Chapter 2

Life and works of Jibran

Khalil Jibran

2.1 Life and Works of Jibran Khalil Jibran

Jibran Khalil Jibran inspired a whole generation of writers in developing Mahjar literature. He has been the gift of Lebanon and the Arab to America and the Arab-American community. Jibran had attained the global reputation. His works are already translated into some twenty languages of the world.

He was a great writer, philosopher, poet, artist, painter, composer, feminist, humanist and so on. He wrote more than twenty books in Arabic and English languages. His whole life can be divided as under:

1. Birth and early life in Lebanon

2. Life in USA and France

2.1.1 Birth and early life in Lebanon

Jibran Khalil Jibran's birth and his early life in Lebanon always remained an inspiration for his writings. Before his migration to USA, the environment of Lebanon had a great influence on him. His birth, his family and his childhood life in Lebanon are described here as follows:

2.1.1.1 Birth

> *Blessed be life whose passing wizardly presses eternities into a wink where antonyms appear as synonyms, and things unequal stand as perfectly equal. Bless it because it mocks our human standards, drawing no lines between essences and shadows; between things that amuse and things that instruct; between business offices and graveyards; between the rattle of death and the rattling of a telephone bill.*[1]

[1] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran: His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1965,p.3.

Jibran Khalil Jibran[2] was born to a Christian family in the village of Bisharri in the North East of Beirut on 6 January 1883. Jibran's full name in Arabic is Jibran Khalil Jibran; the middle name is being his father's.

It is a convention among Arabs to use the father's name after one's first name. He always signed his full name in his Arabic works, but he dropped the first name in his English writings. He did this and changed the correct spelling of 'KHALIL' to 'KAHLIL' at the instigation of his English teacher at the Boston school which he attended from 1895 A.D to 1897 A.D. Jibran is related to the Arabic word 'Jabre' which means to restore to harmony, to bring unequal parts to unity as in Algebra.[3]

According to his friend Mikhail Naimy, his father recorded his son's birth date and said to his mother as:

> *What is the date today? The sixth? Record that Gibran Kahlil Gibran was born on the sixth day of December, Annodomini 1883, in the town of Bisharri of the autonomous province of Lebanon.*[4]

About the dynasty condition of Jibran the books published from the Arab world, write as:

> *This dynasty was uprooted from Syria in the 16th century and settled first in the city of 'Baalbek', then in a village in Lebanon namely 'Bash'ala'.*[5]

In 1872, their family came to Bisharri and made it a permanent staying place.

> *Jibran's half-brother Boutros (Peter) chose his name as 'Antara', but his father according to their dynastic tradition regarded 'Jibran' much better.*[6]

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[2] Jibran is also usd as Gibran or Jubran.
[3] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran :Man and Poet*,Oneworld Publication, England,2009,notes,p.299.
[4] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran: His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1965,p.14.
[5] Dr. Ashfaq Ahmad, *Jibran Khalil Jibran:Fan Aur Shakshiyat*,Nami Press, Lucknow,1980,Chapter 2, p.29.
[6] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran: His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1965,p.28.

Jibran was born in such a period when the likeness of Arabian classicism in literature was growing more and more. It was very difficult to say something opposite to the old style of ancient imagination. Every laureate said what his ancestor has already said. Every poet was the beggar of fortune. It is unaccepted pardon to say something related to the customs and traditions of the tribes. Religious business destroyed the culture and civilization of the East. It was a period of capitalization.

2.1.1.2 His Family

Jibran Khalil Jibran's family consisted of five members; his father, his mother, his elder brother and his two younger sisters. Except his father, all other members migrated to USA. Every person played a role in his life and career. The introduction, qualities, roles and contributions of his family members are described as follows:

2.1.1.2.1 Father

The name of his father was Khalil Jibran. The child inherited Khalil as his middle name according to the customs of the Arabs. His father was a tax collector in Bisharri. He was a strong and a sturdy man with fair skin. His eyes were blue. *"He remained mad in the forests of Bisharri with grape-wine."*[7]

Jibran Khalil Jibran's grandfather was a very angry and proudly man. The dynasty of Jiban is better than any other dynasty in Bisharri. So, he was proudly leading this dynasty.

[7] Fuad al Zaish,*Jaridatul Maksuf*, Beirut, 1936.

Jibran's father was a man of considerable charm who liked to cut a dash. Although he owned a walnut grove Khalil Jibran's meager income soon evaporated as he fed his excessive habits- alcohol and gambling. Someone considered him as one of the strong man of Bisharri. *"He was by all accounts a hard man to live with and his wife and children feared him."*[8]

His father was an orthodox Christian. He was forty when Jibran was born. He expressed his filial feelings toward his father- an attempt to disguise the harsh reality of what was undoubtedly a difficult relationship. He expressed as:

> *I admire him for his power- his honesty and integrity. It was his daring to be himself, his outspokenness and refusal to yield, that got him into trouble eventually. If hundreds were about him, he could command them with a word. He could overpower any number by any expression of himself.*[9]

However, in truth Jibran's relationship with his father was difficult and often strained. *"He never felt very close to his father who was an autocratic temperamental man. He was a hostile to his artistic nature."*[10] *"He was not a loving person."*[11]

Jibran's father was accused of tax evasion in 1891 and was sent to prison when he was eight years old. The Ottoman authorities confiscated the Jibrans' property and left them homeless. Then he was released in 1894, but being an irresponsible head of the family he was undecided about immigration and remained behind in Lebanon.

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[8] Khalil S Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran: His Background,Character and Works*,American University of Beirut,Beirut, 1963,pp.82-90.
[9] Hilu, V.(ed. and arr.), *Beloved Prophed:The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and her Private Journal*,New York,1972,p.26.
[10] Ibid,p.257.
[11] Ibid,p.32

His father was a shepherd with no ambition to alter his peasant's fate. All he cared for was playing Taoula (trick track), smoking the Narjille (water pipe), visiting friends for chit-chats, drinking occasionally a sip of native arrack and strolling in the vast field of Mount Lebanon. He had hardly psychological impact on Jibran.[12]

2.1.1.2.2 Mother

The mother is everything; she is our consolation in sorrow, our hope in misery, and our strength in weakness. She is the source of love, mercy sympathy and forgiveness. He who loses his mother loses a pure soul who blesses and guards him constantly.[13]

For all that he calls 'I' to women ever since he was an infant. The role of his mother was especially important throughout his life.

The name of his mother was Kamila Rahma (Kamileh Rahme). She was the last daughter of a Maronite clergyman, namely Istiphan Rahma. Her Mother was sixty five when she was born. Her quality is described as:

She is described as a graceful woman with a slight pallor in her cheeks and a shade of melancholy in her eyes.[14]

She evoked the deepest affection and admiration in Jibran's feelings. She had a beautiful singing voice and was a devoutly religious person. When she reached marriageable age she was married to one of her own clan, her cousin Hanna Abd al Saalam Rahma. However, like many Lebanese of his time, he immigrated to Brazil to seek his future, but while he was there he died leaving Kamila with a son Boutros (Peter). After her husband's death, the young widow married Khalil Jibran. The romance between Kamila and

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[12] J.P. Ghougassian, *Kahlil Gibran: Wings of Thought*, Philosophical Library, New York,1973, p.24.
[13] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *The Wisdom of Kahlil Gibran*,UBS Publishers Distributors Pvt. Ltd.,New Delhi,2006, p.68.
[14] Khalil S Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran: His Background,Character and Works*,American University of Beirut,Beirut, 1963,p.83.

Khalil Jibran occurred after a sudden encounter when one day he heard her singing in her father's garden.

> *He did not rest until he had met her, and was immediately impressed with her beauty and charm. And there was no peace for him or anyone else until he had won her hand.*[15]

Jibran's mother played an important role in the intellectual maturation on him. She gave birth her first daughter and Jibran's first sister Mariana. In 1887, she gave birth the last child namely Sultana. In contrast to her husband, Kamila was a tolerant and loving parent and ambitious for her children. She possessed an intelligence and wisdom that had an enormous influence on her younger son without formal education, which considered useless. On praising his mother, Jibran said *"It is her mothering me I remember – the inner me.* [16]

Coming from a family steeped in the Maronite tradition, Kamila had contemplated joining the nursery at Saint Simon in Northern Lebanon before her first marriage. The spiritual nature of her and impressions that Jibran received from the mystical ceremonies of the Maronites remained within him all his life. She died in the hospital on June 28, 1903.

2.1.1.2.3 Boutros (Peter)

Boutros was the half-brother of Jibran Khalil Jibran. He was the only son of Hunna 'Abdl al Salaam. His father named him as Jibran because *"He demanded that the name 'Jibran' is greater than 'Antara' because it is the hereditary title of their dynasty."*[17] Mikhail Naimy describes this incident

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[15] Barbara Young, *This Man from Lebanon*, New York, A. Knopt, 1970, p.336.
[16] Hilu, V.(ed. and arr.), *Beloved Prophed:The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and her Private Journal*,New York,1972,p.336.
[17] Syed Tufail Ahmad Madani, *America Me Arbi Sher wa Adab ke Istika*, Shiraj Mahal, Allahabad, 1983, p.221.

as, *"Gibran shall be his name, after the founder of the family. Gibran is greater than 'Antar'."*[18] Boutros is six years older than Jibran, when their family had to migrate to USA for their poverty. He was leading from the front after going to USA. He along with his mother helped Jibran to obtain education. He worked in the streets of Boston for provided his half-brother Jibran's important education. Boutros made plenty of money for the family. *"He died at the age of twenty five."*[19] He died of congested lungs and overtiredness. He died at home on 12th March, 1903.

2.1.1.2.4 Mariana

She was the first daughter of Khalil Jibran and the first sister of Jibran. She was two years younger than him. She, being a younger sister of Jibran, was not consulted about her family's migration.

However, when tragedy struck and her mother and Boutros, who was the bread winner, died of tuberculosis within two years, she found herself alone with her brother Jibran. She sewed and knit to keep a home for herself and for her brother. Jibran was encouraged by her to paint until he had a collection ready for showing but she had not the money for the display of her brother's works.

Expressing the death of their family Jibran once said as, *"It is an obsession with me dear Mariana. Were it not for that I should have joined Sultana and the rest."*[20]

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[18] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran: His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1965,p.17.
[19] Hilu, V.(ed. and arr.), *Beloved Prophed:The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and her Private Journal*,New York,1972,pp.180-181.
[20] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran: His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1965,p.53.

2.1.1.2.5 Sultana

Sultana was the last daughter of the family of Jibran. The daughter of Kamila Rahma was four years younger than his brother and was born in Lebanon in1887. She had less contribution towards her brother Jibran.

2.1.1.3 Childhood

Jibran Khalil Jibran got his first education at home. His mother was the first educator for him. She knew not only Arabic, French and English but also spoke the same. His mother had the artistic talent for music. She was the first tutor.

> *Jibran was acquainted by his mother with the famous Arabian old tales of Harun al Rashid, the Arabian Nights and the hunting songs of Abu Nuwas.*[21]

She also taught him to develop his artistic sense for painting. He learned how to handle brushes and mix the colors from his mother who knew the rules of the game of the psychology of behaviorism.

Being overloaded with poverty, he did not receive any formal education or learning and was limited to regular visits to a village priest who doctrined him with the essentials of religion and bible, alongside Syrian and Arabic languages. Recognizing Jibran's curiousness and alert nature, the priest began to teaching him the fundamentals of alphabet and language, opening up to him the world of history, science and language.

From an early age Jibran had the good quality of spirit and remained single minded. As a child of three, he would tear-off his clothes and run out into the violent storms that lashed the mountain.

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[21] Otto, Annie Salem, *The Parables of Kahlil Gibran: An Interpretation of his Writings and his Art*,Citadel Press, New York, 1963,p.16.

His mother fearing for his safety, would run out after the ecstatic boy, lift him into her arms, and carry him back to the house where his frozen body would be rubbed with alcohol. But the child was irrepressible, and time and time again he would run into the storms, instinctively drawn to the awesome majesty of nature.[22]

The scene of thunder and lightning overwhelmed the young boy and develop in him astonishment for the moments in which nature exhibits her severe power.

From an early age Jibran was inspired by a love of drawing. If there was no paper to be found in the house, he would go outside and spend hours sketching shapes and fingers on the fresh snow.

When he was four years old, he busily dug some holes in the ground and carefully planted ting scraps of paper, hoping that the summer harvest would provide him with a plentiful supply of paper.[23]

When he was five years old he heard the old tales of the ancient period with a greater interest.

