

Chapter – III

Ghalib and Existential Issues

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ہاں، کھائیو مت فریب ہستی
ہر چند کہیں کہ ہے، نہیں ہے

Han, khaaiyo mat fareb-e-hasti,
Har chand kahen ki hai, nahin hai.

Do not be cheated by this life/existence. People say it exists, infact, it does not exist.

Every poet is sensitive. Like other poets Ghalib also ponders over existence. Many of his couplets describe his views about existence. At times Ghalib thinks of the existence as a mirage. So, according to him, anyone who says that existence is real is wrong because existence is not real. This view is associated with the philosophy of Wahdat-al-wujood which says that 'nothing exists except Allah' (God).

The experience of every success of life creates certainty of existence in us and when we analyse and ponder it over, we find it to be false. We should keep in mind the point that the first state (belief of success) is the result of our personal conception, due to the success that we have achieved. To comprehend its reality, is something wrong and misleading. The second state (thinking and reflecting) is based on the principle of investigation and knowledge, hence, it is right.

Ghalib has warned human beings from getting enthralled in the first state:

نہو بہ ہرزہ، بیاباں نور دوہم وجود

ہنوز تیرے تصور میں ہیں نشیب و فراز

Na ho ba harzah, bayabaan noorad wahm-e-wujood

Hanooz tere tasawwur me hain nasheb-o-faraz.

Do not keep trudging in life's wilderness because of ignorance i.e. do not waste your time in searching existence of things other than God. Things other than God's Being, are not real because their existence is based on illusion. However you still have in your imagination, the ups and downs. (believing in ups and downs you feel your existence to be real, when in reality, it is only a mirage).

In another couplet the poet says:

ہے مشتمل نمود صور پر وجود بحر

یاں کیا دھرا ہے قطرہ و موج و حباب میں

Hai mushtamil numood-e-sowar par wujood-e-bahr,

Yaan kya dhara hai, qatra-o-mauj-o-hobab mein.

The existence of the ocean (God) depends upon the manifestation of forms. There is nothing in bubble, the wave and the drop.

The ocean is the Supreme Reality which is manifested in the form of bubble, the drop and the wave. The ocean symbolizes the Existence of God which is unique and one, despite being manifested in different forms of things. The ocean (God's Being) is the only Reality from where the drop, the bubble and the wave are manifested. But, after coming out of the Ocean, all get perished. In such condition to believe in the

individual existence of things, is no more than to involve in fancy or imagination. (Hasan, 1987)

The different conditions of life provide us imagination and whims, and relying on those whims we take the existence of things to be real. Ghalib indicates towards that very state of man when he says:

کثرت آرائی وحدت ہے پرستاری وہم
کر دیا کافران اصنام خیالی نے مجھے

Kasrat aarai-e-wahadat hai parastari-e-wahm,

Kar diya kaa is asnaam khayali ne mujhe.

The Unity of God's manifestation in multiplicity is an illusion and believing in it is like worshipping imaginary idols (the multiple form and figure) which made me (the poet) an atheist.

The status of the existence of creatures is linked with life which is surrounded by the limitations of time and space. Since every creature has a definite life-span as well as definite circle of activity, it is clear that their existence is not permanent rather transitory.

Let us see what Shakespeare; the great poet of England has to say about life and existence. Following are some lines from his tragedy Macbeth:

Out, out brief candle!

Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player,

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

And then is heard no more. (Shakespeare, 1965)

The period of a candle is fixed which is known by everyone. For Shakespeare, life is as temporary as a moving shadow. According to him whatever attraction and interest we see in life, is not due to the reality of our existence. It depends upon time and space.

The concept of futility of our existence is presented by Meer Taqi Meer also when he says:

ہستی اپنی حباب کی سی ہے

یہ نمائش سراب کی سی ہے

Hasti apni Hobab ki si hai,

Ye nomaish sarab ki si hai. (Abbasi, 2003)

Our existence is like a bubble. All that we see is only a mirage.

Here, Meer holds that human existence is meaningless and whatever we see, make us believe that we exist while infact it is all a mirage.

If we take the existence of creatures to be real, it will be mandatory to accept it as influential and independent in being which is absolutely wrong. Infact in this world there is nothing influential and effective in being except God. The life-span of every other thing is fixed and definite and after that it has to be perished. Infact believing in the reality of our existence is like getting involved in self deception.

Ghalib says:

ہستی کے مت فریب میں آجائیو اسد

عالم تمام حلقہٴ دام خیال ہے

Hasti ke mat fareb me aajaaiyo Asad,
Alam tamam halqa-e-daam-e-khayal hai.

Do not be deceived by existence, Asad (Ghalib, the poet). The whole world is the circle of web of imagination.

The belief of existence in us comes from observation which is wholly based on relativity and distinctiveness because we look at different things from different perspective. Therefore, it is difficult to reach to the reality through observation. The perception or imagination is very vast and the whole world is only a circle of web of imagination. Since Ghalib does not accept the existence of things around us to be real, he calls it deception illusion and web of imagination. (Sabzwari, 1969)

The same view is expressed in another couplet of Ghalib where he says:

جز نام، نہیں صورت عالم مجھے منظور
جز وہم نہیں ہستی اشیاء، میرے آگے

Juz naam, nahin soorat-e-aalam mujhe manzoor,
Juz wahm nahin hasti-e-ashiya ,mere aage.

To me the image of the world is nothing but a name. The existence of worldly things is not more than a mere illusion, for me.

This is only man who gets involved in names, imaginations and illusions. Since it is only man, in the whole world, who has been endowed with the capacity of thinking, perceiving and acting, therefore this creature is the best and above all among other creatures. This creature (man) because

of his status has been captivated, by himself, in vein thought, that his existence is real. Ghalib inspite of accepting the excellence of human being, denies from the presence of his existence.

