

**AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF SOCIAL ASPECT
OF MAHJAR LITERATURE**

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the Dissertation entitled "**AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF SOCIAL ASPECT OF MAHJAR LITERATURE**" submitted by **Reyazuddin**, is in the partial fulfillment of the requirements of the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University and is his own work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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To

The Changing Season.....

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INTRODUCTION

The Arabs have been very vibrant, courageous, dynamic and lively people. But they had to toil a lot for national liberation. For this reason they passed through different stages. The most painful stage came to the fore when they waged struggle against imperialism. In turn, they were compelled to leave their country and settle down in alien nations. In the beginning of the Turks's way, a number of people from Iraq and Syria left their countries. The same happened in Tunisia and Algeria, too. Though the individual or en-mass migration has its own significance with merits and demerits in the history of human settlement, the migration after the insurrection of 1860 from Syria and Lebanon played a very important role in Arabic Literature.

The second half of 19th century and the beginning of 20th was marked by a period of turmoil and disturbance. The entire Arab World, particularly Syria and Lebanon was under acute political repression of imperialism and feudalism. The justice itself had become a victim. The people resisted, quite often, but they were victimized and oppressed more and more by the brokers of power snatching even their right to dream of a better tomorrow. In addition, the religious conflict between Druzes and Maronites, and sectarianism of Chatholics and Orthodox resulted in the society becoming deformed or even dying out.

After being exasperated by such conditions, a steady stream of Arabs, particularly from Lebanon and Syria migrated to America — mostly to the U.S.A, but some to South American countries such as Brazil. In North America, the emigrants settled mostly in New York and Washington. In Washington, there was an area called Brooklyn. A visitor happened to visit the area in 1931 and wrote in his travelling

note saying that there were about 300,000 Arabs living together in this area. There were numerous houses and shops all around. Arabic food was being served in hotels. The entire atmosphere was filled with Arabic music. It was very difficult for a stranger to find out whether he was in America or on the street of Cairo or Beirut.

In South American countries, the emigrants mostly made their settlement in Sao Paulo (the capital of Brazil), Buenos (the capital of Argentine) and Reo de Jenero. Some settled in other region, too. These emigrants had been either propelled by need or motivated by ambition, yet most of them had been driven away by the political curbs imposed on them by the Turks. This was historically a new kind of migration, for, this was the first large ethnic community migrated from Lebanon and Syria and settled as far as North and South America.

These emigrants who had settled in an alien atmosphere because of social and economic consideration had more than an average share of young talent and promise in their midst. They founded their own newspapers and magazines and prospered in commerce. However, they did not forget their homeland, which they visited whenever they could. They maintained their own culture and language. At the same time they imbibed the culture of their new ambience. The result was the emergence of a new kind of literature known to the Arabs as Adab al-Mahjar (Emigrant literature or Migration Literature).

The Mahjar Literature is divided into two groups- Northern and Southern Mahjar literature. The literature which developed and flourished in North America is called Northern Mahjar Literature. Similarly the literature which was produced in Latin America, especially in Brazil is known as Southern Mahjar Literature. In

Northern group, some outstanding and talented writers and poets got eminence and filled Arabic literature with far-reaching ideas, exuberant feelings and human values. They tried their hand at almost every literary branch and produced all kinds of literary forms. They composed poems and showed outstanding skill. At the same time, they wrote excellent stories and novels and got distinction in Arabic prose writing.

The three most influential personalities of Mahjar literature happened to be in the North. These were Amin al-Raihani, Jibran Khalil Jibran and Mikhail Nu'aima whose courage, originality and mixed cultural background enabled them to contribute new ideas and concepts to their contemporaries. These three men did a great deal to bring out thoroughly liberal attitude towards literature and life, free from the persistent drawbacks of traditionalism.

By the end of the First World War and the early 1920's Arabic literature had progressed and was assuming a modern character. Religious changes, social reforms had all found expression in creative literatures. The Mahjar Literature was one of them to share such literary efforts which received support and encouragement more markedly when al-Rabita al-Qalamiya (The Pen Association) was formed in 1920 in New York by the Northern group. The influence of this association on Modern Arabic literature has been profound. The eminent critic Isma'il Adham evaluates the contribution of the Pen Association:

“It created a strong movement in Arabic literature and was successful in presenting the best that has been written in the form of novels, short stories and plays”.

As for the Southern group, its writers did not reach the high level as their counterparts in prose. They concentrated on the poetic genres and distinguished themselves in epics and mythological poems. Although its contribution in general could be regarded as a fresher version of the neo-classical school, some poetic works stand out for their originality and novelty. This group was so much influenced by the writers of the al-Rabita al-Qalarniya that its writers started thinking in the same way as the Northern group did. As a result, in 1932, they formed al-Usba al-Undulusiya in Brazil. It was a literary society devoted to promote the Arabic literature, to fight against fanaticism and to eliminate the blind following of the predecessors which was against the spirit of the time and led to the stagnation.

It is worth mentioning that there are some differences in outlook, attitude and interests between the two groups, the most obvious of which is perhaps their different attitudes towards nationalism. For, while the Northern group tended to be universal in their outlook on the world and believed mostly in the brotherhood of man, the Southern group openly supported Arab nationalism.

However, the Mahjar literature occupies an important place in Modern Arabic literature. It is characterized by social and human aspects and its writers exhibit a unique literary style with a special mark in thinking and expression. Jibran is marked by his rebellious spirit, Fauzi Maluf by his elegant interpretation, beautiful similes and metaphors and delicate imagination, Mikhail Nu'aima is known for his beautiful and simple language as well as his compassionate thought and others are also masters and veterans in their own right.

In a very short period, the Mahjar literature became an integral part of Arabic literature. The reason was its embracing nature,

revolutionary ideas, exuberant feelings and human values. Now the relation between the two is like human body with soul. Besides, it has its own distinct feature and a separate identity. The emigrant writers and poets established a new “school of thought” which was not only influenced by European literary movements, but also it was in forefront to introduce new trends and ideas to Modern Arabic literature. Most of its writers were of the opinion that classical Arabic literature had no relevance to modern era.

The emigrant writers, deeply aware of their situation as the first generation immigrants, tended to develop to an extreme degree certain themes, which drive from obvious feelings of alienation from their native social and cultural surrounding. As a result they demonstrated an enduring contact with culture, people and problems of the Arab World and tried to render a double service to the Arabs. In the first place, they wanted to be the transmitters of their spiritual message of the progress to the Arab East. At the same time, they had firm belief that radical reforms were needed in the Arab East; an overwhelming revolution in thought, spirit and exiting material condition had to take place and they became convinced about the decline in Arab society due to sectarianism, ignorance and traditionalism in literature and life.

Every emigrant writer thought of his society and its problems. Their souls stirred up against ignorance, oppression and servitude that the society was suffering from. They targeted religious and feudal lords. Whenever they were able to express their outburst in their writings, they started attacking on every kind of ignorance, oppression and servitude. Sometimes their attack was violent and sometimes very satirical. As a result there were social reformers like Amin al-Raihani, ‘spirit rebellious’ like Jirban Khalil Jibran, realist poets like Ilya Abu

Modi, Ilyas Farhat, Fauzi Maluf and so on. Though the writings were different, their feelings and objectives were the same. Their writings reached the Arab World from the 'land of liberty' a something new, with a liberated spirit. As the Mahjar writers did not have the drawback of an environment with a strong conservative religious element, they did not have to fight a rearguard action to achieve recognition. It was probably the liberal atmosphere in which they were living and working which enabled them to succeed.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MAHJAR LITERATURE

- ❖ ***History of Syria and Lebanon during Migration period***
- ❖ ***Political and Economic reasons behind migration***
- ❖ ***Social and Psychological reasons behind migration***
- ❖ ***The life of emigrants and their activities***
- ❖ ***Merits and Demerits of Migration***

HISTORY OF SYRIA AND LEBANON DURING **MIGRATION PERIOD**

At the time, when Syria and Lebanon were in the grip of poverty, ignorance and Sectarianism, Mohammad Ali came into Egypt as an Albanian soldier in the Turkish army to dislodge the French in 1799. In a matter of time, he served Egypt as a Governor and created a dynasty. He made Egypt autonomous *de facto*, though still *de jure* subject to Istanbul. He collected large booty from his conquest which helped him organize a strong army and navy. His senior officers were non-Arabs like himself. But military success must have given Egyptians a sense of pride they had not known for centuries. On the other, his accumulation of wealth and expansionist policies and those of his successors left in debt to the British who occupied the country in 1882 during a period of civil unrest.

The Levant (Lebanon and Syria), like Egypt was the scene of great unrest in the 19th century, till the other colonial power, France finally edged herself into a position of strength.¹ When the strife between the Ottoman Empire and European powers intensified, the Ottomans gave a call for 'Islamic unity' to stand on their side. The call, in a very short period, gathered momentum and different Islamic movements began to emerge. During these movements, many renowned leaders came to the fore. The most prominent of them was Jamaluddin al-Afghani who was a great supporter of the Ottoman Empire. An Afghan by birth, as his name suggests, al-Afghani made Egypt his home and identified himself

¹ P. K. Hitti, *A Short History of Syria*, p. 233.

with the movement leading to the 'Orabi revolt' of 1882. Yet, strangely enough, these movements did not intend to give complete support to the Ottoman rulers from a political standpoint. At the same time, they maintained equal distance from the European powers as a matter of course. The Sultan was taken aback by the result, especially when he saw the influence of Wahabis rising over the Arabian peninsula. He empowered Mohammad Ali to foil the political movement of Wahabis. Mohammad Ali and his son Ibrahim stormed the peninsula and finally succeeded in thwarting the movement.

After that, Mohammad Ali came into direct contact with the Arab World and began to dream of establishing an Arab Empire. For this, he modernized the Egyptian army and endeavored a lot to make his dream come true. Had there not been any foreign intervention, he could have fared well in his plans. In 1822, Mohammad Ali supported the Turkish force against Greek. In turn, he wished a good return from the Sultan by annexing Syria with Egypt. But his wish remained unfulfilled. Consequently, he sent his son as the head of his modern Army. Helped by Bashir and other local leaders, Ibrahim conquered Syria in 1831.

