

SATAN’S ADVISORY COUNCIL: POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY AND PREDICTIONS

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Abstract

Dr Iqbal besides being a poet was Philosopher, political thinker and a visionary. Throughout his poetry he expressed his philosophy, he wrote about his political views and being a visionary he also wrote about the upcoming events. In these regards Dr Iqbal’s, probably the last poem, “Satan’s advisory Council” from the collection *Armighan e Hijaz*, is a master piece. The poem encompasses the whole ideology of Dr. Iqbal.

Iqbal in his poetry wrote critical account of the political and social system that prevailed during his times. He criticised harshly in his poems the political setup and the social set up of the western countries which was overshadowing many other civilization across the globe. He considered all the political setups as Satanic from Kingship to Democray. He was also critical of the Khilafat that prevailed up to 1921 under the rule of the Ottomans, he named it as Islamic Imperialism rather than Khilafat. He attributed all these setups as Satanic. Towards the end of his career he wrote a master piece poem concerning Satan. This poem was written in Urdu few months before his death and was published posthumously in the collection *Armighan-E-Hijaz*, the poem was titled as ‘The Devils Advisory Councils.’

The poem encompasses the whole vision and philosophy of Iqbal, his views on the history, on the contemporary system that prevailed and even like a seer, said about the things that would happen in near future. Like in many other poems even in this poem he makes Satan as the major spokes person and the head of the Council. He makes an in-depth and enlightening view of all the cultural and political aspects of the world. He takes again the path of satire exalts Satan above the human beings. He presents Satan as very calm and content being who by the advent of the twentieth century has achieved lot many things and has established his empire on the earth which cannot be surpassed. The Empire which he had proposed to build in the Book 2 of *Paradise Lost* seems to be accomplished. Satan in the last poem of Iqbal is very much different to that of Miltonian Satan, who even in the last book has nothing to gain but to lose at the hands of the Jesus Christ (P.B.U.H). Satan in the Devils council presides over the council, and the place in not the Hell or the fiery Lake where Milton made Satan deliver his address to the Fallen Angel, but here Satan is sitting like an old Wiseman, a warrior, man of Knowledge, Politician counting on the achievements that he had so far attained. He seems to be content for what he has so far achieved, whatever he wished to attain, like what Milton made Satan exclaim:

To be weak is miserable, doing or suffering

But ought to do good shall never be our task
Ever to do evil our soul delight (PL-1. 157-160)

This oath that Satan took centuries ago, Iqbal feels he has attained, that is why he makes him feel easy and have a review of all his deeds. It is interesting to note that the poem which consists of hardly 40 couplets covers the history of Mankind of over 600 years, and besides referring to the events bygone he also makes aware about the future happenings. In this poem he makes Satan to call for a council, which is represented by five councilors. Who are upset about the recent council for they consider that everything is going well, what might be the cause of this recent council. Satan delivers the presidential address, like a politician and philosopher and starts again referring to the world as base,

An old game of needs this mean world's tact,
To heavenly host hopes a cold blood act.
That Great Maker bent to wreck earth soon,
Who gave it a name of 'KAF' and 'NOON'. (Satan's Advisory Council)

Satan starts the council with a prophecy before calling the world as mean and cold blood act, that now even its creator does not seem to be happy with it and is about to destroy it. After this he starts counting his deeds. In this poem he makes Satan the progenitor of all the ways of life which man has so far followed be it political, social, economic etc, all have been inspired by the Satan. Some of the ways of life of which he was highly critical of are; feudalism, imperialism, colonisation, democracy, capitalism and socialism etc. He makes Satan to make tall claims that all these are his ways of life and it is he who taught these lessons to the human beings. He says to his advisors that the Kingship was given to Europe by him and it is he who broke the spell of the churches and masques, he taught the poor the lesson of fate and made the rich to hoard the wealth, he is so confident that he dares to say that none can extinguish the fire that he has set ablaze, no one is there who can destroy his empire.