Often Jibran went to the mountain top and noticed the silent valley below. He heard *"the sound of the streams breaking up of from the stones and the other things of the mountain as if it is that kind of Taurat's music whose history repeats itself, the history which eye sees and ear hears. Jibnran lost to this lofty peaks and it flows far and beyond.*[24]

When he was four years old, he digged a big hole in their garden and threw therein some papers thinking that those papers will grow with a complete tree and which will be useful to write.

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[22] Hilu, V.(ed. and arr.), *Beloved Prophed:The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and her Private Journal*,New York,1972,p.343.

[23] Barbara Young, *This Man from Lebanon: A Study of Kahlil Gibran*, Alfred A. Knopf,1981,p.7

[24] Dr. Ashfaq Ahmad, *Jibran Khalil Jibran·Fan Aur Shakshiyat*,Nami Press, Lucknow,1980,Chapter 2, p.35.

When he was six, he was absorbed by some old Leonardo da Vinci prints given to him by his mother. He never forgot these best moments. The child moved by a passion that possessed him from that hour.

When he was five he had given a corner in their small house which he quickly filled as a perfect junk shop with clear stones, rocks, rings, plants and a collection of colored pencils [25]

The green region of Bisharri proved for him as a solitude and meditation. He realized the natural surroundings of the escaping falls, the sagged and the neighboring green cedars, the beauty of which emerged as a remarkable and symbolic influence to his drawings and writings. When he was eight, his parents took him to the sea for the first time. He remembered the impressions vividly:

The sea was before us The sea and the sky were of one color. There was no foreign and the water was full of the large Eastern sailing vessels with sails all set As we passed across the mountains, suddenly I saw what looked like an immeasurable heaven and the ships sailing in it [26]

The exhibition of thunder and lightning overwhelmed the young boy and developed in him a reverence for the moments in which nature exhibits her pierce power. It seemed as though he was distributing in nature's souring laughter with the God's nature's own way of awakening the sleeping spirit of all things.

This creative mind and precious intelligence were connected with concentrated love solitude. Among the mountains, hills, streams, waterfalls,

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[25] Hilu, V.(ed. and arr.), *Beloved Prophed.The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and her Private Journal*,New York,1972,p.135.

[26] S.B. Bushrui and S.H. al Kuzbari (eds and trans.), *Blue Flame The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and May Ziadeh*,Harlow, Longman,1983, p.88.

and with corpses, he rejoiced in savoring the delights of freedom that encouraged his boyish dreams and services.

From the childhood, Jibran was very much attracted to painting and drawing. He thought that he will earn sufficient money by painting after becoming naturalist in life. Likewise, whenever he read a book he had the temperament to write like that.

He enjoyed some humorous ideas in his childhood.

> *One day his teacher gave him a work in the class then when he went to him and observed the paper he found there the picture of an ass, the head of which was covered by a black cap, a book in one ear and a pen in another ear.*[27]

When he was nine, his parents took him to the wrecks of Baalbek, the city of the sun, and the city of Baal.

> *When he was ten years old, he was climbing in the mountains with his cousin where the handrail broke and the boys fell about one hundred and fifty feet onto rocks below. His cousin fractured a leg and Gibran broke his shoulder and suffered deep cuts to his head*[28]

To relocate the left shoulder, his family strapped it to a cross and wrapped it up for forty days, a symbolic incident suggestive of Christ's wanderings in the wilderness and which remained imprinted in Jibran's memory.

2.1.1.4 Immigration to USA

Khalil Jibran, Jibran's father, was accused of tax evasion when he was at the age of eight and his father was sent to prison as the Ottoman authorities confiscated the Jibrans' property and left the family homeless.

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[27] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran: His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1965,p.34.
[28] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran . Man and Poet*,Oneworld Publication, England,2009,p.34.

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Amidst conspiracy and corruption the elder Jibran found himself facing charges of embezzlement. Long after words, Jibran remembered the morning when the summons was served and the crowd rode into the courtyard. So the family went to live with relatives for a while. However, the strong willed mother of Jibran decided that the family should immigrate to the USA, seeking a better life and following suit to Jibran's uncle who immigrated earlier. His father was released in 1894, but being an irresponsible head of the family he was undecided about immigration and remained behind in Lebanon.

The serious economic situation, exacerbated by a corrupt feudal system, prompted many Lebanese to seek a new world. The utilization of the people by the governing feudal lords made life extremely difficult to ordinary men and women. The system suffocated any hope of economic growth and, in addition, an unfair taxation system meant that the weak and the impoverished were caught in a cycle of despair.

Immigration was also fueled by global events of the 1860s. During the terrifying massacres of these periods thousands of refugees fled to Egypt. After the Suez Canal opened in 1869, Lebanon and Syria ceased to be the only crossroads of the trade. The silk industry which had traded with Europe suddenly found itself competition with Japanese and Chinese silk and the economy went into further decline.

> *One afternoon Boutros, the oldest son of Kamila, came home to find his mother in tears Like many thousands before her, Kamila found herself faced with a stark choice either to endure a life of increasing poverty at home or to embark on a difficult and epochal journey of many thousands of miles to seek a better life for her children in America* [29]

[29] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran Man and Poet*,Oneworld Publication, England,2009,p.34.

On June 25, 1895, they embarked on a voyage to United States of America leaving Jibran's father in Lebanon.

2.1.2 Life in USA and France

The second phase of the life of Jibran Khalil Jibran started in USA when he came to Boston with his mother, elder brother and two younger sisters. The life in USA was a life of different kinds of challenges. The life in USA was a platform for him also. From there he went to Paris to study art and painting. He remained in USA till the last breath of his life. The second phase of his life in USA and other places are mentioned as follows:

2.1.2.1. Beginning

The tired family of Jibran Khalil Jibran stepped into the reception Centre at Elis Island, New York after a 5000 mile sea voyage from Lebanon. They were among 30 million immigrants who poured into the United States during the nineteenth century.

> *The haggard family slipped into Chinatown unnoticed except for a handful of men and women from Bisharri who came to inquire about their relatives in the old country more than to bid the new comers welcome*[30]

In 1894 when the family, except Jibran's father, came to Boston, he was twelve years old.

Going to define Boston, Jibran says:

> *This city was called in the past the city of science and art, but today it is the city of traditions The souls of its inhabitants are petrified, even their thoughts are old and worn out. The*

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[30] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran: His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1965,p.27.

strange thing about this city is that the petrified is always proud and boastful, and the worn out and old hold its Chin high.[31]

The family settled in Boston's South End, which at the time hosted at the second largest Syrian community in the USA following New York. The cultural dissimilar area felt familiar to Kamila, who was pleased by the known spoken Arabic and the widespread Arab Customs. Kamila, now the bread-earner of the family, began to work as a dealer on the impoverished streets of South End Boston. At the time peddling was the major source of income for most Syrian immigrants, who were negatively portrayed due to their inconventional Arab ways and their supposed joblessness.

Kamila, flexible and diligent, began to earn a living by pack peddling during the day and working as a seamstress at night to support her young family. She was carrying her heavy loads of linen and lace to the privileged classes of Boston.[32]

2.1.2.2 Education

The work of Charity institutions in the poor immigrant areas allowed the children of immigrants to attend the public school and keep them off the street. So, fortune opened for Jibran, as he was the only member of his family to purpose scholastic education. His sisters Mariana and Sultana, were not allowed to enter school, dissatisfied by Middle Eastern traditions as well as financial difficulties. Jibran, the youngest son of Kamila *"was sent to Quincy School for boys."*[33] He entered school on September 30, 1895, merely two months after his arrival in the USA. In the school, a registration mistake altered his name forever by shortening it to 'Kahlil Gibran' which remained unchanged in the rest of his life despite repeated attempts at

[31] Jibran Khalil Jibran,Wisdom of Kahlil Gibran,USB Publishers Distributors Pvt. Ltd.,New Delhi,2006,p.10.
[32] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran :Man and Poet*,Oneworld Publication, England,2009,p.43.
[33] Ibid.

restoring his full name. In the school, having no formal education, he was placed in an ungraded class reserved for immigrant children, who had to learn English from scratch. Jibran also enrolled in an art school at a nearly settlement house. He caught the eye of his teachers with his sketches and drawings, a hobby he had started during his Childhood in Lebanon.

During the two years of learning in the public school of the district, Jibran recorded the highest scores from among his US classmates.

> *His teachers saw in him the precocity of his genius. It was their suggestion that he shortened his initial name Gibran by rotating the letter 'H' from his first name.*[34]

Denison House, one of the settlement houses, had a beneficial atmosphere that encouraged children to attend arts and crafts classes and drama and social group.

> *In the winter of 1895 Jibran's teachers at the Quincy school with little persuasion, suggested him to attend one of the drawing classes. His talents were quickly recognized by one of the art teachers at Denison House, a woman called Florence Pierce.*[35]

Florence brought him to the attention of a social worker called Jessie Fremont Beale who was particularly impressed by the twelve years Old's drawing of a bacchante statue. Instinctively sensing the boy's potential, Jessie Beale introduced him to Fred Holland Day.

> *Day's greatest love in 1896, when Jibran was introduced to him, was the emerging art form of pictorial photography, while helping to introduce the children of the South End slums to English literature, Day had become increasingly excited by the possibilities of developing his new art. He was capable of transfiguring the American, Arab, Celtic, Ethiopian and Chinese waits into princes, sheikhs, chiefs and mandarins.*[36]

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[34] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran :Man and Poet*,Oneworld Publication, England,2009,p.45.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.

After two successful years of concentrated studies in American curriculum, Jibran asked permission from his half-brother Boutros and his mother to return to Lebanon in order to cultivate his native language and become acquainted with Arabian tradition. His wish was fulfilled. He returned to Lebanon in 1897 or 1896. He was in Lebanon from 1896-1901. He got admitted in 'Madrasa al Hikma' (School of wisdom), today located in Ashrafiet, Beirut. Among the courses he enrolled in were international law, medicine, music and the history of religion. *During the period of 1898 he edited the literary and philosophical magazine 'Al Hakikat' (The Truth).*[37]

He had one love experience also which marked his life deeply. It was his first romance with Miss. Hala Daher.

Jibran's teacher at al Hikma, Father Yousuf Haddad saw in him an alert and dynamic soul with a fundamental and rebellious intellect. His eye rejoiced in whatever it saw. He had only a few friends, cultivating his mind with his own self. He was a very successful student in the school. He was honoured to with the 'College poet prize'.

Finally in 1900, motivated by the admiration for the great Arabian thinkers he had studied in classes. He undertook to make drawings of these persons though no portraits of them existed.

> *He made sketches of the early Islamic poets like al Farid, Abu Nuwas and al Mutanabbi, of the philosophers Ibn Sina and Ibn Khaldun, and of Khansa, the great Arabic Woman poet*[38]

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[37] J.P. Ghougassian, *Kahlil Gibran Wings of Thought*, Philosophical Library, New York,1973, p.26.
[38] Barbara Young, *This Man from Lebanon*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1970, p.184.

At eighteen, Jibran graduated from al-Hikma with high honours. But still eager to acquire knowledge, he decided this time to go to Paris to learn Painting.

2.1.2.3 Art and Painting

The religion of Islam prohibited the use of images and idols, even the image of Muhammad. In the Christian countries it conquered, Islam converted many of the churches into mosques. Statues and paintings were easily removed. Hence the art of painting and carving vanished from the Islamic world.[39]

Jibran's own stories about his childhood often stressed his intelligence and artistic nature. He seemed to spend a lot of time alone sketching and his mother appears to have indulged him. Jibran's artistic skills transformed the route of his life, deflecting his destiny away from what could have been a life of hard physical work and virtual obscurity.

As a young student in Lebanon, Jibran was not influenced by the art of one particular name or school of painters.