In another couplet, Ghalib says:

باز بچہ اطفال ہے دنیا میرے آگے
ہوتا ہے شب و روز تماشا میرے آگے
Baazeecha-e- atfal hai duniya mere aage,
Hota hai shab-o-roz tamasha mere aage.

To me the world is a playground of children (where children play all types of sports). A show goes on before me, day and night.

Ghalib's intellectual/intuitive maturity gives him the perception of this world as a playground of children, where all types of scenes and behaviours of playful activities are being showed. People are playing their role but their behaviours are child's behaviours because they are ignorant. Here, Ghalib can be compared with Shakespeare because the latter also calls the world as a stage where people are playing their role. But Ghalib goes a step further that mostly it is child like activity. People are ignorant. They do not behave maturely.

We came across the thoughts of Ghalib and other thinkers about existence, which in a nutshell can be said as, existence is mere illusion. Here a question arises, that from observation it is proved that things have got consistent existence. Ghalib has thrown light on this perspective from pure philosophical

thinking and tried to answer the above question. Therefore, he says:

اصل شہود و شاہد و مشہود ایک ہے
حیراں ہوں پھر مشاہدہ ہے کس حساب میں

Asl-e-shahood-o-shahid-o-mashhood ek hai,
Hairaan hoon, phir mushahida hai kis hisaab mein.

The seeing, the seer and the scene – when all are the self same things. I wonder then, that on what account lies the observation.

This means that the things observed, the reality of the observer and the origin of observation itself are same things and when we understand this fact then the possibility of observation comes to an end, because there is nothing that can observe itself by own. Therefore whatever is seen is based only on reliability and relativity because the eyes from which we see can not see it.

Since Ghalib is not only a believer of Wahdat-al-Wujood (Unity of Being) but also a propagator of this doctrine, so he presents different illustrations to prove that in the whole world, only God's Being is real and present. According to the poet, it is only His Being (God) who was expansive and got expanded and different images of things were created from His Being. From these different forms and images, appeared multiplicity. But this multiplicity is only a matter of reliability, not the reality of different things. In yet another couplet by Ghalib, some light is thrown on the topic of reality of observation.

ہے غیبِ غیب، جسکو سمجھتے ہیں ہم شہود

ہیں خواب میں ہنوز، جو جاگے ہیں خواب میں

Hai Ghaib-e-ghaib, jisko samajhte hain hum shahood,
Hain khwab mein hanooz, jo jaage hain khwab mein.

Whatever we think as manifest is under veil of veils. Those who wake in dreams are still in dreaming state.

Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali writes about this couplet that whatever we think as manifestation of God is infact under so many veils. In thinking so, we are like a person who sees in a dream that he is waking. Though, he considers himself to be awaked but infact he is still dreaming. (Hali, 1996)

In another couplet also, Ghalib talks from this perspective when he says:

تھا خواب میں خیال کو تجھ سے معاملہ

جب آنکھ کھل گئی، نہ زیاں تھا نہ سود تھا

Tha khwab mein khayal ko tujhse maamla,
Jab aankh khul gai, na zayan tha na sood tha.

In a dreaming state my business with you was by imagination.
The awakening made it plain; there was neither loss nor gain.

It should be made clear that in a dream, the existence of man is not active. Instead, it is only his imagination which is active, because all other strength is rendered ineffective. The famous poet of English and contemporary of Ghalib Edgar Allen Poe also present a similar view about human existence when he says:

"All that we see or seem,

Is but a dream within a dream." (Poe, 1966)

Edgar Allen Poe has called the observation and feelings, 'dream within a dream' because in his opinion, our notion of existence is itself a dream in which observations and feelings are born which are no less than the earlier dream. Therefore, man is involved in a state of dream within a dream.

The belief of existence mostly comes from hope and courage that are related with the certainty of existence which is present in the subconscious of man. These support us in the state of imagination in dream and in our imagination we make the empyrean (sky high) places which never come before us in waking state. The ocean of life continues and flood comes and goes. A point comes when the speed of flowing of ocean gets slow. When we look back on the past, we get startled and it seems that the hopes through which we were busy in making our lives prosperous, was nothing but a dream of an insane person. At this stage our belief in existence is shaken because we find ourselves to be ineffective. But this stage is not long lasting and if it is so, then all the struggles of life will come to an end, which is against the creation of this universe. Consequently, again we get involved in self deception. This is why Ghalib has said:

کہہ سکے کون کہ یہ جلوہ گری کسکی ہے

پردہ چھوڑا ہے وہ اس نے کہ اٹھائے نہ بنے

Kah sake kaun ki ye jalwagari kiski hai

Parda choda hai wo usne ki uthae na bane.

Can anyone say that whose manifestation lies all around? He (God) has veiled Himself as if behind a curtain which can not be lifted.

According to Ghalib, this universe is a manifestation of Husne-e-azal (Eternal Beauty/Gods' being) and that Eternal Beauty is infinite. This universe is not infinite, still it is expansive and man has been sent here to rule on this universe. Infact Ghalib does not accept the individual existence of things and takes this world to be a collection of different states and conditions. These states and conditions appear on the scene because Eternal beauty (God) adopts new splendour. In this regard the poet opines that the reason of creation of this universe is that God wanted to see Himself; therefore, He created the world. (Hasan, 1987)

دہر، جز جلوہ یکتائی معشوق، نہیں

ہم کہاں ہوتے اگر حسن نہ ہوتا خود میں

Dahr, juz jalwa-e-yaktaa-i-e-maashooq nahin.

Hum kahan hote agar husn na hota khud been.

The world is nothing but the manifestation of the Beloved (God's) Unity of Being. Where would we have been if the Eternal Beauty (God) did not want to see Himself.

