PREFACE

Humanism, the attitude of mind which attaches primary importance to man and to his faculties, affairs, temporal aspirations and well-being often regarded as the characteristic attitude of the Renaissance in Western Europe. The Greek and Roman classical writers regularly distinguished the human, or humane, from the divine, but in making the latter contrast they usually stressed some pathetic aspect of the human, such as mortality.

In the 20th century some new senses were given to the word humanism. F.C.S. Schiller (1864-1937) took it as the special name of his version of pragmatism maintaining that all philosophic understanding stems from human activity and re-affirming Protagoras', contention that "Man is the measure" against what he called the "intellectualist" philosophic, whether represented by Plato, by Hume or by the idealists of his own time. The humanism of Irving Babbit was very different, being a reaction in favor of classical order against romanticism and naturalism, only their literary but also in their wider aspects.

There has been a rich and long tradition began with the translation of Panch-tantra, a Sanskrit classic, into Persian, was enriched with the arrival of Shaikh sa'di Sheerazi on the Persian literary scene. He is a strong believer and proponent of the universal brotherhood of mankind and fervently propagates it. He denounces the indifference of man to the suffering of his fellow human beings, and considers such indifferent people of grossly inhuman:

"Human beings are like parts of a body, as they are created from the same substance. When the world causes pain to a single part, the other parts also cannot be at ease. You who are indifferent
to the sufferings of others, do not deserve to be called a human being."

Abu Abdullah Musharrif bin Muslih, Known as Shaikh Sa’di was born in 1184 at Sheeraz. He is not only one of the most honorable Iranians, but is also one of the greatest writers of the world. Among the writers in the Persian language, there are only one or two who may be compared to him. From among the writers of other nations both ancient and modern only a few may equal to him.

He received his education from the Nazamiya College at Baghdad. There after for thirty years he wondered in the lands of Islam. According to his own account he visited Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Abyssinia, Central Asia and India. He returned to Sheeraz in the last phase of his life and engaged himself in the literary activities. His most important works are (i) Bustan (ii) Gulestan (iii) Kulliyat comprising and Persian panegyrics, poems partly in Persian partly in Arabic, Tarji-band, Ghazals, Rubayet and Qatyat. He died in Sheeraz in 1292 and was buried in the same city. His tomb has ever since been the center of pilgrimage of his countless admirers and devotees.

According to Sa’di Humanism is comprised of liberality and kindness. Do not think that it is only the material form. Virtue is a must, since picture can be pain on the walls of a palace with vermillion and verdigrises, If a man is devoid of excellence and benevolence, what is the difference between him and the painted figure on the wall? According worldly riches is not an art. Win over a single heart if you can. He stresses upon the universality of compassion and treats the topic with due emphasis. He considers compassion to be the essence of humanity, as is evident from the following verses:
"Help those who are in trouble when you are safe and secure, as assistance to the poor will prevent a calamity to you. If a mendicant pleads for alms, give it to him willingly. Otherwise, a tyrant will take it by force from you."

He attaches great importance to the subject humality which is the root, mother, nurse, foundation and bond of all virtue:

"God has created you from dust. O man! Therefore, be as humble as dust. Do not be greedy, evil and rebellious. You were created from dust. Therefore do not be like fire. Because, whereas dreadful fire rebelled, dust humbled itself. Since fire displayed arrogance, God made demons from it and since dust showed humility, he created man from it."

He reveals a soft heart with respect to orphans as he had himself lost his father at a very early age. He constantly reminds people about the need to nurture orphans and look after their interests:

"Whenever you see an orphan with his head cast down, do not kiss your child's face in his presence. Who will ever show affection to an orphan when he weeps? Who will ever show sympathy to him and carry his load when he is upset? Beware that he does not cry, because the throne of Almighty God trembles when an orphans sobs. Wipe the tears from his eyes with compassion, and cleans the dust from his with kindness" to sum up we can say that Shaikh Sa'di was one of the greatest humanists of the world. In due recognition of his services towards the humanism his poetry, "Human beings like parts of a body ..............." has been engraved on the main gate of the UNO.

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