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Critical Reading of Gibran's World in *The Prophet*

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Abstract

Gibran Khalil Gibran (1882-1931), the Lebanese writer, poet, artist and philosopher, was the bearer of faith in the unity of all religions. He was a key figure in the history of modern English and Arabic literature in early 20th Century. The present paper is to show how Gibran represents the world and undesirable social practices in the time of writing his greatest book *The Prophet* (1923). Gibran lets the readers feel that the prophet (Al-Mustafa) doesn't belong to this very world; he comes to Orphalese to teach humanity and to correct the society under the tenets of all major religions. Each character in *The Prophet*, except Al-Mustafa, resamples one member of the deformed society who seeks deliverance. Gibran shortens the process of life and its needs in the 28 texts allowing the readers take an active role to interpret and to dictate the context on oblique hints and innuendo. Gibran views the world as a place that lacks love and peace, where individuals' life is deprived and corrupted. The most obvious, Gibran is speaking through the mouth of Al-Mustafa preaching many commandments, disciplines and rituals.

Keywords: Gibran, *The Prophet*, world

1. Introduction

Gibran's masterpiece, *The Prophet* (Gibran, 1923), is a volume of twenty-eight prose-poems full of wise sayings, representing wisdom of a prophetic quality. Each chapter in *The Prophet* is, in a sense, complete in itself; it presents Gibran's views on some aspects of life or other problems of universal interest. Gibran calls for a utopian city by giving treatments to each issue in life. He presents an image of a world not yet in existence. The principles of his message are taken from all religions. Al-Mustafa's desire for teaching, guidance, and support encourages his followers as well as people all over the world to form the social and moral conception of God. He is preaching his wise messages friendly not forcefully by persuading his followers and his readers.

It seems that Gibran tries to resolve cultural and human conflict by transcending the barriers of East and West (Buck, 2010; Acocella, 2008). In addition, out of his influence by the Eastern philosophy, Gibran adopts the belief in the prevalence of God as a spirit in all parts of the universe. Bushrui asserts that the language of *The Prophet* represents the unity in diversity as "a passionate belief in the healing power of universal love and the unity of being" (Bushrui, 1987, p. 68). Like Blake, Gibran thinks that there is an entire human soul distributed to partial souls, and that man is an entity in his soul as well as in his body, and that God rests in the mind and moves in the air. Irwin (1998) points out that the French sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) announced Gibran as: "the Blake of the 20th century" (Irwin, 1998, p. 1). Gibran told his closest friend Mikhail Naimy: "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 search for God is the highest form of worship" (Naimy, 1950, p. 89). The reflection of Gibran's ideology and thoughts on this particular book might be the cause of its popularity.

2. Gibran's World

To show Gibran's ideology in presenting the world, it would be worth to know the undesirable social practices in the time of writing his greatest book *The Prophet*. The term ideology here is not designated to view his political ideology only but it is "representations of the world which contribute to establishing, maintaining or changing social relations of power or domination" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 87; N. Fairclough, 2003, p. 9).

According to Fairclough, text is not only concerned with language in use only, but also it may have invisible sets of values, beliefs and ideas in social circumstance. He points out:

“the question of discourse is the question of how text figure (in relation to other moments) in how people represent the world, including themselves and their productive activities. Different discourses are different ways of representing associated with different positions.” (Fairclough, 2000, p. 170).

The notion of multi-functionality of language is based on Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1985; 1994) in the sense of that language is both socially shaping and socially shaped. Fairclough makes use from the assumption of social constitutive, he asserts that “Language use is always simultaneously constitutive of (i) social identities, (ii) social relations and (iii) systems of knowledge and beliefs” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 134).

Gibran’s ideological and global reform sought to prosecute the negative aspects of the societies. He represents the philosophical and religious approach to life in this world we find ourselves in. Fairclough argues that ideology “may be enacted in ways of interaction (and therefore in genres) and inculcated in ways of being identities (and therefore styles). Analysis of texts ... is an important aspect of ideological analysis and critique ...” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 218). As suggested by Brown and Yule (Yule and Brown, 1983, p. 133), “the general knowledge about the world underpins our interpretation in discourse”. According to (Dryzek, 1997, p. 8) a discourse is a:

“... shared way of apprehending the world. Embedded in language, it enables those who subscribe to it to interpret bits of information and put them together into coherent stories or accounts. Each discourse rests on assumptions, judgments, and contentions that provide the basic terms for analysis, debates, agreements, and disagreements.”

