

Gibran's Opus *The Prophet*: Valuable Lessons for Better Life

Abul Mobrur Mohammad Hamed Hassan

Assistant Professor of English
(Center for University Requirement Courses)
International Islamic University Chittagong
154/A College Road, Chawkbazar, Chittagong

Doi:10.5901/mjss.2012.v3n3p537

Abstract: *The Lebanese American Writer Khalil/Kahlil Gibran, who contributed to both Arabic and American literature was a literary artist, philosopher, theologian, painter, sculptor and visual artist. His masterpiece, The Prophet, was acclaimed worldwide. Having been translated in more than twenty languages the book quenched the thirst for knowledge of millions of the knowledge seekers of the world. This book composed of 26 poetic essays was first published in 1923. This, the author's magnum opus, became especially popular during the 1960s with the American counterculture and New Age movements. Since it, The Prophet has never been out of print and remains world-renowned to this day. The book was the bestselling book of the twentieth century in the United States, second only to the Bible. His thought provoking sayings in this outstanding piece of literature make us think about our life afresh. He strove to resolve cultural and human conflict transcending the barriers of East and West as few have done before. He became not only Gibran of Lebanon, but Gibran of America, indeed Gibran the voice of global consciousness: a voice which increasingly demands to be heard in the continuing Age of Anxiety. This article draws a short biographical sketch of Gibran, deals with some inherent quality of the writings of Gibran and elucidates a few poetic essays of The Prophet so that the readers can have a glimpse of the great writer Kahlil Gibran.*

Keywords: *The prophet, Kahlil Gibran, life, poetic*

"Thus I became a madman. And I have found both freedom and safety in my madness; the freedom of loneliness and the safety from being understood, for those who understand us, enslave something in us." (Gibran-1918, 1) The man who thus preferred madness as it provides freedom of loneliness and safety from being understood is Khalil Gibran, who could not actually get that loneliness and freedom of being understood, as he is in the heart of millions of fans all over the world and people all around the world are still trying to understand him. He is a Lebanese-American philosophical essayist, novelist, mystical poet, and artist. The millions of Arabic-speaking people familiar with his writings in that language consider him the genius of his age. He was a man whose fame and influence spread far beyond the Near East. His poetry has been translated into more than twenty languages. His drawings and paintings have been exhibited in the great capitals of the world. He wrote both in Arabic and English. In the United States, which he made his home during the last twenty years of his life, he began to write in English. Having drawn from an array of spiritual mysticism including Sufi Masters, Jalal-Ud-Din Rumi and Imam Al Ghazali, Gibran, through the characters of his writings, speaks directly to the very core of the human soul. (Singh Manbir, <http://www.sikhspectrum.com>)

Kahlil Gibran (full name Gibran Khalil Gibran bin Mikhael bin Sa'ad,) was born on January 6, 1883, to the Maronite family of Gibran in Bsharri, an area surrounded by the natural beauty of Lebanon's ancient cedar trees and the majestic mountains of Sannin and Famm al-Mizab. He grew up in the region of Bsharri. The rustic beauty of his birthplace proved to be a source of inspiration throughout the poet's life. His maternal grandfather was a Maronite Catholic priest. His mother Kamila Rahmeh was thirty when she begot Gibran from her third husband Khalil, who proved to be an irresponsible husband leading the family to poverty. As a result of his family's poverty, Gibran did not receive any formal schooling during his youth in Lebanon. However, priests visited him regularly and taught him about the Bible, as well as the Syriac and Arabic languages. Gibran proved to be a solitary and pensive child who relished the natural surroundings of the cascading falls, the rugged cliffs and the neighboring green cedars, the beauty of which emerged as a dramatic and symbolic influence to his drawings and writings. Recognizing Gibran's inquisitive and alert nature, the priest began teaching him the rudiments of alphabet and language, opening up to Gibran the world of history, science, and language. At the age of ten, Gibran fell off a cliff, wounding his left shoulder, which remained weak for the rest of his life ever since this incident. Gibran's father, a tax collector, was imprisoned for alleged embezzlement. Ottoman authorities confiscated his family's property. Authorities released Gibran's father in 1894, but the family had by then lost their home. Gibran's mother decided to follow her brother, Gibran's uncle, and emigrated to the United States. Gibran's father remained in Lebanon. Gibran's mother, along with Khalil, his younger sisters Mariana and Sultana, and his half-brother Peter left for