The European powers except France objected to Egyptian rule in Syria, because it was a threat to the Ottoman Empire, as the weakness or disintegration could have caused a European crisis. In 1839, war broke out between Mohammad Ali and his suzerain, the Sultan. Ibrahim defeated the Turkish army, but in 1840 the European power intervened. After an ultimatum, an allied force of Britain, Turkey and Austria landed on the Syrian coast. There was a local insurrection encouraged from

outside, and the Egyptians were forced to withdraw from Syria which reverted to the Sultan's government.²

Meanwhile, Lebanon was ruled by Shihab family who succeeded their relatives, the Maanids as paramount chiefs of the mountains. The most distinguished of the Shihabs was Bashir (II) who took part in the defense of Acre against Bonaparte in 1799.³ After establishing his power with the help of Druze nobles, he tried to weaken them. When the Egyptian troops of Ibrahim Pasha occupied Syria in 1831, Bashir formed an alliance with him to limit the power of local ruling families and to preserve his own power. But the Egyptian rule, as mentioned earlier, was ended by Anglo-Ottoman intervention, aided by a popular rising in 1840 and Bashir was deposed.⁴ With him the principedom virtually ended. His weak successor Bashir III was unable to control the Druze feudal Chiefs of the southern Lebanon and was deposed by the Ottomans in 1842. Ending the Lebanese emirate, direct Ottoman rule ensued but proved impracticable. Maronite maneuvers for restoration of the emirate in the face of Druze resistance fanned growing Druze suspicion of Maronite political motives. In 1842, Mount Lebanon was divided into two administrative regions, a northern district under a local Christian governor and a southern district under a Druze. The Christian, by then a clear majority in the southern district, opposed this arrangement.⁵

However, the rule of Ibrahim in Syria lasted for almost 10 years. The whole country was controlled from Damascus. In political matters,

² The New Encyclopedia Britanica- 1987, vol. 28, p. 384.

³ Encyclopedia Americana - 1983, vol. 17, p. 142.

⁴ The New Encyclopaedia Britanica- 1987, vol.22, p.914.

⁵ Collier's Encyclopaedia - 1983, vol. 14, p. 434.

Ibrahim relied largely on Bashir. New taxes were introduced and strictly collected. After an abortive attempt to introduce trade monopolies, Ibrahim encouraged European traders and missionaries by maintaining better security. The Christian and Jewish populations were treated with consideration.⁶ Such policy ignited ire of Muslim populations. His liberal policy became prominent when foreign missionaries flooded Syria and Lebanon mostly for religious purposes and sometimes for political reasons. Most of them were Catholics who were followed by Protestants.

After a time, Ibrahim's rule became unpopular. He was pushed into critical position because of his frivolous and off-handed policies. He tried hard to extricate himself from the situation, but to no avail. When he sensed the European intention, he resolved to increase his army and tried to conscript the population. This step was most annoying for the people of the country. At the same time, he imposed despotic tax and named it as 'chieftain duties'. And when he felt the possible resistance from the people against such measures, he clamped down all avenues of resistance and ordered to disarm the people. But the people stood firmly and opposed Ibrahim's move tooth and nail. Consequently, he had to retreat from Syria in 1840.

2

Even after the end of Ibrahim's regime, the situation did not normalize. But the period was marked by mounting crisis. Many troublesome incidents occurred in this period. Lebanon became the scene of struggle for power between Druzes and Maronites, with undertones of social conflict. The situation became worse by the growth

⁶ The New Encyclopaedia Britannica – 1987, vol. 28, p.384.

of European influence. France and Britain found an excuse to intervene militarily in affairs of Lebanon. The connection of France with Christians of Muwarna who were in majority and the support of Britain to Druzes both created civil unrest. In 1845, there was an open war between Christians and Druzes. The Ottomans intervened and introduced some administrative modifications.⁷ After that, the unrest relatively abated a little for a particular period.

In 1856, the Sultan issued a decree 'Al-Khatt al-Himayuni'. In this decree, equality among all citizens under Ottoman Empire was promised. Freedom to live with dignity, and protection of properties were accorded. Taxes on farmers were abolished. But these reforms were not implemented and remained only on paper because of constant resistance by religious reactionaries, bankers and ruling class who were either Christians or Jews.⁸ In the meantime, following the policy of divide and rule, the Ottoman Empire began to create friction between Christians and non-Christians. As a result, peasants and religious leaders, particularly priest of Muwarna, gave rise to such frictions. The peasants stormed Muwarna in 1857 by the provocation of religious leaders in Northern Lebanon. The flame of dissension spread in Southern Lebanon, too, and turned into sectarianism. In 1858, Maronite peasants in the northern region revolted against the Maronite aristocracy and destroyed feudal privileges that had existed since the Middle age. By 1860, Christian peasants in the South were receiving encouragement to revolt against their Druze feudal chiefs. In the South, however, the conflict between the peasants and the vestigial feudal aristocracy had religious

⁷ Collier's Encyclopaedia – 1983, vol. 14, p. 434.

⁸ N. Sarraj, Al-Shu'ara al-Rabita al-Qalamiya, p. 29.

overtones. Thus, the planned peasant revolt was preempted by a massacre by Druze of more than 11000 Christians.⁹

The historians have divergent views about the reason behind the massacre of 1860. Some are of the opinion that it was only religious and sectarian dissension started between Christians of Mount Lebanon and Druze and spread to Damascus. Some consider that it was against feudalism which was dominant in Lebanon during that period. Later on, sectarianism triggered and became religious dissension between Christians and Muslims. Antonio Dhahir al-Aqiqi - a contemporary of the massacre wrote a manuscript with detail and sufficient explanation about the whole situations prevailed in Lebanon. He said that the outburst, as mentioned in the manuscript, was nothing but a dissension of peasants against feudal chiefs.¹⁰

Whatsoever, the reason was but after the outburst some positive steps were taken and the ottoman Empire was pressurized to promulgate the Organic Regulation of 1861 for Mount Lebanon. Consequently, feudalism was largely abolished civil liberties were guaranteed to all. Justice and law enforcement were made the responsibility of the administration. Perhaps, this outburst also contributed in Arab awakening.

However, one of the main reasons behind the civil strife was the emergence of Druze and Maronite leaders who actively participated in country's affairs. According to the Encyclopedia of Britanica, Druze renounced Shilab amirs and Maronitas of Muwarna revolted against

⁹ Collier's Encyclopaedia- 1983, vol. 14, p. 434.

¹⁰ N. Sarraj, Al-Shu'ara al- Rabita al-Qualamiya, p. 30.

Khazin family to live peaceful life with dignity. As a result, these feudal chiefs began to supper the inhabitants and sow dissension between two groups. This dissension arose with the support of French to Muwarna and with the encouragement of Turkish Sultan to Druze against those who were supported by European powers. The tension thus generated, outburst in 1860 when a civil war of Druzes and Maronites in Southern Lebanon touched off a massacre.

After this outburst, the intervention by the European powers particularly France, which traditionally protected the Maronites, became inevitable. The Ottoman government sent a special commissioner – Fuad Pasha to punish the guilty and end disorder. France sent an expeditionary force and a European commission discussed the future of the country. After that Lebanon (The mountain itself but not the coastal towns) became an autonomous province under the protection of the Six Great European Powers, passed out of direct Ottoman rule but no change was made in Syria.

3

After introducing the Organic Regulation, Mount Lebanon was reintegrated as a single autonomous administrative unit or Mutesarrefat under an Ottoman Christian governor or Mutesarrif, appointed by the sultan with the approval of the European powers.¹¹ Though the representatives in the administrative council were from the various Lebanese groups, the head of the administration was from Catholic Christian Community. This was so because Catholic Christians were in

¹¹ Collier's Encyclopaedia- 1983, vol. 14, p. 434.

majority in Mount Lebanon and their ally countries, too, were Catholic. The governor was supported through the Sublime Porte by France, Britain, Russia, Persia, Austria and Italy. The governor was, sometimes, called as a 'Mushir'. He was advised and assisted by a committee of 12 deputies who were representing three major religious groups. The government was called a Government of Mount Lebanon or Sanjaq of Mount Lebanon. The experiment with minor modifications that were introduced in 1864, worked out and the system lasted until 1915.

Autonomous Lebanon to some extent enjoyed an era of tranquility and prosperity. The new administrative and legal system was more carefully applied. Local army was appointed to supervise law and order and a new kind of educated officials gradually rose to standards. They concentrated on overall development and prosperity, particularly on internal reforms. Roads were opened and a railway was linked between Beirut and Damascus. The summer resorts and rest houses were built for tourists and other guests to maintain the expenditure of the administration. Roman Catholic and Protestant missions flourished. Lebanese graduates of American institutions in Egypt were among the Champions of Arab nationalism.

The most significant result of the new administration was a rapid increase of foreign groups in mountain region. Soon they spread all over Lebanon and influenced the new generation. As a result, in the cities there was a considerable change in social life. The upper and middle classes adopted the clothes and social customs of Western Europe and Western-style schools flourished.¹² Though Ibrahim Pasha had encouraged the foreigners to come to Syria either for trade or religious

¹² The New Encyclopaedia Britannica – 1987, vol. 28, p. 384.

purposes or education, Christian missionaries flooded the country after introducing the Regulation. They built schools and different institutions where the students came from all sides. French Catholic and U.S Protestant mission schools as well as schools of the local communities multiplied. Before 1860, national schools were rare, rather to say, non-existent. In 1865, Mutran, Yusuf al-Dabis, writer of the 'History of Syria' founded Madrasa al-Hikma. In 1866, the American Protestant mission established the 'Syrian Protestant college' (later the American University of Beirut) and in 1881, the Jesuits started the Universite Saint – Joseph in the same town. Such schools produced an educated class, particularly among Christians that found employment as professionals. The Ottoman government also opened schools, and young men of the great Arab families of the towns began to attend the higher schools in Constantinople and to go on to civil or military services.¹³ After establishing schools and universities, the people felt the need of printing press and other necessary equipments and means. The American University of Beirut was the first to establish modern printing house that contributed a lot and helped to spread knowledge to end ignorance.