The subject of the above couplet has been derived by Ghalib from Hadith-e-Qudsi (words of God to the Prophet):

”كنت كنزاً مخفياً فا حبيت ان اعرف فخلقت الخلق“

Kunto kanzan makhfeeyan fa ahabto an oarafa fakhalaqtul khalqa".(Albani, 1992)

“I was a hidden treasure. I wanted to be known, therefore I created the creatures”.

As if the purpose of creation was to create that consciousness in man from which he can gain the knowledge and proximity of God. Therefore, whatever knowledge we gain, is the reflection and manifestation of God’s attributes.

Besides the above mentioned illustrations, in the following we are presenting some other couplets by Ghalib which indicate that the existence of creatures is only relative.

نقش فریادی ہے کسی شوخی تحریر کا
کاغذی ہے پیرہن ہر پیکر تصویر کا

Naqsh faryaadi hai kiski shokhi-e-tahreer ka,
Kaaghzi hai pairahan har paikar-e-tasweer ka.

Whose clever art has kindled the protest of engraving? Every image that we see is in paper robes dressed (It was a custom in Iran that the petitioners wore paper made dress and went into the court of the king to seek justice).

In creating everything, the Creator (God) has displayed his perfect talent. Still everything except His Being (God’s being) is perishable. The words kaghazi parahan (paper dress) and paiker-e-tasweer (embodiment of image or picture) indicate towards the apparel and perishable existence of creatures.

نہ تھا کچھ تو خدا تھا، کچھ نہ ہوتا تو خدا ہوتا
ڈبویا جھکو ہونے نے، نہ ہوتا میں تو کیا ہوتا

Na thaa kuch to khuda thaa, kuch na hota to khuda hota,
Duboya mujhko hone ne, na hota main to kya hota.

When nothing was, then God was there; had nothing been, God would have been. My being has defeated me. If I would not have been, what would I have been.

Here Ghalib equates his existence with defeat or failure because being involved in life, he has to suffer all the worries and problems like earning livelihood, fear of death, worldly tragedies, sorrow and pangs of love etc.

یک نظر بیش نہیں فرصت ہستی، غافل
گرمی بزم ہے ایک رقص شرر ہونے تک

Yak nazar besh nahin fursat-e-hasti, ghaafil,
Garmi-e-bazm hai ek raqs-e-sharar hone tak.

O negligent person! The life-span is not more than a glance (winking of an eye). The glamour of the assembly is nothing but glimmer of the dancing spark, or of dancing atoms momentarily.

Here the poet wants to convey a message that our life-span is as short as a winking of an eye or a dancing spark. Therefore, we should not take our existence to be permanent or real.

Ghalib keeps on contemplating about human existence. He is quite aware of human suffering, despair and death, that is why he says:

غم ہستی کا اسد کس سے ہو جز مرگ علاج

شمع ہر رنگ میں جلتی ہے، سحر ہونے تک

Gham-e-hasti ka Asad Kis se ho juz marg ilaaj,

Shama har rang mein jalti hai, sehar hone tak.

The sorrow of life can be cured only by death (sorrow and sufferings of life will come to and end only after death). The candle has to burn anyway, till the morning's birth.

The above couplet means that as a candle keeps on burning in every condition till morning appears, similarly human beings have to face all that come to them in the form of sufferings, tragedies, pain etc. It is only after death that one can get rid of the problems of existence. This couplet is reflective of Ghalib's own life which was full of misery till his death. (Chishti, 1992)

GHALIB'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Ghalib's work is a blend of suffering, grief, affliction, yearning, desires and longings. Both the concepts (suffering and desire) are entangled with each other. Rather, it would not be wrong to say that his art contains the dilemma of both these feelings (suffering, sorrow and eagerness, desire).

The tale of suffering and sorrow is recorded on every page of Ghalib's Deewan (collection of poems).

نہ گلِ نغمہ ہوں، نہ پردہ ساز

میں ہوں اپنی شکست کی آواز

Na gule naghma hun, na parda-e-saaz,
Main hoon apni shikast ki aawaz.

I am not the cheering melody, nor the curtain of lute. I represent the voice of my own defeat.

بس کہ ہوں غالب اسیری میں بھی آتش زیرِ پا
موءِ آتش دیدہ ہے، حلقہ میری زنجیر کا

Bas ki hoon Ghalib Aseerī mein bhi aatish zer-e-paa,
Moo-e-aatish deeda hai halqa, meri zanjeer ka.

A fire burns under my feet even in prison (I am very restless). The burnt hair is like the circle (link) of my chain.

The sorrow and pain underlying these couplets is reflective of a person who wants to lead his life with eagerness, desire, zest and zeal, but is unable to do so because of the sufferings and pain that he has to face now and then. In such condition, it is necessary to take shelter under some philosophical thought to face these tragic storms.

In words of Ghalib:

دیرو حرم آئینہ تکرار تمنا
واماندگی شوق تراشے ہے پناہیں

Dair-o-haram aaina takraar-e-tamanna,
Wa mandgi-e-shauque tarashe hai panahen.

The monastery and other religious places reflect the conflict of desires. The thwarting of longings builds shelters.

Philosophy of life is the second name for this shelter or refuge through which a person leads his life.

Life is filled with different multicoloured experiences. Like others, Ghalib too had to face the problem of reaching to a consistent and organized philosophy of life, through these scattered experiences. Ghalib has dealt with the different forms of the current philosophy of life, but he could not find contentment on it. In spite of being aware of the mysteries of Wahdat-al-Wujood, he does not escape from life, rather he looks eagerly and restlessly on every colour and image of life. The poet also comes across with the topics of being and nothingness i.e. whether human life is real or only imaginative as we have cited earlier. But these leave a transitory influence on the poet's personality. The thing that symbolized Ghalib's personality and attraction of his art is his deep involvement in the different colours and forms of life and this involvement is embedded in his personality. He is not escaping from life; rather he is involved in and associated with it. He is the victim of sorrow of not being able to achieve the prosperities of life for which he always has a craving and this is the condition which makes the poet a human being like us. If we observe life, we will find lots of attraction in it. When the moon appears, man stretches out his hands to get it and he is equally attracted to the sunlight. It seems as if the relationship of man and the universe around him is of desire, longing, subjugation and control.