An art teacher, at a local community centre he attended out of school hours, noticed his early artistic talent and brought him to the attention of a friend of hers.[40]

Studying the work of the Arab philosopher, Jibran imagined their appearances and for the first time etched likenesses of these men appeared in books. Jibran created these at the age of seventeen.[41]

Jibran met Fred Holland Day (1864-1933), the first two key figures in Jibran's life in the West, in December, 1896. Day mentioned him the good-looking exotic boy and used him as a model. Day found in Jibran an acolyte, a blank book, someone to be instructed and molded. Through Day, Jibran

[39] Jibran Khalil Jibran,*Mirrors of the Soul*, USB Publishers, New Delhi,2005,p.44.
[40] Kahlil Jibran,*The Prophet, The Artist, The Man*, on Line article.
[41] Jibran Khalil Jibran,*Mirrors of the Soul*, USB Publishers, New Delhi,2005,p.44.

was introduced to a world of luxury and decadence. To draw paintings, patience always needed. In this regard, Jibran says, "*Had I not been born with a passion for painting, I should not have painted and drawn the pictures I later exhibited at Day's studio.*"[42]

Day encouraged young Jibran to read widely and introduced him to various artistic and literary movements.

> *What were then modern ideas would be fundamental to Jibran's later output: a fondness for nature, celebrating the power of love, a belief in the unity of all religions our organized religion, and an interest in reincarnation and the higher self.*[43]

In the early days of his career as a painter, he exhibited his work in a studio in Boston. A fire destroyed the building and the entire collection of drawings and paintings. This was a great shock to a young man who needed to sell his work for a living. In later years he remarked that "it was just as well that they were destroyed because he was not fully mature when he painted then."[44]

In 1904, Fred Holland Day, still a constant friend and guiding light, offered to let Jibran use his Harcourt Building studio for Jibran's first public exhibition. The display opened on 30 April 1904 to favorable critical attention.

> *It was at the opening of his exhibition that Jibran met the next key figure in his life, Mary Elizabeth Haskell (1873-1964). Their relationship, which was reaching a new intensity, and their growing affection for each other, is reflected in Mary's Journal.*[45]

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[42] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran: His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1965,p.73.
[43] Kahlil Jibran, *The Prophet,The Artist, The Man*, on line article.
[44] Jibran Khalil Jibran,*Mirrors of the Soul*, USB Publishers, New Delhi,2005,p.45.
[45] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran :Man and Poet*, Oneworld Publication, England,2009,p.113.

Mary encouraged and funded Jibran's visit to Paris from July 1908 to October 1910, where he went to study art, and further developed his techniques and philosophy.

2.1.2.4 Death

Man is like the foam of the sea that floats upon the surface of the water. When the wind blows, it vanishes, as if it had never been. Thus are lives blown away by Death.[46]

Jibran's mental health and his alcohol addiction drove him in one evening to burst out crying, lamenting the weakness of his mature works. 'I have lost my original creative power,' he lamented to an audience during a reading of one of his mature works. By 1929, doctors were able to trace Jibran's physical ailment to the enlargement of his livers. To avoid the issue of illness, Jibran ignored all medical care, relying instead on heavy drinking.

By 1930, Jibran's excessive drinking to escape the pain in his liver aggravated his disease, and hopes of finishing the second part of *The Prophet*, *The Garden of the Prophet*, dwindled. Jibran revealed to Mary his plans of building a library in Bisharri and soon he drew the last copy of his will. To his pen-friend May Ziadeh, Jibran revealed the fear of death as he admitted, 'I am, May, a small volcano whose opening has been closed.'

Jibran died at 10:50 in the evening, April 10, 1931, the first Friday after Easter at the age of forty-eight at Vincent's Hospital in a New York hospital, as the spreading cancer in his liver left him unconscious.

According to Naimy, an autopsy revealed that the cause of death was "cirrhosis of the liver and incipient tuberculosis in one of the lungs.[47]

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[46] Kahlil Gibran: *The Wisdom of Kahlil Gibran,* USB Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd.,New Delhi, p.19.
[47] Hilu, V.(ed. and arr.), *Beloved Prophed:The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and her Private Journal*,New York,1972,p.445.

The New York streets staged a two-day vigil for Jibran's honor, whose death was mourned in the U.S. and Lebanon. To fulfill Jibran's dream, Marianna and Mary travelled in July of 1931 to Lebanon to bury Jibran in his hometown of Bisharri. The citizens of Lebanon received his coffin with celebration rather than mourning, rejoicing his homecoming, for in death Jibran's popularity increased. By January of 1932, the Mar Sarkis monastery was bought and Jibran moved to his final resting-place. Upon Mary's suggestion, his belongings, the books he read, and some of his works and illustrations were later shipped to provide a local collection in the monastery, which turned into a Jibran museum.

2.2 Influence of women in Jibran Khalil Jibran's life

Biographers of Jibran and those who knew him closely like Mikhail Naimy and Ameen Rhani, point out that Jibran had relationships with many women. Here one should distinguish between the close relationships that do not exceed four and the numerous social ones with American upper class women.

Jibran Khalil Jibran's ambition to be successful explains the vast number of social relationships with rich American women who admired his work, his drawings and his interesting personality. About these he once wrote, "*Dinner parties every Friday at Mrs. Ford are infinitely delightful. At them I always feel and can say whatever I wish....* "[48]

Jibran never married, but love played the most important role in his life by his own admission. At least five different types of love are associated with Jibran:

[48] Otto, Annie, Saleem, *The Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell*, Houston, Texas, Southern Printing Company, 1970, p.621.

(A) Familial love towards his mother, his sister and brother.

(B) Intellectual and spiritual love toward Mary Haskell, his guardian angel and benefactress.

(C) Carnal or recreational love towards the many women by whom he was always surrounded and adored.

(D) Epistolary love through a celebrated correspondence with his female counterpart in the Arab World, May Ziadeh, a love that proved to be fruitful as it inspired the most beautiful love letters in the Arab language.

(E) Religious, Christian, the agape of the Christian faith.

Jibran's relationships with American women influenced his opinion about women in general and Lebanese women in particular whom he criticized as not being open enough to the world. What he liked in women was not only kindness and purity but also courage and intelligence and the love of life and its pleasures. He described his 'ideal woman' as being a mixture or Beatrice and Messalina, Beatrice being Dante's pure love in the divine comedy and Messalina a Roman Empress renowned for her lust and political intrigues. As for the women who were close to Jibran is mentioned below:

2.2.1 Sultana Thabet

A young window Jibran met in 1901 when he had returned to Lebanon to study Arabic. He was seventeen years old. Then they exchanged letters for fourteen months till she died at the age of 22. Her friends sent Jibran a silk scarf which belonged to her and seventeen love letters she had written to him but never sent. Jibran was deeply affected by this gift and wrote *"You cannot imagine how deep my sorrow was. Why doesn't she send*

them to me before?"[49] Taking this incident into account, it can be said that Jibran's relationship with Sultana Thabet was a platonic one because Lebanese society at this time did not allow men and women to mix freely nor to send letters to each other.

2.2.2 Emilie Michel or Micheline

An attractive teacher few months older than Jibran whom he met in Boston in 1904 and whom he pointed a number of times. She was the 'personification of feminism' and their love relationship was transformed into a friendship when Micheline married in 1914. When Jibran was in Paris studying with Rodin, Micheline came to see him a number of times. He never proposed to marry her but they always remained on good terms.

2.2.3 Charlotte Teller

She was a suffragette and a play wright and wrote under a masculine pseudonym. In a letter to his friend Jamil Malouf in 1908, Jibran depicted his relationship with Charlotte as being temporary one. He describes her as 'loving everything that is beautiful and pleasurable.' Eventually Charlotte married the writer Gilbert Hirsh in 1912 and went to live in New York.

2.2.4 Mary Khoury

Jibran met her during his first years in New York. She was one who inspired his literary piece 'the enchanting Fairy.' In this work of prose Jibran reveals what he felt for her by saying "Will you be satisfied with the love of a man who considers love a friend and who refuses it to be a master? Will you accept me as a friend who does not enslave nor wishes to be slave."

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[49] Nahida Taweel Ferzli, *The Personality of Gibran Khalil Gibran A Psychological Study of his Life and Work*, p.8.

2.2.5 May Ziadeh

After publishing his book *al Ajniha al Mutakassira* in 1912, Jibran started corresponding with the famous Lebanese writer May Ziadeh who was a leader of women's liberation in the Arab World and was renowned for her literary salon in Cairo. Jibran and May Ziadeh exchanged letters till Jibran died but they never met in person. Biographers of May Ziadeh agree that she loved Jibran dearly. This was apparent in the tender and sometimes passionate letters she wrote to him. When she died they found a photo of Jibran among her papers on which she had written, "This has been my unhappiness for years." As for Jibran he never wanted to get tied to one woman only and he wrote to her once:

> *I know that a little love does not please you. I also know that a little love does not please me either. Neither you nor I are satisfied with little. We both want much. We both want everything. We want perfection.*[50]

2.2.6 Mary Elizabeth Haskell

However, the woman who meant most to Jibran was Mary Haskell, whom he met in 1904 after he had returned from studying Arabic in Beirut. He was then 21 years old and she was 31. She ran a boarding school for girls in Cambridge. From the beginning, Mary recognized Jibran's unique literary and artistic talents and proposed to become his provider of financial security all his life. He accepted their friendship and platonic love, unknown to many until the discovery of their correspondence, lasted 27 years until he died in 1931. In one of the 325 letters he wrote to her he said:

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[50] Bushrui, S. and Al Kazbari, S.H., *The Blue Flame: The Unpublished Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran to May Ziadeh*, Longman, London, 1983, p.176.

Beloved Mary, God has given me much through you. How blessed it is to be one of God's hands and how fortunate, how more than fortunate I am to know that hand and to touch it and to take from it. It is so good to be a little willow on the bank on a great river.[51]

According to Nahida Taweed Ferzli, Mary's care for Jibran made him feel a reborn man, especially after he had suffered loneliness and poverty in a foreign land with no close companions except his sister Mariana. Moreover, it can be described that Jibran's love for Mary as a mixture of a lover's love and of love towards a 'sacred' mother.

Mary Haskell was the only woman he proposed to marry despite the fact that he was very much opposed to the institution of marriage. She was his 'angel'; his 'beloved' and when he wrote the following thought he was probably thinking of her:

Women opened the windows of my eyes and the doors of my spirit. Had it not been for the woman mother, the woman-sister and the woman friend I would have been sleeping among those who disturb the tranquility of the world with their snoring.[52]

2.2.7 Barbara Young

She knew Jibran the last seven years of his life, during which time she became the first of his disciples to shout his praise in a biography *This Man from Lebanon*. Once she wrote that if Jibran had never written a poem or painted a picture, his signature upon the page of eternal record would still be inerasable. The power of his individual consciousness of the age and the dwelling of his spirit is timeless and deathless. She wrote to Jibran expressing her admiration. She was with Jibran at the hospital when he passed away. Soon afterward she packed the precious paintings and effects

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[51] Hilu, V.(ed. and arr.), *Beloved Prophed:The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and her Private Journal*,New York,1972,p.389.

[52] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *A Self Portrait*, New Delhi, USB Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd., Reprint- 2006, p.82.

left in the studio where Jibran had lived for eighteen years and sent them to his home town of Bisharri in Lebanon.

After Jibran's death, she assembled and put together the chapters of his unfinished book *Garden of the Prophet.*

We realize that Jibran did not see a woman as a sexual partner as much as he saw her as mother...nature....goddess... source of abundant life and symbol of beauty. What proves this point is a sentence he wrote as, "*Every man loves two women. One that his imagination creates and another that has not been form yet.*"[53]

2.3 Jibran as a poet

Khalil Jibran's unique poetic expression, characterized by beauty and spirituality, became known as "Jibranism." His language touches the inner souls of the readers and his parables teach them spiritual lessons. His early short stories, prose poems, and later collections of aphorisms made him widely acclaimed as the greatest of Arab Romantics.

Mikhail Naimy recorded his fascination with his friend saying:

> *Who shall inscribe the name of the present generation in the scrolls of Time? Who they are and where they are? I do not find them among the many "nightingales of the Nile and the warblers of Syria and Lebanon," but among the few whose lips and hearts have been touched by a new fire. Of those some are still within the womb of Creative Silence, some are breathing the air we breathe, and treading the ground we tread Of the latter --, nay, leading latter --is the poet of Night and Solitude. the poet of Loneliness and Melancholy, the poet of Longing and Spiritual Awakening, the poet of the sea and the Tempest – Jibran Khalil Jibran*[54]

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[53] Bashir, An Onios, *The complete collection of Gibran's work in Arabic*, Beirut, Sader Publishing House, 1964, p.167.

[54] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1965,pp.159-160.