On this basis, it can be said that the main reason behind the outburst of 1860 and before it, was nothing but ignorance which gradually diminished replacing education. When the concept of national liberation emerged, the communalism and sectarianism which were taken roots in Arab society, were thrown out of the country. However, the impact of education clearly manifested after many years passed, when the concept of liberation was translated into reality and nationalism became prominent in the country.

¹³ The New Encyclopaedia Britanica – 1987, vol. 28, p. 384.

Even though the Organic Regulation brought a lot of advantages, there were also some disadvantages of the Regulation. The great historian August Adib Pasha had discussed the situation in his book 'Lebanon after war' and compared the merits and demerits of the Regulation. According to him the worst part of the Regulation was the confinement of Mount Lebanon in its present boundary. If the boundary would have been rightly created with just and visionary policy and if the terrain, seaport and its natural resources were attached with Lebanon, the bigger section of the people moved to fertile lands and other prosperous cities where the Lebanese could have given vent to their activities. But they were living a wretched life looking desperately at vast fertile lands on the foot of the mountain which were taken away from them by widespread corruption and autocratic attitude of the Ottoman rulers.¹⁴

The historian's view as well as the general opinion is that it was, indeed, injustice and oppressive confinement of the Mount Lebanon because its people were deprived from coastal lands, particularly the port of Beirut, and from fertile plains stretched in front of them. But they were not able to cultivate and utilize them. The second disadvantage was economic disorder which led to the migration of thousands of Lebanese from their beautiful country leaving its fertile lands. This migration, as Adib Pasha has described, started with its earnest degree when Lebanese began to feel narrowness of their mountain due to overpopulation. They decided to migrate towards Beirut

¹⁴ August Adib Pasha, *Lebanon Bād al-Harb*, translated by Al-Sheikh Faridi, p. 104-05.

and other fertile lands, for instance, Egypt, Europe, North Africa, America and Australia.¹⁵

4

The Ottoman Empire ruled most of the Arab countries in Asia including Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq and the Arabian peninsula until the First World War. The Sultan was the leader of the Arab and Islamic nations, the representative of all these nations and of the whole Islamic East. He ruled them in the Islamic faith because the nationalist ideas were neither strong nor popular enough with the majority of the people at that time. In the eyes of most Arabs, the Ottoman Sultanate was an Islamic Caliphate. They looked to the Sultan for the fulfillment of their hopes as Muslims. This was the main reason why Muslims and Arabs did not disdain the rule of the Sultan and acknowledged him as the protector of their faith and aspirations.

When Sultan Abdul Majid died in 1861, his brother, Sultan Abdul Aziz succeeded him. But he was deposed for incompetence by Midhat Pasha and Avni Pasha, the Leaders of the liberal Constitutionalist groups. During his regime, the administration became corrupt and insolvent. The European countries rose against him in Balqan and other places. Finally, the Constitutionalist placed on the throne Murad V, the eldest son of Abdul Majid. But he suffered from epilepsy and became mentally unbalanced from the strain of office (several ministers were murdered right in the middle of a cabinet meeting), the death of his uncle and the events of the day. He remained Sultan only for three months and was deposed in favor of Abdul Hamid II, another son of Abdul Majid.

¹⁵ N. Sarraj, *Shu'ara al-Rabita al-Qalamiya*, p. 34-35.

The rule of Abdul Hamid II lasted about thirty three years. During this period, the situation became from bad to worse. At the moment of his accession the Ottoman position in Balqan was in peril. The Ottoman forces had defeated the Bosnian and Serbian rebels. These setbacks had forced Russia to threaten to act openly in the rebels' behalf, a move which Austria and England greatly deplored. A conference of ambassadors was called for Istanbul in December 1876 and in the midst of the meeting Abdul Hamid II proclaimed a constitution for the Ottoman Empire which would provide for an elected parliament, a responsible cabinet, and all the trappings of European constitutional monarchy. The fundamental concepts of the constitution were derived from the constitution of France and Belgium in the leadership of Midhat Pasha – if this constitution was implemented, the Arab nations would be certainly benefited. According to the Constitution, all citizens were addressed as Ottoman subjects. Islam was regarded as the religion of the Empire with the recognition of all major religions. The freedom of press was recognized.

At first, Abdul Hamid II agreed to implement the constitution in total. But his intention soon became clear that he was not sincere. He only wanted to gather public opinion and appease certain groups which were threat to him. Similarly he tried to assure the European powers that non-Mulsim population, especially in the Balqans, would become first class subjects and that the plans for reforms would be imposed upon the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶ Suddenly, the war broke out with Russia. The Sultan fished out the situation and put the Constitution in cold storage. Finally the Constitution was suspended. Thereupon, a highly

¹⁶ Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopaedia, vol. 26, p. 115.

autocratic government was established. Governmental power was taken from the bureaucracy and centered in the palace, and all opposition was suppressed.¹⁷ The condition was not changed until the Young Turk revolution of 1908.

Meanwhile, Abdul Hamid exposed himself as a pious man by enforcing the teachings of Islam in his house and governance. He declared himself as a protector of Islam in order to seek the support and devotion of Muslims. The great reformer, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani emerged in Egypt and attempted to break the hold of scholasticism which had encased Islam since medieval times. Al-Afghani first called for reform in religion, next for the arrest in economic and political deterioration.¹⁸ Abdul Hamid encouraged him and his teachings by opening religious schools and supported Arabic educational institutions. Though his emphasis on Islamic solidarity frightened the Christians, but the Muslims on the whole regarded the Ottoman Empire as the political embodiment of Islam.

In the thirty three odd years of his personal rule, Abdul Hamid held the constitution in abeyance. But the political repression ultimately led to the rise of a new liberal opposition movement. In Istanbul, military students exposed to liberal European ideas were humiliated by the comparison of European progress with Turkish despotism. Nationalist ideas were put forward by a score of journalists. Abdul Hamid tried to suppress the movement by arrests, exiles and executions but without success. Secret societies flourished in army head quarters across the nation and in such distant places as Paris,

¹⁷ Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopaedia, vol. 26, p. 115.

¹⁸ Ismat Mahadi, Modern Arabic Literature, p. 15.

Geneva and Cairo. The most effective became the 'Committee of Union and Progress'. Abdul Hamid II incited newspapers to attack the constitutions and its men and tried to find religious grounds to attack the C.U.P. This obliged the leaders of the Committee to depose the Sultan.

Finally, in 1908 the army from Salonika in Macedonia demanded the restoration of the Constitution of 1876 and marched on Istanbul. Abdul Hamid agreed, elections were held, and a constitutional government with responsible ministers was established. Censorship on press was abolished and all politically motivated prisoners were released. The declaration of reinforcing the constitution after thirty three years made the people overjoyed unimaginably. People were greeting each other for the beginning of a new era. They considered the day of the Constitution as the day of the destruction of the very foundation of corruption and the granting of the constitution as a day of festival, on which the nation wore the dress of glory. In April 1909, Abdul Hamid II struck back with a counter-revolution; but the army moved up again from Macedonia to depose the Sultan. They broke into Istanbul and surrounded the Sultan's palace- 'Yildiz Palace'. They fought with the Sultan's guards and in the end, guards surrendered. Then the army arrested the supporters of the Sultan, Abdul Hamid and executed about a thousand of them. Subsequently, parliament held a meeting and deposed the Sultan making Rashad the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. The poets seized the opportunity to expose the faults of the Sultan. They described his evil deeds and told of how he let the empire decay. They described the march on Istanbul from Salonika to suppress the movement saying that the Army, in spite of being composed of men of

TH-17989.



the religions and nations, was united under the banner of patriotism and the Constitution.

In fact, the revolt against Abdul Hamid in July 1908 was the culmination of a series of rebellions and the emergence of national movements, started appearing from the very beginning of his rule or a little before. The Arab national movement was, at first, organized in 1875 by a group of five youths who were studying in the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut. They formed a secret group for national liberation. All of them were Christians. But, later on, 22 more members were included from other religions. Among them Hassan Biham, Ibrahim Yazji and Faris Namir were prominent.

This group of intellectuals and Liberals began to demand a limit to the power of the ruling class and the bureaucracy and a parliament to enforce the rights of the people. For this, they started propagating their demands, composed poems and emphasized on revolt. But they maintained secrecy in every manner. Such poems deeply reverberated in the heart of the ruling class who were very keen to find out the poets. If the poets were caught, they were punished rigorously by the administration. The insurgents soon prepared a plan and resolved to implement it with force, if needed. The main feature of the plan was to outline the demand for the liberation of a united Syria with Lebanon, to consider Arabic as the official language, to abolish censorship on freedom of expression and not to use military units of the country against its own people.

Thus, this was the first call which aroused the Arab revival and the group was the first political group which, later on, shaped the social and ideal awakening. In fact, this awakening was based on two important

elements. (1) Literary renaissance (2) and general awareness that was in response of the massacre of 1860. This sowed the seed of Arab national consciousness. Just after the incidents of 1860, Butrus al-Bustani issued a magazine, 'Nafir-e-Surya' which was the first political magazine in the country. After three years, he opened a national school for the students beyond the sect and class. Nasif al-Yazji was appointed as a teacher of Arabic language in the school.

Meanwhile, the government of Abdul Hamid II was in ambush to suppress all movements arising in the country. He and his supporters were hell bent to find out the insurgents and members of the movements but to no avail. Some revolutionary intellectuals fled abroad, publishing their demands in books and pamphlets that were sent into the empire through the foreign post offices which protected by the Capitulation, were free from Ottoman government control. But the repressions continued. In 1880 Midhat Pasha was deposed and transferred to Izmir where he was prosecuted in an alleged murder of Sultan Abdul Aziz. After that he was exiled to Taif (a town of Hijaz) where he was murdered by the supporters of the Sublime Porte. Thus the repression and autocracy were revived once again in the last phase of the Sultan Abdul Hamid's regime.

In 1914, World War I broke out. The Ottoman Empire entered the war and Syria became a military base. When Ottoman army under German command attacked the British position on the Suez Canal, the rulers of the country feared a fresh revolt. Therefore, they beefed up the security, spread spies and government officials.