New York on June 25, 1895. The family of Gibran settled in Boston's South End, which at the time hosted the second largest Syrian community in the U.S. following New York. His mother Kamila, now the bread-earner of the family, began to work as a peddler on the impoverished streets of South End Boston selling lace and linens that she carried from door to door. The culturally diverse area felt familiar to Kamila, who was comforted by the familiar spoken Arabic, and the widespread Arab customs. While Gibran's mother, his half brother and his two sisters settled in Boston Gibran returned to Lebanon in 1897, where he began a course of intensive study at al-Hikma school. He studied a wide variety of subjects beyond those prescribed in the curriculum and immersed himself in ancient and modern Arabic literature. He also acquainted himself with contemporary literary movements in Arabic world. (Badi and Goteh, 1986, 19) Later Gibran went back to Boston. In Boston he was placed in a low grade class reserved for immigrant children to learn English. Gibran's English teacher suggested to anglicise the spelling of his name in order to make it more acceptable to American society. Khalil then was anglicised as Kahlil. (<http://en.wikipedia.org>) Though physically he was in New York, his heart was in Lebanon. He was filled with nostalgia for the cedar forests, the home and haunt of the Gods. The mountain scenery and all the associated legends and tradition had become a part of his being.

Gibran's curiosity led him to the cultural side of Boston, which exposed him to the rich world of the theatre, Opera and artistic Galleries. He caught the eyes of his teachers with his sketches and drawings, a hobby he had started during his childhood in Lebanon. They contacted Fred Holland Day, an artist and a supporter of artists who opened up Gibran's cultural world and set him on the road to artistic fame

In 1912 he settled in New York, where he devoted himself to writing and painting. Gibran's early works were written in Arabic, and from 1918 he published mostly in English. Merging Eastern and Western philosophies, Gibran was influenced by his Lebanese childhood, his adopted America, and the time he spent studying art with Auguste Rodin in Paris. His first book for the publishing company Alfred Knopf, in 1918, was *The Madman*, a slim volume of aphorisms and parables written in biblical cadence somewhere between poetry and prose. In 1920 he founded a society for Arab writers, Mahjar (al-Mahjar). Among its members were Mikha'il Na'ima (1889-1988), Iliya Abu Madi (1889-1957), Nasib Arida (1887-1946), Nadra Haddad (1881-1950), and Ilyas Abu Sabaka (1903-47).

Gibran was a prominent Syrian nationalist. In a political statement he drafted in 1911, he expressed his loyalty to Greater Syria and to the safeguarding of Syria's national territorial integrity. He also called for the adoption of Arabic as a national language of Syria and the application of Arabic at all school levels. When the Ottomans were finally driven out of Syria during the first world war, Gibran's exhilaration was manifested in a sketch called "Free Syria" which appeared on the front page of al-Sa'ih's special "victory" edition. Moreover, in a draft of a play, still kept among his papers, Gibran expressed great hope for national independence and progress. This play, according to Kahlil Hawi defines Gibran's belief in Syrian nationalism with great clarity, distinguishing it from both Lebanese and Arab nationalism, and showing us that nationalism lived in his mind, even at this late stage, side by side with internationalism. Despite having witnessed war and destruction in the name of religion, Gibran remained committed to "unity of being" by stressing the underlying commonality between various forms of spiritual thought, and the oneness of all humanity.