The desire and longings are the symbols of life and this is the reality which makes Ghalib a precursor of Iqbal. In twentieth century Iqbal made self/ego the base of human existence, while in the nineteenth century Ghalib made craving and longing to be real life and which according to him is the first impression of self or ego.

The stage beyond the desire and longing is the stage of defeat of desire which is responsible for creating all the pain and sufferings.

In fact Ghalib's philosophy of life consists of both the aspects of desire and longing i.e. desire and defeat of desire that are intertwined quite clearly. On one side, desire or longing is the phenomenon without which the life seems to be desolate, having no vigour and vitality. 'Anjuman be Shama hai, gar barq kharaman mein nahin'. (A heart without the passion's fire is an assembly without light). While, on the other hand, this very longing is a prelude to the defeated desires which creates pain and anxiety. As if, what is the reason of happiness is the reason of anguish, dread, and suffering. Ghalib builds his philosophy of life on these two above stated basis. (Hasan, 2005)

The multiple aspect of longing (wistfulness and regret) may be termed as his philosophy of life. On one hand, longing is the symbol of life and all the beauties of life are related with it. On the other hand this longing and yearning is the very cause of extreme anguish and misery. Due to it, human being is always restless for things that he can not get and he complains:

ہزاروں خواہشیں ایسی کہ ہر خواہش پہ دم نکلے

Hazaron khwahishen aisi ki har khwahish pe dum nikle.

Thousands of desires _____ each took my breath away.

یاس و امید نے ایک عربدہ میدان مانگا

عجز ہمت نے طلسم دل ساکل باندھا

Yaas-o-ummeed ne ek arbada maidan manga,

Ajz-e-himmat ne tilasm-e-dil-e- sael bandha.

Despair and hope demanded a battle field. The weakness of courage has made a magic world where the battle between despair and hope is heating up.

(I with all humbleness made my heart magical so that it became a seeker from God)

نہ بندھے تیشگی شوق کے مضمون غالب

گرچہ دل کھول کے دریا کو بھی ساحل باندھا

Na bandhe tishnagi-e- shauq ke mazmoon Ghalib,

Gar chah dil khol ke dariya ko bhi saahil bandha.

Ghalib in the above couplet says that although he brought the entire ocean to the shore with his heart so open, still his thirsty desires/longing could not be expressed.

One of the salient features of Ghalib's sorrowfulness and eagerness is that he never departs from the excessive dilemma of pining and longing. Despite his sorrow, dejection, depression and defeated desires, Ghalib has safeguarded his eagerness, wistfulness and longings, and kept it alive and radiant. Apart

from some of his couplets like رہیے اب ایسی جگہ چل کر جہاں کوئی نہ ہو ('Rahiye ab aisi jagah chal kar jahaan koi na ho'/let me go away and live at a place where there is no one) that reflect his desire of getting isolated from the world, Ghalib is unaware of negation of longings.

Ghalib never gets tired of his earnest desire for getting involved in the struggles of life. He always wants to live life to its fullest with lots of fervour and zeal. This is why he says:

طبع ہے مشتاق لذت، ہائے حسرت کیا کروں
آرزو سے ہے شکست آرزو مطلب مجھے

Taba hai mushtaq-e-lazzat, haae hasrat kya Karoon,

Aarzoo se hai shikast-e-aarzoo matlab mujhe.

The nature longs for pleasure but Ghalib regrets for it; as with having a desire, he really wants the defeat of desire. (So that he may keep on longing for things).

نہ لائی شوخی اندیشہ تاب رنج نومیدی
کف افسوس ملنا عہد تجدید تمنا ہے

Na laai shokhi-e-andesha tab ranj-e-naumeedi,

Kaf-e-afsos malna ahed-e-tajdeed-e-tamanna hai.

The fearfulness of naughtiness (of desires) could not tolerate the sorrow and hopefulness (caused by the thwarting of desires) Rubbing of one's hand (an expression of being sorrowful) is the promise of renewal of desire.

Ghalib agonizes and at the same time smiles from these two aspect i.e. wistfulness and regret. This smiling is not of a pessimist or masochist rather of a lively and mentally healthy person who does not forget the pleasure of longing even when he is dejected from defeated desires.

In so many couplets, Ghalib has assembled the pleasure and pain of longings and desires.

اچھا ہے سر انگشت حنائی کا تصور

دل میں نظر آتی تو ہے ایک بوند لہو کی

Achcha hai sar angusht-e-henaai ka tasawwur,
Dil mein nazar aati to hai ek boond lahoo ki.

It is good to keep imagining the hennaed (coloured) finger tips (of the beloved). At least I am able to see a drop of blood in my heart.

سر اپارہن عشق و ناگزیر الفت ہستی

عبادت برق کی کرتا ہوں اور افسوس حاصل کا

Sarapaa rehan-e-ishq-o-naagazeer-e-ulfat-e-hasti,
Ebaadat barq ki karta hun, aur afsos hasil ka.

I pledge myself to love and love of life possesses me. I worship lightning and lament whatever I receive from it (lightning's handiwork).

