

## I

### General Introduction

#### Biography of the writer; Kahlil Gibran

Khalil Gibran (full name Gibran Khalil Gibran bin Mikhael bin Saâd) was born in the Christian Maronite town of Bsharri which lies at present in northern Lebanon - at the time, part of the Ottoman Empire. He grew up in the region of Bsharri. His maternal grandfather was a Maronite Catholic priest. His mother Kamila was thirty when Gibran was born; his father, also named Khalil, was her third husband. As a result of his family's poverty, Gibran did not receive any formal schooling during his youth in Lebanon. However, priests visited him regularly and taught him about the Bible, as well as the Syriac and Arabic languages. After Gibran's father, a tax collector, went to prison for alleged embezzlement, Ottoman authorities confiscated his family's property. Authorities released Gibran's father in 1894, but the family had by then lost their home. Gibran's mother decided to follow her brother, Gibran's uncle, and immigrated to the United States. Gibran's father remained in Lebanon. Gibran's mother, along with Khalil, his younger sisters Mariana and Sultana, and his half-brother Peter left for New York on June 25, 1895.

The Gibrans settled in Boston's South End, at the time there was the second largest Lebanese-American community in the United States. His mother began working as a pack peddler, selling lace and linens that she carried from door to door. Gibran started school on September 30, 1895. He had had no formal schooling in Lebanon, and school officials placed him in a special class for immigrants to learn English. Gibran's English teacher suggested that he Anglicize the spelling of his name in order to make it more acceptable to American society. *Kahlil Gibran* was the result.

Gibran was also enrolled in an art school nearby the settlement. Through his teachers, he was introduced to the avant-garde Boston artist, photographer, and publisher Fred Holland

Day, who encouraged and supported Gibran in his creative endeavors. A publisher used some of Gibran's drawings for book covers in 1898.

At 15, Gibran went back to Lebanon to study at a Maronite-run preparatory school and higher-education institute in Beirut. He started a student literary magazine with a classmate, and was elected "college poet". He stayed there for several years before returning to Boston in 1902. Two weeks before he got back, his sister, Sultana, age 14, died of tuberculosis. The next year, his brother Bhutros died of the same disease, and his mother died of cancer. His sister Marianna then supported Gibran and herself, working at a dressmaker's shop.

Gibran held his first art exhibition of drawings, in 1904 in Boston, at Day's studio. During this exhibition, Gibran met Mary Elizabeth Haskell, a respected headmistress ten years his senior. The two formed an important friendship that lasted the rest of Gibran's life. Though publicly discreet, their correspondence reveals an exalted intimacy. Haskell influenced not only Gibran's personal life, but also his career. In 1908, Gibran went to study art with Auguste Rodin in Paris for two years. This is where he met his art study partner and lifelong friend Youssef Howayek. He later studied art in Boston.

While most of Gibran's early writings were in Arabic, most of his work published after 1918 was in English. His first book for the publishing company Alfred Knopf, in 1918, was *The Madman*, a slim volume of aphorisms and parables written in biblical cadence somewhere between poetry and prose. Gibran also took part in the New York Pen League, also known as the "immigrant poets" (al-mahjar), alongside important Lebanese American authors such as Ameen Rihani ("the father of Lebanese American literature"), Elia Abu Madi and Mikhail Naimy, a close friend and distinguished master of Arabic literature, whose

descendants Gibran declared to be his own children, and whose nephew, Samir, is a godson of Gibran.

Much of Gibran's writings deal with Christianity, especially, on the topic of spiritual love. His poetry is notable for its use of formal language, as well as insights on topics of life using spiritual terms. Gibran's best-known work is *The Prophet*; a book comprises 26 poetic essays. This, the author's magnum opus, became especially popular during the 1960s with the American counterculture and New Age movements. Since it was first published in 1923, *The Prophet* has never been out of print and remains world-renowned to this day. Having been translated into more than 20 languages, it was the bestselling book of the twentieth century in the United States, second only to the Bible.

One of his most notable lines of poetry in the English speaking world is from '*Sand and Foam*' (1926), which reads: 'Half of what I say is meaningless, but I say it so that the other half may reach you'. This was taken by John Lennon and placed, though in a slightly altered form, into the song Julia from The Beatles' 1968 album *The Beatles* (The White Album).

Juliet Thompson, one of Khalil Gibran's acquaintances, said that Gibran told her that he thought of `Abdu'l-Bahá, the leader of the Bahá'í Faith in his lifetime, all the way through writing *The Prophet*. `Abdu'l-Bahá's personage also influenced *Jesus, The Son of Man*, another book by Gibran. It is certain that Gibran did two portraits of him during this period.

Gibran was a prominent Syrian nationalist. In a political statement he drafted in 1911, he expresses his loyalty to Greater Syria and to the safeguarding of Syria's national territorial integrity. He also calls for the adoption of Arabic as a national language of Syria and the application of Arabic at all school levels.

When the Ottomans were finally driven out of Syria during the First World War, Gibran's exhilaration was manifested in a delightful sketch called "Free Syria" which appeared on the front page of al-Sa'ih's special "victory" edition. Moreover, in a draft of a play, still kept among his papers, Gibran expressed great hope for national independence and progress. This play, according to Kahlil Hawi, "defines Gibran's belief in Syrian nationalism with great clarity, distinguishing it from both Lebanese and Arab nationalism, and showing us that nationalism lived in his mind, even at this late stage, side with side with internationalism."(23)

Gibran died in New York City on April 10, 1931: the cause was determined to be cirrhosis of the liver and tuberculosis. Before his death, Gibran expressed the wish that he be buried in Lebanon. This wish was fulfilled in 1932, when Mary Haskell and his sister Mariana purchased the Mar Sarkis Monastery in Lebanon.

Gibran willed the contents of his studio to Mary Haskell. There she discovered her letters to him spanning 23 years. She initially agreed to burn them because of their intimacy, but recognizing their historical value she saved them. She gave them, along with his letters to her which she had also saved, to the University of North Carolina Library before she died in 1964. Excerpts of the over six hundred letters were published in "*Beloved Prophet*" in 1972.

Mary Haskell Minis (she wed Jacob Florence Minis after moving to Savannah, Georgia in 1923) donated her personal collection of nearly one hundred original works of art by Gibran to the Telfair Museum of Art in Savannah in 1950. Haskell had been thinking of placing her collection at the Telfair as early as 1914. In a letter to Gibran, she explained, "...I am thinking of other museums...the unique little Telfair Gallery in Savannah, Ga., that Gari Melchers chooses pictures for. There when I was a visiting child, form burst upon my astonished little soul." Haskell's extraordinary gift to the Telfair is the largest public

collection of Kahlil Gibran's visual art in the country, consisting of five oils and numerous works on paper rendered in the artist's lyrical style, which reflects the influence of symbolism. The future American royalties to his books were willed to his hometown of Bsharri, to be "used for good causes", however, this led to years of controversy and violence over the distribution of the money; eventually, the Lebanese government became the overseer.

### **Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* and Humanist philosophy**

Kahlil Gibran is migrated Lebanese-American poet, artist, scholar, writer, painter, sculptor, philosopher, who forwards the philosophy of humanity. In such context humanist philosophy is one of the vantage point to peep inside his work; *The Prophet* by him. Sitting astride two worlds, Gibran created his own unique literary style, one that has won fans in every generation, everywhere.

The quest for meaning in life is indeed complex and this challenge has been taken on by many learned and wise philosophers, ever since Man has gained consciousness of the self-concept. Kahlil Gibran stripped away the myriad of hidden layers of Life and enlightened on matters that will illuminate new perceptions.

"He was one of those rare writers who actually transcend the barrier between East and West, and could justifiably call himself - though a Lebanese and a patriot - a citizen of the world," (28)write Bushrui and Jenkins. "His words went beyond the mere evocation of the mysterious East but endeavored to communicate the necessity of reconciliation between Christianity and Islam, spirituality and materialism, East and West..."(37).Gibran, for all his personal flaws and foibles, was a genuine artistic visionary whose works are imbued with themes of unity and oneness that are entirely reflective of our century-long march toward

global integration and, at the same time, expresses 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.

He suffered almost continually from poor health and yet soared upon the spiritual visions of his own inner Muse. Along the way, Gibran met some of the greatest men and women of his time. According to Bushrui and Jenkins, Gibran spent time with the poet William Butler Yeats, the sculptor Auguste Rodin, writer John Galsworthy, and Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung. He also read widely in English and Arabic, and among the writers that touched him greatly were Freidrich Nietzsche and William Blake. Such meetings - whether in person or on paper - refined Gibran's own thinking and direction. When combined with his life experiences, these influences helped shape the singular voice that marked his work, which comprises hundreds of essays, poems, drawings and paintings. "For Gibran true religion was joyous and liberating: 'teachings 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 soar aloft in the realms of love and freedom' - a religion of justice, which 'makes us all brothers equal before the sun.'" write Bushrui and Jenkins "Gibran became the most successful and famous Arab writer in the world," (56)add Bushrui and Jenkins. "Gibran's message is a healing one and his quest to understand the tensions between spirit and exile anticipated the needs of an age witnessing the spiritual and intellectual impasse of modernity itself." (67)

After twelve years in the city of Orphalese, the prophet, Almustafa, is beginning his return journey home. As he makes his way to the ship, the townsfolk question him on the meaning of various issues central to daily life. On topics like love, marriage, friendship, giving and many others, Gibran offers his meditations through the prophet's imparted advice and sayings. Hailed by many to be Gibran's best work, *The Prophet* was published in the

1920s and contains 26 poetic essays that will invite us to contemplate the inner self. It enables us to have a clearer sense of ourselves and of those that surround us all. Somewhat similar to Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, this book does have a spiritual slant to it. But, the religious aspect does not overpower the intended aim of the essays. In fact, if we replace it with Christianity or Buddhism or even Catholicism, the effect will not be jarring at all and the flow and pacing of the book will still remain uninterrupted. In the end, the concept of "God" is irrelevant in this context.

The present work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents short introduction to Kahlil Gibran, his works and their literary criticism. It presents bird's eye view of the entire life of the writer, his works and his philosophical, artistic and literary career.

The second chapter tries to explain briefly the theoretical modality through which the present research will be peeped out. It discusses briefly the General Background and Definition of Humanism, Ethics of Humanism, Philosophy of Humanism, Categories of Humanism, Modern humanist philosophies, Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* and Humanist philosophy. By undertaking an examination of these topics the chapter will reach to the conclusion that humanist philosophy is one of the chief philosophies put forward by the writer.

