

Divine Pursuit as auxiliary to reach Infinite Reality: Comparative study of Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene and Mian Muhammad Buksh's Saif-ul-Malook

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This paper is extracted from my unpublished M.Phil research. The study has been undertaken to demonstrate the universal spirit of literature and the place of Punjabi Sufi literature within the canon of world literature; that the literary gulf between east and west is arbitrary. The study shows the points of commonality and divergences between the eastern and western heroic concepts. Similarities are discussed by highlighting the portrayal of heroes of the epics under study with superman renderings. Dissimilarities, however, will be touched upon while dealing with the theological, spiritual and intuitional aspects of the epics in general and a portrayal of the heroes in particular; their being or not the recipient of Divine illumination. Both Prince Saif-ul-Malook, hero of the epic *Saif-ul-Malook* and Redcross Knight, hero of the first book of the epic *Faerie Queene* face the identical circumstances in search of the Queen of Fairies. The former reaches the ultimate goal, the Infinite Reality (the fairy in symbolic perspective) whereas the later faces the utter dejection. Both are men with superman renderings but one of them fails to prove himself the recipient of Divine illumination. The fundamental question of this research is to what extent the assimilation of Divine illumination proves auxiliary to reach the infinite reality.

Introduction

The present paper denotes a comparative analysis of two epic masterpieces of two different languages; English and Punjabi to specify the supremacy of Punjabi epic Saif-ul-Malook over English epic Faerie Queene both in terms of thematic and linguistic undercurrent. Both the works have unifying similarities of plot and action on one hand while thematic coherence on the other. The main focus of the research, however, is the character analysis of the heroes of these epics on comparative grounds by analyzing their superhuman attributes as well as their spiritual grandeur and edification, finally proving the ascendancy of Punjabi epic hero Prince Saif-ul-Malook over English epic hero Redcross Knight. This research traces the binding thread between the western and eastern vision of heroic deeds and actions; the portrayal of hero as a man of faith with superhuman qualities. The paper also focuses on the points of disparity between the eastern and western concepts of heroism; Nietzsche's philosophy of hero as superman or overman (Nietzsche, 1976, p. 5) and Iqbal's concept of hero as "the recipient of Divine illumination" (Iqbal, 1986, p. 98). This focused disparity leads towards the final analysis conferring the right of

supremacy of Saif-ul-Malook over Faerie Queene. The works under study are Edmund Spenser's *The Fairie Queen* (1998) and the Punjabi epic *SaifulMalook* (1984) by famous Punjabi poet, Mian Muhammad Buksh. The famous Punjabi Sufi poet was born in 1830 in a small village Chak Thakra near Khari Shareef in Meer Pur district of Azad Kashmir. His father Mian Shamas-ul-Din was a pious man having spiritual qualities. He was the descendant of famous Sufi Hazrat Pir Ghazi Shah Qalandar. The father of Mian Muhammad Buksh was a learned man and a scholar of Arabic, Persian and many other branches of knowledge. Mian Muhammad Buksh got his early education from his father and later moved to Samwal, a town in vicinity to get educated there. From very childhood, Mian Muhammad Buksh had spiritual inklings which forced him to get associated with some mentor to quench the thirst of his soul. He found spiritual guidance from Hazrat Pir Ghazi Shah Qalandar in a dream who guided him to get associated with another sufi mentor Sain Ghulam Muhammad. Mian Muhammad Buksh was a learned and well-read man. He visited many places to get worldly knowledge. He was 33 years old when he composed Saif-ul-Malook, the famous epic of love denoting and unfolding many hidden annals of spirituality. The present paper is an attempt to trace out the true meaning of Divine pursuit in terms of spiritual love. A comparative analysis of Prince Saif-ul-Malook, hero of the epic *Saiful Malook* and Redcross Knight, hero of the first book of *Fairie Queen* who is also known as the knight of Holiness is the special focus of this research. The unifying agenda between both the epics is the glaring similarities between plot, action, thematic undercurrent and above all the characterization of the two apart from their geographical and ideological variances. The models of the research are Friedrich Nietzsche's theory of 'Übermensch' (Superman or overman) and Allama Muhammad Iqbal's theory of The Human Ego - His Freedom and Immortality:

Life is one and continuous. Man marches always onward to
receive ever
fresh illumination from an Infinite Reality which every
moment appears
in a new glory. And the recipient of Divine illumination is not
merely a passive recipient.
Every act of a free ego creates a new situation, and thus offers
further opportunities of creative unfolding (Iqbal, 1986:98)

Nietzsche claims that life is terrible and tragic and that the superman has the strength to confront life. Übermensch (superman) is not Superior in breeding and endowment but in power and strength; he is not mere human. Nietzsche regards man as bridge and superman as goal. Man should surpass the human attributes to reach the goal. Nietzsche states: "I teach you the overman. Man is something that shall be overcome." (Nietzsche, 1976:5) Nietzsche's Superman though not human being is aggrandized as prodigy of intellectual prescience, probity of character and will, independence, zinc, taste, temper and stature. Nietzsche proclaims further "What is the ape to man? A laughing stock or a

painful embarrassment and man shall be just that for overman: A laughing stock or painful embarrassment.”(Nietzsche, 1976:6) These are the qualities which this research will explore in western hero (Redcross Knight) and eastern hero (Prince Saif-ul-Malook) confronting the identical circumstances. The present research will also dredge up the spiritual spectrum of both the heroes as recipient of Divine illumination. The fundamental question of the research is that either a creature vested with superman renderings can be a human being in literal sense of the word glorified with spiritual illumination or above humanity equipped with all the powers but destitute of spiritual grandeur. Prince Saif-ul-Malook and Redcross knight both are earthly creatures possessing the entire superman attributes (as allegorical figures represent the superman). The later fails to reach the Divine illumination (the fairy in symbolical perspective) while the former captures the Divine vision, the Infinite Reality (the fairy as symbol of ultimate Truth) only because of the spiritual edification, the former possesses. This paper attempts to denote the reality that all the superman attributes if devoid of Divine illumination are unable to reach the ultimate truth. There always has been a wide gulf between the physical reality and the spiritual metaphysics which celebrates to encode the entire framework of the universe with its components. Iqbal states: “For the body there can be but a single space. The ego, therefore, is not space-bound in the sense in which the body is space-bound” (Iqbal, 1986:79).