Here Ghalib has interpreted desire and longing as love because human life is indebted to this very longing and craving which is essential, painful and delighting. Sorrow has been divided by Ghalib into two parts – sorrow of love and sorrow of

earning livelihood. One (sorrow of earning living), is the source for providing all the general necessities of life and due to it man runs after plenty of wishes to get them fulfilled. While the other one (sorrow of love) which though is mortifying but simultaneously has some delighting and rejuvenating factor. The relationship between sorrow of love and sorrow of living has been very beautifully described by the poet in these words. (Hasan, 2005)

غم اگر چہ جاں گسل ہے، پہ کہاں بچیں، کہ دل ہے
غم عشق گرنہ ہوتا، غم روزگار ہوتا

Gham agar chah jaan-gasal hai, pe kahan bachen, ki dil hai,
Gham-e-ishq gar na hota, gham-e-rozgaar hota.

Grief wastes our life away – and yet how shall we flee the heart within us? Had we not known the grief of love, we would have known the grief of earning livelihood.

When one feels a little relieved from sorrow of earning living, so that he may enjoy the pangs of love, in Ghalib's term it is called as leisure time or spare time.

عمر ہر چند کہ ہے برق خرام
دل کے خوں کرنے کی فرصت ہی سہی
Umr harchand ki hai barq khiraam,
Dil ke khoon karne ki fursat hi sahi.

Though life is fleeting speedily like a flash, still it is enough to make one's heart bleed.

Ghalib has been able to keep himself away from pessimism because he is never negligent of the joy which is hidden under

the layers of grief. Besides, he never gives up his hopes even during the time when he passes through extreme mental agony, depression and sadness. There are plenty of couplets by Ghalib describing this mental state. For example:

سنہلنے دے مجھے اے نا امیدری کیا قیامت ہے

کہ داماں خیال یار چھوٹا جائے ہے مجھ سے

Sambhalne de mujhe ai naa ummeedi kya qyamat hai,

Ki damaan-e-khayal-e-yaar choota jaae hai mujhse.

Give me respite. O despair! Awesome is my state. Even the thought (remembrance) of my friend (the beloved) is slipping away from my mind.

بس ہجوم نا امیدری خاک میں مل جائیگی

یہ جو ایک لذت ہماری سعی لا حاصل میں ہے

Bas hujum-e-naumeedi khak mein mil jaegi,

Yeh jo ek lazzat hamari sai-e-la hasil mein hai.

Relent o host of despairs! Or you will perish into dust, because I derive pleasure from my futile efforts (which could not bring success).

The other state i.e. the joy derived from the desire and longing may be vividly observed in the following couplets by Ghalib.

ہوں میں بھی تماشائی نیرنگ تمنا

مطلب نہیں کچھ اس سے، کہ مطلب ہی بر آوے

Hoon main bhi tamashaai-e-nairang-e-tamanna,

Matlab naheen kuchh is se, ki matlab hi bar aawe.

I too am the spectator of the wonders that my longing can perform. It matters nothing to me, whether I attain my wish or not.

دل لگی کی آرزو بے چین رکھتی ہے ہمیں

ورنہ یاں بے رونقی دود چرائے کشتہ ہے

Dil lagi ki aarzo bechain rakhti hai humein,

Warna yaan be raunaqi dood-e-cheragh-e-kushta hai.

Ghalib is restless to have amusement and fun in life because he is quite ware of the dullness of life which he compares with the smoke of extinguished lamp.

گو ہاتھ کو جنبش نہیں، آنکھوں میں تو دم ہے

رہنے دوا بھی ساغر و مینا، میرے آگے

Go haath ko jumbish naheen, aankhon mein to dum hai,

Rahne do abhi saaghar-o-meena, mere aage.

Though the hands can not make movement, the eyesight is still sound. So let the cup and flask of ale lie before me.

To conclude, Ghalib's philosophy of life consists of rapture and agony of infinite desire. It is easy to visualize this kind of a philosophy of life, today. But if we look at it from the point of view of Ghalib's age we may say that it would not have been easy for the poet to formulate such a philosophy of life (keeping in mind the incidences of Ghalib's life including the Mutiny) at a time when at every step, there was desire and defeat of desire. Ghalib's philosophy of life is the philosophy of a lively, energetic and courageous person who inspite of storms of misfortunes,

never gives hope from life and this is the fact that keeps Ghalib so close to us, even today.

GHALIB AND HUMANISM

Mirza Ghalib was a devout humanist. In his practical life too, he kept in touch with people on the principles of humanism. According to him, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and people from different religion were all men of God and he regarded all of them to be mankind. He did not believe in specialization, division and discrimination among humans because according to him, all are brothers among themselves. This point of view may be vividly discerned in his letters. Writing to his bosom friend and disciple Mirza Hargopal Tafta in one of his letters Ghalib says:

“I hold all human beings – Hindus, Muslims Christians dear to me and regard them as my brothers.” (Ghalib, 1899)

The virtue of meekness and humbleness was a distinct quality that was embedded in his nature. At a place he writes about his own self as: “Among Muslims, I am the condemned of God, accursed of the world, old, infirm, sick, beggar and abject person.” (Kanda, 2004)

The attribute of religious tolerance was a characteristic feature of Mirza Ghalib so much so that it may be termed as an essential part of his life and his identity. Among his dear ones, there were people from all the religion, sects, community and race whom he loved very sincerely. Writing to his bosom friend and disciple Mirza Hargopal Tafta, he expressed his feelings in

these words: "Among the many English men who have been slain by the black faced Indians, some were my friends, some my benefactors, some my students and some patrons and acquaintances. Among the Indians who now lie buried in dust, many were my friends and dear ones, some were my pupils and some my darlings. All of them are now no more. The grief of even a single dear one is enough to unnerve one's heart. Imagine my plight when I have to mourn for so many of my departed mates. It is bound to make my life miserable. I have lost so many of my friends that there will hardly be anyone left to mourn for me when I am dead." (Ghalib, 1928)

In the whole life of Ghalib, there may not be find any incidence which was against tolerance. Whom he made friendship with, he stood by him. Along with the tolerance, the element of faithfulness and loyalty is also very much prominent in his character. According to him, faithfulness is an essential part of mankind without which man is incomplete. This faithfulness and loyalty should be with humanity, community, religion, and race but it should be in abundance. There should not be any loophole in it. For faithfulness, he holds constancy and firmness to be mandatory. At so many places in his poetry, he has expressed his views about faithfulness and constancy. For example:

وفاداری بشرط استواری اصل ایماں ہے

مرے بت خانہ میں تو کعبے میں گاڑو برہمن کو

Wafaadari bashart-e-istawaari asl-e-eemaan hai,

Mare but khana mein to kabe me gaaro brahman ko.