However, the rebels continued to form Arab political associations secretly and publicly trying to secede from the Turks. They, most often,

relied on European countries which opposed the Ottoman Empire. The government attacked them and investigated the opposite consulates and issued diplomatic notes. Some leaders were arrested and others fled to Syria, Egypt and other countries.

Political and Economic factors of Migration

The historians have adverse opinion in determining the reasons behind the migration which contributed a lot in the history of modern Lebanon and shared a magnitude effect in socio-economic and literary development. But they have agreed upon that the first and direct reason for the migration was propelling economy of the country which resulted in poverty, depression, lack of livelihood. In addition the political condition of the period was a significant factor that was manifested in the form of repression by ruling class and corrupt administration. Besides, there were some other social, literary and psychological reasons propelling the countrymen to migrate from their homeland.

For the illustration of political and economic impulses, it would be better to have a glance at the conditions of Lebanon and its history during migration period. It was mentioned earlier how the Turk administration was disgusting for the Lebanese in order that they could not bear it and how the government intensified oppression and tyranny for the people. The administrative conditions were also deteriorated. The political curbs were imposed on groups as well as individuals which made the life tough. As if they were living in a closed pot which was on the verge of explosion. Until Ibrahim Pasha came and conquered Syria.

The people considered him as a rescuer from the oppression. The Amir Bashir Shihabi also supported him and the people breathed a sigh of relief. They greeted him and called the era as a new dawn with prosperity and happiness. But their happiness soon became sore and the hope were frustrated. When European powers saw Ibrahim conquering Syria and penetrating Turkey, they compelled him to go back. After returning of Ibrahim to Egypt, the rein of terror was once again restored by the Turk administration.

The situation continued in the same manner. The administration became even worse. Ignorance prevailed everywhere in Lebanon. Fanaticism and sectarianism intensified which led to the massacre of 1860. after that, the Organic Regulation was introduced in 1861 and modified in 1864. But it made things even worse because it resulted in sealing the original boundary of Lebanon and confinement of mountains in a narrow belt which could not be overstepped by the people of the country. Even they were not able to cultivate the lands that were in front of them.

The Organic Regulation, of course, caused massive discontent and added deep rooted offensive feelings against the Turks. This feeling was bound to manifest anytime as soon as it got opportunity. But it remained confined in the hearts depriving the people from their sleep. Therefore, they were restive and the life became a hardship. As a result, they had no option but to leave their homeland which failed to provide peace and tranquility for its people who were living there for a long time. On the other hand, the countrymen also were not able to be inhabitant there and get benefited because of continuous repression of the Turks.

A Syrian historian, Mohammad Kurd Ali, mentioned in his book, 'Gharaib al-Gharb', that Lebanon had a firm relation with Europe before

1860 and afterwards. Perhaps, he intended with this relation the missionary delegations which started to come to the East earnestly before the middle of the 19th century and had a great impact on guiding the strong thoughts and trends. In the same manner, Lebanon was concerned with the ideology of French Revolution which entered Lebanon after the attack of Napoleon on Egypt and Eastern countries. Later on the French invaded on the port of Beirut after the incidents of 1860 and then dominated on strategic places of Lebanon. All these European influencing factors led to open the mind of the people and look closely at the European culture and the countries where the ideals of liberty and the four freedoms as well as the value of man and his position in his life: the typical concept of Western liberalism were nurtured.

From an economic standpoint, the Organic Regulation, issued by the Sultan of Constantinople badly affected the economy of the country and gave rise to poverty, lack of production and scarcity of people's necessities. According to August Adib Pasha, the Regulation was the foremost responsible for the migration to outside the country. Because it caused the lack of agriculture lands and loss of production.

The Organic Regulation, however, was not the sole responsible for deteriorating conditions. But feudalism, dominated in Lebanon before introducing the Regulation, was also a prominent factor to worsen economic condition of the country. The Lebanese farmers, more often, were victims of operation of feudal lords who treated them as easy prey. Whenever they resisted, they had to face severe consequences and if they wanted to improve their condition in society, they were harassed. There were complete disparities and inequalities among the people. If a farmer, though it happened rarely, tried to occupy his land, the Turk oppression suppressed him vehemently depriving him from his due share and

demanded one-tenth of the yields addition to a tax on land. This was in spite of those taxes which were paid by the farmers in different manners for various purposes, for instance construction of fleet and railway lines. The farmers were unable to avoid them. Ultimately, they had to pay such taxes to either government or their feudal lords.

The condition of trade was also not better than agriculture. The poor transport system and absence of financing and transaction policies caused poverty and lack of necessities. The same condition was of the industry which was ruined completely. The government did not pay heed to such works that helped people raise their living standards. Despite the economic depression, the overpopulation of Lebanon increasing year after year was also important factor for migration. Experiencing such repression and negligence, people became aware of the fact and propelled to migrate to other countries and seek their livelihood.

Social And Psychological Factors

This was the condition of the people who were living in that period on the Eastern bank of the Mediterranean sea facing European countries. The geographical center of Lebanon played an important role in the history of migration and in famous incidents of the 19th century. Lebanon first appeared in the history in a major role as the base from which Phoenicians built their remarkable trading network in the Mediterranean. Until then, Lebanon had been of interest to neighboring powers. With the discovery of Spain by the Phoenicians by about 1000 BC and their exploitation of mineral resources, the Phoenicians coastal

cities within Lebanon grew rapidly in importance.¹⁹ The Phoenicians established cities, the most important of which was Carthage, along the routes to Spain. However, like the rest of the Levant, Lebanon in time succumbed to powers to the East and the North; first Assyrians, then the Neo-Babylonians. Later the Persians, the Macedonians and the Seleucids.²⁰

It is evident that Lebanon was among Eastern countries which proceeded to receive foreign missionaries from European countries. The missionaries came to the East for religious, political and social reasons and began to spread their message. They motivated and encouraged the people, especially the new generation who were studying and striving towards liberation, to migrate to alien nations. As it was mentioned earlier that Ibrahim Pasha was the first ruler who encouraged to enter Lebanon. Since then Catholic Christians started establishing schools and welfare associations a number of people were associated with them. They built many hospitals. Protestants were followed by Catholics. They also opened schools and colleges. Later on, they established American University of Beirut. That produced a lot of students who were rebellious, freedom lovers and hostile to the Ottoman rulers. Thus it showed that the missionaries groups contributed a lot for the betterment of the Lebanese society and its people.

After the French occupation of Lebanon, followed by the incidents of 1860, the relation between Lebanon and Europe improved. The East became open- minded to welcome the fundamental concept of freedom, dignity and justice. The concept became popular after the French

¹⁹ Encyclopaedia Americana- 1983, vol. 17, p. 141.

²⁰ Ibid.

Revolution. The first generation of missionaries made it more popular. It was quite natural that the people of Arab East loved the concept as they suffered from feudal repression and oppressive rules. That is why Lebanese started looking at the countries where their expectations, dreams and ideas could be preserved and they could express themselves in a free environment

The Lebanese, at that time, heard news about a new world. Its stories were narrated by tourists who used to come to Lebanon during 'Haj'. The tourists disseminated information about their countries and filled the Lebanese with longing. They also portrayed beautiful pictures of their countries. In fact, every year many groups of tourists used to come to Lebanon and Palestine and went back. Along with them, some emigrants also visited their country where freedom was desired.

Besides, the different shipping companies disseminated information about European countries in Lebanese ports. They also made travel easy for those who wanted to migrate as well as shared their burden of expenses by giving them loan in-cash. It is worth mentioning that newspapers, too, played major role in encouraging for migration and informing about the country of gold, affluence and free environment. Some American books portraying the country and its people, were translated into Turkish language which were read by the Turks and Syrians. Some of them were translated into Arabic, too.

In the presence of such temptations and incentives, the Lebanese found no reason that prevented them from leaving their country of repression, cruelty abasing poverty and widespread ignorance. This was in addition to the firm inclination of the Lebanese to migration and adventure. They had natural capability to probe the depth of life, earn livelihood and improve material and spiritual conditions. Their ancestors,

Phoenicians, too, used to travel through the sea since 12th century B.C. The Phoenicians, for almost four centuries starting in the 16th century B.C, were under Egyptian rule.²¹ After the 13th century B.C, when they enjoyed a period of independence, they established trading colonies along the Mediterranean, notably in Carthage, near present-day Tunis.²² They had almost monopoly over navigation and reached the region where nobody did so before. They turned most of the islands of the Mediterranean into a colony and conquered the strait of ,Gibraltar'. Then, they moved towards northern sea where they discovered islands in the South of Britain, presently known as the islands of 'Scillies' which were considered parts of Britain. These Phoenicians shifted the trade from Egypt and Mesopotamia to their colonies and traded different commodities and commercial articles like gold, ladies wears, perfume, copper, tin and so on. Hence, it is not surprising that the Lebanese and the Syrians traded all above mentioned goods rather more than those traversing the ocean in a new world.

The flow of migration, however, carried along a number of people who left their homeland and headed for different directions at different times. The migration of the Lebanese to Egypt during the period of Ibrahim Pasha and after his decline is already mentioned earlier. But the second phase of migration started after the 'Orabi revolt' which was foiled by many conspiracies and ended with British occupation of Egypt.²³ In fact the 'Orabi Movement' was a result of discontent among soldiers, and against the administration meted out to them by the Turks. The peasants and intelligentsia joined the movement, fanning it into a

²¹ Collier's Encyclopaedia - 1983, vol. 14, p. 432.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ismat Mahali, Modern Arabic Literature, p. 2.

social revolt demanding constitutional rights and an end of tyranny.²⁴ The effect of this revolt manifested in the form of unrest which prevailed in the Arab East. As a result, some Lebanese were compelled to migrate from Arab land to a new world, especially Northern and Southern America. But some of them preferred to settled down in Egypt itself where they established trade and prospered in commerce. Soon these émigrés who had migrated because of social and economic considerations contributed a lot and rose to fame in the field of education and journalism. They founded big presses, wrote books and published articles in various magazines and journals. Salim and Bashshara (who founded Al-Ihram), Jurji Zaidan(the founder of Dar al-Hilal) and Yaqub sarruf and Faris Namir (the founder of Al- Muqtataf) were eminent journalists in Egypt and Lebanon.

