his alluring tongue and acting upon his suggestions is obviously his success but his misleading turns out to be a blessing in disguise for the deluded fool. Iblis is praiseworthy in this respect, as it was he who introduced man with the charms of the life of perpetual longing and incessant struggle. In the peaceful atmosphere of the granted Paradise, Man’s potentials had no prospects for further development; he could not exercise his potentials there, as he had no opponent. Consequently, he had no idea of the charm of struggle. He was leading the life of a meek dove though he was falcon in terms of his potentials. It is Iblis who tells man that the charm is in leading the life of a falcon and not of a dove and peaceful life tranquillizes the potentials of the falcon and vice versa:

Translation:
A life of struggle, strain and stress
Is better than eternal rest
When a dove strains hard at its net
An eagle’s heart beats in its breast
He asks man to bid farewell to the life of utmost humility, submissiveness, supplication and prostration and set out for action. Paradise is the place where all desires are fulfilled and the fulfilment of desires is the end of the spirit of life, or, the loss of the spirit of life which is worse than death even. Charm is not in the attainment but in the endeavour in the way of attainment, for the taste of success lies in the efforts made for success. "Success is counted sweetest by those who never succeed", because they have an earnest desire for success and, after the desire is fulfilled, it no more remains the sweetest. Iblis asks man to open his eyes and visit a new place which is opposite to his present abode, as it is the place of continuous struggle. Iblis calls for the renunciation of the dull land of Paradise as it is divorced from struggle, and tempts him to venture forth into the unknown world to test his potentials and feel the taste of struggle:

Translation:

O you are fit for nothing but
Abject obeisance like a slave.
Like a tall cypress stand erect,
O you who do not act but crave.
These streams of milk and honey have

Translation:
Deprived you of the strength to act.
Come, take a hearty draught of wine
From the cup of the vine direct.
Good and evil, virtue and sin.
Are myths created by your Lord
Come, taste the joy of action and
Go forth to seek your due reward
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 a tiny, worthless drop;
Become a shining, priceless pearl.
Descend from Eden’s halecyon heights
And plunge into the life-stream’s swirl.
Unfold your eagle-wings and soar
And shed the blood of timid quails.
O for an eagle it is death
To live within its eyrie’s walls.

Iqbal is an ardent believer of evolution in life but he does not believe in the Darwinian theory of evolution; rather, his views about evolution of man were similar to the views of Rumi and Bergson. Life in Paradise was the first step of existence, and the abandonment of Paradise was inevitable for its further development. The paradise that man would win through his efforts would be many times better than that lost Paradise. The First Sin of Man was thus necessary for the development of his potentials and Iblis’ victory over Man was in fact his last success and man’s first one. Man’s success, however, is paradoxical as apparently he is defeated but his first loss leads to a series of achievements. Iblis, however, deserves his due, for he introduced Man with his own self; he told him the way to lead life in the true sense; he cultivated the passion for quest in his mind; he was an eye-opener who showed him a different world; he gave him the consciousness of his own identity; and, above all, none but he is the cognoscente who introduced Man with the passion of
love and told him that not the union but the separation matured love. In Paradise, Man was nothing more than a humble creature of God, like numerous other creatures, but with the expulsion he achieved the status of the supreme creation, and the lover – beloved relationship between God and man made its origin with this expulsion. Iblis, thus, is the pioneer of the passion of love who, out of his deep association with God, "does not want to share his eternal love of God and his complete surrender to His will with anyone else." Iblis is the true lover of God who cannot accept a partner in his love and, unlike other angels, does not prostrate, which, though on the one hand is the cause of his damnation, actually reflects his intense love. His fall from the status of archangel to a damned creature shows his intensity of love and extreme indifference to the worldly status. Iblis thus sets a precedence of sacrifice in the way of love and makes it clear to the world that the true lover is he who can afford loss in the way of love as, in this way, he has to part with material benefits quite often. Following this precedence, Adam too quits Paradise and thus a lover-beloved relationship replaces the former Creator – creation relationship. Jalal-ud-Din Rumi is of the opinion that "intellect is due to Satan but love is due to Adam". This view is held by many who see only one side of the picture. Iblis’ refusal is attributed to his intellect, as he, in his defence, said that he did not bow before Adam because he (Adam) was made of inferior stuff and thus did not deserve that:

\[
\text{Forbidden to me is to bow before you, O Adam!}
\]

31
I am no creature of mere light
That I should bow to man.
He is a base-born thing of dust
And I am of fire born.

But those who hold this opinion only ignore the other facet either due to lack of knowledge or out of inherited bias and enmity. On seeing the other side of the picture, man is captivated by the passions of sympathy for the fallen soul, as his disobedience is not owing to his self-conceit, but it is because of his ardent love for his Master. He has not learnt to bow in front of any one other than God, and he is so committed that he refuses to do that and accepts damnation in the way of love, thus laying the foundations of the passions of faithfulness and sacrifice. Iqbal rates his refusal high, for in so doing he attests the oneness of God:

\[
\text{... When I deny I but affirm}
\text{And what I say is better}
\text{Than what I Withhold.}\]

Besides Iqbal, there are some others in Urdu literature like Abd-ur-Rehman Bajnori, Rashid Ahmed Siddiqi etc., who hold similar ideas, possibly because of his influence. Bajnori confers the title of \textit{Muallim ul Malkoot} (The Tutor of Angels) upon Iblis. In his poem \textit{Muallim-ul-Malkoot}, he asserts that Iblis' refusal and the obedience of angels have given birth to two different traditions: of love and of submission; the first attributed to the former and the

\* All the translations of \textit{Javid Namah} are taken from \textit{Pilgrimage of Eternity}, translated by Shaikh Mahmud Ahmad, Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1977.
second to the latter. According to him, it is Iblis who first of all recognized God:

\[ \text{Translation:} \quad \text{I am he who first knew Him through enlightenment} \]
\[ \quad \text{I, too, was the first to see Him in the universe}^* \]

For such a devoted fellow, it was indeed impossible to bow before anyone other than God, so he had two options at his disposal; one of accepting God’s commands at the cost of his extreme love and, the other, of refusing, thus inviting God’s wrath on the one hand but upholding love on the other. Iblis could not sacrifice his love so he sacrificed his status to his love and elevated the dignity of love. He did not stick to his status at the cost of love but lifted love at the cost of his status, accepting eternal damnation in the way of love:

\[ \text{Translation:} \quad \text{God’s command though it be that I bow before Adam, it is simply impossible for me to bow before any but God.}^* \]

A reflection of this view is found in Rashid Ahmed Siddiqi, an ardent lover of Iqbal. He says;

\[ \text{Translation:} \quad \text{He who has seen the universe in its true beauty, knows that to bow before any but God is impossible.}^* \]
The advent of Adam had fatigued Divine powers, whilst Iblis' refusal caused them to flourish again. The refusal of Iblis was a mirror in which Reality first of all identified itself.

Iblis' refusal is no doubt praiseworthy in this respect as even while committing evil in the perception of others, he actually confirmed the oneness of God. To Iqbal the refusal of Iblis is a symbol of the denial of all gods (except One) and in his opinion this refusal is the foundation of an exemplary society. He considers refusal and affirmation complementary for each other. God liked his refusal so much that it is given primary importance and the denial of all gods precedes the affirmation of one God.