Important thing to note hear is that Iqbal does not associate Satan to any good deeds, though he has been made calm and content and the wise president of the council, but all the negative attributes are being associated to him. The first advisor continues where Satan had left and says, there is no doubt that the Satanic Empire is strong and stable all over the world and the humans also like to be the slaves of us: "The Satan's order is firm everywhere, / The masses too like the servitude snare." (Satan's Advisory Council) There seems no vigor in the prayers of the Muslims, neither does there lie any wish in their hearts to over throw their rule, even if in some ones heart the wish arises it dies off or remain dormant. Though the religious rights continue to be celebrated like the Haj and Kabbah round but the impulse of faith has died, then why has though called this council when the Jihad is prohibited to modern Muslims. Both Satan and the First Advisor are content with things going on, however the second Advisor raises some question, and here Iqbal is referring to the democracy, Second advisor says, weather this new political system that is democracy is good for them or bad, you know nothing about the recent mischief, to this first advisor replies eloquently and the couplet turns out to be the master piece of Iqbal and it cover the view and ideas of him about the democracy, which though he had expressed before in many poems, the first advisor says that he is aware of all, but his knowledge says to him there is no threat to them from democracy, for it is nothing but another form of Kingship, here Iqbal makes him say that this democracy was also Satan's idea, when they saw that humans have become aware of their individuality and rights they veiled the Kingship with Democracy. Iqbal makes even the Satanic Advisor to say that the Democracy is not a worthy rule it no different to the feudalism or Kingship. Commenting on the western democracy, he says that

have a look at the western democracy, though it is alluring from outside but from within it is worse than the court of Genghis, here he compares Democracy with the court of Genghis, Genghis in the Urdu literature is the symbol of injustice and tyranny, thus he proposes that the democracy is also unjust and tyrannical rule though it may look good from outside. He criticised the democracy in many of his poems for its unjust system, he considered it an idea of the baser mind, he considered it an unjust rule where the dignity and integrity of the humans didn't count. In one of his poems from *Zarb-E-Kaleem*, titled 'Democracy' Iqbal makes a point that in the democratic system humans integrity is not counted only the number of individuals count.

A certain European revealed a secret,
Although the wise do not reveal the core of the matter.
Democracy is a certain form of government in which
Men are counted but not weighed (Zarb e Qalim)

In a Persian poem he says that west has found the democratic system and has unleashed a demon, every now and then he considers Democracy as Satanic and Demonic. In a Persian poem from *Payam-E-Mashriq*, entitled 'Democracy' he warns the people to beware of the democracy, and ridicules the proponents of the democracy harshly when comparing them to donkeys, he appeals to the readers to seek the company of a sage and refrain from democracy for even two hundred donkeys cannot attain the wisdom of one man:

You seek the treasures of an alien philosophy
From common, low grade people, themselves poor of mind.
Ants crawling on the ground cannot attain
The heights of wisdom of a Solomon.
Avoid the method of democracy;
Become the bondman of some one of ripe intelligence
For a few hundred donkeys cannot have combined
The brains of one man, of one homosapiens. (Payam e Mashriq p 98)

After writing too much criticism of the democracy Iqbal attributes its origin to Satan. Again we find that the Satan in Iqbal's poems is altogether different from the religious books. He is not concerned with the issues of good and evil rather is interested in socio-political issues. The next topic or concern for the advisors of Satan is the socialism, after being satisfied with the democratic setup he raises his eyebrow on the Karl Marx's views that were dominant in those days. He says if the Kingship remains there, it is no harm, but what about the Marx, a man without Moses rod, a Christ without cross still he is holding a book and propagating his theory:

But what cure have we for the mischief of that Jew,
That Moses sans theophany, that Christ without a cross,
Who is no prophet, but who has a book to call his own?
I do not know what is there in this pagan's glance which burns
All veils and which has brought forward the Day of Reckoning
For all the peoples of the East and of the West? (Devils Advisory Council)