Feeling angst and malaise, the Lebanese continued their passion for their homeland and sniffed out its news. At the same time, they sent their information to their kith and kin. Initially, the news were about adventurous stories and horrifying lives in alien nations. But such news soon became intoxicating for their families and friends to the extent that these were exchanged and discussed in public gathering. The information, particularly about the wealth, fertile lands, immoveable properties, material success and so on. P.K. Hitti mentioned in his book, 'The Syrian in America' that one of the striking reasons for migration was emigrants' creative writings in newspapers describing merits and demerits of their new ambience.

The newspapers and magazines had a major contribution in encouraging those who did not migrate at the beginning and preferred to stay at homeland but later on joined their family members and relatives

²⁴ Ismat Mahali, Modern Arabic Literature, p. 2.

who were already settled down in a new world. This trend escalated when some émigrés came back to homeland possessing enough money to purchase lands and build modern houses made of plaster of Paris on the same patterns which they had seen in the country of migration. Such activities caused a new kind of encouragement even for those who did not leave the country even in successive years. On the other hand, the first generation émigrés constantly extended helping hands to their brethren who followed them and treated them as guests till their malaise of migration subsided and they could face the situations without any major hurdle.

Thus, all the reasons behind the migration, be it political and religious tension or economic depression, led to the country's poverty and suffocated life. In addition the influence of foreign missionaries, tourist propaganda and the encouragement of shipping companies were enough reason for the Lebanese to leave their homeland for their livelihood in alien surroundings.

After a comprehensive review of the reasons behind migration, it is rather important to divide them into two categories as done by some writers who have taken the topic and discussed it. The first category is driving factor – as it was called – for instance, poverty, dry season, increasing birth rate, mismanagement, corrupt administration and repression by ruling class. All these were described by Lebanese themselves. The second category was attractive factor which motivated a lot of people to adopt alien lands where prosperity, freedom and dignity made things easier to take risks and cross the ocean. Under this category the propaganda of foreign tourist and encouragement of missionaries and the news of material success of émigrés were included. The very important psychological factor which fell into these two categories and

had a magnificent impact on Syrian individuals due to migration were nationality, race and Phoenician origin.

Life of emigrants and their activities

En masse migration from Syria started in the second half of 19th century. It is said that the first family which migrated from Damascus in 1878 in order to settle in America, was that of Yusuf Arabili belonging to Arabili descent. Following them, other groups from different parts of the Arab world, mostly from Lebanon migrated to a new world – America and Latin America. Thereafter, this process kept the ball rolling gradually. After reaching there, the emigrants motivated their near and dear ones and friends to follow suit. By the first decade of 20th century, their circle was broadened remarkably. Perhaps, the exhibition, organized in Chicago in 1893, was one of the initiatives to attract the countrymen for migration. A number of people came to exhibit their home-made goods in this exhibition.²⁵

No doubt, the Syrians were of the opinion that America was land of gold, wealth and fortune which fascinated them spontaneously. The discovery of gold mine in California excited the people across the border at that time. Several books were written to propagate this country and translated into Arabic and Turkish known by the Syrians. Newspapers also circulated the news regarding their life and activities and helped in the propagation of the same.

²⁵ Farhat Ziyada and Ibrahim Fariji, *The History of American People*, p. 195.

Since then the migration continued on abundantly and impulsively till the beginning of the First World War. When the American government started issuing the law of citizenship in successive years, the migration was restricted. It ruled that everyone who entered U.S.A before 1924, deserved to hold American nationality enjoying citizenship rights. As a result, the Syrian migration to this new world almost came to a halt.

The Syrian emigrants, at first, had no intention to settle down permanently but they wanted to collect money in every possible way and come back to reestablish in their homeland. Focusing on Syrian migration and material and spiritual conditions, 'Al-Qasis al-Khribawi' cited in his book a simple incident that showed deep-rooted sentiments of emigrants for their homeland. Whenever one met other and had 'Qahwa' (coffee) in a house of his friend, he thanked the host praying "If God wishes, you will go back to your homeland." The host responded, "In your company, O my Lord". As if returning to homeland was a big desire.

The first generation emigrants, of course, were bound to do something for their livelihood. So they worked hard since they stepped into a new world. They arrived here setting their eyes on a clear expectation and tried to achieve it at their level best. Their near and dear ones and friends were waiting for their support and their miserable country was eyeing attentively their activities. They, therefore, devoted themselves as hard workers striking in every field of life. Initially, wandering on the street of New York city they sold razor, button and other knitting objects as well as those things which were brought there as gifts from their country such as cross, rosary, writing pen (made of Zaitun wood), frames for photographs and portraits and woolen clothes.

They also started trading Syrian products like pastry and copper utensils carrying leather bags on their back. They moved from place to place like Chinese and Indians in Egypt and other Middle East countries. That is why, this period was known as a 'period of Romanticism'.

Later on, in the beginning of 20th century, they explored markets and became aware of necessities. They got benefited from their experiences and came to a new life socially, psychologically and monetarily. They established commercial houses to sell linen goods, tissue papers and other home appliances. Some of them were engaged in agriculture and industry. Some were associated with American iron and motor factories.

After the First World War, when numerous factors compelled them to settle down permanently, the passion for their own country diminished and longing to return evaporated, because their old country was still not in suitable condition. On the other hand, the love for their new ambience and intimate relations, rather family relations between Americans and emigrants became a strong factor not to go back to their countries. So the emigrants started to assimilate in American life. Most of them achieved citizenship and became land owners and businessmen. They also worked in hotels and commercial houses to sell different fruits and other eatable stuffs.

The emigrants, indeed, set an example of unity and collective works. Doing so, they made their country respected and presented better picture of the Arab East in alien nations. The success of emigrants was not confined to material life only, but also in other fields. Their eminence can be seen in the field of knowledge, too. As there were a

number of doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, chemists, engineers, musicians, distinguished scholars and literary persons.

Merits and demerits of migration

It is a tradition in any country that the minorities need to flock together and to help each other in different materials and spiritual matters. The emigrants put up brave efforts in this regard and established numerous associations and clubs in their new environment. The Syrians were in the forefront to establish such associations for the benefits of the Syrians. There were 'United Syrian Federation' and 'Syrian-American Club' in New York with their branches in other American countries. However, both were merged in 1927 and the combined entity was known as 'Syrian American Federation'. Some other associations were 'Syrian Trade Association' and 'Syrian Academic Institute'.

Undoubtedly, the emigrants accustomed and assimilated in American life due to these associations and clubs which provided them agglomeration and unity to recover their shattered lives. More importantly, they communicated not only their feelings at large and mobilized the public opinion but also intervened in political affairs of their country.

Nu'oum Makarzil, a prolific writer and founder of 'Al-Hoda' (an Arabic Newspaper), established 'Federation for Lebanese Progress' in 1911. The Federation actively intervened in political issues concerned with the Lebanese who were either living in U.S., Canada, Mexico or in their homeland. Furthermore, the Arabic Newspapers energized the

demand for the liberation of the Arab East from the oppression of the Turk. They had even a magnificent share in restoring the Constitution of 1908 and sacking the Sultan Abdul Hamid from the premier. Each and every incident in Arab World had an echo in a new world where they settled down. The poets and orators supported the Arab's revolt in Hizaj in 1916 and the announcement of Arab Kinship in Damascus in 1918. They also appreciated Sharif Hussain of Hijaz as a hero of Arab revolt by composing poetry. The emigrants also defended their brother's long political struggle in the Arab world till the efforts manifested in the form of 'The Great Lebanon' in 1920.

When the Arab East was divided among France and Britain colonies after First World War, Lebanon came under French rule. The Syrian emigrants also demanded independence and end of French authority in solidarity with their brothers' demand for independence. As a result, Lebanese got independence after Second World War. After the promotion of the U.N. due to its outstanding position, Lebanon occupied the status of permanent representative in the U.N. The emigrants continued their work for their homeland as they did for the sake of their new country, America.

Before concluding the chapter, we must have to see the consequences of migration, be it positive or negative. Most of the writers expressed pessimist views on the migration to a new world and found it more disadvantageous than advantageous. For instance, August Adib Pasha, a historian, in his book 'Lebanon after War' described that the country faced damage due to migration as it was deprived from manpowers and working hands which were needed for agriculture, industry, big projects and amelioration works. If these people had not

migrated, they would have helped in the progress and the pride of the country. But the writer contradicted himself by justifying the excuse of these emigrants regarding the lack of fertile agricultural lands, particularly when the mountains were confined in a fixed belt after the issuance of Organic Regulation in 1861, had led to en masse migration .

Another writer, Mohammad Kurd Ali mentioned in his book that the migration was more disadvantageous than advantageous and counted numerous social damages and losses especially in the beginning of the migration. For instance, family misery and increasing number of unmarried girls due to migration of young boys to America and their marriage with American girls caused a havoc in the society . The writer reiterated that the country was in a dire need of these working hands and further said that the affluence and lustrous gold attracted the youth too much. Thus, we see that Mohammad Kurd Ali preferred the remaining capabilities in the country and the fruitful works inside the homeland against the outside world. Mithal Shibli also described the situation in the same way in his book 'Al-Muhajera al-lebanania'.

In fact, the benefits earned by the emigrants for the country, can't be compared with losses suffered from migration. Perhaps these advantages were not visible at the time when the above mentioned writers wrote their books. Those who visited Lebanon after 1950 and traveled in hilly region with beautiful summer resorts and hotels all over the country from North to South, must have a wonderful feeling and opinion of beautiful houses, edifice buildings and well planned hotels. When the builders and tax payers were asked about, there would not be a great wonder after knowing that all these were built by the wealth of emigrants from Lebanon to a new world.

The emigrants continued to give generously material and spiritual support to their fellow countrymen. They worked hard for the progress and the development of the country in every spheres of life. The relations between emigrants and their fellow countrymen were very strong. Every year a great deal of wealth came to Lebanon from abroad as was evident from the fact that there was a bank in Beirut called 'Bank of Lebanon and Mahjar'. Besides the material and spiritual relations, there was also a strong literary link between them. Each and every book published in homeland, must be read by emigrants. It was said that the Syrian and Lebanese press did not publish a book until it was satisfied about the possibility of its circulation in the country of the migration. Same was the case with journalism. It is also said that the Syrian emigrants in America moved towards Americanization and their children were growing up as they were hardly concerned with their homeland or to put it more exactly their ancestral lands.