One must be constant till the end; this is the essence of faith. If the priest dies in his temple – let the kaba be his burial place (because his death in temple shows how faithful he had been to his religion all his life).

نہیں کچھ سبھ و زنا کے پھندے میں گیرائی

وفاداری میں شیخ و برہمن کی آزمائش ہے

Nahin kuchh subbah-o-zunnar ke phande mein geerai,

Wafadaari mein sheikh-o-brahman ki aazmaish hai.

The rosary and the sacred thread have no strength because these are mere stranglehold. The Brahmin and the Sheikh are judged by their steadfast faith.

In the eyes of Mirza Ghalib, a man is incomplete, imperfect and unsound who is deprived of the beauty of loyalty and constancy.

Love of mankind and human sympathy was a distinct feature of the great poet's personality. He used to become restless on human misery and affliction. He profoundly expressed his emotions about human suffering and sorrow in his works. The description of different mental and emotional state of human being is also present in his works. "One cannot imagine severer affliction than Ghalib had to go through but Ghalib was neither crushed by Grief, nor grew cynical. He becomes disillusioned but not cynical because innate kindness and good cheer always asserted themselves. He never allowed his failure to embitter him towards others. He was alive to the finger – tips and imbued with extreme sensitivity, the varied experiences of his eventful life – a

life of regret and wistfulness." (Kumar, 1982) Observing all the afflictions and hardships of his life, he expressed his feelings in these words:

رنج سے خوگر ہوا انسان تو مٹ جاتا ہے رنج
مشکلیں مجھ پر پڑیں اتنی کہ آساں ہو گئیں

Ranj se khoogar hua insaan to mit jaata hai ranj,
Mushkilen mujh par pareen itni ki aasan ho gayin.

When man is used to sorrow, sorrow vanishes. I have borne so many troubles that life has become easy now.

کیوں گردشِ مدام سے گھبرانہ جائے دل
انسان ہوں، پیالہ و ساغر نہیں ہوں میں

Kyon gardish-e-madaam se ghabra na jaae dil,
Insaan hun, pyaala-o-saaghar nahin hun main.

Perpetual whirl unnerves the heart and why should it not be so, because, after all I am a man, not a flask or bowl. (I am not a vessel which is not conscious of suffering. Being human being I am sensitive enough to feel).

If we analyse the above mentioned couplets in the light of incidences and conditions of his life we can infer that the man who passes through such a life, was not a common man. Rather, we can say that he was a courageous, lively, energetic, discreet and experienced person.

For Ghalib, the most important factor of a man is to become accomplished with human virtues.

بس کہ دشوار ہے ہر کام کا آساں ہونا

آدمی کو بھی میسر نہیں انساں ہونا

Bas ki dushwar hai har kaam ka aasan hona,

Aadmi ko bhi mayassar nahin insaan hona.

To think that every task is easy is something misleading when even a man can not manage to become human. Alas! (For a human being it is not easy to become a human in the true sense of the term).

Moreover, from the expression of Ghalib's Sufi thoughts also we come to know that he believed in the universal brotherhood and human dignity. The concept of Sufism had created politeness, wisdom, love of God irrespective of religion and community, services of mankind, sincerity, and reverence for the leaders of all religion, and love and regard for their message. His whole life bears witness to the fact that despite having faith in the oneness of God and righteousness of prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H) he had equal regard and reverence for the people belonging to other religion and communities. (Quraishi, 1987) The underlying couplet illustrates this fact. For e.g:

ہم موحد ہیں ہمارا کیش ہے ترک رسوم

ملتیں جب مٹ گئیں اجزائے ایماں ہو گئیں

Hum muwahhid hain humara kaish hai tark-e-rasoom,

Millaten jab mit gaeen ajzaae eeman hogaeen.

Our creed is 'God is one.' We abandon rituals and this is our way of life. When the communities (religions) dissolve, they constitute one faith.

In Ghalib's works, due to human weakness, we find the confession of sins as well, but of course in a unique way. Though he repents for his sins, still he is glad for the uncommitted sins (those sins which he was craving to commit but could not). Therefore, according to him if he should be punished for the committed sins, then he should also be rewarded for those sins that he could not commit.

نا کردہ گناہوں کی بھی حسرت کی ملے داد

یارب! اگر ان کردہ گناہوں کی سزا ہے

Naa karda gunaahon ki bhi hasrat ki mile daad

Yaarab! agar un karda gunaahon ki saza hai.

I should be praised for the longing of the sins that I could not commit. O God! If you would punish me for those committed sins.

آتا ہے داغ حسرت دل کا شمار یاد

مجھ سے میرے گناہ کا حساب اے خدا نہ مانگ

Aata hai daagh-e-hasrat-e-dil ka shumar yaad,

Mujh se mere gunaah ka hissab ai khuda na maang.

I am reminded of the scars of thwarted yearning. So, O Go! Do not ask me to give an account of my sins.

