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6. In light of the above criticisms it may be concluded that possessive individualism is the upshot of a particular set of Intellectual principles which make up the modern anthropological outlook, with the following distinctions: (1) an abandoning of the natural condition, (2) a view of individual ownership as the distinguishing characteristic of human species, (3) a fresh notion of power as a human trait, (4) priority of the particular over the universal. All of these can then be viewed as a tendency to four moments of "breaking away":
- (a) *withdrawal from nature*: this was a break with the natural condition and a transformation of nature into an arena for the imposition of human will;
  - (b) *to view possession as a manifestation of man's power over phenomena*: this meant a break from the surrounding world and a falling back on an attitude of domination;
  - (c) *the self-reliance of human reason*: this meant a break from the transcendental reason and the apotheosis of man;
  - (d) *the homogenization of man*: this was a break from the organic whole and morphing into a homogenized whole, through the medium of individuality.
- henceforth, man was viewed as an abstract being, which is free from any attachments. Neither nature, nor society or history, and not even the sacred can claim to any logical priority, historical connection, or concrete obligation vis-à-vis man. Consequently, the economic domain, with man as homo economicus became the sole context for the individual's objective manifestation. Thus, the "law of exchange" supplanted the "law of nature", and came to be seen as being in line with the naturality of interests.
7. Parallel notions of this feeling of alienation can be found in all cultures and religions. Only in the period following the Renaissance has man become oblivious to this pain of exile. In modern times, men tend to view this same notion as loneliness.
8. "Die Metaphysik denkt den menschen von der animalita her und denkt nicht zu seiner humanitas hin."
9. "Die höchsten humanistischen Bestimmungen des Wessen des Menschen die eigentliche Würde des Menschen noch nicht erfahern".
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like have reduced man to a particular aspect of his being, which are not of necessity his preeminent characteristics. Thus, theories of rights deriving from such a view of man are bound to suffer from its inescapable reductionism. As a result, the rights they carve out for modern man, though being among the most essential (natural, rational, and normative), are nonetheless minimal human rights. The right to life, security, social equality, political openness and struggle against oppression, and welfare, should neither be seen as objects to be owned as human property, nor viewed as defining the sum total of what makes a human being. Individuality has a possessive relationship to right, thus it distorts the nature of human rights and dilutes them. Such reduction leads to a reification of human rights and transforms them into commodities. This outlook may be summed up as defining rights for man as that which he is in possession of. Contrary to such conception of *rights*, which advocate individualistic theory of human rights, the possibility of rights, which confer on man the potential for her/his realization, can be envisioned. Hence, notwithstanding rights such as self-preservation, freedom from domination, security, and welfare, which emanate specifically from the modern theory of “possessive man”, human rights can be supplanted with different set of rights.

### Endnotes

1. In the Middle Ages, similar conception was upheld though by a different conceptualization.
2. This can be clearly seen in Max Weber's *Economy and Society* (1978). See The Section on Economic Sociology.
- 3.. These were two distinct contracts: one social and the other political. The first was defined through the notion of equality, while the second was based on individuals' adherence to political power.
4. Burk, Bentham and Marx also have criticized individualistic-possessive conception of human rights ardently. Edmund Burke argued that rights were benefits won within each society. (See *Reflections on the Revolution in France*). Marx too argued that the individual in capitalist was divorced from his or her society and rights were needed in order to provide him protection from the state. (See “On the Jewish Question”). Also, Jeremy Bentham argued that rights are created by the law of a society and denounced “natural rights as” rhetorical nonsense. (See “Anarchical Fallacies; being an examination of the Declaration of Rights issues during the French Revolution”).
5. Habermas considers Fichte's views as a prime example, where “ego” is in constant need of an “other”.

unlike vision, takes place ideally when one is closer to the source. Horen in German means "listening" and *gehoren* means "belonging". To be one's interlocutor is to embrace him and, thus, to "fulfill the obligation toward his being". Hence, by listening to someone, one fulfils one's obligation toward him. Thus, "self" is only authentic when it is with "others", and not when others are its minions. Unlike individual power which is an agent of separation, the "green right" is an existential link between the "self" and the "other". Unlike individual power which is an agent of separation, the "green right" is an existential link between the "self" and the "other".