On the basis of the theoretical modality outlined in the second chapter, the third chapter will analyze the text at a considerable length. It will sort out some extracts from the text as evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study-Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* centers on good and evil forces measured through the yardsticks of human love, compassion and humanist philosophy which justify the interrelationship among man, betterment of life and life world. This part serves as the core portion of my research.

The fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research. On the basis of the textual analysis of chapter three, it will conclude the explanations and arguments put forward in the preceding chapter and show how Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet* explores and justifies good and evil forces. His humanity in *The Prophet* stands in the face of those in the Arab world who view human rights as an alien concept and those in the west who proclaim that the notion is western. These will be presented in nut shell.

### **Kahlil Gibran and Critical reception**

The continuity of tone that runs throughout the works of Gibran is that of lonely alienation, of a yearning for connections. Beneath all his prophetic masks, Gibran's lyric cry for connection reveals his most authentic voice. Hungering for real unity, Gibran is ever attempting to lift himself up by his own bootstraps to deliver truths or at least prolegomena to the multitudes in old societies or new on social and cosmic questions. But ever behind these pronouncements is the Gibran of unsureness, of profound melancholy, of tragic vision. Gibran is at home neither in the old culture nor in the new, and an unresolved dualism vitiates much of the work when, as so often occurs, it pretends to resolution.

Naimy has a suggestive view of the basic framework of Gibran's greatest work. He states that:

The Prophet: As Zarathustra is Nietzsche in another form, so is Almustafa Gibran under a borrowed name. . . . The twelve years Almustafa spent in waiting for his ship are the twelve years Gibran had lived in New York up to the writing of the prelude to *The Prophet*. The city of Orphalese is no other than New York. Almitra 'who had first sought and believed in him' is Mary Haskell [who married another, at Gibran's advice, p. 219]. 'The isle of his



birth' is Lebanon. His promise to return to the people of Orphalese is but a reaffirmation of his old belief in reincarnation. ... (188)

Oxford University Presse on the book *A Treasury of Kahlil Gibran*, Edited by Martin L. Wolf and Translated from the Arabic by Anthony comment that:

The author of *The Prophet* now is hailed by the editor of this volume as the "Prophet of Lebanon." This volume contains translations from many of Gibran's Arabic writings, including those which were written in his youth, and those which were contributed to the efforts of Arrabitah, "The Pen Bond," a group of writers who purposed to encourage the publication of Arabic manuscripts. Their journal published many of his poems and parables. Here, as in his well-known poems and prose poems, Gibran shows a desire to express some universalized human and religious emotions. There is the lushness of his characteristic style. There are also some brief stories, such as "Kahlil the Heretic" and "Secrets of the Heart." There are some passionately composed pieces which are addressed to his countrymen in protest against what he felt to be religious and political injustices. "A Poet's Death Is His Life" is a kind of augury of his own posthumous regard in his native land, where he is interred in the grotto of a monastery which was his childhood church. Gibran is a curious and complex admixture of mysticism, ethical universalism and aestheticism. In his *Song of Man* there are these lines: "I was here from the moment of the Beginning, and here I am still. And I shall remain here until the end of the world, for there is no Ending to my grief-stricken being." That, in contrast to T. S. Eliot's famous line, "In the end is my beginning," shows a

difference in quality between the near-great and the great in poetic expression.  
(144)

Forwarding the idea, David Pinault looks Gibran as a man who employs the image of Jesus Christ as a literary figure in his creative fiction. He adds

The Lebanese poet Khalil Jubran, writing at this time, used the poetic symbol of Jesus to reach a universal audience. Christ, for Jubran, became the example (in the words of M. Naimy) of the "ordinary man of ordinary birth who has been able through spiritual sublimation to elevate himself from the human to the divine. Though himself a Christian, Jubran deliberately intended a secularization of the figure of Jesus, so as to make him a symbol of interdenominational significance. This secularization represented a first step in making Jesus accessible as a poetic figure to both Muslim and Christian Arab poets. (113)

Ahmad Y. majdoubeh examines Kahlil Gibran's ideas, as articulated in *The Procession*, in the context of New Transcendentalism, in particular Emerson's and Thoreau's. He writes:

At a deeper level, the matter is entirely different, of course. A close reading of *The Procession* reveals that the poem is, in its form and content, Emersonian and Thoreauian to a remarkable degree. Its transcendentalism (not just romanticism, I shall point out) is reflected in much of its language, its basic philosophic assumptions and ideas (especially its conception of human society, human nature, and individual life) and in its dualistic structure". (480)

Emerson and Thoreau, in other words, provide the broad philosophic and epistemological base from which many of Gibran's transcendentalist ideas spring up. A

reading of Gibran in connection with Emerson and Thoreau does in no way undercut Gibran's originality and excellence. "For one thing, there is much in *The Procession* which is not Emersonian or Thoreauian; for another, and building on Harold Bloom's theory of influence, the more influenced an author is by others, the more original he/she is"(483)

### **Reading Gibran within his own aesthetic and moral world**

What then ought we to make of Gibran as a writer? Though he is in important ways an American writer, it is wrong to read Gibran from the point of view of contemporary American literary tastes. He is not a contemporary American modernist writer. Rather, he is several other things and deserves to be read accordingly.

First, he was an Arabic writer who eventually came to write in English. He used the flamboyant rhetoric acceptable to Arabic canons of taste, not the cool, detached style of modern American poetry.

Second, he was a symbolist, a member of a school that was already dying as he began to write. In both his writing and his painting he followed a path that other modernists abandoned, the last representative of a school that might have been.

Third, he was a painter who wrote. His writing was of a piece with his painting, haunting, ethereal images that hint at an accompanying narrative. It is no accident that he never mastered either extended narrative or abstract analysis. His stories and prose poems are usually no more than an explication of a single arresting image, usually one slightly too complicated for him to express visually in a single picture.

Eugene Paul Nassar admits Gibran a man of "two cultural pangs". He Writes:

Gibran was a man of considerable talents, and a critical sketch of his work and life is in order now, a half century after their publication; it is necessary both to correct these imprecision and to probe the actual

merits and defects in the works.' Many of those merits and defects are intimately bound to Gibran's struggle to live within two cultures, the Lebanese-Arab and the American. In Gibran's case, the struggle led him to adopt a pseudo-wisdom posture which can be called "exultant dualism." Gibran's personal psychic suffering in maintaining the posture before his audience is variously demonstrated in some of his best, certainly most poignant, lyrical moments. These lyric passages, which constitute the most authentic Gibran, dramatize the pangs of cultural discontinuity.”(21)

Clarence Seidenspinner writing about *Tears and Laughter* clarifies the book as a manifestation of 'heavy exotic imagery'. He adds

It is an oriental style characterized by heavy exotic imagery, by epigrammatic turns of speech and by the long cadences of free verse through which the wind and the water sing their songs .This volume of poetry and prose is running over the brim with the tears and laughter of life. The tears are inevitable. They come when the spirit thinks of all the contradictions and strange paradoxes of life. They result from the tragedy of frustrated love when two elective affinities are unable to plight their troth one to another. Tears come when the soul contemplates the folly of riches, the way they are acquired and the stupid ways in which they are spent. Tears come when the spirit sees out of the comer of its earthly eye the presence of death. In compensation for these tears are the laughter and spontaneity and joy of life. Where love is, there is a bubbling over of gaiety. Where beauty is, there are smiles. Where there is a consciousness of the power of love, there is a hearty laughter that proceeds

from inward strength, and so laughter plays over the poetry and prose of this book as the waves wash the sands of the sea.(84)

Helen Singer views on *The Secrets of the Heart* and illustrates it as “The themes are those typical of Gibran: the chief "lesson" is the castigation of the sin of pride in all its forms. Expounding this point of view involves expressing despair at organized religion, pity and humility mitigated with a O. Henry twist (e.g., the Gibran hermit smokes an after dinner cigarette), and some tales of nondestructive love. (228) Because love never dies, his chief lesson is for the same. To present them Gibran strives to present symbolism. Further comments Singer “Surely he had courage, since he was exiled from his native Lebanon for opposition to church and State”. (228) Commenting further he states

Gibran’s appeal probably lies in the nearness of his imagery to the symbolism of the subliminal consciousness, with its twilights and dawns; castles, minarets, and deserts; saints, cruel tyrants; stars, moon; ascetics and loves the symbolism of the free-floating self with its drive to self-abnegation and its ever resurgent self-assertion. The personality element is great, and the struggle against evil is not pictured as grim or difficult nor the sanctions as freighting supernatural. (229)

Even the concepts and theme of his humanist philosophy proves to be fertile for the human rights activist like Mona Rishmawi. For her *The Prophet* and almost all works of Kahlil Gibran present struggle between good and evil. She states

As a human rights lawyer, I feel that humanist pioneer writings such as that of Gibran and paved the way for us to construct the coherent human rights thinking, approach and legal system that we now have. Gibran’s *The Prophet* reveals a humanist trend that exists in almost all Gibran's work in Arabic and English, whether fiction, poetry, essay or even painting. Almost all his work is

centered on the struggle between good and evil. As in real life, good does not always win in Gibran's writings, as was evident by his novel *The Broken Wings*, but when the evil wins, there is misery. What constitutes good or evil is measured through certain yardsticks that are comprehensively articulated in *The Prophet*, where he reflects on various issues ranging from love and marriage, to good and evil, freedom, law and crime and punishment.

Compassion is the main value that his prophet steadily preaches. (49)

With different views, Anthony Daniels comments on Kahlil Gibran with the title "The false Prophet". He writes

Gibran was an artist as well as a writer, and his drawings, with some of which this Collected Works is interspersed; suffer from a defect that is closely kindred to the defect from which his writing suffers. They consist mainly of naked men and women, often intertwined, as seen through a censoring mist. They are pornography without the genitalia. If ever there were an exhibition of his drawings, it might with justice be titled Nudity for Prudes. (35)

Furthermore he blames Gibran as a "feeler rather than thinker". "Admittedly, he is a feeler rather than a thinker, though even his feelings end up being bogus precisely because of his refusal to discipline them by anything resembling thought".(35)

Literary works are greatly influenced, enriched and pushed forward by the earthly activities, experiences faced and so on. "Covering Gibran's literary contributions and his personal history ,including distressing poverty, the loss of his many of his family members while in his twenties , and his ability to open the eyes of ordinary people to the reality of life and beyond ,the authors; Bushrui, Suheil and Joe Jenkins portray Gibran as a solitary person who reconcile Eastern and Western cultures into a universal humanitarianism" writes Leo

Kriz about the book *Kahlil Gibran: Man and Poet* by the authors ;Bushrui, Suheil and Joe Jenkins.(89)

Gibran's literary and artistic output is highly romantic in outlook and was influenced by the Bible, Friedrich Nietzsche, and William Blake. His writings in both languages, which deal with such themes as love death, nature, and longing for the homeland, are full of lyrical outpourings and are expressive of Gibran's deeply religious and mystic nature.