Saif-ul-Malook is an epical masterpiece of Buksh (1830-1907). Buksh was a regional poet of Punjabi language born in Eastern Punjab. He completed the work under study when he was only 33. His versification talent tends to unfold the reality of life and universe. This is the very universality of poetic art and thematic grandeur of this epic which enriches its fame. Farani (2004) observed: “I firmly believe that if Mian Muhammad Buksh’s language had been Persian, he would have been recognized all over the world as a great Mystical poet not less than Rumi” (Farani, 2004:11-12).

The narrative of *Saif-ul-Malook* runs as the Prince Saif-ul-Malook , the only son of the Egyptian king Asim bin Sufwan, happens to see two pictures inscribed on sovereign stamp, a family heritage, which his father gives him as gift. The prophet Suleiman, who was famous to be the king of fairies and demons, had given those stamps to the grandfather of Prince Saif-ul-Malook as token of friendship. The prince recognizes one of the pictures inscribed on stamps as his own and the other one is of a beautiful and bewitching maiden with whom he falls in love at first sight. The king, his father, sends many brave knights in search of the maiden but all return unsuccessful. Then the prince sees the maiden in a dream who introduces herself as queen of fairies, and invites the prince to her fairy land but warning him of the impending trials to reach there. The prince sets out on journey in search of the fairy and ultimately undergoing trials and tribulations and performing many superman actions, reaches in fairy land and weds the

Queen of Fairies. His union with the fairy is the union of soul with eternal truth. Buksh writes in the epic:

“Rooh shehzada, nadi parm di, baira jan badan nu
Jani nal milain tad jani, krain shakista tan nu”
(Buksh, 1984: 80)

[Syeda translated the verses]

Prince in this epic stands for soul, the stream to sail in, to find out the fairy is the stream of eternal love and the broken vessel during the journey stands for the breakdown of corporal frame of man. Only then one can embrace the lover or the eternal truth when he breaks fragile body links with the world of misleading happenings (Syeda, 2013: 755)

Saif-ul-Malook is the epic of love inviting the readers to unfold the variant ground realities on different levels. Apparently the work describes the story of love between Prince Saif-ul-Malook and Badi-ul-Jamal (the queen of fairies). The thematic under-current, however, is not so apparent; it is engrossed in great intuitional and metaphysical realities. This very aspect of the epic enhances its scope to be acknowledged universally. The subtitle of the book, *Safar-ul-Ishq* (journey of divine love) contextualizes the hero's pursuit from physical to the metaphysical status. “Saif-ulMalook darasal wo Baikal, beqararnafs-e-insani he jo kul se bicherkrphir us se milnaykeliyabaitabhai” (Azhar, 1980:92). Saif-ul-Malook is actually the soul of man which is restless to embrace its organic whole, The Divine Reality, after been parted with it). The journey in pursuit of the fairy in the epic is not merely an adventure of earthly love rather it is the journey of soul in search of Divine Reality which is bound to undergo a series of trials. The hero is tested on physical and spiritual levels before the attainment of Divine Reality. Aqeel (1970) maintains, “Laikin Mian Muhammad ye tamamarahilbiankarnaykebawajood is bat per israrkrtayhainKe ye dastanmehzishqjadastannahinhalbalkay is main majazkeparday main haqeeqatkaizharkiagiahai.” (278). (But despite describing all the stages of the love story, Mian Muhammad Buksh is bent upon pinpointing the fact that this epic is not merely a love epic rather in it under the veil of earthly love the divine realities have been discussed).

The Fairie Queen by Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) the famous and widely read poet of England is an epic of classical English literature with almost similar story with a few exceptions. Prince Arthur, the hero of the epic sets out in the pursuit of the Queen of Fairies. Besides going himself, he sends twelve knights, too, in search of the Fairy. These knights are entitled with twelve classical virtues and are the heroes of the twelve books of *Fairie Queen*. Redcross, the hero of book one of the epic, is the knight of Holiness and the main focus of my research. Some scattered references about Prince Arthur and his pursuit of the fairy, however, are indispensable with an inkling of theological aspects of the fundamental issue of the research. Arthur, after his education by Timon and Merlin, sees in a vision the queen of Fairyland, and resolves to seek her out. Gloriana, the queen of fairies is the central

allegorical figure and the symbol of Divine pursuit in the epic; a pursuit never to be attained. Neither Arthur nor any of the twelve knights reach to seek out the fairy. Even till the end of this incomplete epic the main event of the poem is not clear; it is confused and confusing. The failure of Arthur in pursuit of the fairy along with twelve knights, celebrating the twelve virtues, jointly denotes the fact that any virtue without Divine illumination fails to lead the hero to destination. Redcross Knight like Prince Saif-ul-Malook has superman attributes, the intellectual transcendence, the physical virility, the will to explore the infinite realities, however, devoid of that much spiritual elevation. So, despite his supernatural powers, Redcross fails to find out the Queen of Fairies, though he undergoes the same journey full of trials. He, during the course of his journey, commits a number of errors and falls a prey to several temptations which exposes his spiritual destitute and mental health. As an epic hero "Archimago's temptations bring into clear focus the present state of Redcross's spiritual health: the combination of strength and weakness implicit in his active conscience and his dependence on reason and the evidence of his senses" (Cheney, 1968:71). All the twelve knights along with Prince Arthur fail to find out the fairy or in symbolic subscriptions to embrace the eternal Truth which Prince Saif-ul-Malook succeeds in. Though the poem is a historical allegory, this aspect is explicitly stated nowhere in the work. Historical facts and personages pervade the entire epic, however, at various levels the poem distances itself from a mere presentation of a series of historic-allegorical images. The spiritual and intuitional allusions outweigh at more than one places in the epic which prove it a work much mightier than it is being considered, the allegory of Queen Elizabeth. The present research tending to explore the complexities of heroism reaches to unfold many weaknesses and flaws of intuitional prescience of the hero. Redcross's error of judgment and his falling in the Wood of Error in canto 1, book 1 is one such example. This and many more prove Redcross a comparatively weak epic hero both on spiritual and intuitional levels than Prince Saif-ul-Malook. Redcross fails to prove himself the recipient of Divine illumination. Bernhart declares thus: "Spenser places Redcross's dilemma in terms of the choice of Hercules so that his choice of false religion appears as an unheroic act" (Bernhart, 1975:41).