The determinants of the creation of the Universe are two. Motion arises from refusal while rest comes out of affirmation. The beginning of all action in the Universe takes its rise from refusal. Hence it is, the foremost goal of God's creature. To say 'nay' to anyone other than God is the thing that renews the Universe.

Iqbal's concept of love has two aspects, one that love cannot be shared and the other that the real charm of love lies in separation, not union and Iblis is the trend-setter in this case also. Love that is requited loses its charm with the time being, but unrequited love is a perpetual torment and it keeps on burning one's heart for union with the beloved. Iblis is leading from the front in this respect too and in Javid Namah, he is given the title of Khawaja-i-Ahl-

Translation: Prof. Raoof Jamal
*Firaq* (The Leader of the Souls in Separation) as it was he who first of all willingly separated himself from his beloved. Iqbal does not look down upon him and the title given to him is neither ironical nor disdainful or contemptuous. The theory of separation in love distinguishes Iqbal from other poets, as the longing for union with the beloved is a common phenomenon with all, but this theme is relatively untouched and Iblis’ separation from God is probably the fountainhead of this theory.

On excursion to different horizons of the universe in *Javid Namah*, the poet meets distinguished figures from all walks of life, without any discrimination of good or evil. The poem is given the title of the Islamic Divine Comedy as it resembles Dante’s *Divine Comedy* to a great extent. Iqbal meets Iblis on the Jupiter, where he has earlier met people like Mansur—al-Hallaj, Ghalib and Qurat-ul-Ain Tahira. Iblis’ presence on the horizon of Jupiter indicates that he is not an ordinary figure. All of a sudden, the world goes dark, and out of this dark emerges a flash of light which further assumes the shape of an old man dressed in black and surrounded by pitch dark clouds of smoke. Rumi, who is the same to Iqbal as Virgil to Dante, informs Iqbal about him, on his query and calls him the leader of the souls in separation:

* S.A. Vahid: *Studies in Iqbal*
Translation:

... In a while the world went dark, all space
To bounds of spaceless regions somber turned
And out of this pervading night did flash
A flame, from which appeared an aged man.
He was attired in black and smoke around
His person coiled. The sage of Rum informed,
He leads all those with separation sore,
He is all fire and holds a cup of gore.

The imagery of light and dark connotes specific meanings. Iblis is the leader of dark forces, but actually he appears as a streak of light in the pitch-dark atmosphere. Like a candle which burns to give light to others, he too burns in the passion of unrequited love and imparts charm to man. He is a rare synthesis of antitheses. He is burning from head to toe in his own fire of passion and his cup is full of his own blood; he is choosy in speech, and smile is alien to him; he is gifted with eyes which can see the hidden secrets of the heart; he is a drunkard, a sceptic, a sage, a philosopher and a theologian to boot and above all he is firm and committed in his abstinence which lies in his natural extraneousness towards union with the beloved. His philosophy of love is different from that of mystics who forsake worldly pleasures in order to enjoy Divine reward. They abandon themselves to the temporary pleasures for greater benefits in the long run which hints upon their self-centred approach. Iblis, on the other hand, abdicates his glory thus marking complete separation with God, not because he denies Him, but in order to save his love from the least tinge of impurity. He cannot tolerate the contamination of his deepest emotions for his Beloved. Iqbal has touched this theme in his Urdu poetry too,
as he has great regard for abandonment in the way of love. In one of his earlier poems, he calls for a self-relinquishment different from target-oriented approach of common mystics:

\[ \text{Translation: } \]

O preacher, in the ideal world you attain your aim only by absolute abstinence. True, you have abandoned this world; now take my advice and abandon the next world, too.

He further elaborated the same idea in Taskhir-i-Fitrat, where Iblis, while tempting Adam, tells him that the charm of love is in its consistency, the secret of which is the complete indifference to union, thus giving eternal life to perpetual longing and constant burning for union. On the other hand, love decays in union;

\[ \text{Translation: } \]

You have not learnt this lesson yet; Fulfilment dooms desire to death. You know what is eternal life? To burn anew with each new breath.

The idea is developed to perfection in the poem Namoodar Shudan Khawaja-i-Ahl-i-Firaq Iblis (The Appearance of the Leader of Separatists-Iblis), thus:

\[ \text{Translation: } \]

... The bliss of Union's Is foreign to his stuff, so he forsakes Eternal beauty, chooses to live like An eremite.

* Translation: Prof. Raoof Jamal
Separation with the Ultimate Beauty demands a great deal of courage, selflessness, truthfulness and extreme concentration of the passions of love, and all these qualities find perfect exhibition in Iblis. He uses refusal as a tool for the cultivation of inextinguishable fire of passion in his heart.

Once decided, he does not give any second thought to his decision. He is misinterpreted by the theologians who, in their enmity, distort the facts and give his renunciation a different touch, presenting it as denial of God, which is something totally out of the question for him as he had not only seen Him with open eyes, but had been very close to Him:

Translation:

I am no denier of God, Be not deceived
By my exterior; see my inner self.

And if he had not said 'No' that day, he would have committed the sin of the denial of the oneness of God:

Translation:

I would be mean of intellect if I Denied the Lord, since in His Presence once I stood.

He is not prepared to give up separation, and the poet’s argument that separation is the worst thing in God’s eyes cannot shake his firm resolution. He is satisfied in separation because it is the source of his life.
Translation:

"Transcend thy cult of isolation now,"
I said to him, 'Divorce is in my eyes
The worst of things' "Disunion's day is filled
With rapture", he replied, "its ache and throb
And quiver do compose life's music sweet.
Of union I shall breathe not even a word,
For fusion if I seek, nor I survive
Nor He remains."

He is so steadfast and committed that he has never thought of reunion
and the words of hundreds of prophets could not budge him:

Translation:

Immersed he is still in the blazing war
'Twixt good and evil, and though he has seen
A hundred prophets, yet he dares deny
The sign of his ardent love for God is his unparalleled commitment
with the task assigned to him. He undertook the task of misleading Adam's
progeny and he is so highly occupied with it that he has no leisure:

Translation:

"Who always dwells in action more than me?.
It is such toil that for one Sabbath I
Have never been free ... "

The point is thought provoking as it hints upon his being a votary of God and
acting in full confidence with Him, which indicates that God was well aware
that he would not prostrate before Adam. No doubt God knew it, as He is
omniscient and He could stop him from doing so if He wanted, for He is omnipotent, but He did not do that which shows that He Himself wanted to have a test of Iblis’ love as well as man’s potentials in the long run. Iqbal is suspicious about Iblis’ having got enough power to turn down God’s command and he smells a rat in his refusal and considers him a confidant of God;

Translation:

You ask me how dared he act contrary to Your command
But how can I know that? After all he is a confidant of Yours, not mine.

God is taken as Omnipotent, Omniscient and thoroughly Good. In the presence of these three factors, it is apparently difficult to reconcile the existence of evil in the universe, as it connotes that either God is unable to remove it, which is in conflict with the prerequisites of being a deity, or the second that He does not want to remove it, which further aggravates the crux as it is at odds with His being wholly Good. These questions have disturbed mankind, irrespective of religious associations since time immemorial, as Iqbal says:

How is it ... possible to reconcile the goodness and omnipotence of God with the immense volume of evil in His creation? This painful problem is really the crux of Theism.

Good and evil are two facets of the same coin to him, as both contribute to the development of mankind. He further says:

* Translation: Prof. Raoof Jamal
Good and evil ..., though opposites, must fall within the same whole. There is no such thing as an isolated fact; for facts are systematic wholes, the elements of which must be understood by mutual reference.