Many critics think that Jibran's poetic genius mainly lies in the use of metaphor. Jibran indeed creates beautiful images that are charged with emotions and that expand the reader's vision and imagination. He addressed various subjects about life and humanity like love, beauty, truth, justice, good and evil. He, for example, described a kiss that is "a goblet filled by the gods from the fountain of love" and talked about love as "a trembling happiness" and poetry as "a flash of lightning; it becomes mere composition when it is an arrangement of words" or as "a deal of joy and pain and wonder, with a dash of the dictionary."

As Jibran's interest shifted to spirituality and primitivism, his writings returned again and again to the beauty and purity of nature. He romanticized nature and found in it an inspirational power for his poetry. He identifies the divine essence with the natural world, a pantheism he had absorbed from his readings under Fred Holland Day's guidance.

Jibran's writings establish him with a mystical union with nature, a relationship of love and harmony. The natural beauty of Jibran's home village Bisharri was a strong source of inspiration and nurture to his imagination. His poetry is nostalgic of the magnificent scenery of his childhood. It portrays Jibran rejoicing in peace and freedom among the immortal cedars of Lebanon, the famous sacred valley of Qadisha, and the mountains of Sannin and Famm al-Mizab. Yet, inspired by Rousseau's ideas on the innocence of the natural man as opposed to the man corrupted by civilization and materialism, Jibran repeatedly points out to the contrast between the natural world and the human world. In the former there is peace, harmony, and innocence whereas in the latter there is disorder, injustice, and sorrow.

In a letter to Mikhail Naimy he writes, *"...the future shall find us in a hermitage at the edge of one of the Lebanese gorges. This deceptive civilization has strained the strings of our spirits to the breaking point. We must depart before they break."*[55]

According to Naimy, Jibran once said, *"I shall be happy when men shall say about me what they said of Blake: "he is a madman." Madness in art is creation. Madness in poetry is wisdom. Madness in the search for God is the highest form of worship."*[56]

Such is Jibran's poetic expression: a spiritual and prophetic one.

"Jibran's romantic philosophy was influenced by what Waterfield called *"The Platonizing Stream"* [57]. As we have already seen, the autobiographical tone of his writings depicts him as a poet-prophet with a sacred mission to humanity.

In one of his aphorisms in *Sand and Foam (Raml wa Zabad)* Jibran compares himself to Jesus saying:

> *Crucified One, you are crucified upon my heart; and the nails that pierce your hands pierce the walls of my heart.*
> *And tomorrow when a stranger passes by this Golgotha he will not know that two bled here. He will deem it the blood of one man.*[58]

Here, Jibran often depicts himself as a lonely poet who is more sensitive than other people and who is capable of revealing eternal truths. Again in *Sand and Foam (Raml wa Zabad)* he writes:

> *There lies a green field between the scholar and the poet; should the scholar cross it he becomes a wise man; should the poet cross it, he becomes a prophet.*[59]

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[55] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran: His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1965,p.255.
[56] Ibid,p.89.
[57] R. Waterfield, The Voice of Kahlil Gibran: An Anthology, Arkana, London,1998,p.226.
[58] The complete works of Kahlil Gibran, Indiana Publishing House, New Delhi, 2009,*Sand and Foam*,p.132
[59] Ibid,p.122.

This more elevated role that Jibran started to play continued to live with him. It, however, reached its profoundest expression through *The Prophet (An Nabi)* in which Al Mustafa seems to voice Jibran's own spiritual teachings. Indeed when in an interview Jibran was asked how he came to write *The Prophet,* he answered: *"Did I write it? It wrote me"?*[60] Jibran's writings are known for their prophetic tone against the evils that reigned in his beloved homeland at the time and against other evils that bring humanity to dissolution. His message, however, is a remedial one. He asserts that this modern world, corrupted by conventions, oppression, and hatred is redeemable through love, good will, and freedom.

Jibran embraced the American Transcendentalists like Whitman, Emerson, and Thoreau. His work bears the influence of their ideas of self-reliance, rebirth, and the presence of a greater self that each individual is able to grow into. For Jibran human beings are able to progress toward a divine world. He repeatedly celebrates joining the metaphysical realm as the key to better understand the world and discover higher meanings of life. Together with Nietzsche, William Blake's works also contributed in shaping Jibran's religious ideas. From an early age, he started to question the religion of his birth and the role of priests. He, however, never questioned the existence of some kind of God and continued to be fascinated with Jesus throughout his life.

Jibran, indeed, found in Christ a source of inspiration, an idea that was recurrent in his earlier stories like *Khalīl al Kāfir (Khalil the Heretic)* and then later in his English book *Jesus: the Son of Man (Yasu' ibn al Insān)* (1928). He considered Jesus a lasting leading figure of humankind. He once wrote in a letter to Mary Haskell:

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[60] M.S. Daoudi, *The Meaninig of Kahlil Gibran*, Citadel Press, Secaucus,1982,p.99.

My art can find no better resting place than the personality of Jesus. His life is the symbol of Humanity He shall always be the supreme figure of all ages and in Him we shall always find mystery, passion, love, imagination, tragedy, beauty, romance and truth[61]

Although there are critics such as Najjar (1999) and Hawi (1972), who suggest that Jibran's writing, which is characterized by a romantic mystical style, had little influence on American letters. His impact particularly on Arab-American literature is recognizable.

2.4 Jibran as a reformer of Arabic Literature

Khalil Jibran was among a younger generation of Arab-American writers who contributed to the ongoing Arabic literary renaissance. This movement had started by the end of the 19th century with revivalist figures in the Arab world like Butrus al Bustani, Khalil Mutran, and al Aqqad, among others who were attracted to Western poetry and particularly English Romanticism. Living in the American environment undoubtedly helped Arab American literature in their quest to revolutionize the classically conservative Arabic literature.

In a way, they reflected the culture of freedom they found themselves in. They freely developed new styles whereas their counterpart modernizers in the East had to moderate them. Arab-American modernists were highly influenced by

Western cultures in attempting to reform the traditional use of Arabic language and applying new ideas to Arabic literature. They developed the prose-poem and also introduced Western themes like romanticism, individualism, humanism, and secularism. It is interesting that Ameen Rihani was a pioneer of this revolution before Jibran, but *Al Mahjar* or *Pen League* writers turned to Jibran's own ideas and experimentation with

[61] Khalil Jibran to Marry Haskell,April 19,1909.

language as a source of inspiration. His literary beliefs shaped the views of colleagues. Indeed 'Abd al Masih Haddad, a member of the Pen League, described Jibran's input on the issue as, *"the awakening of spring in a barren land."*[62]

It is worth emphasizing at this point that before even the formation of the Pen League, *al Funun* (*The Arts*) contributed widely to the Arabic literary renaissance. Its main goal, indeed, was to lift Arabic literature from the stagnation it fell into. *Al Funun* became the main channel for Jibran's Arabic writings as well as the work of other Lebanese immigrant writers.

> *The journal sought to promote new forms of literature for the Arabic speaking world. It spread a new orientation towards the renewal of the Arabic language, and drew attention to what Arabic literature should be like, not what it currently was like.*[63]

Jibran, as well as other members of the *Ar Rabitah al Qalamiyyah (The Pen Association)*, did not promote a radical linguistic reform of the Arabic literature or a destruction of the sacredness of formal Arabic. He rather advocated breaking out of traditional patterns in favor of an individual style. As Popp puts it as it was not to be equated with the felling of a tree, but the pruning away of the tree's dead branches and leaves.

Jibran's early works written in Arabic popularized the already growing Romantic tradition. They are considered crucial to the development of modern

Arabic literature as they paved the way to a new kind of creativity. Critics even went further in drawing a similarity between Jibran's impact on 20th Century Arab Romantic writers and that of 19th Century Western Romantic figures on their fellow writers. Jibran's Arabic pieces were part of

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[62] Khalil S Hawi, *Kahlil Gibran: His Background,Character and Works*,American University of Beirut,Beirut, 1963,p.113.
[63] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran: His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1965,p.112-113.

a new literary culture that experienced what Waterfield calls a shift from craftsmanship to inspiration. Jibran indeed sought the beauty of thought more than the beauty of form. He created new images and seemed to adopt a Blakean approach to imagination as the "Divine Vision".

His writing did not match traditional forms of the past that the neoclassical poets of the 19th and early 20th Centuries were faithful to. Jibran, for example, rejected complex grammar, loud rhetoric as well as meters of classical Arabic poetry. In his Arabic poem *Al Mawakib* (*The Procession*) for example, Jibran promoted the idea of using more than one meter in a single poem. The delicate tones of the lines, however, are deeply felt. Jibran challenged what was considered to be criteria of great poetry. He preferred a free and spontaneous verse and blended classical Arabic with colloquial Arabic. He embraced a simplified pronunciation and a language that unsophisticated audience could understand and relate to. Yet, his simple style is elegant, resonant, and able to communicate profound thoughts. It touches on aspects of our experience as humans. It appeals to our hearts as well as to our minds. Jibran's writings strikingly create an element of timelessness and universality that penetrate even the translated work.

In *Al Ajniha al Mutakassira*, for example, Jibran talks about love as:

> *the only freedom in the world because it so elevates the spirit that the laws of humanity and the phenomena of nature do not alter its course* [64]

Jibran's early publications are also characterized by bitter realism and unlike traditional Arabic writings, they dealt with challenging themes. For example *'Ara'is al Muruj* (*Nymphs of the Valley*), reflects Jibran's anti-clerical ideas. One of the issues *Martā al Bāniyah*, *Yuhāna al Majnūn (John the Madman)*, and *Ramād Ajyāl wa an Nār al Khāledah (Dust of Ages and*

[64] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Al Ajniha al Mutakassira,Muassasah*,Bahsun, Beirut, Lebanon, p. 52.

the Eternal Fire) dealt with was religious persecution. For Jibran, true religion is not an organized but a liberating and personal one. His poem "The Crucified" echoes his life-long belief that the mission of Jesus was not to build institutions and structures, but to build the human spirit. Jibran writes in his essay *The Crucified* as:

> *Jesus was not sent here to teach the people to build magnificent churches and temples amidst the cold wretched huts and dismal hovels.... He came to make the human heart a temple, and the soul an altar, and the mind a priest*[65]

'Ara'is al-Muruj, in addition, addresses social injustices in Lebanon like the exploitation of women and the poor by the rich and the powerful. Jibran's early other Arabic writings also point out to the ignored rights of Arab women and call for their emancipation and education. *Al Arwah al Mutamarridah* (*Spirits Rebellious*), for example, portrays a married woman's emancipation from her husband and a bride's escape from a forced marriage through death, themes that had remained untouched in Arabic literature.

Jibran's attempt at bridging the gap between Arabic literature and Western literature in terms of both form and content presents him as a mediator between both worlds. Jibran communicated a message of reconciliation between his own heritage and the new environment he grew in. He imported Western themes and infused an element of avant-garde experiment into Arabic literature, but he in return had something to offer to the West. Former US President Woodrow Wilson once told Jibran as, *"You are the first Eastern storm to sweep the country, and what a number of flowers it has brought!"*[66]

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[65] The complete works of Kahlil Gibran, Indiana Publishing House, New Delhi, 2009,*Secrets of the Heart*,p.416.

[66] M.S. Daoudi, *The Meaninig of Kahlil Gibran*, Citadel Press, Secaucus,1982,pp.11-12.

Jibran, indeed, brought to his adopted land flowers of Eastern spirituality which balanced America's emerging values of materialism and progress. Inspired by his own experience as an immigrant writer Jibran aimed at uniting East and West and creating an intercultural reconciliation that transcends the barriers of language, religion, and politics. Through his contributions to magazines and journal, *The New Orient* in particular, Jibran advocated peace and understanding between the Arab and Western world. Syed Hussein, editor of *The New Orient*, wrote about Jibran that there is no more sincere and authentic or more highly gifted representative of the East functioning today in the West than Khalil Jibran. He considered himself as a spokesman of both cultures. He admired America's achievements and its values of individualism, dynamism, and freedom. On the other hand, he praised the Arabs' contributions to the world, but advised them to evade the past and build one's own future, and to adapt the good aspects of Western civilization instead of blind imitation. Jibran appealed to the new generation of Arab Americans to be proud of both their Eastern and their Western background. In his famous poem *I Believe in You*, also known as *To Young Americans of Syrian Origin*, Jibran writes that he believe that they, the young Americans have inherited from their forefathers an ancient dream, a song, a prophecy, which they can proudly lay as a gift of gratitude upon the lap of America. He believes that they can say to the founders of this great nation, Here he is, a youth, a young tree from the hills of Lebanon, yet I am deeply rooted here, and I would be fruitful.