Ghalib was liberal, warm hearted, and friendly with all and sundry. A man bearing such virtues would undoubtedly have

higher attributes of humanism. He became restless on seeing poor and downtrodden people who were in a deplorable condition. He used to help the poor even when he himself was starving. It is said that he never turned back a beggar without alms. To indulge in a fight with someone was adverse to his nature. In one of his couplets Ghalib says:

آزاد رو ہوں اور میرا مسلک ہے صلح کل
ہر گز کبھی کسی سے عداوت نہیں مجھے

Azaad rau hun aur mera maslak hai sulh-e-kul,
Hargiz kabhi kise se adaawat nahin mujhe.

I am a man of independent will; my creed is 'love and peace with all.' I never feel any malice or ill will for anyone.

Loyalty, sincerity and friendliness was embedded in his nature. He neither harboured a feeling of ill will or grudge, nor enmity or jealousy against some one, notwithstanding the fact he had some unpleasant experiences with others (he had been ill treated by some people).

کہوں کیا خوبی اوضاعِ ابنائے زماں، غالب
بدی کی اس نے جس سے ہم نے کی تھی بارہا نیکی

Kahoon kya khoobi-e-auzaa-e-abnaa-e-zamaan, Ghalib,
Badi ki us ne jis se hum ne ki thi baarha neki.

How can I tell you the virtue of the conduct of the men of this age? O Ghalib! They do me harm to whom I have done well, repeatedly.

Even in such circumstance he did not feel any enmity to anyone, rather said:

یوں ہی دکھ کسی کو دینا نہیں خوب ورنہ کہتا
کہ میرے عدو کو یارب ملے میری زندگانی

Yoonhi dukh kisi ko dena nahin khoob, warna kahta,
Ki mere adoo ko yaarab, mile meri zindagani.

It is not good to torment others or else, I would say: "Give my life to my enemy.! O God".

Besides the above mentioned facts, in Ghalib's works there are plenty of couplets where we find an impression of human dignity, the images of evolution of mankind, delicacies of human philosophy of life, thoughts about downfall of mankind, realities about life and death, description of sorrow and happiness, the world and different aspects of world's realities, observations of man's psychology and the study of pleasant and unpleasant experiences of society. All the above mentioned facts throw light on all the aspects of overall study of man and his philosophy of life. (Quraishi, 1987)

For example:

ہیں آج کیوں ذلیل کہ کل تک نہ تھی پسند
گستاخی فرشتہ ہماری جناب میں

Hain aaj kyon zaleel ki kal tak na thi pasand,
Gustakhi-e-farishta humari janaab mein.

Why are we so disgraced and base today, when till yesterday we could not bear the arrogance of the angles. (This alludes to the event of angel Iblees, disobeying God's order to prostrate Adam).

دونوں جہان دے کے وہ سمجھے، یہ خوش رہا

یاں آپڑی یہ شرم، کہ تکرار کیا کریں

Dono jahaan deke wo samjhe, ye khush raha,
Yaan aa pari ye sharm, ki takraar kya Karen.

Handing me both the world (life and hereafter) He (God) through that I was satisfied. When in reality, I was too embarrassed to ask repeatedly for more (God Himself).

بس کہ دشوار ہے ہر کام کا آساں ہونا

آدمی کو بھی میسر نہیں انساں ہونا

Bas ki dushwaar hai har kaam ka aasaan hona,
Aadmi ko bhi mayassar nahin, insaan hona.

To think that every task is easy is something misleading. When even a man can not manage to become human. Alas! (For a human being, it is not easy to become human in the true sense of the term).

منظر ایک بلندی پر اور ہم بنا سکتے

عرش سے ادھر ہوتا کاش کہ مکاں اپنا

Manzar ek bulandi par aur hum bana sakte,
Arsh se udhar hota kaash ki makaan apna.

If only we had our dwelling place beyond this sky so that we could stretch our vision beyond the starry space.

رنج سے خوگر ہو انسان تو مٹ جاتا ہے رنج
مشکلیں مجھ پر پڑیں اتنی کہ آساں ہو گئیں

Ranj se Khoogar hua insaan to mit jaata hai ranj,
Mushkilen mujh par padeen itni ki aasan ho gaeen.

When man is used to sorrow, sorrow vanishes. I have born
so many troubles that life has become easy now.

قید حیات و بند غم اصل میں دونوں ایک ہیں
موت سے پہلے آدمی غم سے نجات پائے کیوں

Qaid-e-hayaat-o-band-e-gham asal mein dono ek hain,
Maut se pahle aadmi gham se nejaat paae kyon.

The prison of life and the den of sorrow, both are the same
things. How can man get rid of sorrow before death? (As long as
he lives, he has to suffer all that befalls him.)

Ghalib has variously talked about human greatness in his
works. Reprimanding to those who wanted to take away the high
status of man, he says that the very purpose of creation of the
world is the man and the whole world has been created for him
(Begum, 1971).

زآفرینش عالم غرض جز آدم نیست

بگرد نقطہ مادور ہفت پر کار است

Za aafreenash-e-aalam gharz juz aadam neest,
Begird-e-nuqta-e-maa daur-e-haft par kaar-e-ast.

The creation of the world has no purpose but the existence of man (the world has been created for man). The seven heaven and earth are revolving like a compass round us as a centre.

Ghalib protests the fact that Mount Sinai had been chosen for showing the manifestation of God's Tajalli (radiation). He holds it against the status of man. He argues that Mount Sinai which was only a heap of stones was not worthy of bearing such a great responsibility. It is only man who had the capacity to bear it with wholeheartedness; therefore he should have been entrusted with such a responsibility.

گرنی تھی ہم پہ برق تجلی نہ طور پر
دیتے ہیں بادہ ظرف قدح خوار دیکھ کر

Girni thi hum pe barq-e-tajalli na toor par,
Dete hain baada zarf-e-qadah khwar dekh kar.