He is not much worried about the existence of evil in the universe and accepts it as a necessary requirement for the fulfilment of Divine plan, as (perhaps) without it how could God's position (Omnipotence) be understood? Iqbal believes in determinism, to a reasonable extent, and addressing God he holds God equally responsible for his shortcomings:

Translation:

When on the Day of Judgement the full account of my actions in the world is presented to You, it will not only put me to shame but You, too will have to bow Your head in shame.

He accepts evil as the touchstone for the evaluation of one's contribution to the overall progress of mankind. Taking this angle of evil into consideration, it no longer remains terrible, neither does Iblis look evil incarnate, instead, his position is reconciled to an egotist, blessed with the qualities of self-confidence and indomitable courage, who believes in the philosophy of separation and whose dissatisfaction ignites human faculties of exploring the world. This view of Iblis traces its origin in "Manichean and Kabalist literatures". So the role of Iblis is to excite and create; he can make nothing but he is involuntarily effective in another way. He is a creative force, but of a different kind, as outwardly "he wills the evil and creates the good". It is through his insinuations that man's creative faculties are evoked

* Translation: Prof. Raoof Jamal
and he performs action, no matter according to the temptation or otherwise. He is thus a catalyst, which, itself, does not take active part in an action but facilitates it indirectly and “removing him from the world will mean removing the problem of evil, which will mean a dislocation of divine plan”.\(^{25}\)

Love teaches sacrifice. Iblis, no doubt, hurt by God’s indifference towards his love in making man His vicegerent and beloved, did not prostrate himself but this did not reduce his love for God. Iblis’ love has three angles; one, expressed in his refusal from prostration to non God; the other, that of his least concern with union; and the third one is his cooperation with God in the fulfilment of Divine plans. He extended his cooperation to mankind, though guised in enmity, for the betterment of God’s world on the one hand and for the ornamentation of man’s life, on the other.

Translation:

\[
\text{دَلَّلُتُ عَلَى الْكَرَّةَ وَأَنْتَ مَنْ عَلَى الْكَرَّةَ}\\
\text{أَفْنَحَ مَنْ عَلَى الْكَرَّةَ}\\
\text{أَفْنَحَ}\\
\]

I left prostration off, and wrought a tune\(^{42}\)
Out of the clash of good and bad.

He developed a unique love-hate relationship with man characterized by affection, envy, emulation and hatred. As he could not let down his self respect, he waged war against mankind, but he could not go beyond bounds in his enmity with man owing to the reconciling factor of the common Beloved. His enmity with man was, therefore, mitigated because of man’s closeness to God. He does not leave man alone to face the wrath of God, rather he accepts his share in pain and distress willingly:
Translation:

To share man's misery I for him
Accept the wrath and fury of the Lord

There is an inseparable bond between Iblis' love and his 'Khudi' that is self consciousness. The most widely discussed facet of his personality is his haughtiness, arrogance and conceit and his hypersensitivity about his self-respect is the root cause of this pride. This self-consciousness plays a leading role in the character building of an individual. Iblis, through his refusal, has given the lesson not to accept tyranny and to stand up against trespassing. His place was usurped by God for Man and he bluntly refused to accept that. He is the first to rebel against the plundering of rights. He had been very close to God, so he had become quite possessive and could not think of being placed in a position inferior to a newly-made creature. Anyone else of his calibre and position, if placed in such a situation, would behave in the similar manner. Whether he was right or wrong is a separate question but one thing is clear that he taught man to fight for his rights. Moreover, it is as a result of his falling a prey to Iblis' temptation that man acquired the consciousness of his potentials.

The understanding of Self produces a desire which gains vehemence in love which kindles a new fire of passion into dull existence. The Self is thus in a state of constant flux of emotions, desires, longings and affections. While the pantheists call for self-mortification, Iqbal is all out for self-exaltation. Criticizing pantheism he says:
... the self being real and existent, its end cannot be self-absorption in the Absolute, as the pantheists maintain. That would imply the very negation of the ego. The thought that, 'I am non-existent, non-real', is revolting both to the thinking and the practical self of man. 'Cogito Ergo Sum' i.e. 'I think, therefore, I exist', is the historical utterance of Descartes. All thinking presupposes a subject who thinks. Therefore the subject of our thinking process does exist'.

Iqbal has rejected the absolute union with the Absolute Ego many times in his works, for in so doing ego is completely dissolved into Absolute Ego, resulting in loss of identity, which is not acceptable to him. Iblis marking separation with the Absolute is, therefore, in no way condemnable, as union at the cost of the loss of identity is the negation of life created by God. He acquired the sagation of his existence and did what his Self demanded from him. Not confined to the mere exaltation of his own Self, he further made man conscious of his Self, which is, no doubt, a great contribution toward humanity.

Translation:

I let flames shoot out from my field and made
Man reach volition from fatality

Iblis is so satisfied in the domains of his ego that he is not prepared to reconcile. In the poem Gabriel wa Iblis, he is found in high morale, defeating the former in reasoning. The poem is in the form of a dialogue between two old friends. Gabriel addresses Iblis with the title of old friend and recalls time spent together, finally tempting him to reconcile, to which the response of the latter is praiseworthy. He is not prepared to reconcile with God as it would not only cost him the renunciation of his ego but also deprive the world of its
charms. He is the principle of action and, after this cognition, he cannot survive in a dull and motionless world. It is he who is the fountainhead of charms of life and prefers remaining in the same state to the pacification with God.

Translation:

Ah, Gabriel! You have never guessed my mystery; alas!
Maddened for ever I left upon Heaven’s floor my broken glass.
Impossible, Oh! Impossible I should dwell here again;
Silent, how silent all this realm – no palace no loud lane!
I whose despair is the fire by which the universe is stirred,
What should I do – all hope renounce, or hope yet in God’s word?*

Gabriel, now in a satirical tone, reminds him of the loss conceded through disobedience, but this too cannot shake Iblis’ firm determination. Gabriel employs all his tactics to change the mind of Iblis; he is seen talking of past, then reminding him of the luxuries of heaven and finally cursing him for his refusal, but all the efforts end in smoke. He is as steadfast now as he was on the day of the advent of Man, and he is not prepared to compromise on his identity at any cost. The materialistic status and lost luxuries do not haunt him, for he can afford parting with these things for his identity and love but the reverse is not acceptable. Gabriel is no ideal for him as he looks at life as a mere spectator, while all the charm of life is only because of Iblis:

* V.G. Kiernan: Poems From Iqbal
But 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?*

Iblis has grown masochistic, and pain and affliction mean nothing to
him, for he is satisfied with being the adversary of God. He is not an ordinary
being, rather he is the one and only who pricks like thorn in the heart of God:

Translation:
In the heart of the Almighty like a pricking thorn I lie;
You only cry for ever "God, oh God, oh God most high!"

Self needs an opponent for its flourishing and Iblis is so particular
about it that he wants to have a more and more powerful enemy. He begs
mercy and pleads man not to chase him, as he does not want to have a futile
duel with a weak enemy.

Translation:
O Adam! I implore you to release me from the fire in which I
am forever burning. Thus can you undo the knot in my purpose.