Gibran was a prolific writer who wrote in Arabic for the Lebanese, the Syrians and the Arab world and in English for those knowing English. In his writings, Gibran strikes different notes-autobiographical, mystical, romantic, reflective, allegorical, censorious, and revolutionary. He reacted sharply to the corruption in society, politics and religion. The story of Khalil pulsates with righteous indignation. It is a tirade not against religion as such, but against hypocrisy, injustice, and self-aggrandizement in the name of religion. (Singh Manbir, <http://www.sikhspectrum.com/052004/gibran.htm>)

Gibran was excommunicated from the Maronite Church for his anti-establishment tone and stance. His book *Spirits Rebellious* was burnt in public in Beirut. Later, the order of excommunication was revoked. Many scholars find Gibran's work deeply philosophical and elementary. He kept company with the greats of U.S. literary figures. The prominent among them were poet Robinson Jeffers, playwright Eugene O'Neill and novelist Sherwood Anderson. His works were especially influential in the American popular culture in the 1960s. Gibran and other members of the Pen League freed Arab American writers of their self consciousness, addressing topics other than the immigrant experience. As a playwright, novelist, artist and poet, he inspired other writers, musicians, artists and even the U.S. Congress, which established creation of the Khalil Gibran Memorial Poetry Garden in Washington D.C., dedicated by President George Bush in 1990 to commemorate Gibran's influence and universal themes. (Abinader, 2000)

Gibran was an immigrant mystical poet. To be an immigrant is to be an alien. But to be an immigrant mystical poet like Gibran is to be thrice alienated. To the geographical alienation is added the estrangement from both conventional human society at large if human society can be other than conventional, and also the whole world of spatio-temporal existence. Therefore such a poet is gripped with a triple longing: a longing for the country of his birth, for a utopic human society of the imagination in which he feels at home and for a higher world of metaphysical truth. This triple longing provided Gibran with the basis of his artistic creativity. Its development from one stage of his work to another is only a

variation in emphasis and not in kind. Three strings of his harp is always to be detected in his works and towards the end of his life achieved perfect harmony in his masterpiece, *The Prophet* where the utopic state of human existence and the metaphysical world of higher truth became one and the same. (Nadwi: 2009) *The Prophet*, a book composed of 26 poetic essays, the author's magnum opus, became especially popular during the 1960s with the American counterculture and New Age movements. Since it was first published in 1923, *The Prophet* has never been out of print and remains world-renowned to this day. Having been translated into more than 20 languages, it was the bestselling book of the twentieth century in the United States, second only to the Bible.

As we start reading the book we find that the main character, Almustafa, who is described as the 'chosen and beloved', had lived in a foreign country for 12 years. When the time of his departure to the isle of his birth came and a ship was coming to carry him away, the people of Orphalese, where he spent twelve years came to meet him and asked him a series of questions on a variety of subjects like marriage, children, friendship, work, pleasure and so on which he answered, in a mystical and paradoxical strain.

The opening poetic essay where he describes his relation with the city and people of Orphalese and his feeling at the time of departure is so much touching. It reads:

"And In the twelfth year, on the seventh day of lelool, the month of reaping, he climbed the hill without the city walls and looked seaward; and he beheld his ship coming with the mist" (Gibran, 1923, 4).

Seeing the ship coming to carry him at first he was overjoyed and closing his eyes he prayed in the silence of his soul. When he got down from the hill sadness enveloped him and he thought in his heart how it would be possible for him to depart from that city in peace without a wound in his heart. Living in that city he became part and parcel of that city. Now leaving the city was as if tearing off his own skin with his own hands. He says,

"Too many fragments of the spirit have I scattered in these streets, and too many are the children of my longing that walk naked among these hills, and I cannot withdraw from them without a burden and an ache. It is not a garment I cast off this day, but a skin that I tear with my own hands. Nor is it a thought I leave behind me, but a heart made sweet with hunger and with thirst." (4-5)