CHAPTER TWO

RELATION BETWEEN LITERATURE AND SOCIETY IN THE CONTEXT OF MAHJAR LITERATURE

- ❖ ***Literature and Society.***
- ❖ ***Sociology of Mahjar Literature.***
- ❖ ***Social Problem.***
- ❖ ***Religious Freedom.***
- ❖ ***Women Emancipation.***
- ❖ ***Poverty***

LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

Literature is a written or oral expression that uses as its medium language, a social creation, to represent fact or fantasy. But, furthermore, literature represents life; and 'Life' is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of individual have also been objects of literary 'initiation'. The writer or poet himself is a member of society possessed of a specific social status. He receives some degree of social recognition and reward. He addresses an audience, however, hypothetical. Indeed, literature has usually arisen in close connection with particular social institutions. In primitive society, we may even be unable to distinguish poetry from ritual, magic, work or play. Literature has also a social function, of 'use' which cannot be purely individual.¹

Thus, it is common to see 'literature' defined as 'full, central, immediate human experience', usually with an associated reference to 'minute particulars'. By contrast, 'society' is often seen as essentially general and abstract : the summaries and averages, rather than the direct substance of human living. Other related concepts, such as politics, sociology or ideology are similarly placed and downgraded, as more hardened outer shells compared with the living experience of literature.² Consequently, literature is often regarded as too value-laden for the natural scientist and science is seen as too pragmatic for the artist. All though there has been "some degree of convergence" between the physical and cultural sciences, many partisans are still unreconciled. These conflicts have to do with the **protean qualities** of literature, whose essence is defended as inviolable by poets and

¹ Rena Wallek and Austin Warren, *Theory of literature*, p. 94.

² Raymond William, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 45.

their aesthetic cohorts.³

In its modern form, the concept of literature did not emerge earlier than the eighteenth century and was not fully developed until the nineteenth century. Yet the conditions for its emergence had been developing since the European Renaissance. The word itself came into English use in the fourteenth century, following French and Latin precedents; its root was Latin *Littera*, a letter of the alphabet. Literature, in the common early spelling, was then in effect a condition of reading; of being able to read and of having read. It was often close to the sense of modern literacy, which was not in the language until the late nineteenth century, its introduction in part made necessary by the movement of literature to a different sense. The normal adjective associated with literature was 'literate'. **Literary** appeared in the sense of reading ability and experience in the seventeenth century and did not acquire its specialised modern meaning until the eighteenth century.⁴

Most studies have focused on those novels, poetry, plays and other imaginative works as literature that have endured passing fame. Thus the label of 'literature' generally is not applied to books produced for mass audiences or to non-fiction such as biography, history, memories or essays.⁵ According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, literature is referred to as 'Writings that are valued as works of art, especially fiction, drama and poetry (as contrasted with technical books and journalism). According to Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary "Novel, plays, poetry and other creative written works are referred to as literature, especially when they are considered to have artistic qualities". However, these forms are

³ *Encyclopedia of Sociology* – 1984, vol. 3, p. 1141.

⁴ Raymond William, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 46.

⁵ *Encyclopedia of Sociology* – 1984, vol.3, p. 1142

created through mutual acts of individuals and groups who are the 'authors' or 'initiators', the 'agents' or 'facilitators' and 'audiences' or 'responders'. Thus, literature is embedded, in the basic process of communication and serves pervasive social needs. No human society exists without some form of it.⁶

Attempts are made to describe and define the influence of society on literature and to prescribe and judge the position of literature in society. This sociological approach to literature is particularly cultivated by those who profess a specific social philosophy. **Marxist Critics** not only study these relations between literature and society, but also have their clearly defined conception of what these relation should be, both in our present society and in a future classless society.

The sociology of literature derives from several deceptively simple assumptions: Literature reflects the values and experiences of society and implicitly functions to control and generate social action. A vast body of information and controversy has developed from this basic formulation since some shrewd and naive extra-literary connections were made. However, classical Greek philosophers had established the grounds for relationships between social and aesthetic domains. On the one hand, was **Plato's** hostility to poets and their artifices because he saw them as the corrupters of truth by emotional arousal. The view of poets and other artists in 'The Republic' has carried over into contemporary battles between the guardians of law and propriety and the irreverent or imaginative writers who may be imprisoned or condemned to death for offending holy writ. On the other hand, **Aristotle** devised rules for judging the nature and value

⁶ *Encyclopedia of Sociology* – 1984, vol.3, p. 1142.

of tragedy in 'The Poetics' without invoking such drastic sanctions.⁷

During the 20th century, sociological interest in the relations of literature and society has persisted and scholars have undertaken both theoretical discussions and specific research in this field. Lukacs's theories of historical process, literary form and their impact on the transformation of social reality rely on the familiar formulation: "Literature reflects and influences society."⁸ In Hegelian criticism and in that of Taine, historical or social greatness is simply equated with artistic greatness. The artist conveys truth and, necessarily, also historical and social truths. Works of art furnish 'documents because they are monuments'. A harmony between genius and age is postulated. 'Representativeness' or 'social truth', is, by definition, both a result and cause of artistic value. Mediocre, average works of art, though they may seem to a modern sociologist better social documents, are to Taine unexpressive and hence unrepresentative. Literature is really not a reflection of the social process, but the essence, the abridgement and summary of all history.⁹

In precise and succinct terms, literature is a 'criticism of life', be it in the form of examples, fictions or poems which criticize life.¹⁰ True literature, therefore, is at once both concrete and universal. Consequently the criterion of a writer, being the spokesman of life, is the extent to which he can bring about in us, while expressing himself honestly, concretely and realistically, a clearer and more comprehensive understanding or reality as a whole. Literature, therefore, is by its very nature, messianic. It is due to this conviction that most emigrant writers and poets come across through their

⁷ *Encyclopedia of Sociology* – 1984, vol. 3, p. 1141

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 1143

⁹ Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, p. 95.

¹⁰ Prem Chand in his presidential speech in the first conference of Progressive Writers, published in a under magazine, '*Guftugu*', 1980, Bombay, p. 21.

literary creations, as people with a mission and vision of a better society, a better world.

Mahjar Literature, not only epitomizes love and passion, but also ponders upon human problems, and then evaluates them. It does not create ambiguity by adventurous stories but raises the issues which influence the society or individuals. Though ethics and literature carry the same conviction but their ways of treatment are different. Ethics influences the human mind through evidence and advice while literature kindles the human spirit through the artistic delineation of experience and observation. The literature which does not enliven artistic taste and does not provide mental and spiritual assuage and does not instill in us a true desire and constancy to overcome problems of life, cannot be regarded as literature.

SOCIOLOGY OF MAHJAR LITERATURE

The history of mankind has not been devoid of philosophers, reformers, writers and poets who revolted against numerous customs, traditions, rituals and morals existing in the society. The path of revolt has been varied-while some spearheaded reformist movements within the existing structure, others fought for total change. Again there were some who restricted themselves to sermons and admonishments, some who simply pointed out the shortcomings and also some criticised the system through the medium of mockery. Such efforts to purge the society of its evils and enhance the quality of life have repeatedly occurred throughout the history of human civilisation.

Similarly in the history of Arabic literature, there were a number of reformers, writers and poets, who raised their voices for a better society, for instance, Abdullah Ibn al-Muqaffa, Abu al- Atahia, Al-Sharif al-Razi, Abu al-Ala al-Ma'arri and so on. Though they had different views and opinions in dealing with social evils due to different environment and different political, social, economic and cultural conditions, their aims and objectives were the same. But a question that often haunts is why a person or some individuals of a society get eminence in dealing with social problems by rejecting social evils. While other accept them willingly or unwillingly? Infact, the mankind has basic instinct to reject the shortcomings, though these are accepted and have become a part of daily life. In addition, man possesses a sensible mind, quick wit and conformity with the angst of others. He has also a delicate spirit which feels niceties of the society. Furthermore, the man who raises his voice against social evils is a person who missed the harmony with his society where disgrace, vanity and counterfeit are existing. He feels hardship of life and

adjustment problem which reverberate in his hurt and make him move ahead and reshape the society. Therefore, he is always considered as an ideal for the society which loves conflict and struggle.

Naturally, the human society is a corner stone of every artistic expression and the human being is not isolated from the society but considered as a unit of human set-up. For, he interacts with all around him, be it his nearest and dearest ones or friends and neighbours. Similarly, he comes into contact with common people and general environment in his society. At the same time, he encounters all world events as well as culture and civilization. He is influenced by personal and general disasters, social and political turmoil in his country. As a human being, he shares pain with tormented persons and becomes delighted with delighted ones. At the same time, he experiences good as well as bad fortune with others. He feels like a mother with her children and a father in his effort to get livelihood for his family. If this is a quality of a common man, he is most entitled to be a writer and an artist, because he has nothing but a good sense and beautiful expression. He is, in the sense of humanity, a true, an honest and wise leader. This is his biggest message to the society and this is his first and foremost path.

Thus, it can be said that Mahjar literature is a true literature which illuminates the way of life. The people trace in it the spring of happiness and cognition. They drink from this eternal and everlasting spring which does not demarcate time and space. For, it is the origin of time and space and the origin of life and existence. Similarly, Mahjar writers and poets carry the torch of love and freedom and search for the source of happiness and cognition of life in their conscience with desire and passion and in their soul with devotion

and sincerity to lead the startled human soul towards happiness and cognition and eliminate the distress and depression from the life.

Undoubtedly, the great magnitude of a literature is that it should be an expression of solicitude whatever its mode may be or it should be an illustration of a person or a society within a certain framework be it broad or narrow. Prose and poetry, therefore, are considered as two wings of a literature. Every arranged verse is naturally referred to as poetry and every verse without rhythm and metre is known as prose whatever the characteristic of prose and poetry may be. On this basis, wine poems of Akhtal and Abu Nuwas, Love poems of Imraul Qais and Amr Bin Abi Rabi'a, Eulogy of Mutanabbi and Buhtari, Satiric poems of Jarir and Hutai'a and Maqamat (a genre of Arabic rhythmic prose) of Hariri, Badiuzzaman Hamadani and Yazji are considered as literature in essence but the contemplations of Ma'arri, Jibran, Nuaima, Ilya Abu Madi and Raihani are complete literature. These human contemplations fall upon the heart calmly and peacefully and raise the spirits of human being.