Patricia Dooley, in *World Literature Today*, views two books; *Spirit Brides* and *The Storm* with spiritualism, nostalgic idealism or gloomy condemnation of society. She approves

These two collections which inaugurate a five volume series are not likely to enjoy the popularity of Gibran's *The Prophet*(1923).Originally published in Arabic in the first decade of this century ,these stories and prose poems are chiefly vehicles for the writer's vague spiritualism, nostalgic idealism or gloomy condemnation of society. The narratives themselves are either entirely symbolic or mere frames for the messages. (Such as beliefs in the transmigration of the souls, exposure of the wickedness of established religion and censure of the oppression of the poor and weak). (3)

Geoffrey P. Nash offers a discourse analysis of the works of Kahlil Gibran from the perspective of postcolonial theory of literary study. He writes

...Gibran comes out as the least interested in the Arab political discourse, although in the early part of his life in America he is shown to have engaged in activities and produced writings against Ottoman Empire that dominated his Arab people. Writing in English from 1918 onward, Gibran preferred to transcend this early bent and to couch his message in universal terms that would endear him to Western readers by its poetic and spiritual appeal, using

the evocative power of his Arab mystical heritage only to enhance this message. (384)

Moreover, Liesl Schillinger in *New York Times Book Review* writes “although Gibran was a Maronite Christian his writings through the years reflect his desire to merge the Sufi Muslim tradition with the Christian mystical heritage of his background. (10) His writings are amalgamation of literature, philosophy and art. Schillinger adds “His writing is neither pure literature nor pure philosophy, and as an Arab work written in English *The Prophet* belongs exclusive to no particular tradition .In other words nine million people have bought it and don’t know where to shelve it. (10)

The above mentioned review of literature shows that the critics have failed to focus on Kahlil Gibran’s interest on Humanist Philosophy. Thus, this research wants to explore how Gibran with his symbolic, spiritual, mystic techniques wants to focus human beings, humanist philosophy and its importance.



## II.Humanism

### General Background and Definition of Humanism

Humanism is the name given to the intellectual, literary, and scientific movement covering long period from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, the movement which aimed at basing every branch of learning on literature and culture to classical antiquity particularly human centered . The humanist believed that a classical training alone could form a perfect man, the Humanists so called themselves in opposition to the Scholastics, and adopted the term *humaniora* (the humanities) as signifying the scholarship of the ancients. Though the interval between the classical period and their own days was regarded by the Humanists as barbarous and destructive alike of art and science, Humanism (like every other historical phenomenon) was connected with the past. The use of Latin in the Liturgy of the Church had already prepared Europe for the humanistic movement. On the rise of secularism these views underwent a change, especially in Italy. In that country the body politic had grown powerful, the cities had amassed great wealth, and civic liberty was widespread. Worldly pleasure became a strong factor in life and freer play was given to sensory impulse. The transcendental, unworldly concept of life, which had till then been dominant, now came into conflict with a mundane, human and naturalistic view, which centered on nature and man. These new ideas found their prototypes in antiquity, whose writers cherished and extolled the enjoyment of life, the claims of individuality, literary art and fame, the beauty of nature. The book that provides knowledge in depth *The Encyclopedia Britannica* introduces humanism as given below:

The word humanism has been freely applied to a variety of beliefs, methods, and philosophies that place central emphasis on the human realm. Most frequently, however, the term is used with reference to a system of education and mode of inquiry that developed in northern Italy during the 14th century

and later spread through Europe and England. Alternatively known as “Renaissance humanism, “this program was so broadly and profoundly influential that it is one of the chief reasons why the Renaissance is viewed as a distinct historical period. Indeed, though the word Renaissance is of more recent coinage, the fundamental idea of that as one of renewal and reawakening is humanistic in origin. But humanism sought its own philosophical bases in far earlier times and, moreover, continued to exert some of its power long after the end of the Renaissance. (665)

It is customary to begin the history of Humanism with Dante (1265-1321), and Petrarch (1304-74). Of the two Dante, by reason of his poetic sublimity, was undoubtedly the greater; but, as regards Humanism Dante was merely its precursor while Petrarch initiated the movement and led it on to success. Petrarch, on the other hand, is the first Humanist; he is interested only in the ancients and in poetry. He unearths long-lost manuscripts of the classics, and collects ancient medals and coins. If Dante ignored the monuments of Rome and regarded its ancient statues as idolatrous images, Petrarch views the Eternal City with the enthusiasm of a Humanist, not with that of a pious Christian. The ancient classics -- especially his lodestars, Virgil and Cicero -- serve not merely to instruct and to charm him; they also incite him to imitation. His chief disciple and friend, Boccaccio (1313-75), was honored in his lifetime not for his erotic and lewd, though elegant and clever, "Decameron" (by which, however, posterity remembers him), but for his Latin works which helped to spread Humanism.

In *Wikipedia Encyclopedia* the meaning of humanism has been presented to reflect the basic essence of humanism as:

Humanism entails a commitment to the search for truth and morality through human means in support of human interests. In focusing on the capacity for

self-determination, humanism rejects transcendental justifications, such as a dependence on faith, the supernatural or divinely revealed texts. Humanist endorses universal morality based on the commonality of human nature, suggesting that solutions to our social and cultural problems cannot be parochial. (103)

Humanism believes in the beauty of love and the love of beauty. The philosophy of Humanism constitutes a profound and passionate affirmation of the joys and beauties, the braveries and idealisms, of existence upon this earth.

Humanism can be defined as the integrated system of human meaning, goal, values and harmonious program of human fulfillment, assures the dignity and the central position of man in the universe. On the other hand, it is a system of belief that emphasizes on common human needs and seeks ways of solving human problems. Its interest in defending the values and freedom of man drew it from the traditional problems of God and providence and of the soul, its immortality, and its freedom. Humanist focuses on the importance of the study of classical imaginative and philosophical, literature, but with emphasis on its moral and practical rather than aesthetic values. Humanism seeks to clarify man's goal, values and ideals and to achieve his full human thought bringing him in ever deeper and more intimate kinship and harmony with the surrounding life and society. In the Humanist ethics, the chief end of thought and action is to further this-earthly human interests on behalf of the greater glory of people. The watchword of Humanism is happiness for all humanity. The term Humanism is defined in *The Columbia Encyclopedia* as:

A philosophical and literary movement in which man and his capabilities are the central concern. The term was originally restricted to a point of view prevalent among thinkers in the Renaissance. The distinctive characteristics of Renaissance humanism were its emphasis on classical studies or the humanities and a conscious return to

classical ideals and forms. The movement led to a restudy of the Scriptures and gave impetus to the reformation. Modern usage of the term has had diverse meaning but some contemporary emphasis is on lasting human values, cultivation of the classics and respect for scientific knowledge. (1123)

Humanism is a philosophy focused upon human means for comprehending reality.

Humanists make no claims to possess or have access to supposed transcendent knowledge. Humanism is a philosophy of reason and science in the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, when it comes to the question of the most valid means for acquiring knowledge of the world, humanists reject arbitrary faith, authority, revelation, and altered states of consciousness. Humanism teaches us that it is immoral to wait for God to act for us. We must act to stop the wars and the crimes and the brutality of this and future ages. We have powers of a remarkable kind. We have a high degree of freedom in choosing what we will do. Humanism tells us that whatever our philosophy of the universe may be, ultimately the responsibility for the kind of world in which we live rests with us. Samuel Johnson, the eighteenth century humanist writes:

The truth is that the knowledge of external nature and the science which that knowledge requires or includes are not the frequent business of human mind [. . .] we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance [. . .] Socrates was rather of opinion that what we had to learn was: how to do good and avoid evil. (qtd. in Abrams 79)

Humanism is a philosophical system centered to human being. It concerns about human beings, their place and position in relation to the world. It studies about the present and future of human beings. It raises voice for the common interest and betterment of human being. It seeks respect for human dignity. Its aim is to free human being from all types of injustice and

atrocities. It strives to create beautiful world based on justice, love and fraternity. It does not believe any supernatural and omnipotent power like God and Goddess. It believes in the capability of human being. Man is the centre of its study. So, it gives a supreme value and responsibility to man. Humanism assumes that if there is something that can make human life worth and livable that is nothing other than human being. It keeps a firm belief that the present world can be changed with the effort of human being. It attempts to maintain right relation between man and man based on love, co-operation and fraternity. For this it appeals for the unity and good understanding among human beings. Humanists always sacrifice their life for the betterment of human being. Humanism has always emerged as a reaction to the threat to mankind, and humanism's central principle is man is the measure of all things. Humanist like Rousseau imagined a state of society where people lived free of any control of the state. According to him, man is born good and all evils are created by social institutions.

(25)

Humanism is a paradigm that emphasizes freedom, dignity, and potential of human beings. Humanism can be defined as a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and advocating the methods of reason, science, and democracy. Humanism is as old as human civilization and as modern as the twentieth century. Early threads of humanist thought can be found in the works of Confucius, Greek philosophers such as Protagoras and Aristotle, Renaissance philosophers Erasmus and Montaigne, Spinoza in the 17th century and Rousseau in the 18th century. In the 20th century, Bertrand Russell, George Santayana, Albert Schweitzer, and Reinhold Niebuhr have all made contributions to contemporary humanism. Similarly, Nietzsche, Tillich, Buber, and Sartre have contributed to the development of existentialism, a contemporary form of humanism. According to *British Humanist Association*:

Humanism is the belief that we can live good lives without religious or superstitious beliefs. Humanists make sense of the world using reason, experience and shared human values. We seek to make the better of the one life; we have by creating meaning and purpose for ourselves. We take responsibility for our actions and work with others for the common good. (6)

Humanism is a broad category of active ethical philosophies that affirm the dignity and worth of all people, based on the ability to determine right and wrong by appeal to universal human qualities-particularly rationalism. Humanism is a component of a variety of more specific philosophical systems, and is also incorporated into some religious schools of thought.