But still he must go away, because to stay back here was to get frozen and inactive which he didn't want. He earnestly wished, if he could carry with him all that was there in that city. He knew that it was quite impossible because just as a voice can't carry the tongue and lips from where it was produced and an eagle can't carry with it its nest while flying in the sky, he also can't carry with him the city of Orphalese and its people with him. As he saw the ship approaching the harbor and the mariners, who were the men of his land he told them, *"Only another breath will I breathe in this still air, only another look cast backward, And then I shall stand among you, a seafarer among seafarers."* (5) As he walked he saw that the people of Orphalese leaving their field of cultivation and their vineyards were hastening towards the city gate and were calling his name. They were shouting from field to field telling one another of the coming of the ship. He thought to himself what he could give to those people,

"And what shall I give unto him who has left his plow in mid furrow, or to him who has stopped the wheel of his wine press? Shall my heart become a tree heavy laden with fruit that I may gather and give unto them? And shall my desires flow like a fountain that I may fill their cups? Am I a harp that the hand of the mighty may touch me, or a flute that his breath may pass through me?" (5).

The elder people of the city came forward and requested him not to depart. They said,

"Go not yet away from us. A noontide have you been in our twilight, and your youth has given us dreams to dream. No stranger are you among us, nor a guest, but our son and our dearly beloved. Suffer not yet our eyes to hunger for your face." (6).

The people of Orphalese told him that they had loved him so much, although their love had been speechless. Now they were expressing their love loudly and entreating him not to leave them. Almustafa could say nothing in reply. He only bent his head and those who stood near him saw his tears falling upon his breast. He and the people then proceeded towards the temple, and out of the sanctuary came Almitra, a woman who had first sought and believed in him when 'he had been a day in the city'. She hailed him, saying,

"Prophet of God, in quest for the uttermost, long have you searched the distances for your ship..... Deep is your longing for the land of your memories and the dwelling place of your greater desires; and our love would not bind you, nor our needs hold you. Yet this we ask that you leave us, that you speak to us and give us of your truth. And we will give it unto our children, and they unto their children, and it shall not perish." (6).

Almitra requested him to disclose to them their true nature and all those things between birth and death which he experienced. At first Almitra asked him about love then various other persons asked him questions on a variety of subjects.

In reply to Almitra's question about Love Almustafa, Gibran's spokesman, gives us a very valuable advice. According to Gibran the way of love is full of hurdles and thorns. The love which is founded on only expectations of gaining is not a real love at all. A true lover never shuns his beloved even when he is hurt by his beloved. Almustafa says, *"For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning."* (7) The hurdles and thorns in the way of love and the mortifications occasionally coming from beloved must not dishearten the lover, because these are actually a process of purifying the love. Without these the love would not be founded on strong base. We cut the grains from the field. We thresh, grind and boil them in fire to make them suitable for eating. It doesn't mean that we don't love the grains. We do all these things because we love these grains. Gibran says,

"Like sheaves of corn he (love) gathers you unto himself. He threshes you to make you naked. He sifts you to free you from your husks. He grinds you to whiteness. He kneads you until you are pliant; And then assigns you to his sacred fire, that you may become sacred bread of God's sacred feast." (8)

Almitra once again asks him a question about Marriage. In reply Almustafa says that marriage makes the couple together. The couples are as if born together and they will remain together forever. Even death can't separate them. But there should be a space between their togetherness. The couples should love each other deeply. But in this love none should lose the personality. Both of them should work like the strings of a lute. These strings are although separate from each other, they quiver with the same music. Almustafa says,

"Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup. Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf. Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you alone." (8)

In reply to a woman's question about Children, Almustafa says that children are born into this world, light and free, without the corruption and negative social conditioning that plague their adult counterparts. Too often, parents try to live their life through their children, and thus burden them with false expectations and standards. Activities are imposed upon them, sometimes without consideration of what they like. They need to be given room to explore their own likes, within certain parameters, and develop their own unique creativity. In Gibran's philosophy about children there is a message for those who repose lots of hopes and expectation in their children thinking that once their children would grow up and hold the helm of the family and would give them love and comfort in their old age. These parents usually fix up the way of life, future career of the children. They think that their children would become doctors, engineers, judges and barristers and so on. According to Gibran the parents don't have this right, because the children are not actually the possessions of the parents. The parents are none but the media for the children to come to this world. Almutafa says,

"Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself. They come through you, but not from you, And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you. You may give them your love but not your thought, For they have their own thought." (9).