Thus, to justify and analyse how Gibran represents the world in *The Prophet*, the following issues have been investigated and interpreted.

2.1 Ethically and Morally Corrupt World

Gibran sees the world as ethically and morally deformed, wishfully, he wants to advise and teach people how to dispose from the evil and vices deeds which they found themselves after the experience of war’s destructive power. After the First World War (1914-1918) and the terrible experience of it, societies became truly affected by the violence psychologically and spiritually as well. Historians considered this era to be the most moral and ethical corruption time. Moreover, declining of social values has been the main characteristic in individuals’ personality (Feiser, 2003). Gardner shows how the poets of 1914-18 “found a brotherhood that transcended the barriers of class, strong at the time; of religion, of race, of every facet of society” (Gardner, 1976, p. xx). In the same sense, Gibran is looking for the universal themes of humanity that bind humans regardless of their religion, race, or political tendency.

Bushrui and Jenkins assert that “Gibran awaited his moment before publishing *The Prophet*. As World War I drew to a close, he wrote: “Human beings have changed remarkably during the past three years. They are hungry for beauty, for truth” (Bushrui & Jenkins, 1998, p. 13). Gibran, in his discourse, teaches people what ought to be (ethics) in all aspects of life, basically, ethics are based on religious tents. He represents a wider vision into the essentials of ethics and religion. Moreover, Gibran leads the people to what is to be (mores) in the sense of mores pertain to the existing morality.

His willingness to caution the struggles and conflicts and build perfect society was not a means to achieve power or political position in society, as all politicians and priests do, but to build social stability, to draw patterns of peace, and call for spiritual life-style. Data analysis reveals that subtexts of *The Prophet* start with *Love* which is the foremost point of departure throughout life and peace.

All these things shall love do unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart, and in that knowledge become a fragment of Life’s heart.

But if in your fear you would seek only love’s peace and love’s pleasure,

Then it is better for you that you cover your nakedness and pass out of love’s threshing-floor,

Into the seasonless world where you shall laugh, but not all of your laughter, and weep, but not all of your tears.

(Text: *The Love*)

Here, the unstable morality is metalized in “*cover your nakedness*” and “*seasonless world*” where dissatisfaction with one’s life is seen as marginal ethical reflection and moral instability. Nassar and Gibran assert that “Gibran was of the mold of William Blake: both angry social reformer of old cultural contexts and the prophet of an

expanding cosmic consciousness beyond any need of a given cultural context” (Nassar & Gibran, 1980, p. 24). While Ludescher evaluates Gibran’s works claiming that:

“Gibran’s early works depict a world in which the transcendent power of Nature is contrasted with the innate corruption of human society. For Gibran, Nature is both a living spiritualized being and a manifestation of God’s universal law. Although humans in their natural state are pure and uncorrupted, they will only return to God and achieve their divine nature after they have evolved through the course of many lives on earth” (Ludescher, 2010, p. 113).

In fact, Gibran’s creative power draws much of its impetus from the religious side. Ethically and morally corrupt world at the late Nineteenth Century and the religious conflict that arouse between the Maronites and the Catholics in New York are far from witnessing of drastic changes in the beliefs of the societies. The old established habits of the past and the religious sectarian loyalties have been very deeply rooted so much that the westernizing elements have had a scanty influence in affecting break with the rigid conventions of the past. The conclusion set by Hawi on Gibran’s style as being a continuation of the religious literary traditions discloses a body and soul relationship between Gibran’s works and religion. Hawi asserts that the Arabic writings of Gibran are considered, to a great extent, as a vehicle to convey Gibran’s sense of devotion to the religious matters. Gibran’s adherence takes many times the form of a revolt against those who exploited religion to their own use (Hawi, 1963, p. 141).

2.2 *Love-Impoverished World*

People of Orphalese are unconscious and are not aware of love; they realize their hidden love only when they see Al-Mustafa. They comment on their veiled love:

Much have we loved you. But speechless was our love, and with veils has it been veiled. (Text: The Coming of the Ship)

Gibran, through his mouthpiece Al-Mustafa, teaches the value of idealistic uncorrupted love and truth which are appealing to all people. His thoughts reflect not individual’s love but the spirit of corporate relations. He shows his followers how to live and act as lovers in this world; this means that Gibran perceives the failure and insufficiency love in Orphalese.