The cultivating of such a relationship is made possible within the context of the Foursome (*Geviert*): within the framework of a life free from the shackles of any form of domination. *Being* free from domination and exploitation calls for an Ek-sistenz. It means to bask in the light of Being and to be the locus of the actualization of Being. It is man's right to guard Being:

..Being is never the merely precisely actual .... Guardianship is vigilance, watchfulness for the has been and coming destiny of Being, a vigilance that issues from a long and ever-renewed thoughtful deliberateness, which heeds the directive that lies in the manner in which Being makes its appeal. (Heidegger, 1971, p.184)

The safeguarding of *Being* requires freedom from any inclination towards economic exploitation, and from individual, partisan, or ethnic agendas. Economic domination, political hegemony, destructive technology, and the like lead to a shattering of *Being*. To protect Being against such destruction is the right of being a human being.

### Conclusion

While in its pre-modern connotation, "Right" implied *a way of being*, its modern version has implied *possession*. The modern interpretation of man – with its overt or implicit definition of man – has placed emphasis upon that which *belongs* to man. So, right has become contingent upon man. In the Illuminationist understanding, however, the man/right relationship is inverted, and right is the manifestation of being, i.e. *humanness*. A comparison of the modern and the Illuminationist interpretations of man leads to the conclusion that modern man is an attenuated man. Individuality, willfulness, the lust for domination and possession, and the

(Being), the Red Reason is an extension of the Absolute Light of Reason. In neither outlook is "man" viewed as a mere terrestrial creature, neither in terms of his nature, nor in terms of his final destiny. To the extent that man is the bearer of ultimate light, "it" is the media for unfolding the Being. To deny this potential is to deny the right of humanity. Here, the *raison d'être* of right is being a human, or being that which a man is potentially capable of. Alienation from such possibility does not negate its existential necessity. In fact, right is a dialectical mediation for such ontological imperative. Right (*bagh*) mediates the actualization (*Tabaghogh*) of human being, the meaning of being human. Man's deprivation of such mediation is an ontological distortion of man's being. According to *eshraghi* anthropology, therefore, "right" is the manifestation of the authentic being of man. As such, authenticity is both "the right of being" and "being right". To be authentic is to grow out of the estrangement (*ghorbat/verfallen*). Right mediate man's rupture from its entangled preciseness to its actualization.

"Green Rights" is then an apt metaphor for the maximal interpretation of human rights, since it alludes to the fact that man is yet to attain to his fullest potential. In Illuminationist anthropology, man is the medium of light in this world, where phenomena receive their brightness through him. As the topos of light, man is an existential "possibility". Distortion or negation of this "possibility" is the denial of the right to be human. Man's being, therefore implies "right", not necessitating them. Such notion of man, hence, is pregnant with a maximal interpretation of human rights, or what can be called "humane rights". *Green right* is, therefore, the fulfillment of the *maximal right* of being a human. As such, existential realization (*tabaqquq*) is the link between "man" and "right" (*haqq*). *Haqq*, which comes from the semetic word *Hoqq* and means "ruling", is an "existential rule" coming to light through man. As such, "Right" is neither power, nor possession; neither domination, nor obligation. Such a notion is implied in the concept of *Gelassenheit* (ontological hosting): a relationship which is free from any inklings of domination. It is the establishment of a relationship, instead of an attempt at mastery and desire to exercise power. *Gelassenheit* is to-be-with as being in the world. It is an acceptance of things not as we want them to be, but as being together as the meaning of being. With *Gelassenheit* man can have an authentic abode on earth, an abode in which man lives free from will to dominate. *Gelassenheit* is, therefore, a dialogical relationship, namely where one is afforded the opportunity to play host to his interlocutor. In dialogue, listening acts as a medium. Audition,