Significance and Scope of the Study

The present study highlights the need of the modern times: the need to enhance the spiritual serenity among mankind and the need to search the ideal human being among the trash who can deserve to be called a superman in its true sense; the one whose qualities of head and heart are much awaited for. The mankind in general needs heroes like superman who can confront the difficulties of life and solve the problems in the present scenario of anxieties and growing tensions. The superman-attributes and spiritual grandeur testified in the present research offers mankind a scope to nourish such qualities. The research offers ample scope for self-judgment, self-realization and thereof self-

edification which is the greatest need of the hour. It is significant to study the selected topic in order to have a better understanding of human beings and their society.

Both the writers under study enjoy the boisterous success within the canon of literary history. Their genius can be marked through the prodigious criticism written on their personality and works. We have a long list of critics on both Edmund Spenser and Mian Muhammad Buksh respectively in English on former and in Punjabi on latter. No Comparative research, however, has been done so far on both the poets despite distinct similarities in their major works "*Fairie Queene*" and "*Saif-ul-Malook*". The proposed Study is significant in the sense that it will bring forth the unifying spirit in two linguistically variant works and solemnize the universal spirit of literature which knows no bounds. The available English criticism on Punjabi Sufi poetry in general and on "*Saif-ul-Malook*" in particular is negligible. The only significant research work in this context is the PhD thesis of Dr. Lajwanti R. Krishna, 'Punjabi Sufi Poets' (1938). This however, is more a historical and biographical research than literary exploration. Moreover, many Sufi poets including Mian Muhammad Buksh, have not been included in that. The proposed study being a comparative literary research will tend to explore both the works on thematic level and in terms with character portrayal which has not been attempted till date. The western and eastern concepts of heroism will serve as the case study during the course of research. Nietzsche's claim "man is something that shall be overcome" (Nietzsche, 1976, p. 5) as well as Iqbal's assertion, "Man marches always onward to receive ever fresh illuminations from an Infinite Reality" (Iqbal, 1986, p. 98) are regarded as the key assumptions which will be tested and thereof challenged or accepted through this study.

Punjabi Sufi Literature and Buksh's place within it

The present paper is distinctive of the type on account of the subject not been attempted before in the specific context; the context contextualizing and materializing a ground breaking comparison of a classical English epic with that of a regional language(Punjabi). It is a fact that the subject of Sufism engendering a refined heroic tradition in literature is not new all around the world but the more profound fact is that the literature all around the world owes a lot on the subject of Sufism or mystic experience to the translations of Persian literary works in English and other international languages. Had the literary pieces of Punjabi been translated in English, the literary scenario would have experienced radical transformation by introducing itself with wonderful literary genius. Punjabi Sufi poetry traces its roots direct into the mystic vision of rich Persian tradition and poets like Rumi and Mian Muhammad Buksh seem evidently in the same line. An ardent reader of both Persian and Punjabi literature sometimes feels difficult even to draw a demarcated line between both as far as the mystic tradition is concerned. Mian Muhammad Buksh was a gifted poet of Punjabi and a Sufi savant. He was an erudite of Arabic and Persian par excellence basking in a sheer supremacy

over many of his predecessors, successors and coevals. As for his place in world literature, it would suffice to cite that his epic *Saif-ul-Malook* is a master piece as compared with mighty epics of the world literature. If judged on equal grounds, it is not less an important work than Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Mian Muhammad Buksh inherited epic tradition direct from Arabic and Persian Literatures experiencing spiritual blending in the subject thereof; the blending epics of other languages are mostly void of. Babri (1997) gives an authenticated and sublime critical analysis about *Saif-ul-Malook* by writing in his essay about the symbolic significance of its theme and characterization, "Saif-ul-Malook hussan di talash vich insan da doongha painda aiy" (689). (*Saif-ul-Malook* is the utmost journey of man in pursuit of Beauty {Divine Truth}). By giving a general estimate of classical poetry and its hues in Punjabi literature, Dr. Ghuffran Syed (1982) ranks Buksh with notable literary giants of the world such as Homer of Greek literature, Moliere of French, Virgil of Latin, Pushkin of Russian, Goethe of German, Shakespeare and Milton of English, Khusru, Hafez and Firdosi of Persian and many other of various literatures of the world. This estimate speaks volumes of the universal appeal of the poetry of Mian Muhammad Buksh; a title which he thinks suits Mian Muhammad Buksh on account of his thematic grandeur in the epic *Saif-ul-Malook*. Dr. Ghuffran Syed commenting on the theme of Divine Love and Spiritual uplift of man in the epic by Buksh, states, "aihnan ne tasawuf te salook, ishq-e-haqeeqi te irfan-e-nafs de ik ik nuqtay nu pharol pharol ke bian keeta aiy" (269). (He [Mian Muhammad Buksh] has openly unfolded each and every hidden icon of mysticism, Divine Love and spiritual enlightenment). As far as the status of story teller is concerned, Buksh, no doubt, excels in this as well only on account of his infusing the spirit of Divine Love in the art of story-telling. The most authentic and comprehensive critical work on Buksh in Punjabi is PhD thesis of Dr. Syed Akhter Jafferi. In this published thesis *Hazrat Mian Muhammad Buksh: Hayati te Shairi* (2007), Dr. Jafferi has given a complete detail of the life and works of the poet under study with historic and literary references. This work is not merely limited to the analysis of *Saif-ul-Malook* but encapsulates the whole spectrum of life of the poet under study. Almost all the aspects of his poetic works have been touched upon, even elaborated in this thesis. The author has significantly contributed in criticism on Punjabi Sufi literature by rendering this meritorious service of writing a complete, up to date, authenticated and above all factual treatise on the life and complete works of Buksh. The thematic coherence, artistic enterprise, moral dogmatism, fine agency of words and phrases in the works of Buksh as well as historic background and political upheavals in his period, his life from early childhood to maturing in poetic fancy till his death and above all his mental and spiritual metamorphosis in mystic creed which took him a long way to write the epic of *Saif-ul-Malook* in Divine perspective; all the aspects have been given full coverage in this book. Dr. Jafferi (2007) writes:

Punjabi shairi vich Hazrat Mian Muhammad Buksh ik qad
awar shair wikhalidainday nain. Ohnan da ziada kalam sufiana

rang vich aiy. Je kidhray ohnan ne riwaiti ashqana qissay likhay vi nain te ohnan vichun vi sufiana masail te mat dian galan de moti kadh lianday nain. Aih Hazrat Mian Sahib da khas rangaiy jaihra ohnan nu Punjabi de doojhay shairan nalun wakhrian karda aiy te imtiaz bakhshda aiy (530).