When love beckons to you follow him,
Though his ways are hard and steep.
And when his wings enfold you yield to him,
Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you.
And when he speaks to you believe in him, (Text: The Love)

Gibran personifies the abstract noun “love” by using the pronouns (he, his, him) showing the ability of doing the acts of teaching people the appreciation of life, gratitude, and happiness. Gibran depicts irrefutable evidence that following love frees and purifies the souls. He supposes faith in love to most human activities, as lexical item, *love* recurs for (64) times in the whole text. Gibran offers amity to his readers; his words and verses have the power to be animated. He attempts to justify that love begets knowledge which may have more than moral certainty. Perhaps the best of *The Prophet* is in the gradual presentation of the change from fear of God to love God in people’s ideal worship.

2.3 *Complexity of Life and the Materialistic World*

Gibran dissatisfies with the complexity of life in its achievements and promises. He criticizes the world which lacks of spirituality. Bushrui and Jenkins claim that “Gibran sensed among Americans a vague spirituality—an inchoate civilization, increasingly looking to the East for the substance and authority lacking at home” (1998, p. 4). At the beginning of twentieth Century, people abandon the countryside and tend to follow the civilization in big cities where factories and large buildings, seeking work and gaining much money. He pursues this point when he says:

And as he walked he saw from afar men and women leaving their fields and their vineyards and hastening towards the city gates. (Text: The Coming of the Ship)

And is it not a dream which none of you remember having dreamt that building your city and fashioned all there is in it?

Could you but see the tides of that breath you would cease to see all else,
And if you could hear the whispering of the dream you would hear no other sound.
But you do not see, nor do you hear, and it is well.

The veil that clouds your eyes shall be lifted by the hands that wove it, and the clay that fills your ears shall be pierced by those fingers that kneaded it. (Text: The Farewell)

Hawi notes that “Gibran would have liked to abolish society altogether and return to the primal state of nature” (Hawi, 1963, p. 166). In the text of *The Houses*, Gibran criticizes living in large cities and he calls for going back to the nature and countryside where clean and pure life.

Does not your house dream? And dreaming, leave the city for grove or hilltop?

Would that I could gather your houses into my hand, and like a sower scatter them in forest and meadow.

Would the valleys were your streets, and the green paths your alleys, that you might seek one another through vineyards, and come with the fragrance of the earth in your garments. But these things are not yet to be.

In their fear your forefathers gathered you too near together. And that fear shall endure a little longer. A little longer shall your city walls separate your hearths from your fields.

And tell me, people of Orphalese, what have you in these houses? And what is it you guard with fastened doors? Have you peace, the quiet urge that reveals your power? (Text: The Houses)

Gibran condemns the harmful effects of industrialization and the preoccupation with materialism, but he idealizes and worships nature. The nature is a mediator between God and man, it is almost divine. The concept of “less is more” or Minimalism is, somehow, one of the important elements in his thoughts and writings, this concept conveys the message of simplicity, i.e., need less gain more.

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 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.” (Text: Reason and Passion)

Gibran glorifies nature in *The Prophet* and in most of his works, he calls to return to the simplicity of life since civilization is but a part of nature corruption and misused. He considers the imitation of nature is a divine. Bushrui and Jenkins allege that for Gibran, “nature was invested with a life of its own, with spiritual, emotional, and intellectual dimensions; for him it was the link that binds us one to another, within it flowing a divine energy which is the perfect expression of the internal rhythm of all being. To commune with nature was for him akin to a religious experience” (1998, p. 35). Anywise, it can be said that Gibran appeals on environmentalism since he condemns the destruction of nature and invites all people to go to the nature and to respect it.

But you who are born of the mountains and the forests and the seas can find their prayer in your heart.

But in some of you that longing is a torrent rushing with might to the sea, carrying the secrets of the hillsides and the songs of the forest. (Text: Good and Evil)

Gibran rejects the materialism, he believes in a peaceful world of mutual helpfulness and in the high mission of humanity. He deals with the invisible spiritual dimension of human and deeply looks into the inner feelings and listens to spiritual call details by paying great attention to people, nature and soul.

Your soul is oftentimes a battlefield, upon which your reason and your judgment wage war against passion and your appetite.

Would that I could be the peacemaker in your soul, that I might turn the discord and the rivalry of your elements into oneness and melody. (Text: Reason and Passion)

Bushrui and Jenkins claim that “[i]n all his work he [Gibran] expressed the deep-felt desire of men and women for a kind of spiritual life that renders the material world meaningful and imbues it with dignity” (1998, p. 1).