Nala-i-Iblis (The Wail of Iblis) gives a new hue to Iblis' self-
consciousness. He is worried as man's company has spoiled him and his
vulnerability has devitalized his powers. He is not happy with man's

* V.G. Kieman: Poems from Iqbal
* V.G. Kieman: Poems from Iqbal
acceptance of his each and every bidding and regrets the least consciousness of his Self. He has become fed up with man’s preparedness towards his insinuations. Man is prone to evil and equally habituated to blame Iblis for his own evil-centredness, despite the fact that it is the prey itself who beseeches the hunter to trap him.

Translation:

O Lord of good and bad, man’s company
And commerce has degraded me.
Not once my bidding dares he to defy, his self
He realizes not ..............................................

The victim himself to the hunter says,
“Entrap me”; From his pliancy I seek Refuge.

The competition between Self and Not Self makes them strive to outclass each other. Man’s being prone to victimization hints upon the fact that he has not yet achieved the proper perception of himself.

Translation:

... never feels
His dust the thrill of disobedience;
Unlit as it is by the ego’s spark.

_Nala-i-Iblis_ is marked by a melancholic strain which soaks the words in satire. Man, who is the crown of creation, is found paralysed by his evil
instinct, while Iblis, generally taken as evil incarnate, is placed in an enviable position and he even looks down upon man. The difference between the two is the ambition, which is the reflection of Self, the governing force of the universe. The cognition of Self is obligatory for the comprehension of Not Self i.e. the universe and God. "The universe, according to Iqbal, consists of two finite things; conscious self and extended matter, both of which depend upon the third element, God, the Infinite Being."²⁷ The awareness of Self is the basis of the perception of existence, as revealed in Javid Namah in the poet's conversation with Syed Ali Hamdani:

Translation:

I asked him, "What is Existent and what is Non-existent? (And) What is the meaning of the praised and that of the condemned?"

He said, "The Existent is that which (or he who) would reveal itself (or himself). This is so because revelation of self is the absolute demand of Existence."

The proper comprehension of the universe and God is dependent upon the perception of Self, as it devises the path to further explorations. The thorough perception of the universe takes place in three steps and this is the first one;
The first exploration is "Know Thyself", that is, seeing oneself in one's own light. The second exploration is seeing oneself in the light of others. The third explorations is the effort to know God, and to thus to see oneself with the help of the light of the Absolute Reality.

Iqbal’s Iblis is not merely evil incarnate; he is a multidimensional figure, gifted with enviable features. He is the spirit of life, a creative force, a true lover, a monotheist, a sage, an instrument of God, an enemy of man as well as God, a confidant of God, a well-wisher of mankind and, above all, an extremely self-conscious being. Some orientalists like Prof. Annemarie Schimmel and A. Bausani etc. see a Christian tinge in Iqbal’s Iblis and consider him as an independent force of evil at variance with the Good; however, it is not so. Iblis’ ambition is at its peak throughout Iqbal’s poetry and it outshines Milton’s self-begot Satan in this respect. Unlike Satan in the Paradise Lost, Iblis hardly undergoes any drift regarding valour and courage. This trait of his personality may lead to a misconception about his independent being, as seen in comparative context, there is much room for such a conception. The ambition attributed to Iblis does not express his independence; rather, it is the reflection of his self-consciousness. Certain verses, on isolated observation, do give a hint of his independence e.g:

Kon Surat-e-aas ka bhi aas ka Surat
Jo yeh ke humain ber mar de naan kaa asur dhana
Yeh hamein dastaasen dinoon, yeh hourse yeh burdaar
Yeh hamein dastaasen dinoon, yeh hourse yeh burdaar

49
Translation:

1.  ----------------------------- Who shall quench
The devouring blaze in him whose paroxysm
The fires that rage in [Iblis'] soul have fed?

2.  ----------------------------- No deeper skill
Than yours in Adam's nature has He whom men,
Poor, innocents! Magnify as their preserver.

3.  Earth, sun and moon, celestial spheres, all realms
Of matter, lie in the hollow of my hand.*

But when seen in the context, the underlying fact is revealed. Iblis is extremely powerful but not Omnipotent and at places he is apprehensive about his lethal combat with a perfect man. He wants to have a duel with such a man, though he knows that it would result in his defeat:

Translation:

1.  ----------------------------- O God!
Confront me with a single faithful man,
May I perchance gain bliss in my defeat.

2.  For yet with every breath I dread that people's
Awakening, whose religious true behest
Is to hold watch and reckoning over all
The universe.*

He is such a blend of antitheses in whose personality apparently conflicting features are combined together. Like beads in a rosary, the conflicting features are tied with the thread of love and held by the firm knot of Self. He is never seen as an absolute evil; rather, he is more a creative force than a destructive one and he plays his role not only in the materialistic betterment of the world but also in the character-building of the individual.

* V.G. Kieman: Poems from Iqbal

* V.G. Kieman: Poems from Iqbal
Endnotes


2 Ibid., p.88.

3 Ibid., p.88.


9 Ibid., n.p.


11 Hakim, p.553.


13 Ali. p.266.


15 Ibid., p.67.

16 Ibid., p.68.

17 Ibid., p.68.

18 Khayal, p.84.

19 Hakim: p.553.

21 Ibid., n. p.


23 Ibid., p.67.

24 Ibid., p.67.

25 Ibid., p.66.


CHAPTER 3

SATAN VERSUS IBLIS

In him East and West met though it would be too much to say that they were united. (R.A. Nicholson)

Iqbal was the child of the East but matured in the lap of the West. It was but natural for him to assimilate some ideas from the West, but his treatment has given them a totally new look. Like Milton, in whose literary ventures Greek and Latin myth find vent, Iqbal’s works are also tinged with Western philosophical concepts, but are dealt in a purely subjective, novel style. On the surface one may find some similarities between Satan and Iblis but it would be too naive to declare it a mere imitation, for there are some drastic differences of comparatively greater significance between the two, although they cannot undermine the similarities. In the treatment of common themes some similarities definitely occur but differences play a vital role in carrying out further research. Iblis coincides with Satan in Promethean disposition, courage, conviction and moral consciousness but he is invested with a greater depth of background ideas.

The Promethean strain runs through the whole Paradise Lost. There are places where Satan seems merely a representation of Prometheus. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky observes:
Milton in [some] passages, where he is describing the fierce and unrelenting spirit of Satan, seems very plainly to have copied after the picture that Aeschylus gives of Prometheus.²

Prometheus comports with Satan as well as Iblis; however, he shares greater things in common with Satan. Prometheus and Satan hold similar views on matters like courage, conviction and firm resolution along with yearning for liberty with patience for survival and mutual concurrence in the possibility of beating their respective adversaries. Both have developed firm hatred for their respective antagonists and are on the look out for appropriate occasion to attack. Prometheus is contented with the prophecy that some day Hercules would come and rescue him from the torture, however, Satan’s case is different. He knows that he will have to rely on his own potentials in his combat. As no Hercules would come for his rescue, he vows to carry on eternal war, no matter open or beguiled, against God and mankind. He drags man into his fight against God, starting with his falling to pride. Moreover Prometheus is a god himself while Satan, though not a god, is at least “self-begot and self-raised” as claimed by him in Book V (860), therefore not much inferior to the god – Prometheus.