Mian Muhammad Buksh is discernably distinguished poet of Punjabi. Most of his poetic work is written in mystic vein. If ever he has written some romantic tales, he has soaked out mysticism and points of moral teachings from romantic strands as well. This is the notable style of Mian Sahib which makes him not only distinguished from other poets rather gives him supremacy on them).

Sahi (1982) in his critical essay “Mian Muhammad Buksh di ikhlaqi shairi”, seconds the opinion of Dr. Jafferi by writing, “Mian Sahib na sirf apnay zamanay de bahut waday shair san balkay aj vi ohnan da darja manian par manian aiy. Ohnan di kitab Saif-ul-Malook fun da behtreen namoona aiy te aihday warga shahkar shaid ee kidhray milay.” (521). (Mian Sahib was not only the distinguished poet of his age, rather his status as a great poet is also acclaimed in modern age as well. His master piece *Saif-ul-Malook* is the fine specimen of poetic art seldom found in any other literature of the world).

Research Methodology

The present research is initiated by synthesizing different modes and techniques. Fundamentally, however, it can be classified as a comparative and interpretive literary research with eclectic approach. The purpose of research is to elaborate, scrutinize and describe the works under study through the notions of Nietzsche and Iqbal. Such theological approaches are indispensable to explore the works in spiritual connotations. The texts of *Fairie Queene* (1998) and “*Saif-ul-Malook*” (1984) can be regarded as primary source which has been discussed to come to inference. I have already translated “*Saif-ul-Malook*” in English and the translated work is published in Feb, 2013 issue of an international peer reviewed journal “Language in India”. Saeed Farani has translated some parts of “*Saif-ul-Malook*” in English in his book *Great Sufi Wisdom: Mian Muhammad Buksh* (2004). This translated version as well as my own translation of the work have served as the source for citations where required. Nietzsche’s theory of “*Urbemensch*” (Superman) (1976) and Iqbal’s concept of the human ego - his freedom and immortality (1986) will serve as theoretical frameworks for valid analysis of the text materials as well as the comparison and contrast of the two works. As far as the question of theoretical models in this research is concerned, Walter Kaufmann in his translation of Nietzsche’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. (1976) has given the complete description of superman. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1986) is a collection of seven lectures of Allama Iqbal on theology and philosophy. This book has a lecture on ‘Human Ego - His Freedom and Immortality’ which throws ample light on the spiritual power of man to reach the Eternal Truth.

Apart from the primary source, all the critical works including books, articles and most recent research papers published in journals can be regarded the secondary source of research for appropriate findings. These citations have been duly acknowledged in the form of references.

Analysis

Spenser, indeed, focused on more than one theme in his allegory; nationhood, chivalric glory and sovereign grace as evident motives, however, man's quest for Ideal Reality as deep rooted subject in the epic. "Book 1 must be an allegory of the everyman's journey towards salvation as well as a nation's embrace of imperialism" (Donoghue, 2012:6). The journey in the epic attests the spiritual success or failure of the seeker (hero). Journey is the pattern always referring to the transformation from either evil to good or in most of the cases from good to evil. Spenser, however, uses this pattern not to point out transformation rather to encode already deeply engrossed weaknesses in the heroes of his epic. Donoghue(2012) further remarks about moral weakness of Redcross, the hero of Book 1, "The Redcross Knight's seduction by Duessa is symptomatic of a dispersal of religious moral values as well as the degenerated national identity" (5) and, "The Redcross Knight's wanderings through the forests is a punishment for his sin of pride" (4). Spenser uses woods, thickets, glens and wildernesses in the epic as tropical imagery to suggest the spiritual and moral fall of the hero. The knight who is seen at the start of Book 1 pricking on the plain, soon after enters the wood of error wandering thereof from one wilderness to the other throughout the Book. Donoghue (2012) notifies an interesting allegorical image about Spenser's using the mythical allusions of wilderness in the epic. He is of the opinion that the wilderness exemplifies moral destitute in the epic:

The plains are topography for moral certitude and uprightness, the woods for error, rape, and creatures of mixing. On the plain there is law, and significantly in the forest there is no law. The forest implies a lack of civilization, laziness; it implies a lack of a humanist education. (2)

Nohnberg (1976) seconds this opinion in his own words by associating the imagery with religious importance, "It is customary for Scripture to call the wilds of human life a wood, where the various kinds of perturbations of soul flourish, and where destructive beasts dwell..." (158-59). Wofford (2001) perceives the atmosphere of the same psychological illness in the characterization of *The Faerie Queene*, "...many of its places and commonplaces represent spiritual or emotional aspects of the characters themselves" (116). At spiritual level the allegorical nature of *The Faerie Queene* simplifies the thematically interwoven incidents in order to make it a general transcript for the agenda of every man's quest for Ideal Reality; the only ostensible pattern the thematic under current of the epic offers. The narration becomes less simple when the epic deals with the vocalized