2.4 Egoism and Dominate World

Other substantial negative personal experiences might be found in relevant texts as (marriage, children, and friendship) are emotional abandonment, egoism and dominant relationships. In each of these human experiences, Gibran seems to be discomfort with the corruption marriage relation of substance of the distant between spouses in marriage, the gap between parents and children in family relationship, and phonyrelations between friends. For example, marriage requires sharing togetherness not possessing or domination. Gibran’s brief argument on sanctity of marriage and togetherness till death are summarized in these verses:

You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore. You shall be together when white wings of death scatter your days. (Text: The Marriage)

On anti-dominant relationships, he says:

But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
 And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.
 Love one another but make not a bond of love:
 Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
 Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
 Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.
 Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,
 Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
 And stand together, yet not too near together. (Text: The Marriage)

In the above verses, the perlocutionary act which is produced to get the addressees to do is the sequence of the imperative verbs (let; love; make; fill; give; sing together; dance together; and stand together) to force people avoiding the egoism inside them.

On the other hand, Gibran criticises the misunderstanding of parental care in the text *The Children*. "The children are our future" recently seems to be uttered by many societies all over the world, but Gibran has evoked this concept at the beginning of twentieth century. He is one of the earlier agitators who draw attention to children contributes to the overall quality of human experience.

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

Moreover, Gibran's presentation of family life and the way that parents treat their children can be recognised when he faults the parents how rule over their children and make them follow their steps in shaping the life and the world around them:

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you. For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday. (Text: The Children)

In an alike manner, on the discord and the rivalry between friends, Gibran confirms that friendship can provide warmth, knowledge, assistance, and peace. It allows sharing laughter, and pleasure. Al-Mustafa says when he has been asked about the friendship:

Your friend is your needs answered.
 He is your field which you sow with love and reap with thanksgiving.
 And he is your board and your fireside.
 For you come to him with your hunger, and you seek him for peace.
 When your friend speaks his mind you fear not the "nay" in your own mind, nor do you withhold the "ay."
 (Text: The Friendship)

At the same time he is recluse, shutting himself off from the sorrows and perversion of the world around him. In discussing Gibran's work, *The prophet* is considered as one of the books of sound theologians which corrects and reforms the societies. Thus, there is interesting side to Gibran that he is a social reformer and an anthropomorphic prophet, as it is mentioned in some verses in texts as follows:

Prophet of God, in quest for the uttermost, long have you searched the distances for your ship. (Text: The Coming of the Ship)
 For the master spirit of the earth shall not sleep peacefully upon the wind till the needs of the least of you are satisfied. (Text: Buying and Selling)

2.5 Injustice and Oppression World

It is not possible to neglect Gibran's political thoughts because his creativity is the result of social and political events and conditions in the environment he lives in. It can be considered that these elements are the outcome of

his genius and psychological emotions. He passes his political views under the disguise of allegories; he always advocates radical reforms in church and state. He refuses strict laws and revolts against fanatical authoritarian governments whom carve statues for themselves to gain absolute obedience.

But to whom life is a rock, and the law a chisel with which they would carve it in their own likeness?

But you who walk facing the sun, what images drawn on the earth can hold you? (Text: The Law)

And how shall you rise beyond your days and nights unless you break the chains which you at the dawn of your understanding have fastened around your noon hour? (Text: The Freedom)

Ottoman colonial domination in Gibran's native Arab country, poverty, disease and destitution which he suffered from when he was in America, had a significant impact on his ideology and his outlook on life which had been reflected on his assessment of the events around the world. For example, the word *freedom* entered the human beings' dictionary as a single sense without any application on the ground in their spirit and their way of life. Gibran says in freedom:

At the city gate and by your fireside I have seen you prostrate yourself and worship your own freedom,

Even as slaves humble themselves before a tyrant and praise him though he slays them. (Text: The Freedom)

Gibran feels sad and despondent when he has observed that freedom is nothing but a weapon not a goal. Societies become really free when they do not think of freedom as an abstract concept, but when it becomes tangible. Based on Hawi's argumentation (1963, p. 143), Ludescher states that "Gibran was not interested in reforming the corrupt social system by replacing oppressive laws with progressive ones, but instead was advocating absolute freedom" (Ludescher, 2010, p. 114).