Furthermore, in *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory* Hawthorn asserts, "Humanism typically situates the human essence in individual human beings rather than in social structures or CULTURAL formations: humanism is thus idealistic, ahistorical, and individualistic" (156). The sense of humanity and morality has, gradually been declined. In the situation where humanity has been struggling for the existence, some new humanists have argued strongly for a return to a primarily humanistic education and for a conservative view of moral, political and literary values based largely on classical literature. Recent structuralists and post-structuralists intend to dissolve or eliminate the traditional concept of humanity. They are not ready to regard man as one of the most important element of this universe. They "tend to reduce the human subject to an illusion; or effect engendered by the differential play of language"(Abrams, 80). In spite of the crises, the ebb and flow in the sense of humanism, it can be said that the humanists are worried for the classical concept of humanism. The humanistic feelings try to analyze the condition of human being in order to offer beauty, freedom, liberty and happiness, which are essential for the development of human understanding. It is always a victory for total human understanding, feelings and values rather than for the mere intellect and reason. In *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, humanism

is defined as: "Especially in the English speaking world, humanism has since the nineteenth century come to designate a non- religious or anti- religious world view, usually based on a belief in man's capacity for self- cultivation and self improvement and in the progress of mankind" (194).

Humanism is considered as a system of thought which considers that solving human problem with the help of reason is more important than religious belief. It emphasizes the fact that the basic, nature of human being is good but at its most basic humanism involves any concern with humanity (including human needs, human desires, and human experiences) first and foremost. Often this is also giving human being a special place in the universe on account of their abilities and faculties. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* sums up Humanism as:

Though lacking permanence itself, humanism in large measure established the medium for the rise of modern thought. An impressive variety of major developments in literature, philosophy, art, religion, social science, and even natural science had their basis in humanism or were significantly nourished by it. Important spokesmen in all fields regularly made use of humanistic eloquence to further their causes. More generally, the so called modern awareness-that sense of alienation and freedom applied both to the individual and to the race-derives ultimately, for better or worse, from humanistic sources. But with humanism, as with every other historical subject, one should beware lest valid concern about changes, crises, sources, and influences, obscure the even more important issues of human continuity and human value. Whatever its weaknesses and inner conflicts, humanistic movement was heroic in its breadth and energy, remarkable in its aspirations. For human development in all fields it created a context of seldom-equaled fertility. Its characteristic modalities of thought, speech, and image lent themselves to the

promptings of genius and became the media for enduring achievement. Its moral program formed the basis for lives that are remembered with admiration. (676)

Humanism, in sum, is not a particular philosophical system or a set of doctrines, or even a more specific system of belief. Instead, humanism is better described as an attitude or perspective on life and humanity which in turn serves to influence actual philosophies and systems of beliefs. It is characteristically human, not supernatural; it is that which belongs to man and not to external nature, that which raises man to the greatest satisfactions. It may be the responsible balance of life that the early humanists discovered in the Greeks; it may be merely the study of humanities; it may be the freedom from religiosity and vivid interest in all sides of life; it may be the responsiveness to all human passions; or it may be a philosophy of which man is the centre and sanction.

### **Ethics of Humanism**

Humanism has had a long and notable career, with roots reaching far back into the past and deep into the life of civilizations supreme in their day. It has had eminent representatives in all the great nations of the world. As the American historian Professor Edward P. Cheyney says, Humanism has meant many things: “It may be the reasonable balance of life that the early Humanists discovered in the Greeks; it may be merely the study of the humanities or polite letters; it may be the freedom from religiosity and the vivid interests in all sides of life of a Queen Elizabeth or a Benjamin Franklin; it may be the responsiveness to all human passions of a Shakespeare or a Goethe; or it may be a philosophy of which man is the center and sanction. It is in the last sense, elusive as it is that since the sixteenth century.” (87)



## **Philosophy of Humanism**

The philosophy of Humanism represents a specific and forthright view of the universe, the nature of human beings, and the treatment of human problems. The term Humanist first came into use in the early sixteenth century to designate the writers and scholars of the European Renaissance. Contemporary Humanism includes the most enduring values of Renaissance Humanism, but in philosophic scope and significance goes far beyond it.

Humanism is one of those philosophies for people who think for themselves. There is no area of thought that a Humanist is afraid to challenge and explore. Humanism is a philosophy focused upon human means for comprehending reality. Humanists make no claims to possess or have access to supposed transcendent knowledge. Humanism is a philosophy of reason and science in the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, when it comes to the question of the most valid means for acquiring knowledge of the world, Humanists reject arbitrary faith, authority, revelation, and altered states of consciousness. Humanism is a philosophy of imagination. Humanists recognize that intuitive feelings, hunches, speculation, flashes of inspiration, emotion, altered states of consciousness, and even religious experience, while not valid means to acquire knowledge, remain useful sources of ideas that can lead us to new ways of looking at the world. These ideas, after they have been assessed rationally for their usefulness, can then be put to work, often as alternate approaches for solving problems.

As elaborated in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*:

In our time the term “humanist” often connotes those thinkers who base truth on human experience and reason and base values on human nature and culture, as distinct from those who regard religious revelation as the warrant for all truth and values. With few exceptions, however, Renaissance humanists were pious Christians who incorporated the concepts and ideals inherited from

pagan antiquity into the frame of the Christian creed. The result was that they tended to emphasize the values achievable by human beings in this world, and to minimize the earlier Christian emphasis on the innate corruption of human beings and on the ideals of asceticism and of withdrawal from this world in a preoccupation with the world hereafter. It has become common to refer to this synthesis of classical and Christian views, typical of writers such as Sir Philip Sydney, Edmund Spencer, and John Milton, as Christian Humanism. (117)

Humanism is a philosophy for the here and now. Humanists regard human values as making sense only in the context of human life rather than in the promise of a supposed life after death. Humanism is a philosophy of compassion. Humanist ethics is solely concerned with meeting human needs and answering human problems--for both the individual and society--and devotes no attention to the satisfaction of the desires of supposed theological entities. Humanism is a realistic philosophy. Humanists recognize the existence of moral dilemmas and the need for careful consideration of immediate and future consequences in moral decision making.

Humanism is in tune with the science of today. Humanists therefore recognize that we live in a natural universe of great size and age that we evolved on this planet over a long period of time, that there is no compelling evidence for a separable "soul," and that human beings have certain built-in needs that effectively form the basis for any human-oriented value system. Humanism is in tune with today's enlightened social thought. Humanists are committed to civil liberties, human rights, church-state separation, the extension of participatory democracy not only in government but in the workplace and education, an expansion of global consciousness and exchange of products and ideas internationally, and an open-ended approach to solving social problems, an approach that allows for the testing of new alternatives. Humanism is in

tune with new technological developments. Humanists are willing to take part in emerging scientific and technological discoveries in order to exercise their moral influence on these revolutions as they come about, especially in the interest of protecting the environment.

Humanism is a philosophy for those in love with life. Humanists take responsibility for their own lives and relish the adventure of being part of new discoveries, seeking new knowledge, exploring new options. Instead of finding solace in prefabricated answers to the great questions of life, Humanists enjoy the open-endedness of a quest and the freedom of discovery that this entails.

### **Categories of Humanism**

Greek humanism: Sixth century BC pantheists Thales of Miletus and Xenophanes of Colophon prepared the way for later Greek humanist thought. Thales is credited with creating the maxim 'Know thyself', and Xenophanes refused to recognize the gods of his time and reserved the divine for the principle of unity in the universe. Later Anaxagoras, often described as the first free-thinker', contributed to the development of science as a method of understanding the universe. These Ionian Greeks were the first thinkers to recognize that nature is available to be studied separately from any alleged supernatural realm. Pericles, a pupil of Anaxagoras, influenced the development of democracy, freedom of thought, and the exposure of superstitions. Although little of their work survives, Protagoras and Democritus both espoused agnosticism and a spiritual morality not based on the supernatural. The historian Thucydides is noted for his scientific and rational approach to history.

Literary humanism is the term for an American movement, which is actually half philosophical, half literary. It was founded by Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More in the early 1900s. Its main idea is that man's place in the universe allows the free will to be guided by intuition. Man may strive for his own progress, unhampered either by theological or by

scientific determinism. Thus, he has to fight against inhibitions of theological systems of the past as well as against so-called modern mechanistic materialism. The intuition, which leads a man, means liberation from outer constraints and subjection to inner law. It is only logical that representatives of these ideas have found classical art and the philosophy of antiquity the human expressions nearest to their convictions and that they have considered these as the real crystallizations of cultural values. They have objected to the Romanticism and materialistic naturalism of the enlightenment, since both made men appear irresponsible.

Renaissance Humanism is the spirit of learning that developed at the end of the Middle Ages with the revival of classical letters and a renewed confidence in the ability of human beings to determine for themselves truth and falsehood. Renaissance humanism was a movement that affected the cultural, political, social, and literary landscape of Europe. Beginning in Florence in the last decades of the 14th century, Renaissance humanism revived the study of Latin and Greek, with the resultant revival of the study of science, philosophy, art and poetry of classical antiquity. The revival was based on interpretations of Roman and Greek texts, whose emphasis upon art and the senses marked a great change from the contemplation on the Biblical values of humility, introspection, and meekness. Beauty was held to represent a deep inner virtue and value, and an essential element in the path towards God. Like the Humanists, Pelagius perceived humans as possessing inherent capacity for developing the qualities that the church perceived as necessitating the gift of grace from God. Pelagius rejected the doctrine of original sin. The Humanists likewise recognize humans as born not with a burden of inherited sin due to their ancestry but with potential for both good and evil which will develop in this life as their characters are formed. The Humanists therefore reject Calvinistic predestination, and understandably therefore arouse the hostility of Protestant fundamentalists. Renaissance humanists believed that the liberal arts (music, art, grammar, rhetoric, oratory, history, poetry, using classical texts, and the studies of all of the

above) should be practiced by all levels of wealth. They also approved of self, human worth and individual dignity. Noteworthy humanist scholars from this period include the Dutch theologian Erasmus, the English author (and Roman Catholic saint) Thomas More, the French writer François Rabelais, the Italian poet Francesco Petrarch and the Italian scholar Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola.