Barbara Young recorded Jibran's impact on the Arab-American community saying that to the younger generation of his countrymen, those born in the West of parents who had grown up on their native soil; Jibran was one of the elect of God. They went to him in their perplexities and he

met their problems with quick understanding and divine gentleness that won their undying gratitude and devotion. She added, *"I have never entered one of these [Syrian] restaurants without hearing some mention of him, without someone knowing, and saying, 'You are the friend of Jibran."*[67]

Waterfield, however, argues that the cultural dualism Jibran experienced made him act out different roles among his Western friends of literary circles and his Syrian compatriots. The first were often radicals and socialists, whereas the latter were rather nationalists. He describes Jibran as a 'chameleon' who adapts himself to the demands of both worlds. Nevertheless, it could be argued that Gibran balanced both the Eastern and Western sides of his identity and came to resolve his cultural division. Mostly in his early Arabic writings, such as *Al Ajniha al Mutakassira* and *Dam'ah wa Ibtisamah*, Jibran perfectly blended his being an exotic Easterner with being a wounded Romantic. But, broadly speaking, he harmoniously merged his mystic beliefs in a sense of continuity among various faiths and in an inner, personal experience of the divine with his Romantic ideals of universal love and unification of the human race.

> *As a firm believer in the "Divine Unity", his work addresses the common and the universal. This can be traced to the Poet-Prophet image that Jibran started to evolve into in the 1920's. For Waterfield this "Romantic fusion of poet and prophet was undoubtedly Jibran's best opportunity for bringing East and West together.*[68]

This is because Jibran is known in the Arab world mostly as a sensitive poet, whereas to his English speaking readers, he is rather a wise philosopher, a prophet. In his lifetime Jibran created his own spiritual philosophy that relates to different faiths and religions. He called for cultural and religious broadmindedness and a Christian-Muslim dialogue in

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[67] Barbara Young, *This Man from Lebanon*,1945,pp.135-139.
[68] R. Waterfield, The Voice of Kahlil Gibran: An Anthology, Arkana, London,1998,p.238.

particular. Bushrui points out that Jibran's name, perhaps more than that of any other modern writer, is synonymous with peace, spiritual values and international understanding.

Also Robert Hillyer, an American poet and critic who occasionally visited Jibran in his studio recorded his memory of him as a man who had devoted his life to deliberation, to peace, to love, to the life of the soul and the numberless forms of Beauty. Jibran's finest work, *The Prophet (an Nabi)*, for example, is written in the language of unity in diversity. It carries with it themes of unity of religions and oneness of mankind. Al Mustafa's message in the book, as Bushrui asserts, is a passionate belief in the healing power of universal love and the unity of being.

Many critics point to the autobiographical dimension of *The Prophet (an Nabi)*. The fact is that there is evidence that Al Mustafa is a mouthpiece for Jibran's own teachings. According to Mary Haskell's journal, Jibran said, while in the process of writing the book, "*The Prophet (an Nabi),* I have imprisoned certain ideals, and it is my desire to live those ideals...Just writing them would seem to me false.

This, however, does not seem to be a turning point in Jibran's life. As early as 1912, he had told Mary that he has to live the absolute life, must be what he believes in, practice what he preaches, or what he practices and what he preaches are nothing.

2.5 Works of Jibran Khalil Jibran

One way of understanding an author consists in deciphering his thoughts through his works. After all a book is a perfect self-projection of the personality, desires, ambitions and frustrations of the writer. In good philosophical language it is said that there is a relation of proportionality if

not identity between the cause, the producer and effect the product. Now it is true that Jibran would sometimes refuse to be confused with his heroes, as he said for instance in a letter to Miss May Ziadeh concerning the personage. The mad man Gibran has conveyed his thoughts through many literary firms of expression. He wrote many books singing from poems, aphorisms short plays, parables to essays and novels.

Jibran wrote in two languages. At first he wrote in Arabic language. Then he wrote in English language also. His works are divided as follows.

In Arabic:

1. Nubthah fi Fan al Musiqa (1905)
2. 'Ara'is al Muruj (Nymphs of the Valley, also translated as Spirit Brides, 1906)
3. Al Arwah al Mutamarridah (Spirits Rebellious, 1980)
4. Al Ajniha al Mutakassira (The Broken Wings, 1912)
5. Dam'ah wa Ibtisamah (A Tear and A Smile, 1914)
6. Al Mawakib (The Processions, 1919)
7. Al Awasif (The Tempests, 1920)
8. Al Badai'I wa al Tara'if (The New and the Marvelous, 1923)

In English (Prior to his death):

1. The Madman (al Majnūn) (1918)
2. Twenty Drawings (1919)
3. The Forerunner (as Sābeq) (1920)
4. The Prophet (an Nabi) (1923)
5. Sand and Foam (Raml wa Zabad) (1923)
6. Kingdom of the Imagination(1927)

7. Jesus: The Son of Man (Yasu' ibn al Insān) (1928)
8. The Earth Gods (Alehah al 'Ard) (1931)

Posthumous in English:

1. The Wonderer (1932)
2. The Garden of the Prophet (Hadīqat an Nabi) (1933)
3. Lazarus and His Beloved (1933)
4. Prose Poems (1934)
5. A Self Portrait (1959)
6. Thought and Meditations (1960)
7. Spiritual Sayings (1962)
8. Voice of the Master (1963)
9. Mirrors of the Soul (1963)
10. The Vision(1994)
11. Eye of the Prophet(1995)

2.6 Major works of Jibran Khalil Jibran

Jibran Khalil Jibran wrote both in Arabic and English. His books have the highly valued throughout the world. Most of his books have been translated into different rich languages of the world. Among his prominent books An Nabi (The Prophet), Al Ajniha al Mutakassira (The Broken Wings), Dam'ah wa Ibtisamah (a Tear and a Smile), Al Arwah al Mutamarrida (Spirits Rebellious), The Madman (Al Majnūn), Jesus: The Son of Man (Yasu' ibn al Insān), The Forerunner (As Sābeq), Sand and Foam (Raml wa Zabad), The Wanderer and The Earth Gods (Alehah al 'Ard) are mentionable. These books express different kind of themes and techniques. As a reason, these prominent books are highlighted below:

2.6.1An Nabi (The Prophet)

An Nabi is Jibran's literary and artistic masterpiece. It remained during the 20th Century America's best -selling book, after *The Bible*. As of 1998, it has sold 9,000,000 copies in North America alone. It has been translated into at least twenty languages and has become one of the greatest classics of our time. The book is said to be a testimony to the genius of Jibran. Before *An Nabi* was born, Jibran told Mary Haskell of his aspirations to satisfy the spiritual hunger of the world as:

> *The world is hungry, Mary, and I have seen and heard the hunger of the world, and if this thing is bread it will find a place in the heart of the world, and if it is not bread it will at least make the hunger of the world deeper and higher* [69]

Although there are critics like Najjar who argue that Jibran's idealistic symbolic message of balancing Eastern spirituality and Western material progress did not relieve human suffering around the world, readers have found themselves returning to *An Nabi*'s pages to reabsorb its wisdom. Its beloved poetry is commonly read at weddings, baptisms, and funerals throughout the world. The *Chicago Evening Post Literary Review* said of *An Nabi*:

> *Truth is here truth expressed with all the music and beauty and idealism of a Syrian. The words of Jibran bring to one's ears the majestic rhythm of Ecclesiastes...For Khalil Jibran has not feared to be an idealist in an age of cynics Nor to be concerned with simple truth where others devote themselves to mountebank cleverness ..The twenty eight chapters in the book form a little bible, to be read and loved by those at all ready for truth.* [70]

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[69] Hilu, V.(ed. and arr.), *Beloved Prophed The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and her Private Journal*,New York,1972,p.264.
[70] Barbara Young, *This Man from Lebanon*,1945,p.61.

The book presents Jibran as a writer of prophetic vision who shares his spiritual sensitivities with his readers. It portrays the journey of a banished man called Al Mustafa, which in the Arabic language means the chosen one. As he prepares to go back to the isle of his birth, he wishes to offer the Orphalese, the people among whom he has been placed, gifts but possesses nothing. The people gather around him, and Almitra, the seeress, asks him to give them of his truth and the man's spiritual insights in twenty-six poetic sermons are his gift. As a wise sage and man of great vision, Al Mustafa teaches moral values, the mysteries of life, and timeless wisdom about the human experience: marriage, children, friendship, pleasure, death ...He, for example, calls for balancing heart and mind, passion and reason, and for giving without recognition because the giver's joy is his reward. Al Mustafa describes the yearning of the soul for spiritual regeneration and self-fulfillment. He teaches that man's purpose in life is a mystic quest towards a Greater Self, towards Godhood and the infinite. He talks about 'your larger selves' and pictures 'together stretching our hands unto the giver.

Then at the end of the book Al Mustafa closes his farewell address saying, *"A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear Me."*[71]

This image reflects a romantic vision of eternal rebirth, rebirth, and continuity of life. It evokes the Unity of Being which Jibran believes in rather than disintegration. Al Mustafa's soul, hence, will return again to its mystical path towards a greater soul. "The Prophet's words are logical and beautiful, powerful and inspiring in such aphorisms as 'Work is love made visible,' 'Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your

[71] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *al Nabi*, Dar ash Shuruq, al Qahirah,al Tab'at al Tasiyah,2000, p.106.

understanding,' 'The soul unfolds itself, like a lotus of countless petals,' and 'Thought is a bird of space, that in a cage of words may indeed unfold its wings but cannot fly." Bushrui remarked that the secret of the book's success is "Jibran's remarkable ability to convey profound truths in simple yet incomparably elegant language. Yet, this is no surprise; simplicity and delicacy of language are distinguishing aspects of Jibran's writings. In his sermon on Joy and Sorrow Al Mustafa says:

> *When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy. When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.*[72]

The positive and optimistic teachings of the book are appealing. Al Mustafa strongly believes in the power of the human soul. He speaks with a tone that is consoling and filled with hope and compassion for humanity, seen to be in need for self-realization. Speaking of God and Evil, Al Mustafa has this to say:

> *You are good when you are one with yourself*
>
> *Yet when you are not one with yourself you are not evil*
>
> *For a divided house is not a den of thieves; it is only a divided house*
>
> *And a ship without rudder may wander aimlessly among perilous isles yet sink not to the bottom.*[73]

Jibran also beautifully combines his Romantic thoughts of nature with his teachings. In his sermon on Reason and Passion, for example, he writes as 'Among the hills, when you sit in the cool shade of the white poplars, sharing the peace and serenity of distant fields and meadows – then let your

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[72] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *al Nabi*, Dar ash Shuruq, al Qahirah,al Tab'at al Tasiyah,2000, p.30.
[73] Ibid, p.69.

heart say in silence, "God rests in reason.' And when the storm comes, and the mighty wind shakes the forest, and thunder and lightning proclaim the majesty of the sky, -- then let your heart say in awe, 'God moves in passion.' Critics agree that *al Nabi* is partly autobiographical. Mary is often said to be the inspiration for Almitra, and America or New York for the city of Orphalese. The twelve-year wait Al Mustafa experienced before returning home from the land of the Orphalese seems to equal Jibran's own twelve-year stay in New York City. In regard to Al Mustafa's departure for the land of his birth and his gratefulness to the people who have given him his deeper thirsting after life, it reflects Jibran's everlasting dream to go back to his homeland and his gratefulness to the country which he made his home for the last twenty years of his life. While creating the prophecy of Al Mustafa, Jibran undoubtedly considered his own experience as an 'exotic Easterner' living in America and his interest in teaching Eastern spirituality to the West. Bushrui and Jenkins emphasize the image of the wise man coming from the East and argued that *"the idea of a sage dispensing wisdom among the people of a foreign land no doubt appealed to Jibran"*[74] The book apparently also draws on Jibran's readings, thoughts, and contemplations through the years. It is inspired by Biblical literature, Christian and Sufi mysticism, Buddhism, Hinduism...But we can also trace the influence of the Romantics and Transcendentalists. Talking about *An Nabi*, Mary Haskell promised Jibran that "*in our darkness and in our weakness we will open it, to find ourselves again and heaven and earth within ourselves*"[75]

[74] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins, *Khalil Gibran. Man and Poet*, 1998,p.99.
[75] Marry Haskell to Kahlil Jibran,October 2,1923.

Mikhail Naimy added that such books and such men are our surety that Humanity, despite the fearful dissipation of its incalculable energies and resources, is not yet bankrupt.