You shall be free indeed when your days are not without a care nor your nights without a want and a grief, but rather when these things girdle your life and yet you rise above them naked and unbound. (Text: The Freedom)

Gibran deals with freedom in a philosophical sense; he never looks upon happiness and wealth as end but his pronounced freedom comes from his passionate sense of social justice and national responsibility in all human communities. He seeks justice with social solidarity by glorifying morality.

And the robbed is not blameless in being robbed.

The righteous is not innocent of the deeds of the wicked.

And the white-handed is not clean in the doings of the felon.

Yea, the guilty is oftentimes the victim of the injured,

And still more often the condemned is the burden bearer for the guiltless and unblamed. (Text: Crime and Punishment)

Gibran is quite aware that the justice is Lord's legalisation, not the laws which are enacted by man; for politicians or leaders are often doubtful whether their deeds good or harm and their acts are bounded up with the existence of their rules. Most analysts agree that "Gibran challenges the arbitrary injustices of the legal system, whose man-made laws are frequently in conflict with the more enduring and just laws of nature" (Ludescher, 2010, p. 112).

Is not remorse the justice which is administered by that very law which you would fain serve?

Yet you cannot lay remorse upon the innocent nor lift it from the heart of the guilty. (Text: Crime and Punishment)

If it is an unjust law you would abolish, that law was written with your own hand upon your own forehead. (Text: The Freedom)

Gibran thinks that man-made laws represent hypocrisy, despotism and persecution because they are governed by the environment and the situation that are harmful and wrong deeds. Al-Mustafa proclaims:

You delight in laying down laws,

Yet you delight more in breaking them.

What shall I say of these save that they too stand in the sunlight, but with their backs to the sun?

They see only their shadows, and their shadows are their laws. (Text: The Law)

Gibran launches his attacks against hypocrisy and he speaks about shadow law verses moral law to focus on

religious aspects of law. On his refusal of man's law, Gibran asks rhetorical questions:

What man's law shall bind you if you break your yoke but upon no man's prison door?

What laws shall you fear if you dance but stumble against no man's iron chains? (Text: *The Law*)

The need for freedom has never been neglected by Gibran in most of his works; his mission is to provide spiritual movement. Each work includes a presentation of his distinctive beliefs and his rebellious soul. In *The Prophet*, Gibran is preaching and teaching vulnerable nations although the action of Al-Mustafa is not free of criticism. While in Gibran's following book *The Garden of The Prophet* he is blaming nations and he is expressing his rebel against cruel life and political corruption. Al-Mustafa, in *The Garden of The Prophet*, feels pity on the nations and he laments the oppressive social conditions. He says:

Pity the nation that is full of beliefs and empty of religion.

Pity the nation that wears a cloth it does not weave, eats a bread it does not harvest, and drinks a wine that flows not from its own wine-press.

Pity the nation that acclaims the bully as hero, and that deems the glittering conqueror bountiful.

Pity a nation that despises a passion in its dream, yet submits in its awakening.

Pity the nation that raises not its voice save when it walks in a funeral, boasts not except among its ruins, and will rebel not save when its neck is laid between the sword and the block.

Pity the nation whose statesman is a fox, whose philosopher is a juggler, and whose art is the art of patching and mimicking.

Pity the nation that welcomes its new ruler with trumpeting, and farewells him with hooting, only to welcome another with trumpeting again.

Pity the nation whose sages are dumb with years and whose strong men are yet in the cradle.

Pity the nation divided into fragments, each fragment deeming itself a nation. (Gibran, 1933) *The Garden of The Prophet*

The above verses lay down very important principles that the nation which seeks and delights true freedom should avoid a series of actions in order to prevail and to deploy human freedom. Both novels (*The prophet* and *The Garden of The Prophet*) are globally located with cultural and social themes and both are based on the role of Al-Mustafa that may solve many human beings' widespread dilemmas.

2.6 Diaspora Identity World

The authoritarianism of deviant religious, injustice social judiciary and self-alienation of man were the triangle forces dominated on the individuals and their disputes. Gibran's sense of self-alienation, social justice and social responsibility has always been emphasized, this steams from his experience and belonging to two different societies and cultures he lives in.

Feeling of alienation can be noticed, particularly, at the beginning and at the end of the book. When Al-Mustafa's ship arrives to Orphalese and then when he bids farewell his followers at the latter part of the book:

But he descended the hill, a sadness came upon him, and he thought in his heart: How shall I go in peace and without sorrow?

Nay, not without a wound in the spirit shall I leave this city.

Long were the days of pain I have spent within its walls, and long were the nights of aloneness; and who can depart from his pain and his aloneness without regret?