Cultural Humanism is the rational and empirical tradition that originated largely in ancient Greece and Rome, evolved throughout European history, and now constitutes a basic part of the Western approach to science, political theory, ethics, and law.

Philosophical Humanism: It is any outlook or way of life centered on human need and interest. Sub-categories of this type include Christian Humanism and Modern Humanism.

Christian Humanism is defined by *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* as "a philosophy advocating the self-fulfilment of man within the framework of Christian principles." (668).

Modern Humanism is also called Naturalistic Humanism, Scientific Humanism, Ethical Humanism and Democratic Humanism. Modern Humanism has a dual origin, both secular and religious, and these constitute its sub-categories.

Secular humanism: Secular humanism is the branch of humanism that rejects theistic religious belief and adherence to belief in the existence of a supernatural world.

During the Renaissance, the period in cultural history which called itself the "humanistic period", classical learning and the study of antique work of art were put in the foreground, in contrast to the ecclesiastical studies of the middle Ages. This tendency, as well as similar attitudes in later periods is called historical humanism.

Since 'Humanism' is a vast term, besides above described kinds, there are other various kinds as well. According to Dr. Jatava some of them are Realistic humanism,

Naturalistic humanism, Pragmatic humanism, Creative humanism, Evolutionary humanism, Democratic humanism, Integral humanism, Existential humanism, Exuberant humanism, Perennial humanism, Liberal humanism, Christian humanism, Modern humanism, etc (3).

### **Modern humanist philosophies**

One of the earliest forerunners of contemporary chartered humanist organizations was the Humanistic Religious Association formed in 1853 in London. This early group was democratically organized, with male and female members participating in the election of the leadership and promoted knowledge of the sciences, philosophy, and the arts.

In February 1877, the word 'Humanism' was publicly used, apparently for the first time in America, to apply to Felix Adler, pejoratively. Adler, however, did not embrace the term, and instead coined the name "Ethical Culture" for his new movement. Active in the early 1920s, F.C.S. Schiller considered his work to be tied to the Humanist movement. Schiller himself was influenced by the pragmatism of William James. In 1929 Charles Francis Potter founded the First Humanist Society of New York whose advisory board included Julian Huxley, John Dewey, Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann. Potter was a minister from the Unitarian tradition and in 1930 he and his wife, Clara Cook Potter, published *Humanism: A New Religion*. Throughout the 1930s Potter was a well-known advocate of women's rights, access to birth control, "civil divorce laws", and an end to capital punishment. Raymond B. Bragg, the associate editor of *The New Humanist*, sought to consolidate the input of L. M. Birkhead, Charles Francis Potter, and several members of the Western Unitarian Conference. Bragg asked Roy Wood Sellars to draft a document based on this information which resulted in the publication of the *Humanist Manifesto* in 1933. The *Manifesto* and Potter's book became the cornerstones of modern humanism. Both of these sources envision humanism as a religion. In 1941 the American Humanist Association was organized. Noted members of The American Humanist Association included Isaac Asimov,

who was the president before his death, and writer Kurt Vonnegut, who followed as honorary president until his death in 2007. Robert Buckman was the head of the association in Canada.

There are many people who consider themselves humanists, and much variety in the exact type of humanism to which they subscribe. There is some disagreement over terminology and definitions, with some people using narrower or broader interpretations. Not all people who call themselves humanists hold beliefs that are genuinely humanistic and not all people who do hold humanistic beliefs apply the label of humanism to themselves. All of this aside, Humanism can be divided into secular and religious types, although some Humanists, including the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), reject the addition of any adjective at all to "Humanist," and instead intended the word to have universal application.

### **Essential features of Humanism**

1. Humanism is one of those philosophies for people who think for themselves. There is no area of thought that Humanism is afraid to challenge and explore.
2. Humanism is a philosophy focused upon human means for comprehending reality. Humanism makes no claims to possess or have access to supposed transcendental knowledge.
3. Humanism is a philosophy of reason and science in the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, when it comes to the question of the most valid means for acquiring knowledge of the world, Humanism rejects arbitrary faith, authority, revelation, and altered states of consciousness.
4. Humanism is a philosophy of imagination. Humanism recognizes that intuitive feelings, hunches, speculation, flashes of inspiration, emotion, altered states of consciousness, and even religious experience, while not valid means to acquire

knowledge, remain useful sources of ideas that can lead us to new ways of looking the world. These ideas, after they have been assessed rationally for their usefulness, can then be put to work, often as alternate approaches for solving problems.

5. Humanism is a philosophy for here and now. Humanism regards human values as making sense only in the context of human life rather than in the promise of a supposed life after death.
6. Humanism is a philosophy of compassion. Humanist ethics is solely concerned with meeting human needs and answering human problems--for both the individual and society--and devotes no attention to the satisfaction of the desires of supposed theological entities.
7. Humanism is a realistic philosophy. Humanism recognizes the existence of moral dilemmas and the need for careful consideration of immediate and future consequences in moral decision making.
8. Humanism is in tune with the science of today. Humanism, therefore, recognizes that we live in a natural universe of great size and age that we evolved on this planet over a long period of time, that there is no compelling evidence for a separable "soul," and that human beings have certain built-in needs that effectively form the basis for any human-oriented value system.
9. Humanism is in tune with today's enlightened social thought. Humanists are committed to civil liberties, human rights, church-state separation, the extension of participatory democracy not only in government but in the workplace and education, an expansion of global consciousness and exchange of products and ideas internationally, and an open-ended approach to solving social problems, an approach that allows for the testing of new alternatives.



10. Humanism is in tune with new technological developments. Humanists are willing to take part in emerging scientific and technological discoveries in order to exercise their moral influence on these revolutions as they come about, especially in the interest of protecting the environment.
11. Humanism is, in sum, a philosophy for those in love with life. Humanists take responsibility for their own lives and relish the adventure of being part of new discoveries, seeking new knowledge, exploring new options. Instead of finding solace in prefabricated answers to the great questions of life, Humanists enjoy the open-endedness of a quest and the freedom of discovery that this entails.
12. The focus on man and his capabilities is the central concern of Humanism, in particular the idea that human beings possess the potential of solving problems through a rigorous application of reason and the scientific method. Humanists reject the religious concepts of determinism, fatalism, or predestination, and instead believe that human beings are the shapers of individual destiny.
13. Humanism is a new philosophy that superseded the dominant mode of the interpretation of reality according to a supernatural medieval church model, and replaced that "ideal" with the concept of man as the measure of all things; as such, it is the beginning of Modernity and the Age of Reason concept that all human beings have the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, not in some promised unknown future paradise, but in the here and now as shapers and interpreters of self-destiny.
14. Human beings are not subject to God or any divine agency. They have no obligation to love, fear or obey any such supernatural agent.

15. Humanism develops an attitude of compassion to those in a state of suffering from whatever cause that leads to the suffering, and seeks to engage in action that alleviates this suffering.
16. Humanism differs from related movements like rationalism, skepticism, free-thought and atheism, in that it claims to offer an ethical alternative to religion based on human experience.
17. Free of supernaturalism it [Humanism] recognizes human beings as a part of nature and holds that values - be they religious, ethical, social or political - have their source in human nature, experience, and culture. Humanism thus derives the goals of life from human need and interest rather than from theological or ideological abstractions, and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny.
18. Humanism is a philosophy that places humanity in the universal context and develops a code of behavior that frees humans from the supernatural and the unreasonable but still places mankind in the appropriate universal context.
19. Deep concern for the well being and prosperity of all of humanity and its individuals, Support for democracy and human rights, Love and respect for fellow human beings regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, or disability.
20. Human beings are capable of great works of good, capable of great achievements, and capable for improvement.
21. Humanism is a philosophy that promotes life based on ethics, not on superstition, mysticism, or the supernatural, but on what we can empirically observe in the physical universe around us. Because Humanism is not based on the transcendental, it has come to be one of the more popular worldviews for those who do not have faith-

based or supernatural views, but wish to live meaningful and moral lives. Therefore, Humanists tend to consider themselves either atheist or agnostic

22. Grossly speaking, the ethics of Humanism stems from the fact that morality is a human invention and has been created for our well-beings and happiness while working and living together in society. The basic human decencies: integrity, honesty, altruism, responsibility, etc. all allow us to live happier and healthier lives with a sense of self respect and dignity

### **Humanism and Humanitarianism**

Humanitarianism is an active belief in the value of human life, whereby humans practice benevolent treatment and provide assistance to other humans, in order to better humanity for both moral and logical reasons. It is the philosophical belief in movement toward the improvement of the human race in a variety of areas, used to describe a wide number of activities relating specifically to human welfare

Humanitarianism is an informal ideology of practice; it is the doctrine that people's duty is to promote human welfare. Humanitarianism is based on a view that all human beings deserve respect and dignity and should be treated as such. Therefore, humanitarians work towards advancing the well-being of humanity as a whole. It is the antithesis of the "us vs. them" mentality that characterizes tribalism and ethnic nationalism. Humanitarians abhor slavery, violation of basic and human rights, and discrimination on the basis of features such as skin colors, religion, ancestry, or place of birth. Humanitarianism drives people to save lives, alleviate suffering, and promote human dignity in the middle of man-made or natural disasters. Humanitarianism is embraced by movements and people across the political spectrum. The informal ideology can be summed up by a quote from Albert Schweitzer: "Humanitarianism consists in never sacrificing a human being to a purpose." Jean Pictet, in

his commentary on *The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross* points out the universal characteristics of humanitarianism as:

The wellspring of the principle of humanity is in the essence of social morality which can be summed up in a single sentence, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. This fundamental precept can be found, in almost identical form, in all the great religions, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Islam, Judaism and Taoism. It is also the golden rule of the positivists, who do not commit themselves to any religion but only to the data of experience, in the name of reason alone. It is indeed not at all necessary to resort to affective or transcendental concepts to recognize the advantage for men to work together to improve their lot. (24)

Historically, humanitarianism was publicly seen in the social reforms of the late 1800s and early 1900s, following the economic turmoil of the Industrial Revolution in England. Many of the women in Great Britain who were involved with feminism during the 1900s also pushed humanitarianism. The atrocious hours and working conditions of children and unskilled laborers were made illegal by pressure on Parliament by humanitarians. The Factory Act of 1833 and the Factory Act of 1844 were some of the most significant humanitarian bills passed in Parliament following the Industrial Revolution. In the middle of the 19th century, humanitarianism was central to the work of Florence Nightingale and Henry Dunant in emergency response and in the latter case led to the founding of the Red Cross.