As such, man is the only being whose characteristic is "being possible (seinkönnen)". In fact, possibility is manifested in man. Therefore, man's identity is not in "possession" but in "possibility". It is according to such characteristic that man's possible way of living can be thought of, namely, to be human is to have true relationship with Being. Such relationship, in Heidegger's thought is revealed in the notion of *ek-sistenz*. He derives the notion of *ekistenz* from Greek *ekstasis* meaning rupture. *Ek-sistenz* means to stand outside of oneself in the light of Being. Being is the essence of all beings, without which "to be" is impossible:

Existence is not merely a ground for the possibility of Reason (ratio), but is the locus where man's essence preserves the origin of his determination. In other words, man is the locus of the illumination (Lichtung) of Being. (Smith, 1996, pp.245-247)

Man is also a "natural light". Things come to light through him. This is due to two factors, first, man is concerned about his own being. Secondly, he projects himself by understanding "possibilities". Individualistic, self centeredness, possessiveness are certain possibilities for *Dasein*'s existence, but they are not authentic existence, for they do not come from man himself. It is in Resoluteness (*entschlossenheit*) that man understands being in accordance with the meaning of being. In Resoluteness there is neither external determination, nor will to power, but there is existential hosting (*Gelassenheit*). In *Gelassenheit* the relationship between man and his world is that of reception and not domination. It is the establishment of mutuality, that is, instead of an attempt at mastery and desire to exercise power. *Gelassenheit* is an acceptance of things as they are, and not as we want them to be. It is where being can come to light.

Thus, "self" is only authentic when it is with "others", and not when others are its minions. *Gelassenheit* is a dialogical relationship, where one is afforded the opportunity to play host to his interlocutor. In dialogue listening acts as a medium. Audition, unlike vision, takes place ideally when one is closer to the source. *Hören* in German means "listening" and *gehören* means "belonging".

### III) Green Rights

"Green" is a metaphor for growth and fulfillment. It also signifies the possibility characterized in Illuminationist anthropology. Man is, being the kind of being he is, ontologically concomitant with possibility and self realization. Just as *Dasein* (the There of Being) is an extension of *Sein*

divine soul. Owing to the soul's potential and necessary dimensions, Suhrawardi considers it as resembling a coin, with one side to the divine world and the other to the world of sensuality. The more one strives toward perfecting his soul, the more one becomes a mirror for reflecting the divine realities.

Thus, man, far from being a mere terrestrial being, is an existential continuum, stretching from a pre-eternal past to an eternal future. In his journey from the other world to this earthly sphere, man is accompanied by the Reason. According to Suhrawardi, man loses his wings in the course of descent to the lower world, and is compelled to remain in exile until such time that he has grown fresh ones. The essence of man's soul is immaterial light, a light emanating from the divine light and capable of knowing its true self. A pure light, of the same essence as angels, whose difference from other divine lights derives from its distance to the Light of Lights, or Absolute Light, or God.

## II) Ek-sistenz

Heidegger contends that "man" has not been properly pondered in the history of western thought. To him, the metaphysical outlook has failed to grasp man's proper status. In his view, as a continuation of the metaphysics, modern humanism has also, fallen into the same trap:

Metaphysics thinks about man from his animal side rather than his human side (1946, p.322).<sup>8</sup> [On the other hand,] [T]he highest humanist definition of human nature has yet to experience man's special value (p.329).<sup>9</sup> [It] fails to accord man a lofty enough status (p.330).<sup>10</sup>

Based upon the four notions of *Dasein*, *Eksistenz*, *Geviert*, and *Gelassenheit*, Heidegger offers an outlook which entails a different way of thinking about man. According to the notion of *Dasein*, man is not independent from the world in which s/he lives. Before anything else, man is-in-the-world. It is man's ontological a priori relationship with the world which conditions his being. *Dasein* exists in away that by its existence it understand Being. The fundamental way of *Dasein*'s being is understanding, which is mostly understanding one's being as possibilities:

*Dasein* always has understood and will always understand himself according to possibilities. .... But as being possible... it is existentially that which it is not yet in its potentiality of being. (1996, p.136)

and drifting into bewilderment and homelessness:

We hail from transoxiana (*mawara' al-nabr*, that which lies beyond the river), from absolute light, the infinite ocean of absolute light, from The unknown land (*na Kojā abad*). (2001/1380, p.119)

*Red Reason* is not just a metaphor for a God-endowed capacity, but is an extension of a divine attribute. Man, in spite of his terrestrial nature, can strive to partake of this divine quality in proportion to his capacity. To Suhrawardi a man's degree of humanity is commensurate with his existential relationship with God. Here, the creatures' immutable ontological link to God is denied in exchange for an existential scheme where the degree of existence of a phenomenon is proportional to the amount of luminosity it receives from God (*Nur al-Anwar*: the Light of Lights) (p.179). Thus, the extent of man's proximity to God – i.e. the possibility of his existential realization – is contingent upon his endeavor. In his worldly existence, man is in a state of "occidental exile" or "Illuminationist exiguity"<sup>7</sup>, though he is potentially capable of breaking away (ecstasy), or is Suhrawardian jargon, "flight" to the existential abode (*Mount Qaf*).

Man, however, returns to his "homeland" (origin) through his dwelling in the nearness of Being; a dwelling achieved through an spiritual journey. In Suhrawardi's mystical fables, the existential need for spiritual ascension is described in the language of the birds. Hoopoe in the Language of Ants stands for one who has attained to Illumination. Flight is the *raison d'être* of man's existence in this world, thus the mystical allegorization of man to a bird. Hoopoe is a cryptic allusion to *Aql Mustafad* (Reasonus acquisitus) or *Wali Allah* (God's Friend), who upon becoming aware of the birds' desire for having a king, hastens to inform them about *Simorgh* (Phoenix):

There is for us a king, who errs not; beyond a mountain, which is called *Qaf*. His name is *Simorgh*, the king of birds; he is nigh, but we are far, far away from him. (p.263)

The search for *Simorgh* is an existential quest. Being contains an essential quality for transcendence and going beyond. Suhrawardi employs the metaphor of a bird, for the soul that has become free from the fetters of the body (p.264). He considers the soul to have the innate ability for embarking on an ascending curve toward perfection, where he would move from sheer potentiality to the level of *Aql Mustafad* and



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### A) Red Reason and Green Rights

The moral conception of man and human rights does establish a relationship between man and right which is different from attributive and possessive relationship. Such relationship can be established according to the Illuminationist anthropology, according to which the modern notion of man can be appraised as reductionist. For, in the modern view, individuality and possessive will do reduce man to particular dimensions which are not necessarily characteristic of him. Therefore, the rights considered for him are, at best, minimal. Illuminationist anthropology, however, understands the meaning of "being human" in reaching a status in the world which implies liberation from the alienated (*Ghorbat Gharbi*) existence. Suhrawardi has presented an illuminationist anthropology by the two notions of "Red Reason" and "Flight" (*Parvaz*). Martin Heidegger, similarly, has applied the two concepts of *lumen naturale* and *entslossenheit* (rupture). Such conception of man can provide ground for a notion of right expressed in the notion of Green Rights.

#### I) Red Reason

Suhrawardi, after Aristotle, holds that one has to come to the knowledge of his own "self" before becoming capable of gaining knowledge of other phenomena. On a practical level, "me" is the source of lofty aspirations that have been shrouded in the veil of temptations arising from man's transitional (*barzakhi*) dimension. On the Intellectual level, Suhrawardi holds "me" to be the source of Illuminationist knowledge. He believes that all creatures innately seek after perfection, and thus originates "animals' desire for light" (2001/1380, Vol.3, p.182).