allegorical stances about the sovereignty and the monarch involving numerous inter textual references, legends, myths and rituals. The obvious results of depicting the legends and rituals at one hand increases the ambiguity of the epic while at the other the tonal effects of poetic artifice fall down from the mighty style of epic to parodist mimicry of chivalric romance. “The interplay between the seen and the unseen is a topic Spenser addresses throughout the *Faerie Queene*” (Iammarino, 2012:39). The entire framework of both the epics, “*Saif-ul-Malook*” and “*Fairy Queen*” proclaim evidently their being travelogues from “Seen” to “Unseen”; the epics celebrating the ethereal subject matter of Divine Pursuit; the pursuit which takes the heroes from tangible to intangible focusing on the sheer classification of their physical, mental and above all their spiritual might; the might both Prince Saif-ul-Malook (hero of *Saif-ul-Malook*) and Redcross Knight (hero of book 1 of *Fairy Queen*) have to prove to enable themselves for the title of Superman and Man as Recipient of Divine illumination. The comparison between both the epic heroes, therefore, is to be estimated on three respective levels; physical, mental and spiritual. During the course of actions in Divine Pursuit both the heroes undergo an untiring series of trials and tribulation to judge upon the rise and fall of their heroic attributes. Eternity being the first mile stone on the long path leading towards the ultimate destination (to embrace Divine Reality) proves it being a journey testing the hero’s inherent qualities of head and heart in entirety to focus on the decisive issue of his being or not able to travel the path in Divine Pursuit. Buksh states the point thus:

Ashiq banna sukhla nahin, waikh ishqay dian safran
(Buksh, 1984: 99).

(So, it is evident that the Divine love and pursuit is not an easy task. It puts the man in endless trials before the acquisition)
(Syeda, 2013:756).

The same has been discussed by Spenser when he uses the saint of the House of Holiness as his mouthpiece to guide the ways of Redcross:

Then come thou man of earth, and see the way
That never yet was seen by Faeries sonne
That never leads the traveller astray
But after labours long, and sad delay
Brings them to joyous rest and endless bliss (1.10.52).

The “labours long” in this stanza vouchsafes with Arthur’s comments in Canto 9 stanza 15 about Divine Pursuit:

From that day forth I cast in careful mind
To seek her out with labour, and long tyne (1.9.16).

The “careful mind” in the stanza refers towards hero’s Mental Alertness while “labour and long tyne” respectively alludes towards Physical Might and

Spiritual Elevation; the all-encompassing three heroic attributes serving as a case study in the present paper.

The present paper explores these three superman renderings in both the epic heroes - Saif-ul-Malook and Redcross knight. The comparison being made on Friedrich Nietzsche's Superman and Allama Iqbal's Man as recipient of Divine illumination, the study exudes glaring theological variances apart from superman attributes both the heroes possess. The study extensively provides glimpses of the fundamental clash celebrating different outlook of eastern and western concepts of heroism. The study focuses mainly on the point where both the heroes with superman renderings part ways with each other that is their being or not 'the recipient of Divine illumination' (Iqbal, 1986). In fact, the concept of superman without his being 'Recipient of Divine illumination' rings out a superficial treatment of the subject; the superman devoid of soul resembles some Robot which can perform difficult but ordinary tasks not worthy of any special merit; not at all worthy to be ranked with the task of Divine pursuit. Iqbal's idea of superman sounds more profound than that of Nietzsche. "In the words of Iqbal himself, he had formed the idea of his 'Mard-i-Momin' long before he read Nietzsche. Again, he remarks, "It is probable that Nietzsche borrowed it from the literature of Islam or of the East and degraded it by his materialism" (Iqbal as cited in Vahid, 1964:241). The identical canvas of plot and situations confronted with both the heroes provide the ample scope to judge their heroic attributes on equal grounds. Both face the trials of almost same magnitude; both perform the tasks worthy to prove their merit as 'Superman'. However, during their allegorical journey in Divine pursuit, any of them if falling a prey to error of judgment or being led by misleading notions, proves himself not 'The recipient of Divine illumination'. The very concept of superman sounds incomplete and shallow without spiritual grandeur associated with it, rendered by Iqbal. During the journey many trials testify the spiritual uplift of the heroes along with their physical vigour. The legendary epithet 'Superman' reserves the right to be tested spiritually as well as physically and mentally. Intuition is the highest category of mental capabilities which parts ways with ordinary brain to be associated with soul --- an oriel to see the Divine Reality with naked eyes. The ordinary brain touches the height of intuition only when the soul becomes so purified that the vision of Divine Reality mirrors through it. The physical reality can also work wonders if under the strict supervision of metaphysical standards. Both Saif-ul-Malook and Redcross have been judged as superman in this paper to prove them endowed with the attributes suiting the epithet. The heroes under study undergo physical trials to prepare their souls for the grand task; the Divine pursuit (fairly in symbolical connotations). The setting and plot of both the epics are purely allegorical offering the heroes at wide range to prove their potentials as superman. Superman traits speak volumes of the hero's physical and spiritual test; a criterion for judgment in which all the hostile forces of nature are at war with the hero. This impeding war paves a way to eternity. It ends either with the immortality of the hero or the death of his soul; the only difference between death and immortality. This is the very difference which

decides man to be or not the 'recipient of Divine illumination'. The recipient of Divine illumination never gets his soul intimated with death. The sustained immortality of the hero as recipient of Divine illumination is above board. No physical trial can harm the spiritual integrity of the hero, it, rather sharpens its dexterity:

A person is self-sustained, in individuality, just so far as he resists absorption in nature. Death then becomes the test for the power of self-maintenance in man. 'Personal immortality', says Iqbal, is not ours by right, it is to be achieved by personal effort (Harre, 1983:278).

Superman renderings and heroic stature both tend to rest upon exceptional corporal strength or physical might of the hero. The very image of superman is associated with sound corporeality even touching the bounds of immortal zeal and zest. Hero, the Superman should be a person ever ready to fight with mortals and immortals; with humans and non- humans; with demons and monsters quite with equal rather outweighing might. While judged upon the standard of physical might, Saif-ul-Malook surpasses Redcross Knight as an invincible epic hero. From the very beginning, both the heroes are reported to be mighty figures with their warlike personages. Saif-ul-Malook is a prince with inherent heroic qualities:

Saif-Malook ander Rab paya buht aasar danai.
Teztabiati, hoshwadiati, fehmaqal, chitrai (Buksh, 1984: 53).