The Prophet seems to reflect Jibran's efforts to unite various faiths and religions. Jibran himself declared that *An Nabi* wrote him instead of him writing *An Nabi*. Behind Al Mustafa's global vision of a harmonious universe healed by the power of love and unity, there is an underlying theme of the unity of all religions and the essential oneness of humanity. Jibran communicates a universal humanist message and truths relevant to all cultures and times. In *An Nabi*, according to Bushrui and Jenkins, *"East and West meet in a mystic union unparalleled in modern literature"*[76]

Jibran's reputation in the Western world rests on his masterpiece *An Nabi*. He is looked up to as a master of philosophy whose teachings are immortal. The fame of *An Nabi* in terms of its worldwide readership, however, has shadowed the fame of Jibran's earlier Arabic writings through which he had already established a literary name for himself as an illustrious writer in Arabic. It should be noted that experts in modern Arabic literature have noticed that some of Jibran's translations into English may sound artificial and inadequate, mainly because Arabic and English belong to two different families of languages, but they do not sound as such in the original Arabic. For example, with the English translation of Jibran's Arabic poem "The Procession," which was his first attempt at writing in classical Arabic with its rhetorical decoration, metric patterns, and musicality, a certain charm and elegance seem to fade. It is evident that the original taste of a literary work stands alone. It must be emphasized, however, that a fair

[76] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins, *Khalil Gibran: Man and Poet*, 1998,p.228.

degree of grace and greatness penetrates the translation task and Jibran's message can still be captured.

2.6.2 Al Ajniha al Mutakassira (The Broken Wings)

First published in 1912, *Al Ajniha al Mutakassira* (*The Broken Wings*) is one of Khalil Jibran's early experimental works through which he sought to reform the Arabic literature and culture. In a manner unknown in traditional Arabic writing, it is free from rhetorical flourishes but more importantly, it debates the issue of the oppressed Arab woman in the Middle Eastern society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The novella was, naturally, attacked by conservatives, but overall it received a wide trend and favorable reviews in the Arab world which at the time was thirsty for new ideas. It even boosted Jibran's literary career. According to Jibran himself, *al Ajniha al Mutakassira* was welcomed as 'a wonderful work of art,' 'perhaps the most beautiful in modern Arabic,' and as *"a tragedy of subtlest simplicity"*[77] It is Jibran's longest sustained narrative, written in the tradition of Romeo and Juliet and based on oriental settings and images. Inspired by his own first love and bitter experience in his home village Bisharri, *al Ajniha al Mutakassira* gives the taste of the bitter, sweet, of the beauty and pain of young love. It is an alive and profound story characterized by beautiful prose and reminiscent imagery, a tale of passion doomed by the restrictions of society and the power and greediness of the clergy. From another romantic perspective, Jibran once again describes the beautiful nature in North Lebanon which fired his imagination and stirred his homesickness up to his death. In the 'Forward' he is seen rejoicing in spiritual exaltation from remembering those valleys full of magic and

[77] Khalil Gibran to Marry Haskell,May 6,1912.

dignity, and those mountains covered with glory and greatness trying to reach the sky.

Young Khalil is introduced to Farris Effandi Karamy, a wealthy widower, and immediately falls in love with Selma Karamy, Farris Effandi's only child. Selma is equally attracted to Khalil. But a powerful priest, who is after the family's fortune, puts pressure on Farris Effandi Karamy and demands Selma's hand for his nephew Mansour Bey. Despite Selma's protests, her father accepts the match and sends his daughter to a loveless life. With Fares' death, Mansour Bey takes over Selma's inheritance and begins to waste it in gambling and other thoughtless spending. Meanwhile, Selma resumes her innocent relationship with Khalil Jibran. But when Mansour Bey becomes suspicious, he demands that Selma gives him an heir. She chooses to confine herself to her new life and thinks of her future infant as a guide out of the unhappiness that imprisons her. Selma's baby dies minutes after birth and she follows him because of weak health. Khalil finds himself alone in agony by Selma's tomb. Jibran's narrator delicately paints his feelings when describing the blossoming of his love. He talks about Selma's unparalleled beauty and virtue, her sweetness and nobility of spirit. She lives inside him as a supreme thought, a beautiful dream, and an overpowering emotion. He believes in the transcendental power of Romantic love and in its dominance over tradition. For him, true love is a supreme way of achieving self-realization and is the noblest of human attainment. It becomes a spiritual accord that brings him heavenly inspiration, for through Selma's eyes he sees the angels of Heaven looking at him. Selma, however, tells her beloved that the true nature of a woman's soul is a mixture of love and sorrow, affection and sacrifice. Her

understanding of the situation is deeper and more complicated. Unable to overcome the values of her society, she chooses commitment to her father and unloving husband over running away to Khalil's love, and so she sacrifices true love for social customs. She prays as, "*help me, my Lord, to be strong in this deadly struggle and assist me to be truthful and virtuous until death.*"[78]

Powerless and resigned, she is convinced that 'a bird with broken wings cannot fly in the spacious sky.' For Waterfield, the *al Ajniha al Mutakassira* of the title are "*the wings of love on which the young couple first explore the exalted domain of love, only to find themselves brought abruptly down to earth by harsh realities.*"[79]

Jibran's narrator also sees himself as a wounded bird, but takes a stronger stand against convention, male prejudice, and corruption of the Lebanese aristocracy. His criticism is especially harsh when it comes to the heads of religion whom he accuses of maintaining the oppression of women. He says that the Christian Bishop and the Moslem imam and the Brahman priest become like sea reptiles who clutch their pray with many tentacles and suck their blood with numerous mouths.

Jibran sympathetically describes women in his native Lebanon as victims of a tyrannical patriarchal system. They are prisoners of social expectations and are treated as a commodity to be purchased, like in the case of Selma whose function was to take her father's riches to a husband who treated her like another possession.

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[78] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Al Ajniha al Mutakassira, Muassasah*,Bahsun, Beirut, Lebanon, p. 77.
[79] R. Waterfield, The Voice of Kahlil Gibran: An Anthology, Arkana, London,1998,p.60.

He urges Selma to liberate herself from the chains of social norms and to run away with him from a world of suffering, or what he calls 'slavery and ignorance' to another world across the oceans where "real freedom and personal independence...can be found. In *al Ajniha al Mutakassira*, Jibran is not just a story teller but a culture analyst and a reformer who seeks to correct the wrongs. Najjar writes that Jibran's purpose for that story was to satirize in order to reform is evident in his frequent didactic intrusions by which he introduces his rebellious views regarding the conditions of the Arab woman.

The story, however, illustrates Jibran's attempts at approaching universal truth. He reflects on the meaning of the human existence and portrays himself as a champion of women and of the values of human freedom and dignity. Jibran's works that speak of women has a ring of modernity about them as they deal with issues that are still burning and being addressed in our times.

Jibran's other earlier stories also touch on similar native themes and classify him as a rebel against old culture. In *Madja' al 'Arūs* (*The Bride's Bed)* in *Al Arwah al Mutamarridah*, Jibran depicts an oppressive patriarchal system that caused bloodshed. Laila is trapped by her father's social ambitions and is misled by the society's lies. On the evening of her wedding to an arranged husband, Laila sees her beloved Salim and asks him to run away with her. But bound by social expectations, he refuses and asks her to go back to her new husband. She stabs him to death and then kills herself over his body after she gives a sermon on life and love.

In *Sayyīdah Wardah al Hāni (Madame Rose Hanie)*, another narrative in *Al Arwah al Mutamarridah*, we meet Rose as another victim of forced marriage. But unlike Selma Karamy, she breaks her social image of a good wife when she leaves her husband to live with her beloved. Rose tells the narrator the story of her bitter past, but at the same time she seems to tell the story of the difficulty of the Arab woman in general. She says:

> *It is a tragedy written with the woman's blood and tears which the man reads with ridicule because he cannot understand it; yet, if he does understand, his laughter will turn into scorn and blasphemy that act like fire upon her heart.*[80]

2.6.3 Dam'ah wa Ibtisamah (a Tear and a Smile)

Dam'ah wa Ibtisamah (a Tear and a Smile), first published in 1914, is an anthology of Jibran's youthful writings in the Arabic-speaking emigrant newspaper *al-Mohajer* (*The Immigrant*). Jibran's column, 'Tears and Laughter,' attracted a wide attention from his readers both in the Arab world and among the Arab literati in America. The book contains 56 poetic prose pieces close to the aphoristic, and illustrated with 4 of Jibran's paintings. In a beautiful and splendid language, the poems, stories, and parables included exhibit the youth's world of imagination; his self-reflective thoughts and romantic philosophy of life and death, which although at the burgeoning stage, is quiet insightful and universally appealing. Jibran's reflections in *Dam'ah wa Ibtisamah* are especially pleasing to those sensitive and emotional souls which are his most enthusiastic admirers. As the title evokes, the book is a mixture of tears and smiles, mourning and celebration of a wounded lover and solitary poet. But the tears seem to be much more

[80] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Al Arwah al Mutamarridah*, Dar al 'Arab, al Qahirah, p.26.

abundant than the smiles. The poet lives in agony and longing for his beloved, for a re-establishment of beauty in the world, and for a peace of mind, but is convinced that human life is a world of suffering to be lived through until death. Jibran, indeed, sings of the glory of his tears and the beauty of sorrow. He tells that a person experiences joy only if he or she has experienced sorrow. Tears have illuminated his heart and mind. They have given him sight and deeper knowledge of life as he says that a tear to purify his heart and give him understanding of life's secrets and hidden things. In other times, however, the poet seeks transcendence. In *Rahmāk Ya Nafs Rahmāk (Have Mercy, My Soul!)*' for example, he asks his soul how long she will continue to suffering him. Jibran strikingly expresses a romantic fascination with death. For him death marks the end of suffering and becomes a life-giver, a transcendental and eternal world where the spirit rests in timelessness. In *Maut ash Shāyer Hayātuhu (A Poet's Death is His Life)*, the dying youth addresses death as 'sweet' and 'beloved' friend which alone can set his soul free from the sorrow of the world and take him to a greater life. In addition to *Maut ash Shāyer Hayātuhu (A Poet's Death is His Life)*' other selections in the book like *Saut ash Shāyer (A Poet's Voice)* and *Ash Shāyer (The Poet)* suggest a recognizable emphasis on the prophetic role of the poet and, chronologically speaking, these pieces seem to anticipate Gibran's ripened philosophy in the later years of his career. Jibran portrays the poet as the one who brings society to a state of harmony and sacrifices his life for the deliverance of humanity. In his homeland he is in exile, a stranger in a strange land because his people underestimate his teachings and fail to see his virtues.

The poet is a visionary and, unlike the rest of humankind, clear and universal perceptions are his gift. He is the one who bears ripe fruits for the hungry souls and is capable of opening people's eyes into eternity and enlightening generations. For Jibran the poet is a 'singing bird', 'A shining light unconquered by the dark' and even an 'Angel sent by the gods to teach man the way of gods.'

The poet lives somewhere between a real world and a transcendent world. He is the final stage in the evolution of man which he describes as a process from descent into the material world to isolation and to a return to the spiritual universe. Hence he reveals his passionate belief that men are capable of discovering their inherent spirituality because humanity is the spirit of divinity on earth. He emphasizes the deeper power of the soul, for true light comes from within man.

Jibran rejoices in feelings of self-fulfillment through a mystical union with God who is 'the Ocean of Love and Beauty'. He invites us to a meditative life rather than the comfort of materialism. He opens *'Ala Mal'ab ad Dahr" (The Playground of Life)* saying:

> *A minute moving among the patterns of Beauty and the dreams of Love is greater and more precious than an age filled with splendor granted by the weak to the strong.*[81]

Jibran accomplishes transcendence also through union with nature. In several of the selections he expresses an aesthetic and spiritual affinity to the valleys and the flowers, the shore and the wind. In *Al Liqā'(Meeting)*, for example, he describes the glorious valley of the Nile and its magical cedars and cypress trees. He associates nature not only with beauty but with purity

[81] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Dam'ah wa Ibtisamah*,Dar al 'Arab,al Qahirah,p.90.

and friendship. He tells us that nature's sweet words and tender smile fill the spirit with joy. The hard edge to the book, however, represents Jibran's frustration and anger with the corruption of humanity. In bitter and ironic tones, he describes a world that glorifies power and the pursuit of richness rather than human values. He expresses his sympathy with the poor and the wretched that are being exploited and abused by the rich and the powerful. In the same mode as *al Ajniha al Mutakassira*, Jibran rejects orthodoxy and organized religion. He attacks priests for he believes they embody falsehood, immorality, and evil. He writes that he beholds priests, cunning like foxes; and false messiahs dealing its deception with the people.