In your aloneness you have watched with our days, and in your wakefulness you have listened to the weeping and the laughter of our sleep. (Text: *The Coming of the Ship*)

The silence of aloneness reveals to their eyes their naked selves and they would escape. (Text: *The Talking*)

And when Al-Mustafa wants to leave Orphalese, the sense of isolation and alienation appear in his words, although he will return to his second home:

And some of you have called me aloof, and drunk with my own aloneness,

And you have said: "He holds council with the trees of the forest, but not with men.

He sits alone on hill-tops and looks down upon our city".

True it is that I have climbed the hills and walked in remote places.

How could I have seen you save from a great height or a great distance?

How can one be indeed near unless he be far? (Text: The Farewell)

Multiplicity of religions, doctrines and sects are strongly abhors in Gibran's works. In *The Prophet* the idea of man as the image of God is pervasive in the text. Since religions are not similar, people have different views regarding to methods of worship and rituals. This may lead to conflict between nations which are incompatible with one another. Gibran's beliefs are not a part from Christianity only but within all main other religions and worships of the everlasting and universal spirit.

And then he assigns you to his sacred fire, that you may become sacred bread for God's sacred feast. (Text: The Coming of the Ship:16)

Though the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth.

For to be overmindful of your debt, is to doubt his generosity who has the freehearted earth for mother, and God for father. (Text: The Giving)

Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism Zoroastrianism, Jainism and Sikhism are the main living religions of the world and each has its doctrines (Hick, 1978, p. 118). But Gibran is a believer of "*The Unity of all Religions*"; he argues that God is in everywhere and man is inside God's heart and all human deeds are Godly. The belief in the God-self aspect of all human beings where each person has an undefiled God-self.

When you love you should not say, "God is in my heart," but rather, I am in the heart of God." (Text: The Love)

Aye, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God. (Text: The Marriage)

And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God. (Text: The Work)

Like the ocean is your god-self. It remains for ever undefiled. And like the ether it lifts but the winged. Even like the sun is your god-self; (Text: Crime and Punishment)

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 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."

And since you are a breath In God's sphere, and a leaf in God's forest, you too should rest in reason and move in passion. (Text: Reason and Passion)

And even as each one of you stands alone in God's knowledge, so must each one of you be alone in his knowledge of God and in his understanding of the earth. (Text: The Teaching)

God listens not to your words save when He Himself utters them through your lips. (Text: The Prayer)

"Our God, who art our winged self, it is thy will in us that willeth. It is thy desire in us that desireth.

It is thy urge in us that would turn our nights, which are thine, into days which are thine also".

We cannot ask thee for aught, for thou knowest our needs before they are born in us.

"Thou art our need; and in giving us more of thyself thou givest us all." (Text: The Prayer)

"This for God and this for myself;

And if you would know God be not therefore a solver of riddles.

Rather look about you and you shall see Him playing with your children.

And look into space; you shall see Him walking in the cloud, outstretching His arms in the lightning and descending in rain.

You shall see Him smiling in flowers, then rising and waving His hands in trees. (Text: The Religion)

The character of the prophet of all religions in *The Prophet* is no less the centre of Gibran's interest and thoughts. So, it is not wonder to any that the above verses dealing with the unity of all religions are scattered in many texts in his book. Obviously enough, the characters in *The Prophet* contribute largely to enhance our understanding of his views about the world by recognizing the kind of protagonists on the basis of their acts and interact.

3. Conclusion

In times of conflict between religions and sectarian violence which breed terror, fear and insecurity, it is not surprising to do research on a popular book written by a great Arab-Christian philosopher like Gibran Khalil Gibran who used to admire and respect Islam and other religions. Understanding his ideology, belief, wisdom, and thoughts into different aspects of life brings hope to live in peace and spiritual personal freedom. Many researchers wrote about Gibran and on his works but none of them has critically touched upon how Gibran sees the world. This study would hopefully bridge the gap in the body of literature.

Gibran's distinguished moral values and wise teachings for each of life issues presented in *The Prophet* stand for a utopian city by presenting an image of a world not yet in existence. The principles of his global message are taken from all religions by discarding dogmatism and hailing love, solidarity, and mutual understanding. Al-Mustafa's desire for such teachings encourages his followers as well as the addresses all over the world to form social and moral conception of God as a source of love. He preaches these wise messages in solidarity, and through persuasion, simply because he totally rejects hegemonic ideology.

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