(The God put prudence in prince Saif-ul-Malook. He was wise, agile, mentally alert and active) (Syeda, 2013:753)

Redcross is a knight; Christian warrior whose very image is allied with exceptional physical valour. Knightly attributes speak volumes of determined virility of corporeal frame. A knight is a person always at war with evil forces of nature. Redcross knight is reportedly the very paradigm of a great warrior:

A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,
Ye ladd in mightie armes and silver shielde (1.1.1).

During the course of actions, however, when both the heroes venture to put forth their might confronting various impeding forces in the Divine pursuit, Saif-ul-Malook withstands every trial steadfastly and never is seen cast down with any pitted ordeal. He is always hopeful of his chivalrous zeal; the zeal exhibited clearly in his disparate fights with humans, beasts, and monsters and above all with opposing forces of nature such as storms and hurricanes. He fights alone for many days with the furious waves of sea:

Ghotaykhanda, mar mar janda, parhda nam Ilahi
Himat karda, bahin tarda, taru mard sipahi
Zorawari shehzaday wali ginter witch na away

Rab de palay bhalay bhalairay, konshumar liaway (Buksh, 1984: 111).

(Saif-ul-Malook combated the fury of the sea with great might and his faith on God. He seemed a warrior fighting with his enemy (hurricane) quite courageously. The physical might of the prince was inestimable as he had the power of Divine faith with him).

Whereas the identical wind storm faced by Redcross exposed his heroic might to utter frailty as the intensity of the storm forced the hero to take refuge in the wood of error. Redcross, too, was not an ordinary person by status as he was a Christian knight wearing a Cross as his faith on God. He was going to an adventure mandatory to win the grace of Queen of Fairies (Divine Reality). He has lady *Una* (Truth) as his companion in Divine Pursuit; he was entitled as the Knight of Holiness and was a mighty warrior. Even then, however, while put on scale of judgment, his physical strength proved quite shallow. A knight scared of a storm does not reserve to have any claim as Superman or of heroic grandeur.

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand
A shady grove not far away they spide
That promistayde the tempest to withstand (1.1.7).

The physical virility of Redcross could not withstand the storm neither it could save him from losing his way in the “Wood of Error”.

Buksh considers courage as necessary in Divine pursuit. He writes in the epic:

Marda Himat har na moolay mat koi kahay namarda
Himat nal lagay jis loray, payay bajh na marda (verse.377 as cited in Farani, 2003).

(O man of courage! Never lose your heart, as none could call you a coward [a poor spirited person]. Only with strong will and commitment can you find whatever you seek) (Farani, 2003: 45).

Other comparative instances of bravery of both the heroes can be cited from different occurrences of their fights with men, beasts and monsters. One such example is Redcross’s duel with pagan knight Sansjoy at the House of Pride. During the fight Redcross is seen twisting and wheeling with the fierce blows he receives from his foe. Evidently his might; both physical and spiritual failed to defeat Sansjoy who easily escaped death. The image of defeated bravery of Redcross has been openly described in the epic when Duessa finds him resting in the forest after his combat with Sansjoy:

Eftsoon his manly forces gan to faile,
And mightie strong was turned to feeble fraile (1.7.5).

Another such precedence of the falling bravery of Redcross can be cited from his very first encounter with Monster Error where the hero is seen in the deadly grip of the monster to the extent that is unable to move his limbs or even to stir. The hero; the Superman in grip of error can simultaneously quoted symbolical of his mental handicap as well:

Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge traine
All suddenly about his body wound
That hand or foot to stir he strove in vain (1.1.18).

As compared to Redcross, Saif-ul-Malook ever fights courageously with foes irrespective of their being animals like wild apes or monsters like Sagsars. Even by the end of the epic Saif-ul-Malook defeated with utmost physical might many yetis and demons in fairy land including the giant who had imprisoned the princess Malika Khatoon in a deserted fort. Saif-ul-Malook fought with the giant and killed him to release the princess from imprisonment. This defeat of a giant by Saif-ul-Malook serves quite contrary to the imprisonment of Redcross by the giant Orgogolio in Canto 7 of the book. The physical might of Saif-ul-Malook clearly stated in these lines reserves all rights to entitle him as Superman:

Saif Malook bahadar aisa, daiwtian sang larda
Dai marora ror jihan nu, koi na agay charhda (Buksh, 1984:
104).

(Saif-ul-Malook was such an intrepid man worthy of fighting with demons, monsters and yetis. with his prodigious power he could wring the monsters to shreds; none could bear the brunt of his smite.)

A hero worthy to be ranked as Superman and as Recipient of Divine illumination must along with physical might possess a certain amount of mental agility and power to probe the matter with keenness and alertness. Senses of the hero should never fail to ascertain the reality and magnitude of the problem confronting him. To understand wisely and to act accordingly at the spur of the moment is the attribute suiting the high acclaim of a hero. Where the impending ordeals play havoc with the senses of the hero, there lies his failure as Superman and as Recipient of Divine illumination. When compared both Saif-ul-Malook and Redcross on the basis of mental and intuitional excellence, the former outweigh the later in more than one ways. The power to judge the matter carefully and to act wisely is the attribute reached in Saif-ul-Malook on such apex which Redcross failed to summit. In *Faerie Queen*, soon after the outset of his journey, Redcross gets astray in Wood of Error and his senses failed to guide him to take the right path. His abrupt decision to take refuge in that dimly lit forest where the light of the sun and stars dare not to pierce; the strange looking forest in an alien land just to

save himself from a storm of rain if at one hand challenges his physical might at the other it exposes his weak mental capabilities fully. Had he been a wise man he would never have taken such foolish decision of stepping into the Wood of Error. Wandering to and fro in the forest, both Redcross and his companion Truth (Una) declare their wits being not their own; the failure of their mental powers:

But wander to and fro in waies unknown
 Furthest from end then, when they nearest weene,
 That makes them doubts their wits be not their own (1.1.10).

Throughout the entire course of action Redcross is befooled and deceived by someone or the other; sometimes Archimago disguised as saint separating him from Truth, sometimes false Duessa enchanting him with her deceits and sometimes the Queen of the House of Pride whom he takes as some Divine entity. Archimago sends erotic dreams to the mind of the hero and he being the easy prey nourishes those. Ultimately deceived by the contrived scene of sexual intimacy between Una and evil spirit disguised as a young man he gets extremely jealous and shuts the door of his reason closed:

Which when he saw, he burst with gealous fire
 The eye of reason was with rage yblent (1.2.5).