In his famous poem *Ru'yā (A Vision)*, Jibran reemphasizes his concern for individual freedom in society. He uses an allegory between a caged bird and a caged human heart that laments the imprisonment of men by convention and civilization. The human heart reflects Jibran's criticism of the oppressiveness of man-made laws which he believes strip the human being of his life and essence. From a biographical point of view, it is probable that Jibran's relationship with Josephine Peabody at the time inspired his thoughts in the book. This probability seems consistent with Waterfield's argument that the poet's painful love for Josephine created "the melancholy habits and wounded eyes of the Romantic hero. We can also find a parallel to the feelings of alienation and dissatisfaction with humankind in Jibran's own life. The book is a bridge between a first and a second stage of Jibran's career, the poet's longing for his homeland evolved into rebellion against humanity in general. Naimy points out that the tears in *Dam'ah wa Ibtisamah are those of Jibran the misfit rather than of the rebel*

in Boston, singing in an exceedingly touching way of his frustrated love and estrangement, his loneliness, homesickness and melancholy.[82]

2.6.4 Al Arwah al Mutamarrida (Spirits Rebellious)

The very first appearance of Jibran as a writer is that of rebellious youth dissatisfied with any thing called 'Organization.' Spirit Rebellious was composed in Arabic while studying in Paris in 1903. The book argues that the *"institutionalized laws of the church, as well as man-made social laws are decayed, for none of them enaid the individual to develop a self-identity."*[83]

Using *Khalil the Heretic* as his mouth piece, Jibran's own views on spirituality become apparent in spirit Rebellious. *"True light is that which radiates from within a man."*[84] Taking the New Testament that it is the inner person who must be transformed, Jibran teaches that compassion is the Guiding light of a person's actions. A word of comfort in the ears of the feeble and the criminal and the harlot is worthier than prayers recited in the temple! Rather, they are 'universal,' and therefore they appeal to the common mass, and mold patterned or stereotyped personalities. The book specially denounces the Maronite clergy's conduct forward the poor peasants as 'Simoniac', and declares human laws as unethical oppressions exercised in the name of moral justice. This work is meaningful in many respects.

1. It reveals the political and religious situations of Lebanon at the time of its public caution. In that it is clearly underlines that the spirit of

[82] Mikhail Naimy,*Kahlil Gibran. His Life and His Work*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon,1974,p.59.
[83] J.P. Ghougassian, *Kahlil Gibran:Wings of Thought*, Philosophical Library, New York,1973, p.38.
[84] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Al Arwah al Mutamarridah*, Dar al 'Arab, al Qahirah, p.40.

feudalism under the Turks was detrimental to the poor for it introduced the class struggle.

2. *"It represents Jibran's moral philosophy."*[85]

For Jibran "true religion was joyous and liberating: teaching that free you and me from bondage and place us unfettered upon the earth, the stepping place of the feet of God, a God who has given men and women *"spirit wings to sour aloft into the realms of love and freedom – a religion of justice, which "makes us all brothers equal before the sum."*[86]

> *Jibran's views on liberty and the essential components of democracy also become apparent in the stories. He deals with the iniquities of a corrupt and exploitative judicial system*[87]

Jibran's passion for freedom, his quest for justice and his efforts to high light the plight of women in the Middle East all come surging up in Spirits Rebellious. Such blazing stories would have shocked a more settled age. Jibran's Arab readers had however, already embarked on a voyage of discovery, laying themselves open to new and challenging ideas and influences. His stories reaching as they to the very core of individual liberty, reflected the hitherto to unspoken concerns of a generation. The passionate ideals of Spirits Rebellious were not, however, well received by some and years later Jibran claimed that he was shot in the arm around this time-a Turkish attempt 'on his life; the shot was fired too close and had been a failure.'

Soon after its publication, *al Arwah al Mutamarrida* was burned in the mid of Beirut. As punishment, Jibran was excommunicated from the

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[85] J.P. Ghougassian, *Kahlil Gibran. Wings of Thought*, Philosophical Library, New York,1973, p.38.
[86] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Al Arwah al Mutamarridah*, Dar al 'Arab, al Qahirah, p.57.
[87] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran Man and Poet*,Oneworld Publication, England,2009,p.85.

Catholic Maronite Church and was exiled by the Turkish Officials from Lebanon. In a letter he wrote to his first cousin, Nakhli Gibran, he expressed his melancholy for what his countrymen did to him.

> *I am not sure whether the Arabic-speaking world would remain as friendly to me as it has been in the past three years, I say this because the apparition of enmity has already appeared The people in Syria are calling me heretic and the intelligentsia in Egypt vilifies me, saying, "He is the enemy of just laws, of family ties, and of old Traditions ' Those writers are letting the truth, because I do not love man-mad laws and I abhor the traditions that our ancestors left us This hatred is the fruit of my love for the sacred and spiritual kindness which should be the source of every law upon the earth, for kindness is the shadow of God in man will my teaching ever be received by the Arab world, or will it die away and disappear like a shadow?*[88]

> *In 1908, the young Turks, headed by Niyazi, overthrew the Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the new government pardoned all the exiles including Jibran who was therein Paris studying painting with Auguste Rodin*[89]

> *The publication of al Arwah al Mutamarrida passed relatively unnoticed among Parisians, its effect on the consciousness of the Arab world was considerable, and Jibran's themes began to inspire a whole new generation of Arab writers*[90]

Viewing himself as one of a long line of poet-rebels in the tradition of Zola and Lamartine, he was not surprised by the suppression of his work by the authorities in Syria. *"The church considered excommunicating Jibran, but the sentence was never actually pronounced."* [91]

2.6.5 The Madman (Al Majnūn)

Jibran's first publication in English is a collection of poems and parables with the title *The Madman* (1918). *Al Majnūn* is a collection of 35 short moral stories and poetry that tell the tale of an individual who had all

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[88] Jibran Khalil Jibran,*Self Portrait*,p 14.
[89] Barbara Young, *This Man from Lebanon*, New York, p.186
[90] Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Trends and Movements, vol-2.
[91] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran Man and Poet*,Oneworld Publication, England,2009,p.88

his self-imposed illusions and artificial faces stripped from him, leaving him just with the truth of his life, his observations and his surroundings. It shows the irony of sanity and its status as a social construct. It is a thought-provoking collection of life-affirming parables and poems by the author of *An Nabi,* many casting an ironic light on the beliefs, aspirations, and vanities of humankind. He was influenced by Nietzsche's style. Like Nietzsche, Jibran expresses himself through parables. But also, his madman following the trend of Zarathustra introduces himself to others with a 'shout.' The cry of Zarathustra was the declaration of God's death. *Jibran's Al Majnūn however does not proclaim the deity's death but asserts a relation of cooperation between man and God concerning creation.*[92]

The Madman is not literally mentally unbalanced; on the contrary, he is, in the language of psychosomatic medicine, perfectly healthy. His madness is only in the eyes of others, from whom he deviates in his right and just and logical doings. Jibran here agrees with the opinion held by the humanistic psychologists, we tend to be what society expects from us, although these expectations could be disadvantageous for the development of our self-identity. Whence often times we veil our true self with masks, out of fear of being ridiculed by other. The ethics of Jibran's hero is quite simple; better be labeled madman by others, than hide one's inner self with dirty social masks.

This is a collection of short parables ranging in length from a single paragraph to a few pages. They are individualist in nature and center around a single soul's dealings with the world around it. Notions of truth and being are communicated in that soul's interactions with God, friends, neighbors, strangers, animals and itself.

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[92] J.P. Ghougassian, *Kahlil Gibran. Wings of Thought*, Philosophical Library, New York,1973, p.42.

Along with the other prose-poems in *Al Majnūn*, he expressed the multiple levels of separation that Jibran had experienced during his thirty five years; a Christian from a predominantly Muslim region, the off-spring of a broken marriage; a Lebanese emigrant in America; and an artist living in a worldly society. Often he found himself stranger, not only among the native population of America, but also among his own kin and countryman in exile. To be an emigrant is undoubtedly to be an alien, but to be an emigrant mystical poet is in many ways to be thrice alienated.

In *Al Majnūn* Jibran offers a self-commentary on the condition of being an artist. In his solitude he finds 'freedom and safety' in his madness – his creativity. Jibran once wrote to his friend about madness:

> *So you are on the brink of madness. This is a good bit of news, majestic in its fear-fullness, fearful in its majesty and beauty. I say that madness is the first step towards unselfishness..... Be mad and tell us what is behind the veil of 'Sanity'. The purpose of the life is to bring us closer to those secrets, and madness is the only means. Be mad and remain a mad brother to your mad brother.*[93]

Employing Sufi notions of The Madman as, *"an inspired poet-seer, whose madness is a mark of special wisdom, Jibran built on a tradition explored by Shakespeare and Blake, stretching back to Plato*[94] who supposed that madness can a kin to a state of illumination; while Jacob Bochme, one of Blake's spiritual masters, passionately testifies to this the most powerful and universal folk tradition.

The thirty five prose poems and Sufi style parables of *Al Majnūn* present a considerable change in the tone of Jibran's writing. Published within weeks of the end of World War I it represents the pessimism of a man who has just experienced one of the darkest periods in human history.

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[93] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran :Man and Poet*,Oneworld Publication, England, 2009,p.168.

[94] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Jesus: The Son of Man*, Heinemann, London,1993,p.35

Each parable in *Al Majnūn* contains a moral, with some subjects foreshadowing those dealt with in some of Jibran's later works. Themes such as wickedness, hypocrisy, injustice, orthodoxy, ambition, blindness and Puritanism are explored with Poignancy, and although expressed lyrically, the mocking note ultimately prevails.

> *The other key theme of the Madman is concerned with the liberation of the greater self from the lesser selves that manifest themselves in human kind's multiplicity* [95]

The style of this book is general colloquial style of writing and it is more expressive than similar styles of essay and short story writing. It is an astoundingly eloquent, but still clear and expressive collection of writing on the most fundamentally important of all topics.

2.6.6 Jesus: The Son of Man (Yasu' ibn al Insān)

For twenty years, Jibran had wanted to write a life of Jesus. After Alfred Knopf gave him a two thousand- dollar advance, Jibran abandoned *The Garden of the Prophet* in order to work on *Jesus: the Son of Man* which he began in November 1926. The book, published in 1928, was handsomely produced with some of Jibran's illustrations in color. Reviews were favorable, and the book remains the most popular of his works after *The Prophet.*

The full title of this work is *Jesus, the Son of Man: His Words and His Deeds as Told and Recorded by Those Who Knew Him.* It is a creative and reverential life of Jesus as told by seventy-eight of his contemporaries, both real and fictional, enemies as well as friends, and strangers from a

[95] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran :Man and Poet*,Oneworld Publication, England, 2009,p.172.

distance—such as the Persian philosopher who was a follower of the Persian prophet Zoroaster.

One of the major important works of Jibran is *Jesus: the Son of Man (Yasu' ibn al Insān)*, published in 1928. He has always been attracted by the majesty of Jesus' teachings and by the mystery of his life. He viewed Jesus as the great human example who best fulfilled the transformation of alteration from human nature into God like.

As the title already implies, the Jesus that Jibran describes is not the Jesus of theology or dogmas of whom Revelation attests as the son and equal of God and the Holy Spirit in the mystery of Trinity. Rather, he depicts him as a Jesus made of flesh, tormented by human passions, but who, however, has transcended the evil limitations of desire, injustice, and in insensitiveness. At this point Jibran had no attachment for organized religion. That is why he never meant to speak of the Jesus of the Christian, but of the Jesus of Nazareth, the man who had a mother and a father. His real concern is to make the image of Jesus easily reachable to the human.

As such, *Jesus, the Son of Man* is a series of sketches from which a patchwork portrait of Jesus emerges. At the very end, *A Man from Lebanon: Nineteen Centuries Afterward*[96] speaks, saying that seven times he was born and seven times he had died, that Jesus' mother is seen in the sheen of the face of all mothers; that Mary Magdalene, Judas, John, Simon Peter, and Caiaphas and Annas are all archetypally alive in the recurring cosmic drama.