The parents must not fix up the aim and future career of the children, because whatever the parents would fix up it would be either on the basis of the demand of their contemporary or past days, but the children's career would be shaped up on the basis of the demand of future. Almustafa says,

"You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you. For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday. You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth." (9)

When a rich man asks Almustafa to tell them something about Giving he says,

"You give very little when you give of your possession. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give." (9)

According to Gibran there is no meaning in giving unless we are able to give everything of our possession. If we give a part of our possession and save the rest for ourselves, we actually fear that in future we'll be in need of that portion. But none of us knows whether or not we'll be able to enjoy it in future. Keeping something for future is like the activity of the dog which buries a bone in the trackless sand. Almustafa says, *"And tomorrow, what shall tomorrow bring to the over-prudent dog burying bones in the trackless sand as he follows the pilgrims to the holy city?"* (9) We should not give for any purpose. Nor should we seek anything in exchange of what we give. Almustafa says, *"And there are those who give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy, nor give with mindful of virtue; They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breaths its fragrance into space. Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth."* (10) While giving it is not necessary for us as to whether the receiver is a deserving person or not. We should open up our treasures for all irrespective of deserving and non deserving persons. Almustafa says, *"You often say. 'I would give, but only to the deserving.' The tree in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture. They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish"* (11)

In reply to a ploughman's question about Work Almustafa says that in order to keep pace with the world, which is marching ahead, one must work and must not remain idle. Almustafa says, *"For to be idle is to become a stranger unto the seasons, and to step out of life's profession that marches in majesty and proud submission towards the infinite."* (12) We must not consider work as a curse or misfortune. If we love our life, we must engage in labor. And to love life through labor is actually to get closed with the innermost secret of life and thus to understand life better. Having been unable to bear the pain and misfortune of life if one thinks that his birth was a curse, then Almustafa advises him to engage in physical labor instead of cursing his fortune, because the sweat of one's brow caused by physical labor has the capacity to wash away all bad things written upon one's brow. One must work with love, because to work with love is comparable to weave a cloth for one's dearest one with threads drawn from one's heart. Almustafa says, *"It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, even as if your beloved were to wear that cloth."* (13) According to Gibran all works are of equal importance. The work of the man who makes sandals for our feet is never less important than the works of those fashion designers who make extraordinary designs for our clothes. Love is the most essential thing which a worker should have. *"And if you can't work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy."* (13)

When a woman asks Almustafa about Joy and Sorrow he says, *"Your joy is your sorrow unmasked. And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears."* (14) According to Gibran joy and sorrow are two sides of the same coin. They are inseparable. Both joy and sorrow are interwoven. Gibran's teaching about joy and sorrow will help us maintain a balance between joy and sorrow. None of us should be overjoyed with something nor should be so much frustrated and despondent because of sorrow. Gibran's spokesman Almustafa says, *"Together they (joy and sorrow) come and when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep under your bed."* (14)

In reply to a question from a lawyer Almustafa discloses a harsh reality about the condition of law. Gibran thinks that law makers themselves are the lawbreakers. Almustafa says, *"You delight in laying down laws, yet you delight in breaking them. Like children playing by the ocean who build sand-towers with constancy and then destroy them with laughter."* (19) The reason behind this miserable condition of law is that people are always in the habit of keeping their own activities out of the jurisdiction of law. Everyone thinks that whatever he is doing, it is lawful and it is for protecting the law and what the others are doing are violation of law. Gibran says, *"What of the old serpent who can't shed his skin and calls all others naked and shameless? And of him who comes early to wedding feast and when over fed and tired goes his way saying all feasts are violation and all feasters are law breakers."* (20)