During the whole journey in Divine pursuit, Redcross seems to be a puppet in the hands of false Duessa and never a slightest suspicion arises in his mind about her. He is separated from the Truth (Una), he is beguiled by Duessa whom he takes as a true virgin worthy to become his dear lady and mistress and who till the end captivate the fancies of the hero so much that a mist of error she flings before his sensual and intuitional eyes to make him blind of the situation when he was about to take victory over Sansjoy. She easily saves Sansjoy from him and even then Redcross is unable to understand her true nature so mends his relations with her. The high estimate of Duessa by Redcross is an ample proof of his weak mental and judgmental powers:

And in his falsed fancy he her takes
 To be the fairest wight that lived yit (1.2.30).

The journey of Divine Pursuit is always fraught with strange sights and extraordinary happenings so it demands from the seeker of Innfinite Reality a much more than ordinary insight to cope with the situations. Redcross, however, seems perplexed at such happenings as he not only gets horrified rather his senses began to fail on seeing a talking tree:

Yet musing at the strange occasion'
 And doubting much his since, he thus bespake (1.2.32).

All this prove Redcross to be an ordinary man quite remote from the image of Superman or Man as recipient of Divine illumination; the status demanding extraordinary mental agility. The case with Saif-ul-Malook, however is quite contrary to that of Redcross. Saif-ul-Malook like wisely travel many alien lands full of strange sights and extraordinary happenings. He wanders in woods and dales, deserts and mountains; sees the monsters and birds not to be seen by any human eye before him; experiences troubles and ordeals unbearable but never is seen perplexed or puzzled. He passes through a city of apes governed by a man; he visits a city of ladies where no man is ever born of a woman; he sees not only talking trees rather trees swallowing flames coming out of sea water but neither such strange sights dare to frighten him nor he feels any need to question his senses. He rather relies upon his faith and mental agility to approve such sights as hidden icons of Infinite Reality invisible from the eyes of ordinary man. God manages to expose such icons step by step according to the mental and intuitional ability of the seeker during the journey of Divine pursuit if the Almighty considers the seeker fit for enduring such apparently horrifying sights. Saif-ul-Malook was evidently considered the fittest one. The statement of Saif-ul-Malook on seeing strange sights in City of Ladies serves a proof of his extraordinary mental capabilities and his faith in God:

Sun ke gal ajaib munh thin, shehzada farmayay
Wah wah qadir qudrat wala, jis aih khail bnayay (Buksh,
1984:119)

(The prince, on hearing this strange fact, praised God, the creator of wonderful world who made things above human reason).

To act wisely according to the situation is another propriety in which Saif-ul-Malook excels Redcross knight. When the prince was got captive by the Negress who wanted to marry him, Saif-ul-Malook used her foolish passion as a weapon against her and got rid of on account of his exceptional mental agility. The same mental power of the prince helped him throughout his journey and was appreciated by his companions thus:

Aih salah passand tamam keeti nal iraday
Kehnday afreen hazaran aqal tairi shehzaday (Buksh, 1984:
111).

(All the companions of the prince liked his contrivance to get rid of the Negress and her savage tribe. All acclaimed the mental supremacy and sanity of the prince in making that flawless plan to be free.)

It is above all the spiritual grandeur wherewith is placed the true estimate of a hero's claim of Superman or Recipient of Divine illumination. Divine pursuit

is a mighty cause putting the hero in a series of trials the magnitude of which gets higher and higher as the journey of love proceeds further. Both the epic heroes under study take up the mighty errand of Divine pursuit (Queen of fairies) as an earnest desire. As their journey of Divine love proceeds, they have to undergo many ordeals testing respectively their physical strength, mental soundness and ultimately their spiritual elevation to draw upon whether their souls are fully able to imprint Divine image upon. Divine illumination is a standard charter proving thus the recipient of it having the spiritual status not met by ordinary persons. When the hero stands successful in extraordinary physical, mental and intuitional predicaments, only then he is given the spiritual tests the success or failure of which determines his being or not "The Recipient of Divine illumination". Divine illumination is the only nostrum to reach the Infinite Reality. Buksh (1984) writes in the epic:

Je so heelay bajh waseelay kariay nal daleelay
 Bhar bairay da par na janda bajh malah rangeelay
 Nal malah salah milain, thailh chaplain baira
 Peer bina tadbeer na koi, jhoota aihu jhaira (125).

(If a man tries his utmost depending only upon his prudence without any Divine Illumination, he can never reach his destination (Divine Reality). Some boatman (Divine Illumination) is surely needed to get across the river of eternity leading to the ultimate destination. There is no prudence, no way out and no contrivance successful unless one has Divine Illumination) (Syeda, 2013: 760).

While judged upon the standard of spiritual grandeur, Saif-ul-Malook surely surpasses Redcross in every respect. From the very beginning, Saif-ul-Malook is seen as a hero invoking eternal providence and faith in every tribulation. Later as the climax of the epic reaches its culmination and the hero stands victorious in every corporal and intuitional battle with evil forces, the Divine illumination itself reaches him in the form of spiritual guide (angel) who figures out the way for the hero to reach his destination (Divine Reality).

Kanday sakht gulaban walay doorun waikh na dariyay
 Chobhan jhaliay, rut chuaiay, jhol phulin tad bhariyay
 Bashak nagan de sir gahin awin hath khazanay
 Rut dolin, phat khawin shaha, sokhay nahin yaranay
 Saif Malook shehzaday tain hukmay nal rabanay
 Azam ism farishtay dasia, parhia shah sianay
 Assay nal farishtay sachay leek zameen par pai
 Kaihus isay rukh te jain, lor Karin har jai (Buksh, 1984:126).

(If one has the desire to get roses, he should be ready to face the thorns. One can never get roses if scared of thorns. To get the hidden treasure of Divinity, one must first kill the serpents

of desires holding one back to reach that treasure. The prince had to undergo those ordeals only to get it dawned upon him that Divine love and pursuit was not some easy task. The angel, (Divine messenger) gave Saif-ul-Malook Divine Illumination as a gift. The angel, drew a long line on earth with his cane and asked the prince to follow that line leading towards his destination) (Syeda, 2013:760).