The modern men of letters have taken the literature in greater context which includes multi-dimensional views and consists of dedications and dignity. They, therefore, don't consider eulogy as a genre of Arabic Literature. Because eulogy is clear beggary or in most cases a medium of begging and the begging is an act of humiliation and depravity. At the same time, vulgarity in love poem as well as wine poems is not referred to as literature, because it is also an open invitation to great vices. Similarly, fanatic and vain-glorious poetry is not a part of Arabic Literature for both are deception and pride.

In fact, Literature furnishes the human society and guides the

mankind. The value of literature is that it leads the people to a better life and society. In the words of Nu'ama Qazan, "The man of letter is one who shows me the path and leads on the front."¹¹ Therefore, Mahjar writers and poets are known as messengers and Mahjar literature as a message to the society. The members of "The Pen Association are in forefront. Though they had different views about literature and followed different path, they remained close to each other in expressing their feelings about the life. Rashid Ayyub. "The Traveler" asks his soul to submit to fate and be prepared for all eventualities. Nasib Arida is full of sadness about himself, his life and his homeland. But his despair does not lead him to reject his faith. In his poems, he seems to weep over the lot of humanity and its woes. What is life?, he asks. To him it is nothing but sighs and tears.¹²

Jibran, Nuaima and Abu Madi etc. made the literature as a medium of communication for an ideal humanity which were above all kinds of regional, sectarian, religious and national aspirations. At the same time, Al-Raihani, Al-Qarawí, Farahat, Qunsul and so on dealt the literature as an expression of nationalism with excellence. But their artistic efforts are not devoid of human ideas and social values, because their messages of nationalism are not superficial inasmuch as they forget that they are a part of their homeland. This sentiment was expressed by Al-Raihani when he says:

" لا تنسوا وطنكم في حبكم الانساني ، ولا تنسوا الإنسانية في نزعتمكم الوطنية "

"Don't forget your home land in loving humanity and don't forget humanity in your patriotic learning."

¹¹ Isa al Nauri, *Adab al Mahjar*, p. 197.

¹² Ismat Mahdi, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 140.

It is evident that Mahjar Literature is very much concerned with the society. All the Mahjar writers made efforts to create a humanitarian and loving society. They wanted to replace Arab Society that was static, stratified, complacent, submissive and mal-administered with one which could be progressive, mobile, ambitious, idealistic and responsibly governed. But there were divergent opinions regarding model of society. A group viewed the human society as a big unit without any discrimination. In this group, the members of "The Pen Association" were forerunners. Other groups confined themselves to the Arab land only. These differences, in fact, were nothing but an external aspect. For, the Arabs cannot restrain themselves from participating in a great human society and cannot be isolated from it. Besides, the patriotism be it love for the nation or countrymen or resentment against aggression and aggressors, slavery and slavers or imperialism and imperialist is considered as the message of social literature.

Here, a question arises. Is it necessary that the literary message to the nation – every nation- should be a mere national one or it should be an absolute message to humanism having a broad range of vision and struggle? Most of the people think that the latter is a true message of a literature that must be conveyed to every nation. At the same time, they see that the Arab nations are much more in need of an absolute national literature, which would put them into action to stand on their feet amicably and vigorously and to make for themselves a place in the world side by side with other powerful and free nations. Both opinions are valuable and necessary for the Arab East.

Thus, Mahjar writers dedicated their pens to awaken their countrymen and open their eyes towards humiliation and servitude.

They showed the possible way to the actual freedom and explained the different factors and aspects which caused their suffering and humiliation. They categorically stated that sectarianism, factionalism and confessionalism all were like a disease which weakens Arabism and Arab nation. The only way to the upliftment is to remove all differences. Without following this path the Arab East can't succeed in raising itself from the state of humiliation.

Amin al-Raihani says in his book "Al Tatarruf wa al-Islah": "

إخواني أبناء وطني ! إن أول ما يلزمنا في هذه البلاد ... هو هذا الشعور الوطني الخالص من شوائب المذهبيات والطائفيات كلها ، الشعور الصافي السليم ، الخالص للوطن ... علينا أن نرفع في شئون الحياة المدنية الوطن على الدين ... بل علينا أن نفكك الطوائف كلها لنستطيع أن نؤلف طائفة الوطن الكبرى. أجل علينا أن نسعى في تأليف وطنية عالية شاملة ، ركنها الأول الوحدة القومية ، وأن نعزز هذه الوحدة بالأعمال لا بالأقوال . وعلينا أن نغرس هذه الفكرة في البيت وفي المدرسة ، وأن نؤسس لها الجمعيات من النساء والرجال لتبثها في الأمة"

*"O my brethren , sons of my country ! the first thing which compels us in this country is national consciousness free from all kinds of sectarian and religious flaws and awareness for the country. We must prefer the country to religion in civil affairs... We must take apart sectarianism completely so that we can form a great community. Yes, we must try to form a complete and outstanding nationality whose first element is national unity. We must strengthen this unity with action not with merely words. We must crop this idea in every school and house and establish an association comprising men and women so that it can be deep-rooted in the people."*³

¹³ Amin al-Raihani, *Al-Raihaniyat*

Al-Raihani in his book "Antum Al-Shuara" (You the Poet) opposed the call:

"لقد أنكرتم علينا القول : إن زينة الحياة القوة . فقلتم وقد فاتكم ما شمل
من كلامنا : إن في الحياة غير القوة مما يستوجب الرعاية والإجلال ، أي أن فيها
للعبقرين من رقة الشعور وعذوبة الأرواح ما يتألف منه روعة الفن وطهارة
الدموع . وأمام تلك الرقة والعذوبة ، وعند قدمي الروعة والطهارة يجب أن نخر
ساجدين . وأنا أقول لكم إن من ينشدون فنا لا وطن له يمسون ولا فن ولا وطن
لهم . القوة ، ثم القوة ، ثم القوة ! القوة العقلية العلمية ، والقوة الروحية
اللاطائفية، والقوة المادية الاقتصادية ! يوم نظفر بهذه القوى كلها نصير أمة حرة
مستقلة ، عزيزة النفس ، عزيزة الجانب بدون الأجانب"

"Art for art' sake" not "Art for the sake of life and mankind." He says : *" You have denied the saying : The beauty of life is power. Then you have said while our words have left you behind: In the life without power there are regard and honor that is, there are delicacy of feeling and sweetness of the spirit which consists of beauty of art and sanctity of tears for ingenious persons in the life. In front of delicacy and sweetness and near the feet of beauty and sanctity we must fall down prostrating in adoration. I say to you that whosoever is crying for art which has no country, there are no art and no country for him. The power, then the power, again the power! Scientific intellectual power, non- sectarian spiritual power and economic material power ! We will succeed one day through all these powers which are defender of free nation from foreigners."*¹⁴

In the same tune, the peasantry poet, Rashid Salim Al-Khuri composed a number of successful and impressive poems with excellence. Every verse of his poem is revolutionary and heart-rending. In his divan (collection of poems) "Al -A'asir", he says:

¹⁴ Amin al-Raihani, *Al-Raihaniyat*.

” إلهي ! رد مالك من أياد
على وطني ، ورد له الإيادا
خلعت على رباه الحسن فذا
وألست القطين به الحدادا
وما شرف الجبال بساكنها
وشم إباتهم خسفت وهادا؟
أهيب بهم فلا ألقى سميعا
كأنني المنادي والمنادي“

O, God! Help my country and return its power.

You have created extra-ordinary people, but make them wear mourning cloth.

What is honor for Mountain and its people when their pride is affected and lost.

I caution them but I could not find any listener, as if I am only shouting.¹⁵

There is no Arab – Lebanese and non-Lebanese – whose heart was aflamed by the revolution with anger for his prestige. He does not wake up to wash disgrace and shame. The poet depicts the situation brilliantly and expresses his pain:

أمدون التاريخ ! مرحة ! ولا تذكر لهم لبنان في صفحاته
لا تمح رسم المجد من تاريخه يكفيه عيث بنيه في آياته
لا تخبر الأحفاد أن جدودهم لم يشهروا سيفا بوجه عداته

Do you compile the history, God bless you ! Don't mention Lebanon in its pages.

Don't crease the mark of the glory from the history.

It is enough that its people create havoc in its symbol.

Don't inform the grand children that their forefathers didn't take out the sword before their enemies.¹⁶

¹⁵ Rashid Salim al-Khuri, *Al-Aasir*.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Ilyas Farahat who belongs to Southern group of emigrants had also the same spirit regarding nationalism. He was extremely bitter about the solicitude of Arabs, Arabism and Arab countries. He considered Arabism like a religion before every religion. Freedom for Arab nations, their power and force inspired him to compose the best songs. He considered that the enemies of the nation were very few in number and taking side of foreigners against Arab nations. They were also helping them ignore the Arab people. In this regard, Farahat says:

يقولون لي : صادق فلانا فإنه أخو نجدة يرجى لساعة ضيق
فقلت لهم : هذا صحيح وإنما عدو بلادي لن يكون صديقي

They tell me : Trust someone because he is helpful in bad times.

فلو أوصى بكره العرب دين لكنت إذن إمام الملحدينا

I said them: This is true but the enemy of my country can never be my friend.¹⁷

Farahat reiterates :

If any religion suggests me to hate the Arab, then, I would be leader of heretic.¹⁸

Thus, the nationalist emotion of Farahat doesn't know the illusive boundary demarcated by the foreigners among the Arab countries in order to divide them into small states which were engaged in fighting with each other to pursue their interests. He had firm belief in the strength of his nation and its power to wipe out the

¹⁷ Isa al-Nauri, *Adab Al-Mahjar*, p. 212.