Gibran's philosophy of freedom reminds us the remark of great French political philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains." Gibran doesn't believe that one can have freedom, because man's life is full of care, wants, grief and desire. Even the happiest man is a slave of his desire as he has to do whatever his desires guide him to do. Gibran says, *"Ay in the grove of the temple and in the shadow of the citadel I have seen the freest among you wear their freedom as a yoke and handcuff. And my heart bled within me, for you can only be free when even the desire of seeking freedom becomes a harness to you and when you cease to speak of freedom as a goal and fulfillment."* (20)

When a woman asked Almustafa about Pain he says:

"Your pain is the break of the shell that encloses your understanding. Even as the stone of the fruit must break, that its heart may stand in the sun, so must you know pain....Much of your pain is self-chosen. It is the bitter potion by which the sick physician within you heals your sick self." (22)

A tree can't sprout if the shell of the seed doesn't break to open up its core to the sun. If the sprouting of the tree is a joy, it begins with a pain. Thus conceived pain becomes at once a kind of joy. It is the joy of the seed dying as a tree in embryo is in a process of becoming a tree in full. Pain truly understood is thus an impetus for growth and therefore for joy. Painful experiences though they may cause a lot of emotional hurt, help us to better gauge life, as well as to stimulate character refinement. Pain in Gibran's view is comparable to the dose of bitter medicine prescribed by the doctor. Although this medicine is detestable to the tongue, it cures the disease and ultimately brings the joy. Almustafa says, *"It is the bitter potion by which the physician within you heals your sick self. Therefore trust the physician, and drink his remedy in silence and tranquility: For his hand, though heavy and hard is guided by the tender hand of the unseen."* (23) Therefore we should welcome and embrace pain gladly.

In response to a teacher's query about Teaching Almustafa says, *"No man can reveal to ought but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge."* (23) A teacher can't insert any knowledge in the hearts of the learners. He rather awakens the latent talent of the learners so that they can learn themselves. This indicates that all educated persons are self educated. Therefore, we should work according to the guidance of our teacher and work hard to seek knowledge applying our own talent. Indeed, history has shown us the danger of dependence on some mystical savior. Blind faith to supposed holy individuals or books disconnects individuals from realizing their divinity, thus limiting their potential. The best teachers make the students empower themselves, and explore the thresholds of their own divine potential. *"If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his own wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind."* (23) Every individual can have his own view regarding any subject and so it is necessary for everybody to develop his own opinion instead of following others opinion blindly. In this way people can make far better choices in their everyday lives and realize heaven on earth. *"And even as each one of you stands alone in God's knowledge, so must each of you be alone in his knowledge of God and understanding of earth."* (24)

When a hermit, who visited the city once a year, comes forth and asks Almustafa to speak on Pleasure, he gives us valuable advice about pleasure. According to him it is not fair to ignore pleasure. At the same time it is not expected that one would engage one's whole self out and out in pursuit of pleasure. *"Ay, in every truth, pleasure is a freedom-song. And I fain would have you sing it with fullness of heart; yet I would not have you lose your hearts in freedom-song."* (28) Gibran is not at one with those people who in fear of neglecting the spiritual development or offending the spirit shun pleasure activities. He says that the desire for pleasure is inherent in the mind of man. If it is suppressed it may explode any time. *" Oftentimes in denying yourself pleasure you do but store the desire in the recess of your being. Who knows but that which seems omitted today, waits for tomorrow?"* (29)

Out of 26 poetic essays of *The Prophet* I have just pointed out a few in the above paragraphs. Gibran's advices and suggestions through his mouthpiece Almustafa regarding other matters of life like, Giving, Eating and Drinking, Joy and Sorrow, Houses, Clothes, Buying Selling, Crime and Punishment, Reason and Passion, Self Knowledge, Talking, Time, Good and Evil, Prayer, Beauty, Religion Death and Farewell are worth remembering. We have much to learn from them.