Iblis, on the other hand, is not second to either of the two in courage, conviction and resolution. He is the enemy of God but his enmity has not blinded him to the extent of extreme hatred, rather he is still prone to love God with comparatively greater intensity. He is perpetually damned but is even then quite satisfied with his position and does not have any longing for the
recovery of his former position. Unlike Prometheus who is god and Satan who is self-begot and self-raised being, Iblis is neither god nor a primordial being, but a creature of all-creating God. The similarity, however, is in their gifts of fire, knowledge, reasoning and rationality given to the mankind. Satan’s and Iblis’ introducing mankind with forbidden knowledge is in keeping with the Promethean act of providing fire to mankind. Prometheus speaks of his deeds thus

I took from man the expectancy of death  
I planted blind hope in the heart of man  
I conferred the gift of fire

Satan, shocked on knowing that knowledge was forbidden to mankind, communicates his intentions thus;

? Can it be sin to know?  
Can it be death? And do they only stand  
By ignorance? …  
… I will excite their minds  
With more desire to know, and to reject  
Envious commands. (Bk. IV, 517-524)

Iblis summarizes his deeds of pumping the world with the real spirit of life and exciting the creative faculties of man. He is the creature who procures evil but the outcome is good.
Translation: The blood in the veins of the world
Is lit up by my flame.
The tearing speed of wind is mine,
And mine is thunder's boom.
I forge the atoms' harmony,
The elements' concourse.
I burn, but also shape: I am
The fire that makes the glass.
The things I make I break to bits,
And scatter in the dust,
In order to create new forms
From fragments of those lost.
This restlessly revolving sky
Is a wave of my sea;
And in my throbbing substance dwells
The shape of things to be.

There is unanimity of ideas in this respect and both Satan and Iblis emerge as reflections of Prometheus but except the chronological order, which is not very reliable, there is no sound proof in defence of this statement. Iqbal's whole poetry is marked with the edification of the life of strife and effort, therefore only the reading of Aeschylus and Milton cannot be said to have revealed this aspect of Iblis to him.

Satan is equipped with a high degree of fictional courage and he is firmly stuck to his conviction of being in perpetual conflict with Heaven's Almighty King. He hypnotizes the reader with his courageous speeches and bold claims like:

... What though the field be lost?
All is not lost – the unconquerable will
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome? (Bk. I, 105-9)

And

We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war
Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe. (Bk. I, 120-3)
Though his extreme courage, through which he resolves to undertake eternal war against the Almighty appears like a folly, it wins spontaneous applause for him and so Raleigh declares him the hero:

His (Satan's) very situation of fearless antagonist of Omnipotence makes him either a fool or a hero, and Milton is far indeed from permitting us to think him a fool.³

But his temporary courage vanishes when the time of action draws closer. In the council at Pandemonium Moloch's bold suggestion of outright assault on Heaven is not paid any heed

My sentence is for open war. Of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need; not now,
For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest —
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend — sit lingering here,
Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of his tyranny who reigns
By our delay? (Bk. II, 51-60)

Instead, a more rational and less demanding, but morally depraved, proposal of invading man is accepted, obviously because attacking Heaven might endanger the position of the infernal spirits by exposing them to greater vulnerability. Satan's asset, "courage never to submit or yield" (Bk. I, 108) and "not to be overcome" (Bk. I, 109) is yielded to cunning and overcome by cowardice.

Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven Err not) — another World, the happy seat
Of some new race, called Man, about this time
To be crated ... less
In power and excellence.  

The conscience of Satan does not prick him when he undertakes the excursion to Heaven to attack a creature, not only weaker than him but also too innocent to inflict any harm upon him. He violates the moral code of conduct by plotting treachery against man before his coming into existence.

Satan’s courage dwindles, his moral consciousness flickers and his conviction appears to be inferior when compared with Iblis’ chivalry. The former has dragged man into his war against God, practically confining it to committing atrocities upon him, the latter, however, is the direct enemy of man, who refused to bend a supplicant knee before Man, because he did not think him worthy of that, as he was superior to him in birth as well as in piety and, further, he was no god.

Translation: I am no creature of mere light
That I should bow to man
He is a base-born thing of dust
And I am of fire born

Iblis is so courageous that he dares to act upon his own will, contrary to God’s Will, because God’s Will was not justified in his perception. He has spent hundreds of years in worship of none but God, with full dogmatic fervour, assimilating the fact of apotheosizing God only and rejecting all other deities. He is such a great monist that he never prostrates before Adam even on the commands of God Himself. The fall of Satan is because of his pride in not
accepting the creative faculties of the Son of God, which in the respective religious scenario is the renunciation of God's qualities, which is a heinous sin of reprimandable nature. Satan in his pride wags war against God, which no more remains against God but goes against Man because, unlike the Almighty, he is easily vulnerable. His proud denial is not a heroic deed but a display of folly, while the courageous invasion of man, rather than God, to humiliate God, is the demonstration of villainous moral debauchery, treachery, cunning, wickedness, cowardice, or anything except heroic valour. On the contrary, Iblis is a courageous and outspoken enemy of man and, through him, of God also. Though he has detested God, he is not guilty of the breach of moral code of conduct. He is stuck to his dual moral conviction towards God as well as man. His refusal to prostrate before Adam is not immoral; it is rather a proof of his high moral consciousness, which does not let him compromise on his basic belief. In so doing he in fact proves that his refusal is many times better than acceptance:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Translation:} & \quad \text{When I deny I but affirm} \\
& \text{And what I say is better} \\
& \text{Than what I withhold}
\end{align*}
\]

He plays a vital role in the character building of man. He is a disguised friend of man whose denial has given a new twist to the life of Man, introducing him with the charm which would be alien to mankind, if he(Adam) obeyed God's command.
Satan is second to Iblis in terms of moral consciousness as well as courage. Satan is not totally devoid of moral values, but is seen at the height of morality off and on in *Paradise Lost* and B. Rajan is right to say that "Milton’s Satan is not presented in a moral vacuum". After Book I, however, he undergoes a moral decay which affects his courage also. Satan’s moral is perverted and his courage reduced to conspiracy. Though he hardly looks evil incarnate, he is prone to evil. E.M. W. Tillyard remarks:

> How remote Satan is from essential evil can be seen, if you compare him with Macbeth and Iago respectively. Plainly, he resembles Macbeth and not Iago.

Satan shares a wide range of characteristics with Iago but even if he is accepted as Macbeth, like Macbeth he cannot be supported on moral grounds. Macbeth’s tragedy ensues out of his moral perversion, yet Macbeth is more courageous and less perverted than Satan. “The goodness, happiness and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior”, says C.S. Lewis. The moral goodness of both Macbeth and Satan is exposed; however, Satan’s position is more critical. Macbeth, motivated by his inordinate volition for rule, kills his benefactor Duncan, which despite being a highly immoral act, loses its intensity when compared with Satan’s revenge. His quarrel is with God and after being defeated once he cannot gather enough courage for another explicit attack. Instead, he gives vent to his frustration by plotting against a weaker creature, for the satisfaction of his hurt ego. He always goes for the weaker enemy in order to satisfy his lust of supremacy. Not to speak of
attack on Heaven, he does not want to face Adam even and goes rather for the weaker option. Eve, quite in consistence with his cowardice, which always seeks to exploit a weaker opponent. Finding Eve alone, he celebrates this appropriate moment thus;

... let me not let pass
Occasion which now smiles: behold alone
The Woman, opportune to all attempts;
Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould;
Foe not informidable, exempt from wound,
I not; so much hath Hell debased, and pain
Enfeebled me, to what I was in Heaven. (Bk. IX, 479-88)

This Satan who himself confesses his fragility has no comparison with the chivalric figure of Iblis who seduces Adam in a manner as elevated as his fall. Contrary to the ignoble means of seduction used by Satan, Iblis openly advises Adam to step forth into a life of perpetual action, totally different from the static existence in the Paradise. He looks down upon Man’s effortless life which has paralysed his potentials, and invites him to consort with him to a new world; a world of action, not of mere supplication. He teaches Man not to relish the heavenly provisions in Paradise, but to resort to his own potentials to substitute them, as their taste can better satisfy the urge.