In his treatise of Red Reason (*Aql-e Sorkeh*), a crimson-faced man gives an account of man's original creation with a white and luminous countenance, and ascribes his present crimson face to his mingling with the darkness of this world (Abbasi, 2001/1380, p.108). The Luminous Gem (*Gohar-e Shab Afruz*), the first object of creation, is said to be the Reason, which is the agent of Illumination (*ishraq*). However, one must guard against the disastrous consequences of its improper use. According to Suhrawardi, human history is a history of exile or separation from one's true self. In Suhrawardi's mystical outlook man's creation is viewed as a process of falling away from one's original self

in the ditch, had shouted to his fellow-men: Beware of listening to this impostor; you are lost if you forget that the fruits belong to all and the earth to no one. (*ibid*)

Hegel also has criticized individualistic-possessive conception of human rights ardently. He argued that:

Particularity [individual] by itself, given rein in every direction to satisfy its needs, accidental caprices, and subjective desires, destroys itself and its substantive concept in this process of gratification. .... [such] civil society affords a spectacle of extravagance and want as well as of the physical and ethical degeneration common to them both. (1964, no.185)<sup>4</sup>

**II-** In recent times the modern understanding of the relationship between man and his rights as the foundations of human rights have been criticized also as regards its claim to universality and its anthropological assumptions. The individualistic conception of rights has also been criticized from a theoretical point of view by Jurgen Habermas regards modern egoism as a major theoretical fallacy. He argues that the notion of individuality is paradoxically comprised of an existential as well as a logical dimension. This is clearly manifested in the case of Hobbes' delineation of the process of formation of social contract. According to Habermas, in the formation of social contract, there is an implicit recognition of intersubjectivity which precedes any individual participation in signing the contract (Habermas, 1992, pp.92-93). Kant's central notion of ego is believed by Habermas to be suffering from the same defect too.<sup>5</sup> Kant believed that the right of a single individual should be distinguished within the context of a legal system, so that both the freedom of every member of the society as a human being, and his equal status as an ego, can find their concrete manifestation (p.92).<sup>6</sup>

The claim regarding the universal applicability of the individualist-oriented human rights has been called into question by Communitarians on the grounds that this type of human rights tend to ignore cultural differences. Laclau, Rorty, McIntyre, and Dworkin too harbor serious doubts with regards to the universality of the modern doctrine of human rights. Jacques Donnelly is also of the opinion that the doctrine of human rights is, not only as a historical reality or merely from the point of view of its social function and significance, but also from an existential perspective, a western individualist idea (Freeman, 1994, p.214).

natural right determines the limits of this power. Thus, a man's natural right is derived from his power:

The foundation of virtue is the struggle for self-preservation. The more earnestly one seeks after what is beneficial to him, i.e. his "self", and the more one is successful in this effort, the more virtuous he is ... One's right is defined based on his virtue or might. (*ibid*)

Finally, the bond between the notions of the "primacy of the individual", "right", "possession" and "power" was given its ultimate shape by Locke. He joined a long-standing and varied debate about the concept of right that continued to rage among his contemporaries. Locke held all men to be equal in nature and capacity. He postulated a particular relationship between God, nature, individual reason, law, and possession:

God having made Man, and planted in him, as in other animals, a strong desire of Self-preservation..... directed him by his Sense and Reason..... to the use of those things, which were serviceable for his Subsistence.... Man had a right to use of Creatures, by the will and Grant of God.. . And thus Man's *property* in the Creatures, was founded upon the right he had.... (1965, ¶86)

## B) Critique of Possessive Rights

I- Prior to the rise of possessive individualism, William of Ockham had lashed out against the idea of ownership as the root cause of human ills (Dumont, 1986, p.65). After Ockham, Rousseau echoed Aristotle's belief in man's proclivity for seeking perfection and considered it as ability for perfecting himself. An ability that he none the less deemed as a possible source of decline as well: "this is the same ability that eventually turned him into an oppressor against himself and nature" (1964, pp.141-142). He drew a clear distinction between the "right of ownership", which was a core element of the individualistic theory of right, and the right to life and freedom. According to him:

The first person who, having fenced off a plot of ground, took it into his head to say *this is mine* and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. What crimes, wars, murders, what miseries and horrors would the human race have been spared by someone who, uprooting the stakes or filling

speculation. Thus, he posited a two-way relationship between right and reason. According to Grotius, "rights" emerge from man's social nature, thus they belong to him. The philosophical arguments for the validity of such a relationship can be found in Kant. In his explication of the distinction between the world of Reason and the world of will, Kant postulates man's Reason as the agent responsible for his perceptions and their order, but considers his will as capable of choosing its own goal and effecting changes in the course of events. Kant considers man, an all other sentient beings, as a goal in itself. On the other hand, in his *Philosophy of Ethics*, he gives pride of place to individual will and deems freedom as a property belonging to causality of the will. He calls this as belonging to the "rules of will" as opposed to the "rules of nature". Thus, Kant gives the following definition for "right":