Abu-almasood Muhammad Khalil Saqib (1998) writes,

“Aaryun usay tareeqatki rah par chalnay se apni manzil nazaraney lagtihaijo Sarandeeep se hazarun meel door honay kai bawajood aik hi just main taiy ho jaigi” (84).

(And so by taking the right path with the help of Divine illumination, the prince gets able to see his destination which will be reached by him within the twinkling of an eye besides its being thousands of miles away from Sarandeeep).

This all is possible for Saif-ul-Malook only because of his spiritual grandeur. His soul has reached such high altitude where it becomes immune from the bounds of time and space because “the time span of the ego (soul) is fundamentally different to the time span of the physical event” (Iqbal, 1986:79).

Redcross, nowhere in the epic is seen to invoke his faith or Divine illumination. During his first encounter with monster Error Una pleads him to add faith into his might. The hero, however, does not do so rather “Knitting all his force” tries to defeat the monster. From there onward, Redcross is entangled in a series of events exposing his lack of spiritual strength as a result. His being easily beguiled by Archimago and lured by Duessa in false love and sexual intimacy are enough examples to be cited to prove him a spiritually weak hero as compared to Saif-ul-Malook. Redcross is evidently reported to be deviated from the path of Divine love (Queen of fairies) and the love for Infinite Truth (Una) in Canto 4:

For unto knight there is no greater shame,
Than lightnesse and inconstancie in love
That doth this Redcross knight ensample plainly prove (1.4.1).

Saif-ul-Malook’s rejection of the most beautiful woman of the world in “Shehr-e-Zanan” (City of ladies) serves quite contrary to the spiritual health of Redcross who accepted the enchantress Duessa as her mistress leaving the Truth (Una). His moral and spiritual bankruptcy is evidently proven whereas the remarks of Saif-ul-Malook as answer to the lure of earthly love proves his spiritual grandeur fully:

Jis sar, sir ishq da othay shehwat mool an wasdi
 Jis dil hub sajan di us vich hub nahin har kas di (Buksh,
 1984:119).

(Where there is spiritual love, nor is there lust so the heart in
 which dwells Divine love, gets indifferent to everyone else)
 (Syeda, 2013:757).

During the whole book 1 of *The Faerie Queene*, Redcross knight is seen toggling and dwindling during the spiritual journey of Divine pursuit but not following the right direction only on ground of his spiritual inadequacy and moral shortfall. The repenting knight of Redcross in the House of Holiness clearly manifests himself neither Superman who is above ordinary human being only due to his moral uplift nor is he Recipient of Divine illumination; a status reserved for spiritually selected ones like Saif-ul-Malook. Even by the end of the book when the saint of House of Holiness (Divine messenger) shows Redcross a glimpse of the right path leading towards Infinite Reality only as a prize for his repentance on his sinful behaviour during Divine pursuit, the saint, however, does not allow him to travel that path before the completion of his adventure (to win the grace of fairy, the Divine Reality). Obviously, the saint (Divine messenger) considers it obligatory for the knight to undergo some more trials for spiritual grandeur so unless the soul be able to embrace Divine Reality. The knight till the last stanza of book 1 is not successful in his pursuit as he has still to take another journey to reach the fairy:

In case he could that monstrous beast destroy
 Unto his Faerie Queene backe to return (1.12.41).

Conclusion

By evaluating and analyzing critically both the works under study *Saif-ul-Malook (1984)* and *Faerie Queene (1998)* in general as well as heroic stature of prince Saif-ul-Malook, the hero of *Saif-ul-Malook* and Redcross Knight, the hero of Book one of *The Fairy Queen* in particular by using the yard stick of Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of Superman and Allama Iqbal's notion of Man as Recipient of Divine Illumination, the present paper comes to inference that Prince Saif-ul-Malook surpasses Redcross Knight as far as the heroic standing of the aforesaid is concerned. The present research not only explores certain heroic qualities suiting the very idea of superman rather it epitomizes superman with high attributes such as the combination of faith and force and spiritual enlightenment; the attributes not formerly associated with the concept of superman due to its obvious limitations. Saif-ul-Malook is the hero who not only proves himself Superman due to the fine combination of might and mind rather sounds more akin to virtual and spiritual analogies of an ideal hero; a superman with highly illumined self; the self, likely to be reunited with its

organic particle, the Infinite Reality sending ever fresh illumination to the hero (Recipient). This mystic experience of Self enables the heroes like Saif-ul-Malook transcend the status of ordinary man and to attain through Divine pursuit a highly associative strand with Divine Reality; a strand likely to be achieved by none of the type of Redcross Knight. Iqbal elaborates the point by stating, “to the mystic, the mystic state is a moment of intimate association with a Unique Other Self, transcending, encompassing, and momentarily suppressing the private personality of the subject of experience” (Iqbal as cited in Bhatti, 1981: 17). Saif-ul-Malook as a hero determines his position more native to the key issues propounded by saints and mystics about an ideal man (Superman). Buksh in the epic if at one hand by presenting the character of Saif-ul-Malook as ideal hero corresponds to Nietzsche’s concept of Superman, at the other through many of his maximal verses seconds the philosophy of Iqbal and mysticism of Rumi. His treatment highly elaborates the subject:

Qatrawanj pia darya way, tan oh kon kahaway
Jiste apna ap gawaway, ap oho ban jaway (Buksh, verse 520 as
cited in Farani)

(When a droplet dissolves in the river, what will it be called? It
becomes that for whom it has lost itself. It is the journey of a
Salik [seeker] who eliminates his existence as a separate self,
and attains everlasting life by entering the River of Union)
(Farani, 2003:53).

The present research avowedly concludes that Redcross fails not only to prove himself Recipient of Divine illumination rather loses every right to have superman renderings; the key assumptions have been researched in this paper. Saif-ul-Malook deserves and reserves each claim of having not only Superman Renderings rather his status as Recipient of Divine illumination does suffice to prove him an ideal hero; the one needed to surmount the sordid predicament faced by mankind in present scenario.

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