Translation: 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
It is the glorious outcome of his teachings that Man bids farewell to the
granted Paradise and takes up the effort of winning a better paradise for him.

Translation: ... in your furnace earth and water
Became a planet panting with hot life
We, [and also the Man] once Heaven’s simpletons, with you for teacher
Have come to knowledge.*

Translation: One does not set much value to Paradise granted
Your paradise is concealed in your life blood.*

The factor which mainly prompts Iqbal to glorify Iblis is his extreme
self-consciousness, which is a reflection of his love. He expresses his
sentiments about Iblis thus;

I hope I shall not be offending the reader when I say that I have
certain amount of admiration for the devil. By refusing to
prostrate himself before Adam, whom he honestly believed to
be his inferior, he revealed a high sense of self-respect, a trait of
character, which in my opinion ought to redeem him from his
spiritual deformity ... And I believe God punished him not
because he refused to make himself low before the progenitor
of enfeebled humanity, but because he declined to give absolute
obedience to the will of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe.®

The world is comprised of individual Self and supra-individual Not Self,
therefore the awareness of Self is complementary for the comprehension of
Not Self. Iqbal believes that;

All life is individual, God is an individual. He regards the
existence of nature relative to the self, if there is no self, there
can be no not-self. The not-self has thus the signet of relativity
impressed upon it, and only exists because the self affirms
itself.7

* V.G. Kiernan: Poem: From Iqbal
* S.A. Vahid: Iqbal: His Art and Thought.
Love and Self have an inseparable bond. Both are opposite to each other, yet they are firmly held through mutual attraction. Love longs for union but Self hinders, because Self has an unending desire of manifestation, which comes to an end in the bliss of union. Iblis' self-consciousness did not let him bow before a creature though commanded by the Creator. He cannot afford to yield his self-respect. So enraged by the indifference of God, he disobeys Him. Iblis does not deny God, rather he is an ardent lover of God, and his love teaches him to glorify his Self. Though in so doing he parts his way from God, he is satisfied with this, for complete union has never been his goal. Complete union is the end of individual identity, therefore, for Iqbal who edifies self-promotion, it is totally beyond acceptability. He regrets ascetism practised by the mystics, since it is a negation of personal existence. He has great admiration for Iblis' indifference to absorbing union with Absolute Ego. Love and Self can maintain separate identity as long as they are apart, while in union passion is gradually cooled down and Self has to be yielded off and on, leading to the contamination of passion on the one hand and self-mortification on the other. However, separation is not easy, because it is a constant torment, that is why Iqbal has due regard for Iblis' abstinence:

Translation: ... The bliss of Union is foreign to his stuff, so he for sakes Eternal beauty, chooses to live like An eremite.
Love is the necessity of Self; it promotes the desire which evokes the Self. Love always has its ideal, which entails the Self to act, while Self, in return, does not let love to be subdued, and both, in collaboration, bring about the development of personality. Sheikh Akbar Ali remarks;

The law of development demands that the self should also take the offensive in order to expand. This weapon is love with which God has armed it, as distinguished from the five senses and other mental powers, that are the defence weapons. Love, which is the all-assimilative power of action, thus strengthens the self and is "the cause of the radiance of its being and the development of its unknown possibilities".

Iblis' Self, armed with the weapon of love, takes the offensive and turns down God's command, which is in no way the renunciation of God, and hence is distinguished from Satan's proud renunciation. There is a marked difference between Self, which is a virtue, and pride which is a heinous vice. Unlike Self, which is a reflection of love, it is the reflection of ego. Love is another name for selflessness and it teaches sacrifice, which needs courage; a virtue of self-conscious individual. On the other hand, pride has association with ego, selfishness, tyranny and cowardice. Ego shoots forth selfishness which imparts encroachment, leading to cowardice, sprouting from shallow pride. Satan denies the attributes of God and His Son, which amounts to a denial of God Whom he has served for a considerable time. He is so much blinded by his pride that he shuns the creative powers of God and declares himself self-begot. He declares Abdiel's theory of Creation, strange as well as new, and propounds his own thus:
We know no time when we were not as now;
Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised
By our own quickening power when fatal course
Had circled his full orb the birth mature
Of this our native Heaven, Ethereal Sons.
Our puissance is our own; our own right hand
Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
Who is our equal; then thou shalt behold
Whether by supplication we intend
Address, and to begirt the Almighty Throne
Beseeching or besieging. (Bk. V, 859-69)

This declaration does not match with his own saying;

... pride and worse ambition threw me down,
Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King:
Ah wherefore? He deserved no such return
From me, whom he created. (Bk. IV, 40-3)

There is no harmony in his any two statements at two different occasions. He declares himself self-begot and in the very next moment ascribes his creation to the fatal course, which leads to thinking that “Satan may be lying, he may be deceiving himself, [or] he may have lost touch with the truth”. However, the first two options seem most consistent with his nature. He is a congenital liar, who, in a stream of pride, says something and refutes it on some other occasion. His only aim is to satisfy his perverted ego, and in order to uphold it he can go to any depth of cowardice, or, to any height of pride, without any concern with the truth. C.S. Lewis remarks;

Throughout the poem he is engaged in sawing off the branch he is sitting on ... since a creature revolting against a creator is revolting against the source of his own powers -- including even his power to revolt.

Satan seems neurotic and the reason for his neurosis is his unconsciousness of Self, because of which he fails to comprehend the Not Self. As a result, he goes on concocting different unconvincing theories in his
justification. There are vivid glimpses of Milton’s inclination towards dualism, i.e. “the belief in two supreme opposed powers or gods, or sets of divine or demonic beings, that caused the world to exist”. This belief grants Satan a position equal but opposite to God in Milton’s cosmos and further encourages him to strive for victory over God. But he is not always convinced of this belief and whenever he realises that, he gets dejected. All this enigma has its roots in his incognizance of Self, which makes him indecisive.

... he, of the first,
If not the first Archangel, great in power,
In favour and pre-eminence, yet fraught
With envy against the Son of God, that day
Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed
Messiah, King Anointed, could not bear,
Through pride that sight, and thought himself impaired. (Bk. V,659-64)

He is not governed by some positive conviction and, if there is any, it is destructive. Consequently he cannot cherish his advancement and is merely disappointed when his plans meet with unexpected results. R.A. Shoaf observes:

Satan thought to impair God, and did so, though in a sense contrary to his will and beyond his present understanding, since he impaired God by ceasing his own pairing with God as one of God’s creatures — and, as a result is now visibly impaired. It is his dilemma that “he sought and forever seeks to part God from God’s own identity” but has lost his own identity in this futile endeavour.