Today, humanitarianism is particularly used to describe the thinking and doctrines behind emergency response to humanitarian crises. In such cases it argues for a humanitarian response based on humanitarian principles, particularly the principle of humanity.

The most important principles of humanitarian action are humanity, which posits the conviction that all people have equal dignity by virtue of their membership in humanity,

impartiality, which directs that assistance is provided based solely on need, without discrimination among recipients, neutrality, which stipulates that humanitarian organizations must refrain from taking part in hostilities or taking actions that advantage one side of the conflict over another, and independence, which is necessary to ensure that humanitarian action only serves the interests of war victims, and not political, religious, or other agendas.

These fundamental principles serve two essential purposes. They embody humanitarian action's single-minded purpose of alleviating suffering, unconditionally and without any ulterior motive. They also serve as operational tools that help in obtaining both the consent of belligerents and the trust of communities for the presence and activities of humanitarian organizations, particularly in highly volatile contexts.

The basic difference between humanitarianism and humanism is that Humanism is the name given to the intellectual, literary, and scientific movement covering long period from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, the movement which aimed at basing every branch of learning on literature and culture to classical antiquity particularly human centered and Humanitarianism necessarily encompasses civil rights, justice, etc., because humanitarianism is an effort to change the core base of ethics and morals that lead to things such as racial and sexual inequality. Humanitarianism is that quality of a human being that is committed to the caring for humanity especially as manifested in those who have become victims of circumstances beyond their control; the personal quality of a true humanitarian. Humanitarianism is that quality of caring about humanity and its state of being; an essential element for peace.

### **III. Humanist Philosophy in Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet***

Humanism is the integrated system of human meaning goal, values, and harmonious program of human fulfilment which assures the dignity and the central position of man in the universe. It is a system of belief that emphasizes on common human needs and seeks ways of solving problems. It is a philosophy of reason and science in the pursuit of knowledge. Humanists discard arbitrary faith, authority, revelation, and altered states of consciousness. It teaches us that it is immoral to wait for God to act for us. We must act to stop the wars and the crimes and the brutality of this and future ages.

As a matter of fact humanism seeks respect for human dignity. Its aim is to free human being from all types of injustice and atrocities. It attempts to create beautiful world based on justice, love and fraternity. It does not believe any supernatural and omnipotent power like God and Goddess. It confides in the capability of human being. Man is the centre of its study. This is why it owes man with a supreme value and responsibility. On the whole humanism assumes that if there is something that can make human life worth and livable that is nothing other than human beings. Humanists are committed to civil liberties, human rights, church-state separation, the extension of participatory democracy not only in government but in the workplace and education, an expansion of global consciousness and exchange of products and ideas internationally, and open-ended approach to solving social problems, an approach that permits for the examination of new alternatives.

Gibran's *The Prophet* reveals messages about humanity and diverse aspects of human life in much transparent manner. It is a sort of milestone for bettering and upgrading human crest. The Prophet helps human beings reach the apex of human dignity and supremacy. Whatever are the promises of humanism as a philosophy are found well-mentioned and discussed nicely. As a matter of fact *The Prophet* is often described as Gibran's masterpiece.

The Prophet of the title is a man who is about to set sail from the city of Orphalese after a residence of twelve years. Before he goes, various inhabitants of the city ask him questions of a philosophical nature, and most of the poem consists of his replies. His replies are much prominent since they advocate for bettering human dignity and prestige. When he is asked how a journey can be made in peace without pain and sorrow, Almustafa says:

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? (1-2)

Hence he makes it clear that without difficulties and complications even the city cannot be left. The days of sorrow and loneliness have already been experienced and now it is the time for departure from those walls of gloom and pain. He further clarifies that there is no place of regret and repent. What have happened are now all right and such moments of the past must be forgotten. Freedom and peace are there in the river and stream. He describes other features of life: “A noontide have you been in our twilight, and your youth has given us dreams to dream. No stranger are you among us, nor a guest, but our son and our dearly beloved. Suffer not yet our eyes to hunger for your face” (7). He appeals the noontide and calls it human beings’ son and dearly beloved. He synthesizes the nature with human beings. He does not see any difference between nature and human being since both of them are intimately interconnected and says that human beings are much eager to perceive the noontide as they derive a sort of pleasure from its sight. Thus he vitalizes the position of noontide and associates it with human beings. He says: “Much have we loved you. But speechless was our love, and with veils has it been veiled” (7). It is the broad concept and wide vision at the level of humanity. Human beings love noontide much but they cannot expose the degree of love since it is abstract and no one can show this. Their love is covered and invisible. It becomes

clear whatever is much precious and much significant, can hardly be revealed. It is simply felt. There is no way of revelation and exposition. Rather it is the matter of feeling and realization. Hence again he makes a forceful effort to show the intimate connection between both nature and human being.

Almitra a seeress promises that they will hand down the message of the prophet of God to the coming generation. With this promise she requests very humbly to tell about truth. Further she says the very truth and message will gain immortality. Hence she says: “Yet this we ere you leave us that you speak to us and give us of your truth. And we will give it unto our children, and they unto their children, and it shall not perish” (8-9). While the ship is about to depart from, this request is made. There is an urgent requirement of knowing the truth and the message in order to spread it all over the human world since all human beings are children to the God.

When Almitra gets inquisitive enough to know about love that is pious and sacred feeling, Almustafa says:

And when he speaks to you believe in him, Though his  
voice may shatter your dream as the north wind lays  
waste the garden. For ever as love crowns you so shall he  
crucify you. Even as he is for your growth so is he or your  
pruning. (10)

Hence love is the matter of belief and faith. In the absence of faith, love cannot be imagined and thought of. His voice may sound harsh and bitter. Furthermore it may shatter our dream. However, we need to confide his speech and statements. Whatever he does is for the sake of human beings. This is why one should not suspect him any more. The connection of life with love is much deep and dense that one feels complicated to understanding it. He says: “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" (13). Hence love is presented a great force that pervades the all aspects of human beings. There is nothing which remains unaffected by love since it is a synthesizing factor. Furthermore the secrets of human beings can be known through the lens of love. Whatever we know is because of love. In its absence nothing is possible. The writer heightens the degree of love in human life. He discloses the fact that love is an independent thing since it is sufficient within itself. To make it clear that evidence from the text can be presented: "Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself. Love possesses not nor would it be possessed; for love is sufficient unto love (14). Nobody can own love since it is not some sort of entity at the same time it is not dependent on others. Moreover it is so autonomous that it remains untouched from the outer factors. The way love is detailed in the text, reveals the fact that it is much sacred and pious. In this regard he says:

You were born together, and together you shall be for evermore. You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days. Aye, you shall be together even in silent memory of God. [...] 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 the 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, even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.

(15-16)

He simplifies the value of love that it integrates people and let them remain together that is indeed required for betterment of humanity. The sense of communalism is disclosed in very transparent manner. The crux of life is to love each other with full pleasure. The life becomes

meaningful when people are interconnected with each other and dance and sing together. Even they need to pray together to please God and to derive the bliss in life. No matter how close and intimate they become they should not make a bond of love. He wants people to remain dynamic and their love in motion like a sea that is much democratic. When love becomes static, it cannot please and benefit everyone. This is why we human beings need to be free and let love remain independent and moving to spread warmth and pleasure everywhere without any discrimination. After all, he does talk about the communal and just life that can be possible through the sharing of possessions among the fellow beings. We human beings should share but not eat the same bread simultaneously. In fact human beings can derive pleasure and can remain content keeping them separately by singing and dancing together. Hence he wants people to enjoy collective life without losing their individual identities since all of us are unique having distinct quality that helps recognize us in society we live.

Almastufa makes it crystal clear that human beings boast of having children and talk that these people belong to them which is really our illusion. He deludes us stating that children are not our children rather they are daughters and sons. Hence he avers:

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. (19)

We human beings are simply the means of them that they come through us. We do not have any right to claim that they are our children only the basis of mediation. Despite that fact that they stay with us, they do not belong to us in the sense that we are not their masters and owners. Rather they are independent beings who have their own identity and existence that

must remain untouched and unaffected. People can share love but not thought since the mindset of everyone is distinct. The thinking process is very much autonomous aspect of human beings that remain different from each other. It is the thought that distinguishes one from other.

Various aspects of human beings are displayed in *The Prophet* which is of much significance. The nature of human beings and their interpersonal behavior are focused in such a way that the entire life span can be led to the commendable direction to achieve the meaning of living. The liberal and selfless are those people who hardly think of their benefits at the cost of survival of many innocent, helpless and poor people. They are indeed devoted to distributing things they have got with joy and thus they create milieu of happiness and satisfaction. It is said in the text:

There are those who give little of the much which they have-and they give it for recognition and their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome. And there are those who have little and give it all. These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty. There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward. [...] And there are those who give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy, nor give with mindfulness of virtue. (23-24)

He categorizes human beings who give away things they have. To him some people are hypocrites in the sense that they give little from their possession in order to show their liberal and charitable nature in society. In fact they want to create their recognition through charity. Their intention of giving is not so sound that we can appreciate since they think more of their benefits than the life of those undergoing suffering and needy. Thus some people are there

who have little but give away to others all in all with the hope that their treasure will never remain empty. They are much obliged to the fellow beings for their own satisfaction as well as for the sake of others. Similarly there are some who give with joy and the joy is their reward. The virtuous people never expect any thing from giving nor do they feel pained while giving. They are unmindful to anything. In fact they are the selfless people who never expect any sort of return from their giving. This is the highest level of humanity and human beings thus can create their supremacy in the fullest range. To strengthen the very idea concerning humanism, he says:

And he who has deserved to drink from the ocean of life deserves to fill his cup from your little stream. [...] And you receivers-and you are all receivers-assume no weight of gratitude, lest you lay a yoke upon yourself and upon him who gives. Rather rise together with the giver on his gifts as on wings. (27)

Rights and duties come together. In human domain people are much worried and prepared to receive their rights but hardly think of their duties that they need to accomplish simultaneously. He hereby talks about those who deserve to have something are also liable for accomplishment of their duties that is to say they deserve to fill up the empty cup from their stream. Filling up the empty cup is symbolically a sort of accountability and duty. This sermon is much contemplative as it carries a clear and right direction to human beings. In general people are receptive and hardly think of giving away. To awaken such people from the slumbering stance he conveys this kind of message which is indeed worthy and significant for overall betterment of humanity in the universe.