Right is any action based on reason or a universal law, in which there is harmony between various individuals' freedom for its adoption. (2001, p.66)

Therefore, right becomes a function of human characteristics and – similar to the possessive nature of the egoistic individual – it assumes a possessive nature. The modern concept of right, both in the context of modern view of natural law, that breaks with the classical perspective, and in the idealist context (Kantian egoism, i.e. the primacy of the individual), accords right a possessive characteristic.

## 2) Might and Right

In the modern perspective, the two notions of "individual" and "right" were bonded through the medium of power, or *potestas* (Dumont, 1986, p.61). Ever since Grotius, Hobbes and Bacon, all the way to the time of Locke, Kant and Hegel, the idea of "right" was intertwined with the notions of individual power and property. Pufendorf's emphasis on the theoretical link between the two notions of right and power is a clear indication of this idea:

Right" and "domination" is one and the same thing, with the single exception that the latter is purely sought for conquest, while the former implies legitimacy and has to be achieved through legal means. (1986, p.128)

The link between these two notions was thrown into sharper relief in the works of Spinoza who thought that "right" is nothing but power, and

right, he is the worst of them... Right is the order of the city.  
(*Politics*, 1252a)<sup>1</sup>

II- In the modern era, man was defined as a self sufficient being created in the image of God and as a repository of Reason (Dumont, 1986, p.73). The notion of right assumed a new connotation, namely a possessive one. Accordingly man was considered as "having rights". Although such a view did have a practical pretext in the feudal period, but it lacked the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the modern period.<sup>2</sup> According to Hobbes' view of Natural Law such underpinnings were provided for the new understanding of the notion of Right. Hobbes was the first thinker who applied nominalism along with atomism for an individualistic theory of right. Accordingly, the societal whole came to be based on the concept of "individual". The new interpretation of the natural law, together with the establishments of a social and a political contract was the beginning of a new outlook regarding the notion of "right".<sup>3</sup>

Thus, unlike the classical perspective in which the whole took precedence over the parts, modern theories assigned primacy to the idea of right, in the context of "individual rights". This then delineated the nature of suitable political institutions. Against this backdrop, the modern idea of man – as an individual – and, in turn, the modern idea of "right" can be viewed in an interactive context with such many-sided intellectual and institutional entities as religion, philosophy, church, government, political philosophy, and rights. As a result of such interactions, a solid link between the modern idea of right, on the one hand, and the two notions of power and freedom, on the other, came to be established.

### 1) Freedom and Right

Individual freedom is another idea that has served to forge a bond between man and the modern notion of right. The link between right and individual freedom is at the forefront of such documents as the English Bill of Rights (1689), the Virginia Declaration of Rights (USA, 1776), the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (France, 1789), and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Grotius envisioned "right" as an individual ethical quality with the capacity to act. The relationship between right and man underwent a drastic turn in Grotius. He not only ascribed right to man, but considered natural right as an epistemological subject for individual

also the metaphor of "Green Right", as an emancipatory notion used for "right", are applied for a maximal theory of "human rights".

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### A) Man and Right in Western Thought

In the history of western thought the relationship between "man" and "right" can be identified as having been attributive and possessive. The first characterizes the classical period of Greek thought and the second one characterizes the modern era.