He has made the lives of the Kings difficult for the slaves have been raging wars against the Kings and guardians. The Fourth Advisor answers this concern by referring to Mussolini, who was the Fascist leader of Germany and he sidelined himself from the Italian Socialist Party and went against socialist system to induce the Kingship. He calls Mussolini the son of Caesar, whom Satan has shown the dream of the Caesar. "Look at the counterblast to that in Rome's assembly halls. / We made the Romans dream the dream of Caesar once again," (Satan's Advisory Council)

Thus in the council after discussing these two emerging threats the Fifth Advisor makes again a long speech on the efficiency and the achievements of the Satan. He says that the balance in the world is maintained by the Satan, he whenever wished opened up the hidden secrets to the world, it is Satan who taught the Man the wisdom and logic, even here the advisor refers to the human beings as the 'heaven's fool.' He continues the exaltation of the Satan and says that Satan has understood the nature of man more than the creator has. "Than thee He knows not the nature of men, / Who is famous as God, in the fool's ken" (Satan's Advisory Council). He further continues and says that though the task of the human beings was to submit to God's Will and to pray and praise but because of you he will be shameful of his deeds till the end of the world, "Those whose life's task was worship, praise and going round and round / will always keep their heads bowed down in envy of your pride." (Devils Advisory Council)

The fifth advisor also raises the questions about the Marx and the socialism still trouble, and he makes a worrying statement towards the end when he warns that the whole Satanic Empire is under threat, he exclaims: "My Master! that world is going to doom, / The world which looks to thy Leadership's boom." (Satan's Advisory Council) However in his concluding address Satan shuns away any threats from all these side, i.e. Democracy, Capitalism or Socialism. Satan starts his concluding address by again exalting his deeds: "Thus lies in my hold the world's pomp and show, / This earth, the Sun and Moon, the Sky's glow." (Satan's Advisory Council)

Satan again says that everything that is between heavens and the earth in under my control, all the activities that the world holds is all because of my power. In this stanza Iqbal now looks to the forth coming events and makes Satan proclaim his future plans and what he is going to do in the near future and further what are real threats and trouble that the world and the Satanic Empire will have to face. Through Satan he prophecies the World War II, and again associates it with the Satanic plans. Iqbalian Satan says that soon will world witness the great turmoil when I shall boil the blood of the Europeans to indulge in the war: "Shall see the East and the West my game and roar / As soon I warm up western nations gore" (Satan's Advisory Council)

It so happened only in few years times from the publication of this poem World War II broke out in 1939, which caused huge loss. Satan continues and says that all the pious men, religious men and the political leaders are obedient to him and one call from my side makes them go mad. He says to his advisors if they considers this Empire of his as mere glass work, can anybody dare to break it? "If some fool thinks that Western culture's wine cups are mere glass, / Let him try and destroy them for good by just breaking them." (Satan's Advisory Council)

He turns down all sorts of threat from socialist side says that his handiwork is not going to be threatened by Mazdakite logic. Here Iqbal hold his opinion regarding the Socialism, which he never considered as a better option to democracy rather considered it also satanic and unjust system, a system that by no standards was going to help for the betterment of human society. Satan says that how can these Socialists frighten him who are straying in the streets aimlessly, who are wretched, distracted in mind and at odds in their speech. "How can these wretched communist tramps frighten me, / These feather-brained, wild-looking ne'r-do-wells?" (Devils Council)

But Satan does not remain alluded from the threats. He makes Satan claim that if he foresaw any threat to his Empire it was from Islam. He being a fundamentalist Muslim, believed highly that the only way of life worth following was the Islamic way of life, which provided a

solution and answers to all the problems of the Universe. He banked on Quran in promoting this concept, wherein Allah says in Surah Al Imran:

The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His

Will): Nor did the People of the Book dissent

There from except through envy of each other),

after knowledge had come to them. But if any deny

the Signs of Allah, Allah is swift in calling to account. (Quran 3.19)

Continuing his speech Satan claims if he feels any threat to his Empire it is from the side of Islam. He says that though there are only few Muslims left with faith, who rise early and offer prayer with devotion. Satan claims that very body is aware of the truth, who ever can foresee the things that the threat is not Mazdkiat but Islam, “Whoever has insight into the ages’ inwardness / Knows that Islam, not communism, is the future’s threat.” (Satan’s Advisory Council)