It is not hard to see that al-Mustafa or the Prophet is Gibran himself, who had already spent twelve years in the New York City, the city of Orphalese, having moved to it from Boston in 1912, and that the isle of his birth is Lebanon to which he had longed to return. But looking deeper still, al- Mustafa can further symbolize the man who, in Gibran's reckoning, has become his freer self; who has realized the passage in himself from the human to the divine, and is therefore ripe for emancipation and reunion with life absolute. His ship is death that has come to bear him to the isle of his birth, the Platonic world of metaphysical reality whence we have all emerged. As to the people of Orphalese, they stand for human society at large in which men, in their God-ward journey, are in need of the guiding prophetic hand that would lead them from what is human in them to the divine. Having made that journey himself al-Mustafa poses in his sermons throughout the book as that guide.

Gibran's teaching in *The Prophet* is found to rest on the sole idea that life is one and infinite. As a living being, man in his temporal existence is only a shadow of his real self. To be one's real self is to be one with infinite to which man is inseparably related. Self realization, therefore, lies in growing out of one's spatio-temporal dimensions, so that the self is broadened to the extent of including everyone and all things. Consequently man's only path to self realization, to his greater self, lies in love. Hence love is the opening sermon of al-Mustafa to the people of Orphalese. No one can say "I" truly without meaning the totality of the things apart from which he can not be or be conceived. Even less can one love

oneself truly without loving everyone and all things. So love is at one an emancipation and a crucifixion: an emancipation in the sense that it releases man from his narrow spatio-temporal confinement and brings him to that stage of broader self-consciousness whereby he feels one with infinite, with God; a crucifixion in the sense that, to grow into the broader self is to shatter to pieces the smaller self which was the seed and the confinement. Thus al-Mustafa says to his listeners; *"For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. Even as he for your growth so is for your pruning."* (The Prophet) (Nadwi, 2009, 48) Dr. Suheil Bashrui, an internationally recognized authority on the works of Khalil Gibran says: "In truth, *The Prophet* is a work of such universal appeal that there is little to be gained from speculating on the identity of persons or places represented in it. For Gibran's purpose was a lofty one, and his belief in the 'unity of being', which led him to call for universal fellowship and the unification of the human race, is a message which retains its potency even today as do the messages of all great poets. Inspired by his experiences in a country far from the land of his origins, he strove to resolve cultural and human conflict transcending the barriers of East and West as few have done before or since. He became not only Gibran of Lebanon, but Gibran of America, indeed Gibran the voice of global consciousness: a voice which increasingly demands to be heard in the continuing Age of Anxiety." [Singh Manbir <http://www.sikhspectrum.com>]

To conclude we can say that Khalil Gibran was such a prolific artist that the realm of American and Arabic literature as well as the world of fine arts owes much to him. Although Khalil says'

Half of what I say is meaningless; but I say it so that the other half may reach you " (Gibran-1927, 15)

We believe that the whole of the sayings of Gibran has deep meaning for those who don't think that literature has nothing to do except providing aesthetic beauty and pleasure of reading. It's my firm belief that Gibran's works can provide us essence of better human being as well as a soothing effect to our mind. We have a lot of things to learn from Gibran's works. If we follow Gibran's advices in *The Prophet* we'll be able to realize our true identity and thus to refine our life.

References

- Abinader, Elmaz.: *Children of Al-Mahjar, Arab American Literature Spans a Century*, U.S. Society & Values, (February 2000)
- Badi, Suheil and Goteh, Paul. (1986): *Gibran of Lebanon*, American University of Beirut Press, , p-xix
- Chowdhary, Manbir Singh. <http://www.sikhspectrum.com/052004/gibran.htm>
- Gibran, Kahlil: (1923): *The Prophet*,: e-book edition by Paul Coughlin, <http://www.prophetebook.com/>
- Gibran, Kahlil, (1918) *The Madman*, e-book by Fishburne, www.gutenberg.org/etext/5616 p-1
- Gibran, Kahlil. (1927): *Sand and Foam*, British edition: London, William Heinemann, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khalil_Gibran
- Nadwi, Nazmul Hoque: (2009): *Jibran: a Poet Philosopher*, Journal of the Asiatic Society, volume LI, No.1, -p-40