Iblis, on the contrary, is well aware of his position in the universe, and there is hardly any contradiction in his personality. He is in duel with God but
this duel has nothing to do with dualism. Though distinguished orientalists like A. Bausani and Annemarie Schimmel are of the opinion that there are some dualistic strains in Iblis, this view cannot be endorsed because in the original text there is hardly any verse which could be interpreted in the perspective of dualism. A. Bausani lists five aspects of Iqbal’s Iblis which are;

The Promethean side, which Iqbal may have taken over from Milton; the Judao – Islamic aspect according to which [Iblis] is and remains a creature and instrument of God; the Gnostic-Christian idea, originating in Iran, that Iblis is an independent power in the world; the idea common in some mystical trends in East and West that Iblis is the manifestation of God’s Jalal side, and eventually the aspect of Iblis as the pragmatic politician.  

The aspect of independence of Iblis, however, cannot be supported from the text, for it is probably the misinterpretation of Iblis’ self consciousness. There are some verses which on cursory view may be related to Gnostic-Christian dualism, but seen in the context of Iqbal’s concept of Self and the Jalal side of God, the previous misperception is resolved. Iblis’ Self is so developed that he has absorbed certain features of God, which Iqbal mentions as the final stage of the development of one’s Self and Iblis has so conceived the aggressive features of God that their vigour is not reduced much, as a result of which he is in a position to criticize God as well as Adam for demanding supplication from their inferiors, just for the satisfaction of their ego.

Translation:
I never begged obedience
Of slaves who always pray.
I rule without a Hell: I judge
Without a Judgement Day
Iblis is instrumental in the development of human conscience and thus bringing about a constructive change aiming at the evolution of mankind. The influences of Rumi and Goethe are collectively marked in Iqbal’s Iblis. Goethe, influenced by Rumi, developed an optimistic view about the interrelation of good and evil, in a way that each contributes to the overall development of the world. Like Goethe’s Mephistopheles, Iqbal’s Iblis is a constructive creature of God, who, unlike Satan, does not uselessly insist on being self-begot, rather he is the confidant of God, for whom Iqbal had due admiration. S.A. Valid says;

Unlike those writers [including Milton] who have depicted Satan as inhabiting Hell and planning in nefarious activities to mislead man from there, Goethe describes Mephistopheles in the Prologue as one of the elite of God in Heaven. And Iqbal places him in the planet of Jupiter in company with the great mystic Mansur B. Hallaj and poet Ghalib, who refused to accept residence in Paradise and preferred to be constantly travelling about the Universe.15

Unlike Satan who is constantly oscillating, Iblis sticks to his conviction with full devotion having no time to spare for leisure.

Translation:

\[ \text{فزست آسمان، از دنیا، دل آرام،} \]

It is such toil that for one Sabbath I have not been free

Iblis in view of Iqbal is inevitable for the flourishing of good, and removing it means the dislocation of Divine plan. Iblis turns down the possibility of union because neither God nor he wants union:
Of union I shall breathe not even a word,
For fusion if I seek, nor I survive
Nor he remains

Iqbal is concerned over Iblis’ being condemned, despite the fact that it is not he who inflicts evil upon man. Man himself blames him for his wrong doings.

The victim himself to the hunter says,
"Entrap me", from his pliancy I seek
Refuge.

Unlike Satan, who always exploits the weaker enemy, Iblis is fed up with feeble opponents and prays for a better man (Perfect Man) fit for a tough duel.

O God! Confront me with a single faithful man
May I perchance gain bliss in my defeat.

Some similarities are also found in the presentation of Satan and Iblis. Both Milton and Iqbal place responsibility on Fate also. In the doom of Satan
and Iblis, however, Fate totally dominates Satan, but not Iblis. Some Satanists
totally exculpate Satan of being involved in spreading evil, and ascribe sole
responsibility to the tyranny of God, for Milton provides much room for such
explanations through his views about Fate. William Empson points out the
mutual connivance of God and Satan and declares Satan totally helpless in the
clutches of Fate, but this dominance of Fate is negated by Satan’s heroic
grandeur expressed in the early books. Iblis only once speaks of dominance of
Fate in his dialogue with God, thus;

Translation:
... what presumption could refuse to You
Obedience? If I would not kneel to him,
The cause was Your own fore-ordaining will.

God, addressing the angels, reprimands him thus;

Translation:
See what a grovelling nature taught him this
Fine theorem! His not kneeling, he pretends
Belonged to My fore-ordinance; gives his freedom
Necessity’s base title; - wretch! His own
Consuming fire he calls a wreath of smoke.

Iqbal does not believe in an all-dominating Fate; neither does he totally
liberate it from all responsibility; rather he believes in a balance of the two
which can be changed in favour of an individual through personal endeavours.
The connivance of God and Satan is treacherous, but the collaboration of God
and Iblis is always constructive. Man is the pride of all creation and God cannot stand his humiliation as it is his own loss.

Milton had a grudge against the Crown and he used Satan to criticise it in two aspects. In the first place he emerges as an ardent lover of liberty who ensures liberty to all and, secondly, despotic tyranny is embodied in his own personality. The rebel against tyranny turns into a tyrant himself, as C.S. Lewis says:

Satan is the Sultan - a name hateful in Milton's day to all Europeans both as freemen and as Christians. He is the chief, the general, the great commander. He is the Machiavellian prince who excuses his 'political realism' by 'necessity, the tyrant's plea'. His rebellion begins with talk about liberty, but very soon proceeds to 'what we more affect, Honour, Dominion, glorice and renounce' (Bk. VI, 421)

_Iblis ki Majlas-i-Shoora_ (Iblis' Parliament) is a poem written in the prevailing socio-political perspective. The idea seems to be borrowed from the conference of infernal spirits at Pandemonium, but treatment discriminates it. The poem was written in 1936; a crucial time in the history, when the world was in a state of gradually warming up cold war, which ultimately led to the Second World War. The British Colonial rule was breathing its last, and Iqbal's genius had felt its decline and the rise of Muslims. That is why Iblis advises his disciples to embroil the Muslims in concocted issues so that they cannot ponder over the real issues of the time. Iqbal had a keen eye on comparative socio-religio-political scenario of the world. The devils devise
their future strategy after a brainstorming discussion on imperialism, democracy, communism, fascism and Islam, declaring communism and Islam as major threats for them:

Translation:

... That rebel Jew
That spirit of Mazdak come again! Not long,
And every mantle will be rent to shreds
And tatters by his fury.

The Arch-devil, however, is only worried about the looming threat of the rise of Islam.

Translation: 1 be afraid of socialists? - Street bawlers,
Ragged things, tortured brains, tormented souls!

If there is any monster in my path
It lurks within that people in whose ashes
Still glow the embers of an infinite hope

he to whom anatomy of the age
Shows clear knows well, the canker of to-morrow
Is not your communism: it is Islam.

So he advises his followers to entangle the Muslims in the maze of scholastic calculations:

Translation: let
These theologian’s graven images
Content the Muslims of this century!
Milton preferred democracy to monarchy and some critics are of the opinion that he criticized Mughal King Jehangir through Satan, who was ruling the subcontinent in Milton’s time. Milton in *The Areopagitica* declares democracy the solution of all problems. Iqbal, on the other hand, is as critical about democracy as about imperialism. He totally discards Western democracy, for it is nothing except the clothing of the same monarchical and imperialistic rule. The first advisor of Iblis, describes democracy thus;

Translation:

Was it not we, when men began to observe  
And to reflect, who dressed autocracy  
In democratic costume?