From here onwards Iqbal focuses his attention on the Muslim community, and criticises them for their actions. He had previously also written many poems wherein he had criticised the Muslims for their deeds, one such famous poem being Jawab-E-Shikwa, wherein the mouthpiece of Iqbal is God, but here the Muslim community is being presented from the perspective of Satan. Satan says that he knows that this community is not following the Quran the same capitalism is the religion of the Moumin, and the dark night of the west has overshadowed the Islamic thought. But still the demands and the conditions of the present age spell the apprehension that the Shariah of the prophet will come to lime light one day. “But I fear that the modern world’s demands / May bring to light the Prophet’s law again.” (Satan’s Advisory Council)

Satan feels terrified at the thought of the revival of the Islam and says to his advisor to beware of the Shariah, for this is the protector of the rights of Women, the tester of Men’s capacity and rearer of worthy men. Satan says this is the only system which brings along with it the message of death for all sorts of slavery and it is Islam which holds no sovereign, no Monarch and no Mendicant’s begging. In this speech of Satan, Iqbal portrays all the fascist of Islam, Satan says that it is Islam that purifies the wealth of all pollution, i.e. interest and hoardings etc., Look what will be the great revolution of thought, they claim that this earth does not belong to Kings but to God. Satan says that it is better that the Shariah remains hidden from the eyes of the world, and it is matter of great relief that Moumin himself is not aware about Shariah. It is good for them that Muslim remains busy in the metaphysical theology and in different interpretations of the book. Satan prays that may the night of God fearing men never turn to light; his cries in the praise of God would break the charm of Universe. “Let not the night of these God-knowers be lit up / Whose thunderous hosanna, "God is great," can shake the world.” (Satan’s Advisory Council)

Towards the last segment of the poem, Iqbal portrays through Satan some of the frequently prevalent arguments of differences among the Muslim community of the times, which are a threat to the integrity of Ummah but are good for the Satanic Empire. The question that struck the debates of the times was concerned with different topics. Some of them as highlighted by Iqbal via Satan are: Weather Jesus (P.B.U.H) is dead or having eternal life? Are the attributes of God separate or from what he is? If the Jesus (P.B.U.H) is going to come back, will he be Jesus (P.B.U.H) or a person with his attributes? Are the letters of the Quran new or old? In which doctrine lays the salvation of the Ummah? Satan says this is where this Ummah has lead astray. Though they do not bow down to the idols, but he claims that, Are these idols of metaphysical theology not enough for the destruction of the Muslim Ummah? He encourages his advisors to

keep Muslims busy in the all these issues and keep him alien form the worldly character. He says that it is better for them that the Moumin remains slaves till the day of judgment and renounces the world for the sake of others. The best poetry for him is the mystic poetry keeps them unaware of life hidden from him. In the last two stanza's Satan again shows his fears regarding the threat from Islam, and says that he fears every moment from the awakening of the Ummah, whose religion in reality takes account of the Universe, keep him absorbed in the thoughts and contemplation of God, make him grow strong as a monast.

The last section of the poem on Satan reveals too many facts and the upcoming events. This portion of Satan's speech is a speech of Prophecy, where in Satan prophecies many upcoming events, few of them being the death of Socialism, outbreak of World War II, revival of Islam, and the threat of Islam to the Satanic and Western civilizations, which were unleashed as the time went on. Some of the events for Iqbal might have been easy to predict like those of Socialism and World War II, But the strongest statement made in the whole speech by Satan was regarding the revival of Islam, when he said that the presents demands and condition throw the apprehension that the Shariah of the Prophet may come to lime light. However at that point of time there was so such threat to the west or to any civilization from any corner of world, because it was only fourteen fifteen years back that the Khilafat system was abolished by the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. By this disintegration the whole of Muslim community was in depression and there seemed no hope of revival, but even under these circumstances, Iqbal made this claim, which however proved to be correct few decades later. However it is worth noting that it was not only Iqbal who had prophesised the revival of Islam and presented it as a strong force against the Western civilisation, even George Bernard Shaw one of the famous dramatists of the twentieth century had similar opinions. In one his books titled *The Genuine Islam* G. B. Shah says: "If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam." (G. B. Shaw) G. B Shaw also considered Islam as a religion capable of overtaking the western ideology, thus Iqbal cannot be a lonely figure in prophesising, the Islamic revival. G. B Shaw seems to be very close in understanding the Islam in real essence and appreciates the fact that Islam as a religion has got wonderful vitality and wisdom to be acceptable in any age and provide the solution to the problems of humanity. He held Islam in high esteem as he said:

I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity.(G. B. Shaw)

This vitality and assimilating capacity that G. B Shaw talks about is what threatens Satan, in the devils council, he feels if the Muslim becomes aware about this assimilating power; it can over throw the Satanic Empire. Satan firmly believes that if at any point in time Shariah overtakes other form of rule of law that will mean an extinction of all forms of injustice and slavery, when Iqbal makes Satan exclaim all these worrying statement, his faith in religion and in the Quranic teaching seems affirm. It seems to be stylistic devise of Iqbal that he makes Islam as the best way of life from the mouth of Satan, Satan who is staunch enemy of Islam and in no way is going to accept its essence is forced to praise the religion and consider it as a formidable truth. His statement that the Islamic revival is at hands and modern demands and condition reveal the advent of Shariah, seems to be said by G. B Shaw also. He believed that if man like Mohammad

(P.B.U.H) overtakes the control of modern world, he will be able to provide solution to all the problems of modern society and will succeed in providing the peace and calmness to the atmosphere. G. B Shaw said that the faith of Mohammad will be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is acceptable to the Europe of today.

I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today. (G. B. Shaw)

This prophecy made by Iqbal through Satan, and the ideas of G. B. Shaw were felt almost sixty years by the Europe and the Americans. Huntington named it as ‘clash of civilization’ where in he emphasised Islam again as most formidable threat to the Western civilization. However this fear of Satan has been more realised by the American in past few decades which lead to waging of war on Islam. The situation grew worse after the Afgan and Iraq war. However the political and the religious aspect of Islam had differed highly in the past few decades. Despite of the political turmoil and trouble in the Muslim countries the revival of Islam has been going at a great speed, despite all the possible measures of the Americans the Islam continues to spread in Europe and America. After 9/11 attack Americans made the fear of Islam for their civilization more worse, they started an anti-Islamic school where in they trained the army regarding war on Islam. This act of America seemed to be a verbatim copy of ‘The Devils council’ by Allama Iqbal. But here the Satan’s position was taken by an American teacher Lt. Col Dooley Matthew, who delivered a lecture to his students on the topic Perspectives of Islamic Radicalism, wherein he raised the same questions and fears that once were raised by Satan, but Dooley seems more worried about Islam and the solution that he presents to confront Islam seems also at odds, Dooley remarks: “They hate everything that you stand for and will never coexist, unless you submit”

Satan had similar worries regarding Islam when he said that Islam along with it brings the death of Slavery, and a revolutionary thought that this earth does not belong to Kings but to God, he says that Islam is the protector of the Women’s right and tester of Men’s will, it purifies the wealth from pollution, thus Islam contradicts Satanic view at every point, West according to Iqbal follows the Satanic rule, which constitutes of Democracy and capitalism. Dooley seems more concerned and worried and says to his students; “We have now come to understand that there is no such thing as moderate Islam. It is therefore time for the United States to make our true intensions clear. This barbaric ideology will no longer be tolerated. Islam must change or we will facilitate its destruction.”