I- In classic Greeks thought "right" and "man" were independent elements of a terminological network in a philosophical system. In this system, there was a relationship between kosmos and arête, and human virtue (arête) was an exemplification of the kosmos or in accordance with it. Greek thinkers believed in unwritten laws which, in their view, were innate in nature. They considered the nature to be orderly and teleological, and, accordingly, human beings were conceived as "social" by nature. Law meant that there are certain unchangeable and rational principles in social life which provides the norms necessary for the fulfillment of ethically determined goals. This in turn pertained to what the Greeks considered as the "right way to live." Therefore, "right" was a natural attribute of man, while man, educated in polis, could reach happiness (Eudaimonia) by living "in the right way". According to such conception, they theorized the notion of "good life" and the "right political" order. Also, in *Criton*, Plato defines "rightness" as "correctness" or "justness":

.....or do we believe that this part of us, whatever it may be, in which right and wrong operate, is of less importance than the body.....what we ought to consider is.....how we stand with the expert in right and wrong. (48a-50b)

Also, in the *Republic* Plato speaks of a government that is "not right" (439c-444b). Aristotle too refers to the idea of right in its attribute sense and defines it as that which gives order to the city. In his words:

All men have an innate attraction to society, and the man who founded the first society created the highest of the good. Since the perfect man is the best of animals. But if he is bereft of law and

Marxist criticism of bourgeois individualism, and to Habermas's criticism of individual egoism, such primacy and, in consequence, the notion of Human Rights built upon it have been questioned. More recently, Jack Donnelly has raised the issue of a moral view of man in contrast to scientifically claimed idea of human needs as the foundation for human rights.

In his examination of the link between man and right, Donnelly argues that human needs define the human nature that gives rise to human rights. This approach is not helpful, he suggests, because the concept of "human needs" is almost as obscure as that of "human nature". Human needs are obscure because science gives us a very limited set of needs. If we look beyond science, the concept of "needs" assume a metaphorical or moral meaning, which leads us back to philosophical disputes about human nature. To understand the source of human rights therefore, one must turn to philosophy (Freeman, 1994, p.501).

Accordingly, Donnelly suggests that human rights are needed "for a life worthy of a human being", and the human nature that grounds such rights is "a moral account of human possibility." Human rights, therefore, represent a social choice of a particular, moral vision of human potentiality (p.502).

As such, the idea of human rights is based on a man's essential dignity and value. In other words, it rests on a social possibility and a specific assessment and elaboration for the conduct of a dignified life. The notion of human rights, therefore, rests on an ethical basis deriving from man's essential dignity. It can therefore be said that it is a task to elaborate on "human possibility" which can serve the "human rights" theoretically and practically. This in turn needs to be defended philosophically, or more appropriately, by a philosophical anthropology.

In his symbolic notion of "Red Reason" Suhrawardi has offered a unique interpretation of man. In a similar vein, Martin Heidegger has subjected the notion of modern man to a severe criticism. In the light of the commonalities between these two anthropological approaches and the sanctions they provide for the notion of right, one may employ the metaphor of "green" in referring to the concept of "maximal right". This paper is an attempt to answer such requirement. In this regard, first the relationship between the two notions of "Man" and "Right" in the history of western thought is reviewed. Then, the metaphor of "Red Reason" and the notion of Ek-sistenz, which, in the illuminationist philosophy of the Iranian philosopher, Shahaboddin Suhrawardi (d. 1191, A.D), and Martin Heidegger's philosophy, are used for "man", and

## Red Reason and Green Rights Illuminationist Anthropology and Human Rights

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### Abstract

*The notion of "Human Rights" encompass the two notions of "man" and "right" and the relationship between them. This relationship, however, pertains to much of theoretical as well as philosophical elaboration. Looking critically at the prevailing conception of this relationship, namely that of possessive individualism, this paper points to a different conception for such relationship. Using the two metaphors of "Red Reason" and "Green Rights", a theory of "human rights" is elaborated according to an illuminationist (Esbraghi) conception of "man" and an emancipatory conception of "right".*

**Keywords:** *Human Rights, individualism, Red Reason, existence, Green Rights.*

### Introduction

In the classical Greek perspective, the notion of "right" was concomitant with the "truth" and the concept of "man" was considered to be related to the "cosmos". In the modern era, "Right" and "Man" became intertwined with the primacy of the notion of "individuality", and man came to be defined as an "individual" who posses rights. This primacy has, however, from the outset been intellectually challenged. All the way from Rousseau's critique of the "possessive individual", to

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