This type of democracy is worse than monarchy even:

Translation:

Have you not seen in the West  
Those Demos – governments with rosy faces  
And all within blacker than Ghengiz’ soul?

There is partial similarity in the ideas about the Fall in the works of both the poets. Milton’s aim was to “justify the ways of God to men” (Bk. I, 26), therefore, he, like Iqbal, believed in the inevitability of the Fall, however, there is a difference in the intensity of the belief. Milton cannot convince his reader on the problem of Fall, for there are opposite views interwined together, the overlapping of which impedes understanding, which is the fault of Milton’s theodicy. *Paradise Lost* presents the prelapsarian scenario better than
the postlapsarian, with a shocking and unconvincing conclusion of the
desirability of Fall. Adam and Eve’s uneasiness on leaving Paradise for their
new abode reflects their suspicions in the Providence, which leads to
dejection, dismay and lamentation;

They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms:
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way. (Bk. XII, 641-9)

In complete contrast with it, Iqbal’s Adam rejoices in his Fall, for it is a
way to matchless glory. He convincingly puts his case in the Divine Tribunal,
proving that his sin was indispensable for the development of his potentials,
and he has compensated for the sin through the conquest of Nature, which was
impossible in Paradise:

Translation:

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
until it falls into Love’s snare.
In order to melt the heart of
This stone-god with a fervid sigh,
I had to wear his sacred thread
As proof of my idolatry.

Though Milton too declares the sin of Adam, “a felix culpa [i.e] a happy fault”, the ending of *Paradise Lost*, in particular, shakes this belief, if not totally overrules it. Indeed the whole work is fraught with contradictions of a wavering soul. Milton preferred the sinless passivity of Paradise to the productive postlapsarian activity. Dennis Danielson maintains;

... the unfallen scenario [that] Milton presents in *Paradise Lost* suggests that, however, great our future, it will never match the still greater future that Adam and Eve and their offsprings might have enjoyed in a world without sin.18

Iqbal is the preacher of ceaseless endeavour. He shuns passivity to such an extent that he prefers sin to it. He has a due regard for the sin of Adam, for it opened new horizons, inviting man to conquer them. Iqbal has elevated Iblis from the pitfall of hatred to the height of grandeur. Unlike Milton’s Satan who undergoes a continuous degradation, Iblis maintains his position. Regarding the gradual degradation of Satan, C.S Lewis remarks;

> From hero to general, from general to politician, from politician to secret service agent, and thence to a thing that peers in at bedroom or bathroom windows, and thence to a toad, and finally to a snake – such is the progress of Satan.19

Iblis, on the other hand, is one of the major characters of Iqbal’s poetry, and fabricated with extreme care. His grandeur does not meet any fall. Iqbal uses him to criticize the religious strata of society and Western norms, values and systems at large, but he is never scathed, that is why he is in high morale.
in every appearance, unlike Satan who, after Book I, loses all his courage and apparent heroic grandeur, and this trait makes Iblis more powerful character than Satan. Iblis is more multidimensional character, superior to Satan from every angle.
Endnotes


8 Ibid., p.216.


10 Lewis, p.96.


13 Ibid., p.16.

14 Annemarie Schimmel: “Iblis in Iqbal’s Poetry” in, Iqbal Centenary Papers, Compiled by Prof. Muhammad Munawwar (Lahore: Department of Iqbal Studies, University of the Punjab, 1982), p.119.


16 Lewis, p.78.


18 Ibid., p.224.

19 Lewis, p.99.
CONCLUSION

Satan and Iblis despite their differences have certain affinities which were indispensable, of course, as in presenting the same figure some similarities have to occur in realistic studies. It is a reality, though it may be bitter for some, that even the Devil has some marvellous qualities which led Milton and Iqbal to an uncommon and unmatched presentation of the Devil. However, Milton made a retreat after Book I, probably realizing that he was justifying Satan instead of “the ways of God to men” (Bk. I, 26) for which he sat out, while Iblis’ dignity remains unmatched and unquestioned. Satan, though inferior to Iblis, is the best character of *Paradise Lost* and if there is any hero of the poem, it is Satan, for Milton could not put that life in other characters:

*Paradise Lost* inspired Iqbal in some respect, and he wanted to write a poem on this pattern. In a letter to a friend, written in 1903, he says:

> For a long time I have been yearning to write in the manner of Milton (*Paradise Lost*, etc.) and the time for that seems to be fast approaching, because in these days there is hardly a moment when I am not thinking seriously of this.¹

Though Iqbal could not write such a poem, Iblis resembles Satan in his Promethean disposition. However, it would be too much to declare Iblis totally Miltonic. Unlike Satan, he maintains his moral dignity, and even if he is not accepted a hero, his being maker of the hero, cannot be refuted. He is not the hero of Iqbal’s poetry because there are characters who are better than him, but
Milton’s cosmos is abounded with weaker characters and he is the hero because he is less weak among the weaker ones. Man is the hero in Iqbal’s poetry, for he is so courageous that Gabriel is a poor prey for him and he does not dread in courting God:

\[\text{Translation:} \]

\[\text{In the desert of my love Gabriel is a humble prey}
\]
\[\text{O manly grit! Try to bag God.}^\star\]

Iqbal is equally critical about Milton, and in the poem, which he wanted to write, he probably wanted to unsheathe the contradictions and weaknesses of *Paradise Lost*. In his diary, published in the name of *Stray Reflections*, he declares Milton an outdated poet. He says,

\[\text{The puritan theology of Milton cannot appeal to the imagination of our age. Very few people read him. Voltaire is quite true in saying that Milton’s popularity will go on increasing because no body reads him.}^3\]

But he has due regard for Milton’s high degree of commitment to his task and his grand style:

\[\text{No poet has been more serious about his task than he. His style-a gigantic architecture consecrated to false deities -- will always stand untouched by the palsied hand of time.}^3\]

Great people are born in the times of suppression, and this is true of both the poets under-review. Both were born in time when monarchy and colonial empire were in full swing respectively, and an extreme longing for

\[\text{Sheikh Akbar ali: Iqbal: His Poetry and Message.}\]
liberty was found in the public. In such circumstances, they imparted the awareness of liberty and rights through the Devil, in order to invigorate the people for the ideal. But Iqbal was not merely concerned with this. Iblis is a multifaceted figure, who in each and every position serves as a stimulus for man and thus contributes to the development of man's Self. Annemarie Schimmel observes:

Iqbal, ... sees Iblis never as absolute evil, or as God's enemy; he is rather the enemy of man, the power with whom man has to struggle in order to grow. It does not make any difference whether we understand this power as dark feminine element of chaos which has to be tamed in order to serve man, or as the lucid masculine element of luciferian intellect which is necessary for man's individuation although it can grow into a hypertrophy of intellect once it is separated from love and becomes an independent force, we may also understand this power as the seducer into useless dreaming, mystical introspection, unsocial attitude, or as the protector of civilization that is devoid of Divine love. In each of these aspects Iblis is a necessary companion of man, who is called to overcome him and thus to develop into the Perfect Man.¹

Iqbal's Iblis is woven from many strands with a great care and love and he can be placed among the immortal characters of all literatures. He resembles Satan and is comparatively closer to Goethe's Mephistopheles, yet, "retains his originality and he is distinctly Iqbalean".⁵
Endnotes


2 Muhammad Iqbal: *Stray Reflections*; Ed. Prof. Muhammad Munawar, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1992), p.75.

3 Ibid., p.75.


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