Non-violence is another prominent aspect of human life. It infers love for life of all the fellow creatures. We should respect the life of all in all since life is equally loving and significant of all creatures of the universe. To make it a bit more focused, he says in the text:

When you kill a beast say to him in your heart: “By the same power that slays you, I too am slain; and I too shall be consumed. For the law that delivered you into my hand shall deliver me into a mightier hand. (29)

At the level of power and might creatures differ from each other but all of them are God’s children. The mightier always prefer to slay the weaker that really invites destruction of one creature and reservation of other. Hence he does not long for this kind of culture. Implicitly he wants us to respect lives mutually and should live in the good coordination and harmony for the sake of our betterment and progress. Furthermore it also becomes clear that feeling and sense of fear is with every creature while one is about death regardless their kinds. We can create our own fate. It means we have life as we work. To remain idle is a sort of waste of precious time we have. It is not favorable to anyone. It brings about a number of difficulties and problems in the sense that we always become short of essentials. To assimilate all seasons and moments of life we must work lest we become strangers to all these. He says in the light of textual evidence:

For to be idle is to become a stranger unto the seasons, and to step out of life’s possession that marches in majesty and proud submission towards the infinite. When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music. (30)

To work is to create music which pleases us and makes us content with all possessions. Action is a kind of worshipping in the modern sense. The more liable and diligent we are in our work, the better fruits we get. After all, work results in fruition and positive things in our life. To upgrade life standard we need to work and do our level best to turn every moment into the moment of happiness and pleasure. Otherwise we become strangers to the life

journey and change of time as well. We all human beings are endowed with distinct accountabilities and duties in our life. This is why we should work to fulfill dream of better life and reach close to the truth of life. The mystery of life cannot be comprehended in case we do not labor with full joy and devotion. Hence the Prophet says:

But I say to you that when you work you fulfill a part of earth's furthest dream, assigned to you when that dream was born, and in keeping yourself with labor you are in truth loving life, and to love life through labor is to be intimate with life's inmost secret. (31)

We should love life in deed and only in words. To understand the secret of life we must work as hard as we can since it is the way to lead to understanding the mystery and secret of our life. We become closer to the sensitive and inner aspect of our life. Not to work and to remain idle means we distance us from life. The more intimate we become to life, the better knowledge we can have about life. Deed is the implementation of love. Till we work, we cannot disclose whether we love life or not. He further says in the same vein: "Work is love made visible. And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy" (32-33). While working we must be much dedicated and be in delighted mood.

Otherwise we should stay away from work and depend on others for food and clothes. Not to work means to turn us into parasites that is a sort of insult on the part of humanity. To him work is the worship in the real sense. Hence by work human beings can maintain their supremacy in the world. Laziness kills our potentials and makes us passive to a greater extent that is indeed not commendable for overall betterment of humanity. To Gibran human beings are supreme and to keep this supremacy alive evermore they need to work and remain obliged to duties they are assigned to.

Sorrow and joy are two opposites that we undergo and tackle them as nicely as we can. They come and become dominant from time and again. He 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. (34-35)

when we are in delighted condition, we are zealous to know the cause of the sorrowful condition and when we are in sorrowful condition, we seek for delight. Hence delight every of us seeks for since it really pleases us and we always want to remain delighted by virtue of being human. We burst into tears for happy moments that have gone out of grip and feel short of delight when sorrow comes into our life.

While having a glimpse on house, he says: “Your house is your larger body. It grows in the sun and sleeps in the stillness of the night; and it is not dreamless. Does not your house dream? And dreaming, leave the city for grove or hilltop?” (36) Hence house means a team of people who follow the normal routine of life and move them accordingly since they are human beings that they do not show any magic on their side. People in a family are disciplined and obliged to the rules of nature which they never violate for the sake of momentary pleasure and interest. Dream is also associated with the house that it dreams. Gibran metaphorically expresses distinct aspects of human beings how they live their normal life with joy and satisfaction. No matter house is a non-living entity that cannot do what people can. Hence the writer has personified and endowed with the quality of human beings. Furthermore he talks about the other features that are of the house. It means the house is the place where people feel comfortable and they can share their feelings and emotions with each other since they live in a group. They coordinate and cooperate with each other. He says: “Or

have you only comfort, and the lust for comfort, that stealthy thing that enters the house a guest, and then becomes a host, and then a master?" (37) Besides all these he warns people not to let outsider enter their house lest they will have face the dire situation in which turn the ruled and the outsider in the guise of guest becomes the ruler or master. Hence he focuses on the secrecy of family as that is required for the sake of harmony and integrity. After all, this guidance is par excellent in the favor of humanity in particular and all the creatures in general.

Speaking truly the text carries the message that we do not need to confide much on artificial things. Nature is supreme and human beings cannot overcome nature and her entities at any cost. Putting on clothes is the part of culture which is beyond nature. Though people dress their body with clothes, they cannot hide all organs of their body. In this regard, he reveals the evidence from the text:

Your clothes conceal much of your beauty, yet they hide not  
the unbeautiful. And though you seek in garments the  
freedom of privacy you may find in them a harness and  
a chain. Would that you could meet the sun and the wind  
with more of your skin and less of your raiment, for the  
breath of life is in the sunlight and the hand of life is in the  
wind. (39)

While reflecting on the clothes that human beings wear to veil their beauty, he says all parts of the body cannot be concealed. When beauty is hidden, the unbeautiful remain uncovered. In fact clothes cannot save our privacy and secret. The freedom that we want to attain by wearing clothes is not possible since there are some sorts of chain and harshness in those clothes as well. This is why we should leave the natural body as it is simply because we can never become successful to cover the whole body through any means. Hence there is intimate



relationship between nature and human beings. Sun and wind are the entities of nature which vitally affect human beings' life and their activities. They are the means of human survival since people breathe in air and bath in the sun to remain alive longer. This close connection between nature and human beings shows the supremacy and significance of nature in human life. After all, these details are human-centric and for the betterment of human life as well. They pave the path for us to walk along as it leads us to get to the gate of our life end in very pleasant manner.

Humanism is a philosophy for those in love with life. Humanists take responsibilities for their own lives and savor the adventure of being part of new discoveries, seeking new understanding, exploring new options. Instead of finding solace in prefabricated answers to the great questions of life, humanists take pleasure in the open-endedness of a pursuit and the liberty of detection that this necessitates. Gibran's *The Prophet* seems to be moving around similar themes that are life-oriented and benefiting human beings in totality. The text does focus on how human life can be bettered by releasing it from various hazardous factors. The Prophet says:

To you the earth yields her fruit and you shall not want if  
 you but know how to fill your hands. It is in exchanging the  
 gifts of the earth that you shall find abundance and be  
 satisfied. Yet unless the exchange be in love and kindly  
 justice, it will but lead some to greed and others to  
 hunger.[...] And suffer not the barren-handed to take part in your  
 transactions, who would sell their words for your labor. (41-42)

It gets crystal clear that human beings depend on gifts them by nature. Their survival is due to the fruits of the earth. On this ground the earth is our mother that we must be obliged to and protect her for our future as well. No matter how many we are in number, are tamed by the

earth in very comfortable way. Human beings are takers and the earth is a liberal giver that she gives away all in all without any discrimination. She is much generous and loving to all of us. There are plenty of things that we human beings consume for our goodness. Despite the fact that nature is so liberal and generous to us, human beings are of variety of perspectives and psychology that they turn greedy and selfish as well. In fact this is no good transaction. For exchange we need to be loving and kind to the earth. The above extract consists of poor people as well who undergo hunger and suffering due to shortage of food and they simply remain mute even in time of crisis since they feel helpless. The Prophet further asserts:

For it is he and not your god-self nor the pigmy in the mist  
that knows crime and the punishment of crime. Oftentimes  
have I heard you speak of one who commits a wrong as  
though he were not one of you, but a stranger unto you and  
an intruder upon your world. (44)

He makes it clear the criminals and the guilty should be punished and the criminals are those whom we do not know. They are strangers and unfamiliar to us. We are not criminals and this is why we know nothing about the crime and wrong deeds. The outer forces invite difficulties in our life and they know the crime and punishment of crime. The untouched and uninvolved do not have any idea about crimes and their consequences. When human world is transgressed by outer forces, some sort of complication and troubles certainly arise and interfere with human pleasure and happiness.

As a matter of fact, the focus on human beings and their capabilities is the focal concern of humanism, in particular the idea that human beings own the potential of solving problems through a meticulous application of reason and the scientific method. Humanists discard the religious concepts of determinism, fatalism, or predestination, and instead belie

that human beings are the sharper of individual fortune. Similarly Gibran highlights the moral aspect of human beings:

The murdered is not unaccountable for his own murder, and robbed is not blameless in being robbed. The righteous is not blameless in being robbed. The righteous is not innocent of the deeds of the wicked. And the white-handed is not dean in the doings of the felon. Yea, the guilty is oftentimes the victims of the injured. And still more often the condemned is the burden bearer for the guiltless and unblamed. You cannot separate the just from the unjust and the good from the wicked. (47)

It is complicated and even impossible to put two opposites into two separate boxes as both types come simultaneously and remain together. The sun is not without shadow and day is not without night. The significance of the innocent is due to the presence of the guilty. The robbers and the robbed both are responsible for crime and we cannot blame one of them solely. Thus he puts all sorts of things on the same measuring standard to equalize the stance of all levels of humanity. What happens in the society is due to the participation of both the blamed and blameless. In fact this is the postmodern concept that nothing is static and has a single meaning. Everything is fluid that it keeps on changing its shape and form. Furthermore he talks about rules and regulations how effectively they are implemented and assimilated by human beings. He says:

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? And who is he that shall bring you to judgment if you tear off your garment yet leave it in no man's path? (51)

Hence it becomes pretty clear people are fully free from everything until they interfere with others' life. Nobody can claim that s/he has committed this and that mistake since the person has not affected any one in any way. Fear is indeed our greatest enemy. But why of get afraid of fear when we are totally untouched with the problems created in the society. Thus the prophet clarifies rules and regulations are for those who violate and they need to get afraid of. As a matter of fact, he is implicitly convincing people to remain unconcerned with the idea to disturb. And then freedom can be enjoyed to a grater extent. Freedom must not be taken as a goal since it is invisible and abstract. And there is some sort of trouble in the heart when we get anxious enough to seek for freedom. The prophet reveals the matter makes it clear by passing suggestions to human beings in the text:

And my heart bled within me; for you can only be free when  
 even the desire of seeking freedom becomes a harness to you  
 ,and when you cease to speak of freedom as a goal and a  
 fulfillment. 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 [...] for how can a tyrant  
 rule the free and the proud, but for a tyranny in their  
 own freedom and a shame in their own pride. (53-54)

The desire for freedom is indeed very high in everybody. However we should not run after fulfilling it. Otherwise we get troubled a lot. We should not have a certain purpose to attain freedom. It comes spontaneously and without any efforts. We do not have to struggle to get freedom and enjoy the liberty. In fact bearing difficulties and grieves in course of trying for freedom only become obstacles and restraints on the path of our life. We must discard all these efforts. People who are free and proud of their being cannot be ruled by the despotic

ruler. The tyrant fails to prolong her/his reign in the country of free and proud citizens. After all, it gets clear that the Prophet focuses again on the dignity and self-esteem of human beings. He exposes the supremacy of those who are free but do not attempt to seek for freedom.