Dooley presents a simple solution which is not what Satan advised to his advisors, wherein he said to his advisor to keep Moumin the Slave and keep him busy in the monastic acts of worship, let him renounce the world for the sake of other, keep the real essence of his faith hidden from him, and let him not indulge into the worldly affairs, but Dooley has different plans and ideas to overcome these fears, he declares war on Islam as the only solution and considers it baseless to think about the death of the innocent people. He asserts that they will only succeed if they uproot the holy sites of Islam, in this there is no harm if they need to repeat the Hiroshema and Naghasaki act. However this solution of violence as propagated by Dooley did not help America in curbing the growth of Islam. The 9/11 which was one of deadliest and condemnable attacks in human history, the blame of which was put on the Islam and Muslims, but this helped in no way in solving the problem of revival and fear of Islam among American politicians, for

after 9/11 according to CNN report more than 30000 Americans accepted Islam as their way of life.

Iqbalian Satan is extensively a literary figure who has hardly any similarities with the Mythical character. With the exception of the creation of Satan, Iqbalian Satan has nothing in common with the Mythical character. Satan in Iqbal's poetry is hardly concerned with the sin and evil. He has nothing to do with fall and its aftermath. He is not a weak and miserable being, who is running for life, but rather he is an accomplished being a King of his own world, which in his own words is not mere glasswork, "If some fool thinks that Western culture's wine cups are mere glass, / Let him try and destroy them for good by just breaking them." (Satan's Advisory Council) this is not a Satan which leads mankind astray, but he is philosopher, a guide, a thinker, a politician. He has guided mankind at every step in every walk of life, be it religious, political, economic or social, Satan affirms that he has given the concepts, of feudalism, capitalism, democracy, socialism, the concept of fate, the slavery, injustice, wars etc. Satan in Iqbal's poetry is not concerned with himself rather he is concerned about others, among them being human beings, hoors, Angels and prophets. He makes comments on them, he concerned about their downfall and extinction. He considers human beings as the base creation, who is weak in intellect and can hardly foresee things, one who has no taste for action, man for Satan is nothing but a handful of straw: "What is man? A handful of straw;/ One spark from me is enough for a handful of starw" (Javed Nama 2525). Regarding Hoors he says in a poem, 'Satan's Petition': "*Knowest Thou not, the girls of Paradise see / And mourn their gardens turning wilderness?*" (Zarb E Qalim). For Angels Satan says: "In the heart of the Almighty like a pricking thorn I lie; / You only cry for ever God, oh God, oh God most high!" (Gabriel and Satan). Regarding prophets he says: "*Both Khizr and Ilyas feel helpless: / The storms I have stirred up rage in oceans, rivers, and streams.*" (Gabriel and Satan). Thus Satan is hardly concerned about himself. It is only in two poems that we find Satan a bit concerned about himself, even there he is not worried because of his disobedience but because of the weakness of man. In the 'Satan's Lament' A poem from Javed Nama Satan shows some concerns and goes back to God for repentance, this repentance is not because of his failure but because of the weakness of man. He says to God that he is an old wise Man, it does suit him that he plays with the toys of the child. He considers man a toy in his hands: "*take back this plaything of water and clay: / a child's toy suits not a man of a certain age.*" (Javed Nama 2524). In another poem titled 'God and Satan,' Satan considers himself as being destined to disobey:

Fore You, O mighty Lord of Worlds
A haughty pose I could not show,
It was pre-ordained by You God,
That I to You would never bow. (Zarb e Qalim)

Besides these two poem Iqbalian Satan has forgotten his old bad days, is moving fast on his way to success. He has almost conquered everything. Nothing is there in this world which this Satan considers out of his range. He is concerned about socio-political issues rather than the theological issues. The war of heaven and hell is almost an outdated issue for Satan. The new war for Satan is now the clash of civilization. He is now worried about his civilization and his Empire, which he had build over many years. This Clash of civilization became a burning issue when Huntington published a book titled *The Clash of Civilization and the New World Order*, in which he considered Islamic civilization one of the serious threats to the western civilization. Interestingly Iqbal's Satan does not feel threat from the God or Christ but from human beings.

This is because he is living among human beings. He is not a theological character but a literary character worried about society, civilization and socio-political issues.

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