Ernest Renan's *Life of Jesus* (English trans., 1863) was a major influence on Gibran's conception of Jesus. His biographers Bushrui and

[96] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Jesus: The Son of Man*, Heinemann, Great Britain, reprint-1961, pp.180-187.

Jenkins claim Baha'i influence as well: "The template for his unique portrayal of Jesus was inspired by his meetings in 1912 with 'Abdu'l- Bahá, the Bahá'í leader, whom he drew in New York, a man whose presence moved Jibran to exclaim that for the first time he saw form noble enough to be a receptacle for the Holy Spirit. This novel hypothesis, however, remains undeveloped. While Gibran was clearly impressed by Bahá'u'lláh's writings in Arabic, and by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in person, he was relatively unfamiliar with the full scope of Baha'i teachings and thus cannot be said to have subscribed to them generally. The result was a gospel narrative that is not seamless but rather is a patchwork of fictional reminiscences by those who knew or had met the Nazarene, creating an impressionistic medley of memories that would entertain, even illumine, but not necessarily enlighten. 'Abdu'l- Bahá, rather than being an actual template for *Jesus, the Son of Man,* could arguably have served as an immediate inspirational presence in the mind of Gibran, while he was composing this secular yet sacred portrait of Jesus.

Juliet Thompson later recalled that when Jibran wrote his portrait of Christ, *Jesus: the Son of Man*, he had told her that his meetings with the Baha'i leader had profoundly influenced his work."[97]

Is Jibran's Jesus Christian? Clearly, the figure portrayed in this volume is both orthodox and extra-orthodox. Curiously, in *James the Son of Zebedee: On the Various Appellations of Jesus*,[98] Zoroaster, the prophet of the Persians, is identified as a previous incarnation of Jesus, as is Prometheus and Mithra. Not only does Jibran add apocryphal accounts to the life of Jesus, he enhances a number of the sayings of Jesus by taking a

[97] M. Gail, *Other People, Other Places*,George Ronald, Oxford, 1982, p-228.
[98] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Jesus· The Son of Man,* Heinemann, Great Britain, reprint-1961, pp.1-5.

familiar teaching and expanding on it. For instance, in *Simon Who Was Called Peter: When He and His Brother Were Called,*[99] Jesus says to Andrew, brother of Peter, on the shores of Galilee: "Follow me to the shores of a greater sea. I shall make you fishers of men. And your net shall never be empty;" a reader might recall that 'the greater sea' is a favorite Jibranian symbol for the Sufi notion of the greater self, or the perfect man. The most extensive of Jibran's edifying edits of the sayings of Jesus is in the chapter, *Matthew: The Sermon on the Mount*[100], in which Jibran embellishes Jesus' beatitudes, proverbs, and other teachings. This, in turn, is followed by Gibran's version of the Lord's Prayer. Sometimes the alteration or embellishment may be accomplished by a single word, such as in Jibran's version of Jesus' cry of dereliction, as scholars call it. In *Barabbas: The Last Words of Jesus*[101], Jesus, who is still alive on the cross, exclaims, *"Father, why hast Thou forsaken us?"*[102]—where the word "us" is substituted for "me."

Some of Jibran's sayings of Jesus are utterly no canonical, as in this saying from *James the Brother of the Lord: The Last Supper*:[103] *"Heaven and earth, and hell too, are of man."*[104] Jibran here has disenchanted the metaphysical world of the principality of Satan and shifted attention back to the true principal of evil—man.

The biographical narrative is not sequential and is sometimes glaringly out of sequence. For instance, *The Last Supper* appears shortly

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[99] Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Jesus: The Son of Man,* Heinemann, Great Britain, reprint-1961, pp.17-22.
[100] Ibid, pp.33-39.
[101] Ibid, pp.161-163.
[102] Ibid, p.163.
[103] Ibid, pp.166-171.
[104] Ibid, p.169.

after the Crucifixion account, mentioned above. The anecdotal accounts are interwoven with the occasional poem, typically a paean to Jesus. *Jesus, the Son of Man,* as a whole, is an artistically original and eloquent tribute to the Prophet of Nazareth.

2.6.7 The Forerunner (As Sābeq)

The book published in 1920. With this book Jibran becomes more mysterious and more of a mature philosopher. On September 10, 1920, he told Marry that to think about oneself is terrifying.

> *But it is the only honest thing: to think about myself as I am, my ugly features, my beautiful features, and wonder at them. What other solid beginning can I have, what to make progress from except myself?*[105]

Three weeks later, *As Sābeq (The Forerunner: His Parables and Poems)*, was published. The underlying theme in this collection, the need to awaken, accurately reflected Jibran's own aspirations of this time, The parables in *The Forerunner* defines his social concepts and illustrates his belief that the individual must first understand himself or herself before any social or personal transformation can take place, a transformation that can only be accomplished by observing how one's actions affect others.[106]

In the preface Jibran defines man as a 'forerunner' meaning that we foreran what we are today. His logic here is not much different from the historical dialectic of Marx or Sartre. Basically, he asserts that "man invents man" (Marx): we are our own product; 'I am what I am because I have made of myself what I am (Sartre). Nobody is to be blamed for our 'being' and

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[105] Hilu, V.(ed. and arr.), *Beloved Prophed:The Love Letters of Kahlil Gibran and Mary Haskell and her Private Journal*,New York,1972,p.350.
[106] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran :Man and Poet*,Oneworld Publication, England, 2009, p.201.

'having,' but ourselves. Psychologically speaking, this is called self-actualization. Yet, this process is Heraclitian, i.e. it never ends for the tomorrow is always stretched out these, untouched. In other words, Jibran makes clear that we are our own destiny and not the toy of a blind fate. Moreover, the essay makes sufficient reference to inter subjectivity. *"A man's existence does not run parallel to another's. Existence is coexistence. For better or for worse, man is not an island; he is a social animal."*[107]

The Forerunner opens with the words:

> *You are your own forerunner, and the towers you have built are but the foundation of your giant self And that self too shall be a foundation*
>
> *And I too am my own Forerunner, for the long shadow stretching before me at sunrise shall gather under my feet at the noon hour Yet another sunrise shall lay another shadow before me, and that also shall be gathered at another noon*[108]

The Forerunner illustrates Jibran's belief that the limited notions of truth entertained by the literal mind are only fragments of unlimited reality.[109]

2.6.8 Sand and Foam (Raml wa Zabad)

Jibran is the consummate aphorist, and his 1926 volume *Sand and Foam (Raml wa Zabad)* is primarily a collection of aphorisms, pithy bits of wisdom, strung like pearls across the skin of the slender volume's pages. Some of the aphorisms in this work were first composed by other writers in Arabic, and then translated by Jibran into English. For instance, Gibran

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[107] J.P. Ghougassian, *Kahlil Gibran Wings of Thought*, Philosophical Library, New York,1973, pp.42-43.
[108] The complete works of Kahlil Gibran, Indiana Publishing House, New Delhi, 2009,*Forerunner*,2009, p.163.
[109] Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins,*Kahlil Gibran ·Man and Poet*,Oneworld Publication, England,2009, p.204.

writes, *"Love is the veil between lover and lover."*[110] This alludes to a couplet composed by the Bahá'í founder and prophet, Bahá'u'lláh's. As it is written in an English translation of his mystical work *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys, "Love is a veil betwixt the lover and the loved one; More than this I am not permitted to tell."*[111] Despite its negative reception by critics, *Sand and Foam* won popular acclaim. Jibran sustains his anthropology of the lower and higher selves in this book, with phrasing such as, *"You are but a fragment of your giant self."*[112] Rising toward the greater self is a process of expanding one's awareness and seeing the greater picture in a vaster panorama unbounded by limitations of narrow identities: *"If you would rise but a cubit above race and country and self you would indeed become godlike."*[113] Elsewhere in *Sand and Foam,* the writer speaks of the "other self" as the greater self: *"Your other self is always sorry for you. But your other self grows on sorrow; so all is well."*[114]

The book concludes with what may be Jibran's most prescriptive general counsel in English: *"Every thought I have imprisoned in expression I must free by my deeds."*[115] Here, action follows cognition, if moved by volition. Mere intentionality is inert, and action without knowledge and wisdom is a rudderless ship. In *Sand and Foam,* the reader stands on the shore of the ocean of grandeur, gazes on the sea of wisdom, is awakened and enlightened by the dawn of knowledge, is inspired by the breezes of love, is

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[110] The complete works of Kahlil Gibran, Indiana Publishing House, New Delhi, 2009,*Sand and Foam*,p.104.
[111] Marzieh Gail, *Other People, Other Places*,George Ronald, Oxford, 1991,
[112] The complete works of Kahlil Gibran, Indiana Publishing House, New Delhi, 2009,*Sand and Foam*,p.130.
[113] The complete works of Kahlil Gibran, Indiana Publishing House, New Delhi, 2009,*Sand and Foam*, p.130.
[114] Ibid, p.103.
[115] Ibid, p.132.

uplifted like a bird, and soars in the atmosphere of spiritual oversight in an invisible world that endows the visible world with meaning and purpose—yet the reader must inevitably return to the rigors of daily life and find a way to translate insight into action.

2.6.9 The Wanderer

Jibran finalized the manuscript of *The Wanderer: His Parables and His Sayings* during the last three weeks of his life. The original manuscript, however, is not extant; after she edited the manuscript, and once the book appeared in print in 1932, Barbara Young destroyed it. *The Wanderer* is primarily a book of fables, tales told by the itinerant traveler whom a man chances to meet and invite to his home. The guest regales his host and family with edifying stories with various morals. Some of these stories serve as social commentaries as well. Among the fifty two parables and poems, for instance, in *The Lightning Flash*, a Christian bishop is asked by a non-Christian whether there is salvation for her from hellfire. The bishop replies that only those baptized in water and the spirit will be saved. Then a thunderbolt strikes the cathedral, igniting a fire. The woman is saved by the men of the city, but the bishop is consumed by the fire. This fabulous fable turns on the irony of the priest telling the woman that she is destined for hellfire, when he himself is the one ultimately engulfed by fire; if she is being saved and he, not. The salvation of dogma is the antithesis of real salvation.

In *The Prophet and the Child*, the prophet 'Sharia' appears, with Jibran again drawing on the term for the Islamic code of law. In *The King*,

the author speaks of the *Kingdom of Sadiq*[116]- an Islamic term for 'righteous' and name of Ja'far al-Sádiq universally revered as a mystic in both Sunní and Shí'a Islam, and regarded as the "Sixth Imám" by all Shí'a Muslims. In *The Three Gifts*, Jibran writes of his birthplace, 'Becharre'[117], and in *The Quest*, two ancient philosophers meet on a mountain slope of Lebanon much like the one near Jibran's childhood home. There is much personification throughout the stories, such as in *Garments* where Beauty and Ugliness converse, or *The Eagle and the Skylark*, in which a talking turtle enters into the conversation between the two birds. There are talking oysters, frogs, dogs, trees, sparrows, grass, and even a speaking shadow. Like the title of the book's final fable, *The Other Wanderer*, the book may be thought of as a desultory disquisition on the mysteries of life and death, in which the reader is left to divine the wisdom of each brief tale.

2.6.10 The Earth Gods (Alehah al 'Ard)

As a complete work, The Earth Gods, published in 1931, brings Jibran's literary work to a conclusion, as it appeared shortly prior to his death in same year. The Earth Gods is a free-verse triologue among three earth-born Titans, in what may be considered a meditation on love. At one point, the Second God discloses the open "secret" that is at the heart of Jibran's consistent message:

> *Yea, in your own soul your Redeemer lies asleep,*
>
> *And in sleep sees what your waking eye does not see.*

[116] The complete works of Kahlil Gibran, Indiana Publishing House, New Delhi, 2009,,*The Wanderer*, p.59.
[117] Ibid, p.62.

And that is the secret of our being[118]

In other words, the greater self, the spiritual giant, Christ-spirit is within. The beginning of salvation is to awaken the sleeping giant. At the height of their debate, the Third God proclaims: "Love is our lord and master."[119] Love is God on Earth. Beyond that, the debate is convoluted and unsophisticated, with no clear progression in reasoning. The Earth Gods is perhaps the least deserving of Jibran's English works. Its publication was anticlimactic. Fortunately, it was followed by the appearance of *The Wanderer*, which is more true to form and a more befitting legacy.

[118] The complete works of Kahlil Gibran, Indiana Publishing House, New Delhi, 2009,,*The Wanderer*, p.201.
[119] Ibid, p.208.