The rational and emotional aspects of human beings at distinct stages in their life journey prove much prominent since these two forces guide human beings to behave and deal with situations in different manners. To cope with life hurdles people need to become rational and emotional in accordance with the urgency and nature of time and situation respectively. To stress these two aspects, the Prophet says:

For reason, ruling alone, is a force confining; and passion,  
unattended, is a flame that burns to its own destruction,  
therefore, let your soul exalt your reason to the height of  
passion, that it may sing; and let it direct your passion with  
reason, that your passion may live through its own daily  
resurrection, and like the phoenix rise above its own ashes. (57)

He discloses the distinct nature and functions of reason and passion. Reason is mechanical and therefore it has certain boundary whereas passion is unbound and it goes beyond the measure of its criterion. People turn much obsessed with their emotional aspect and do something they do not have to for the sake of the temporal interest and as a result they face the unfavorable result. He prefers the amalgam of both and their interrelation and interaction. For this the soul needs to exalt the rationality to the level of emotion and thus both get combined in such a way that they remain iron-clad and eventually passion keeps on rising ceaselessly in the sense that it receives some sort of immortality that it ever remains alive and flowering.

Sorrow in human life is much antagonistic in the sense that it blocks up the rational faculty and makes people completely blind in such a way that they cannot see ahead. The Prophet says in the text it is human choice and no else should be blamed for. Thus he says: “Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding. [...] Much of your pain is self-chosen. [...] It is the bitter potion by which the physician within you heals your sick self” (59-61). But in contrary to the common sense of pain, the Prophet says pain has got the healing power that eliminates sickness and illness from the human body. As a matter of fact pain filters our emotions and anxieties ever suppressed. Such suppressed feelings get an outlet due to pain. Hence pain has the medicinal use that needs understanding. After all we cannot negate this inevitable feature of pain.

The Prophet opines that cognition should be measured at any scales since it is boundless and measureless. Thus things which are beyond our capacity we should not attempt for. He says in this concern:

But let there be no scales to weigh your unknown treasure;

And seek not the depths of your knowledge with staff or  
sounding line. For self is a sea boundless and measureless.

Say not, “I have found the truth,” but rather, “I have found a truth.” Say not, “I  
have found the path of the soul.” Say rather, “I have met the soul walking  
upon my path.” For the soul walks upon all paths. (63)

Every individual self is like a sea that surpasses to the extent the horizon appears to us. As the sea is boundless and measureless, human beings’ cognitive ability is so dense and deep that no measuring standard can work to determine its depth and density. Again the Prophet heightens the supremacy and human potential to a greater extent. After all his attempt and want is only to expose the human potentials and capabilities as possible as the words he finds to express. Furthermore he says there is a single truth. There are a chain of truths since the

notion of truth keeps on changing every moment. This is why we should say I have found a truth which further infers that there is the possibility of another truth as well. Human soul is walking not on a single path paved by anyone special rather it walks on the paths. Overall he speaks all these in the spirit of postmodernism that there are a series of meanings and truths about a single thing.

While reflecting on teachers and mentors, he says how and what they do and are. He assets regarding teachers and their followers:

The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness. If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind. (64)

In fact commendable and wise teachers are those who lead, guide and convince their disciples to the right path where they can recognize their self and potentials and be aware and conscious of the things around them. The teacher should only give her/his students faith and lovingness since they excite the slumbering energy and zeal in disciples and thus they become active to find the path ahead. Wisdom should not be given to disciples. Simply faith and lovingness is sufficient. Faith and lovingness helps disciples disclose the door of their mind which is boundless and measureless. Thus the abundance of mine can have an opening with the help of teacher's guidance and faith.

Friendship is very much pious and sacred which requires delicate handling and soft temperament to prolong its longevity. The Prophet speaks about friendship as such:

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. [...] For without

words, in friendship, all thoughts, all desires, all expectations are born are shared, with joy that is unacclaimed. (66)

Metaphorically presented the notion of friendship and its growth seems much rejoiced and meaningful. He says it is a field which has been cultivated and sown in the seed of love and thanksgivings. It is a place where people can share their feelings and anxieties. It is place where we can take shelter in for peace and food. It is a situation in which we can attain joy and pleasure. After all, it is greatly resourceful that we can have a lot and our expectations get fulfilled and appeased well. He focuses on the prominence of friendship into human life and how it emancipates people from all sorts of sorrow and pain.

In this way he further exposes human behavior:

You talk when you cease to be at peace with your thoughts. And when you can no longer dwell in the solitude of your heart you live in your lips, and sound is a diversion and a pastime. And in much of your talking, thinking is half murdered. [...] when you meet your friend on the roadside or in the market place, let the spirit in you move your lips and direct your tongue. Let the voice within your voice speak to the ear of his ear; (69)

We human beings by virtue contemplate over many concerned things while being in the state of solitariness. In fact our mind works freely when we are alone and they are cut off from the disturbing factors of the world. Hence the Prophet does emphasize how and when people's mind works at nice pace and in commendable manner. When we are not in solitude, we keep on interacting with fellow beings in our surrounding. Hence he reveals the human nature.

Interaction is indeed a way to kill our time but while talking our thought process ceases working. Both talking and thinking are not possible simultaneously. However, his focus is on the talking and interaction with fellow beings as well since that is indispensable for the social rapport as well as for our overall well being.



Likewise he talks about selfish and opportunistic nature of human beings that they pray in their distress and in their need; but it is doubtful whether they pray also in the fullness of their joy and in their days of abundance. People pour their darkness into space for their comfort and delight. But the Prophet advises human beings that we should spur again and again till we burst into laughter and change our position from weeping to laughing

The way he defines freedom is much philosophical and unusual. He takes pleasure as a freedom and it is not the freedom at all. Pleasure is a sort of flourishing and blossoming of inner desires. And there is no fixed space of freedom and pleasure. Rather they are abstract things which are felt not seen in the space and time. On the whole the Prophet in *The Prophet* by disclosing distinct aspects of human life passes his visions and views on so that there can be a better world for humanity in general and human beings can learn and get aware of many things and their ignorance about various hurdles of human life. Eventually they can lead a better life by improving the current one and overcoming all sorts of biases and prefabricated consciousness.

#### IV. Conclusion

Gibran is public reformer of old cultural contexts and the forecaster of an increasing celestial awareness beyond any need of a given enlightening context. Most often and fundamentally, however, he emerges as a lonely poet finding solace only in the poetic consciousness or imagination. He wants desperately to trumpet Humanism with absolutist foundations, but at the centre of his vision, he is a tragic dualist whose exultation is fixed only in the idea of an ever-upwards-striving human spirit

*The Prophet* is indeed prophetic in its way, but not in a sense that does any credit to Gibran. He expresses very clearly the idea that moral authority belongs to children and not to adults. The cultural results of such advice, when it has been taken seriously, are all around us for us to see, but since it is easier for adolescents to stamp themselves on a culture than for children to do so, the consequential culture is pubescent rather than childish in the strict sense.

In *The Prophet*, Gibran expresses some of the financial ideas that have not only been devastating economically, but have led to hideous outbursts of brutality, feelings that united the Nazi and Communist ideologies. Fuzzy schmaltziness is again made to do the work of thought, with atrocious logical consequences.

The permanence of tone that runs throughout *The Prophet* of Gibran is that of lonely alienation, of a longing for connections. Beneath all his prophetic masks, Gibran's lyric cry for association reveals his most authentic voice. Hungering for real unity, Gibran is ever attempting to lift himself up by his own bootstraps to deliver truths or at least prolegomena to the multitudes in old societies or new on social and cosmic questions. But ever behind these pronouncements is the Gibran of unsure ness, of insightful melancholy, of tragic apparition. Gibran is at home neither in the old culture nor in the new, and an unresolved dualism vitiates much of the work when, as so often occurs, it pretends to resolution.

The desire for freedom as mentioned in *The Prophet* is indeed very high in all of us. But according to *The Prophet* we should not run after fulfilling it. If not we get bothered a lot. Independence is the matter of negligence and disinterestedness. We should not have a certain principle to attain autonomy. It comes spontaneously and without any efforts. We do not have to fight back to get freedom and enjoy the liberty. In fact bearing difficulties and grieves in course of trying for freedom only become obstacles and restraints on the path of our life. We must abandon all these efforts. People who are free and self-important of their being cannot be ruled by the despotic ruler. The dictator fails to prolong her/his supremacy in the country of free and ostentatious citizens. After all, it gets clear that the Prophet focuses again on the dignity and self-esteem of human beings. He exposes the ascendancy of those who are free but do not attempt to seek for freedom.

The lucid and arousing aspects of human beings at distinct stages in their life expedition prove much high-flying since these two forces guide human beings to behave and deal with situations in different manners. To cope with life hurdles people need to become rational and poignant in accordance with the urgency and temperament of time and situation respectively.

Furthermore the Prophet says there is a solo truth. There are a chain of truths since the concept of truth keeps on changing every moment. This is why we should say I have found a truth which further infers that there is the option of another truth as well. Human soul is walking not on a single path paved by anyone special rather it walks on many paths.

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