You should have chosen us (O God) for the flash of your radiation not the Mount Sinai. The wine is given, according to the capacity of the drinker.

What is the secret of this fundamental power of man? Ghalib in reply presents Mansoor Hallaj's example. It is famous that Mansoor Hallaj in a state of intoxication claimed, 'Ana Al Haque' (I am the Truth (God)). Scholars having superficial knowledge objected to it and put upon him an allegation of Kufr (Heresy). Eventually he was hanged till death. Ghalib says that infact every human being is a manifestation of God's being. As in a drop of water all the qualities of a sea are present, similarly man is also a reflection of God's attribute. But this is against

human dignity that man should announce this fact so openly like that of Mansoor. The poet says:

قطرہ اپنا بھی حقیقت میں ہے دریا لیکن
ہم کو تقلید تک ظرفی منصور نہیں

Qatra apna bhi haqeeqat mein hai dariya lekin,
Humko taqleed-e-tunak zarfi-e-Mansoor nahin.

In fact our drop is also a sea in itself. But Mansoor's narrow mindedness is not for us to emulate.

Since man has been blessed with such greatness he needs to put lots of efforts and labour. Unfortunately, some people do not pay due attention to gain subtle and appropriate education, therefore they fail in the attainment of the goal of life. As if they are unable to fulfill the purpose of their existence, hence they go away from the goal of life. Pointing towards this fact Ghalib says:

بس کہ دشوار ہے ہر کام کا آساں ہونا
آدمی کو بھی میسر نہیں انساں ہونا

Bas ki dushwar hai har kaam ka aasaan hona,
Aadmi ko bhi mayassar nahin insaan hona.

To think that every task is easy is something misleading. When even a man can not manage to become human. Alas! (For a human being, it is not easy to become human in the true sense of the term.)

One may possibly feel that in a situation when at every step one has to face the death, how and why a man can dare to do something? Man works in the hope of success but that success

can be attained only after passing through dread, anguish and fear; then it is a matter to think that how many of us would dare to go ahead. Ghalib would have borne such thoughts, when he wrote this couplet. (Malik Ram, 1985)

دام ہر موج میں ہے حلقہ صد کام نہنگ
دیکھیں کیا گزرے ہے قطرے پہ گہر ہونے تک

Daam har mauj mein hai halqa-e-sad kaam-e-nahang,
Dekhen kya guzre hai qatre pe guhar hone tak.

A hundred crocodiles lie ambushed In the web of every wave. Let us see, what the drop goes through before it becomes a pearl.

It can not be denied that the task is difficult and man has to face plenty of hardships in completing the task the more so because he had very little time. But inspite of all this, to give up hope is something wrong. It is our duty that we should try our best like a candle that keeps on burning till morning, though it knows that it's life is only for a night. Similarly man should also focus on the goal of his life and should never show carelessness. Let us see what Ghalib says about this:

یک نظر بیش نہیں فرصت ہستی، غافل
گر مئی بزم ہے ایک رقص شرر ہونے تک

Yak nazar besh nahin fursat-e-hasti, ghaafil,
Garmi-e-bazm hai ek raqs-e-sharar hone tak.

O negligent person! The life span is not more than a glance (winking of an eye). The glamour of the assembly is but glimmer of the dancing spark or dancing atoms momentarily.

The difficulty of the way can not be denied of, but loosing hope and courage is not appreciated. Instead, man should learn a lesson from the hardships of life and should go ahead under the guidance of his knowledge and experience.

اہل بینش کو ہے طوفان حوادث، مکتب

لطمہ موج، کم از سلی استاد، نہیں

Ahl-e-beenish ko hai toofan-e-hawadis, maktab,

Lutma-e-mauj, kam az saili-e-ustaad, nahin.

For the wise men the stress and storm of life teaches a lesson. The surge of the tragic waves is no less than the slap of a teacher.

Man needs to understand his responsibilities, capacity and power. He also needs to learn self confidence and self reliance. Iqbal has interpreted it as self/ego. Though Ghalib has not used the word self or ego but it bears the same meaning when he says, that man can not attain self realization until and unless he leaves to rely on others. Hence, for attaining success instead of looking outside, he should look into himself. (Malik Ram, 1985) Ghalib puts this in these words:

اتنا ہی جھکوا اپنی حقیقت سے بعد ہے

جتنا کہ وہم غیر سے ہوں پیچ و تاب میں

Utna hi mujhko apni haqeeqat se boad hai,
Jitna ki wahm-e-ghair se hun pech-o-taab mein

The reality of my own self is beyond the grasp. I am very much far away from the understanding of my own self. Multiplicity or otherness is an illusion. It is simply causing perplexity as it is a veil in the understanding of unity.

To conclude, according to Ghalib, man should accomplish himself with human attributes and should take care of the responsibilities of vicegerency of God. He will have to take care of his business and decide which of the work is necessary to be done and which is not. Moreover, he will have to put it into sequence according to the importance of the work. Ghalib says:

میتا ہے فوت فرصت ہستی کا غم کہیں
عمر عزیز صرف عبادت ہی کیوں نہ ہو

Mit-ta hai faut-e-fursat-e-hasti ka ghum kahin,
Umr-e-aziz sarf-e-ibadat hi kyon na ho.

We can never overcome regret for wasted life even if the whole of it is spent in worship.

The prospects of man's work are so broad that the whole universe despite being so ample, seems insufficient for him.

ہے کہاں تمنا کا دوسرا قدم یارب!
ہم نے دشت امکان کو ایک نقش پایا

Hai kahaan tamanna ka doosra qadam yaarab!
Humne dasht-e-imkaan ko ek naqsh-e-paa paya.

O Lord! Where is the next step of our endless quest? We found the world of possibilities to be just an impression of the feet.