¹⁸ Ibid.

oppression of foreigners. Therefore, condemning Guro, a French about the massacre undertaken in his leadership, he says :

ويا غورو ! أتتسب أن شعبا طليق النفس يرضى بالقيود
هزئتم بالوعود ، ونحن قوم غداة الروع نهزأ بالوعيد

O Guro! Do you think , free people will accept the shackle?

You have ridiculed the promise but we people take risk and ridicule the threat¹⁹.

There was another Mahjar poet who was not less furious than the poet Al-Qarawi, Farahat and Raihani. His nationalist sentiments reached such an extent that he changed his religion. When he did not find any satisfactory solution about Arab nationalism in his religion, Christianity, he embraced Islam and changed his name into Abu al-Fazl al-Walid. Later, he shot to fame with this name. Perhaps, this was not needed, because the feeling of nationalism does not require such kind of sentiments. Even Rashid Salim Al-Khuri and Farahat achieved much more publicity in their nationalist vision. But they did not change the name and religion.

In his 'Ode' 'Za-er wa Zafeer' (Roaring and Moaning) Abu al-Fazl expressed his homesickness and pain because of foreign rule (French occupation) and inspired the countrymen to achieve freedom and independence from the foreigners:

يا أمتي ضيقت كل فضيلة وغدوت لا علم ولا أعلام
وإذا أضاعت أمة أعلامها وعلومها فسدت بها الأحكام

O my people! Every virtue has been lost and you have been shown of knowledge, and distinction.

¹⁹ Isa al-Nauri, *Adab Al-Mahjar*, p. 212.

*If a nation wastes its knowledge and distinction, rules and regulations went off.*²⁰

In another Ode “Zikra al-Jamal wa al-Shabab” (memory of beauty and youthfulness) he says :

أقسمت أن أقضى الحياة مجاهدا والحق لي ولتابعي شعار
حتى نفوز به ونرفع راية من حولها يستشهد الأنصار
الموت فخر في الدفاع عن الحمى والعيش في دار المذلة عار

“I swear to spend the life as Mujahid (fighter). In fact, I with my colleague have a slogan.

In order that we will succeed through this slogan and raise the flag around which people sacrifice their lives.

*No doubt, death is pride in case of defence in the war and the life in the house of humiliation is a blot.*²¹

There were many more Mahjar writers and poets whose prose and poetry show their deep-rooted and true national feelings, for instance, Amin Mashriq’s Ode “Aya al-Jamal” (The Symbol of Generation) and most of the poems of Abu Madi, Goerge Saidah, Masud Samaha, Aql al-Jarr, Shukr al-Jarr, Nudra Haddad, Ilyas Qunsul, and his brother, Zaki Qunsul, Nasib Arida, Goerge Kaadi and so on. Nasib Arida’s poem ‘Al-Nehaya’ was a scathing attack against those who made no effort for freedom and ‘Nafs al- Shuja’ was a salute to young revolutionaries who had taken part in the freedom movement during the First World War. Similarly, his poems ‘Nukhab al-junood’ and ‘To Palestine’ created a landmark for the struggle of

²⁰ Isa al-Nauri, *Adab Al-Mahjar*, p. 212.

²¹ Isa al-Nauri, *Adab Al-Mahjar*, p. 212.

Palestinians against Zionist mandatory. "Ternima al-Sarir" was a wail on the state of affairs in Lebanon in the aftermath of severe drought in 1916.

However, there are volumes of prose, poetry and pages of magazines filled with social values in Mahjar Literature. The Mahjar writers and poets attacked the existing paradigm and challenged the authority. Similarly, they advocated strongly for justice, women emancipation and religious freedom. In addition, they wrote on various aspects of social life and different artisans and professionals such as mason, carpenter, tailor, postman, gardener farmer etc., which show their deep association with the society.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Under the impact of certain decisive historical and psychological factors, the Mahjar writers and poets were concerned with the political and social aspects of the range of problems confronting the Arab East, particularly Syria and Lebanon. Such problems were reflected in their writings and served as an inspiring force in the struggle for independence. However, simultaneously with the political current there was flowing a stream of positive thought which aimed at the reconstruction of the social, intellectual and religious life of the community with which Mahjar writers and poets had a deep involvement.

The social problems of the Arab world were in no way different from that of other backward countries. There were poverty, ignorance, sectarianism, religious fanaticism, corrupt administrative and frustrated economic and monetary conditions. There was also the desperate plight of the peasant and the abject condition of women. The feudal system and the religious men of Syria in general and of Lebanon in particular gave rise to such problems. For this, Christians and Muslims were equally responsible to the extent that the land of friendship and brotherhood had then become a land of hatred and discord. Neighbour feared neighbour, friend doubted friend; not merely individuals, but whole groups were at odds with each other. So painful was the situation! When the Ottoman Constitution was promulgated in 1908, the voice of reform grew bolder and more insistent. All the reformers, writers and poets expressed their scorn for the ills, ailments and shortcomings through a flood of prose and poetry. They were filled with the sincere desire for a change and wanted to arouse the great masses which were deaf to the call for reform and insensitive to the pain of the suffering of the people.

The 20th century is characterized by a powerful surge of nationalism all over the world and naturally the Mahjar literature was no exception to be influenced by it. As a result the whole complex of diverse social and economic problems appeared to it as a single and indivisible issue; the question of Arabism, consciousness of weakness, ignorance, and backwardness of the nation. The writers and poets of Mahjar literature realized that Arab East cannot compete with the strong, healthy and well-trained rivals in order to secure a place in the world. They tried, therefore, very hard to inspire the nation, to give her the strength and courage necessary to resist the invaders with the sincere belief that once national sovereignty was attained, everything else would look after itself.

However, the outstanding and urgent problems, given special attention by émigrés were (1) religious freedom, (2) emancipation of women (3) and poverty. This is by no means an extensive enumeration of the ills, ailments and shortcomings harassing the nation at the turn of the 20th century. The three issues exercised overwhelming influence in Mahjar Literature and hence deserve special mention.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The social condition, to a considerable extent, was influenced by religious condition in the Arab East, particularly in Lebanon and Syria where lived a number of religious groups and sects, for instance, Muslims, Christians, Druzes, Jews, Bahaese Qadyanese, Ismailese, Alawese and so on. Muslims, Christian and Druzes played on effective role in country's affair and their leaders enjoyed an upper hand in political and social matters.

Religion, since the very beginning has been highly sensitive to changes in the intellectual and moral climate of the day; at the same time, it has been a powerful factor in the creation of that climate. Basically religious beliefs, rituals and practices arise and develop in man's continuous struggle to overcome the obstacles presented by nature and equally so in man's struggle against man on social issues. When privileged groups or social classes find it difficult to maintain their power and privileges based on unequal share of the produce made available by peasants, artisans and others, they devise superstitious measure to collect taxes and tributes. Similarly when the masses are burdened with disabilities to fight for social justice, they invoke the aid of God who is credited with the creation of free and equal human being.

Thus, religion is used and elaborated by both the privileged and the underprivileged sections of society but more so by the former because the religious ideology of the privileged classes, is turned into the dominant ideology which is ingrained in the minds of the people. Religion played the same role in the feudal society of Lebanon and Syria. As Jibran says : *From distant times down to our own days the privileged of society have ever allied themselves with the clergy and*

*leaders of religion against the body of society.*²² More often than not the country's policies were guided by the economic and political interests of the ruling class and religion was used for this purpose.

However, 20th century, as mentioned earlier, was characterized by immense nationalism and cultural stirrings. The impact of the modern Western culture begot a new awakening. There was an awareness that the entire Arab East was colonized by a handful of foreigners because of internal weakness of social structure and culture. Thoughtful Arabs began to look for the strength and weakness of their society and for ways and means of removing the weakness. While a large number of people refused to come to terms with the West and put their faith in traditional ideas and institutions, others gradually come to hold that elements of modern western thoughts had to be imbibed for the regeneration of their society. They were impressed in particular by modern science and the doctrines of reason and humanism.

As the emigrants had experienced corruption, oppression, authoritarianism, religious fanaticism and intolerance in their homeland, and were enjoying in the land of liberty and progress, it was very natural to react to social evils and transmit the western message of freedom and progress to the Arab East. That is why, differing on the nature and extent of reforms, most of the emigrant writers and poets shared the conviction that social and religious reforms were urgently needed.

Perhaps, the emigrant writers were among those who spread the meaning of religious tolerance. They dedicated their prose and poetry for this purpose. Their writings were filled with freedom of expression, thought, religious discussion and its explanation which were free from

²² Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Spirit Rebellious*, Translated by A.H. Nahmad, p. 86

the bigotry, rigidity and blind acceptance of whatever was mentioned in religions as well as its explanatory books. However, the Orientalists considered the emigrants as non-believers and accused them of being infidels, but they didn't accept the charge and fought it tooth and nail. The emigrants showed that they were very much concerned with their religion but they were against religious fanaticism because religion had become full of superstitions and was used as an exploitative tool by ignorant and corrupt priests.

The central figures among the emigrant writers were Amin al-Raihani and Jibran. Though they had different opinions about the religion and its men, they had the same view about the simplicity of religious convictions with which they grew in their homeland. At the same time, they were pained by religious jugglery which was drilled in the minds of common people by the priests. Therefore, they made severe attacks on them through their stirring writings. As a result, they were branded heretics. Their books were blacklisted and prohibited for the Catholics Christians. Because they were against the teaching of priests and their explanations about the spirit of Catholic religion. Even a book of Jibran was burnt in Beirut on the charge of blasphemy.

However, they carried on a protracted struggle against the religions and social evils and vigorously opposed the rigidity and prevalence of the arbitrary attitude of religion and its men. Jibran wrote a number of books in this regard, for instance, 'Al-Ajneha al-Mutakassira', 'Araes al-Muruj', 'Al-Arwah al-Mutamarrida', Yasu Ibn al-Insan al-Awasif and so on. Challenging the dictatorship of priest, he calls his countrymen :

*Come brethren, and let us worship God according to the dictates of our spirits and not as priest will it, for God wants not the adoration of the ignorant in their imitation of other, they would say that this one is a heretic who rebels against the authority placed by God in the hands of His priests.*²³

Jibran lashed out against the vested interests of the priests and religious fanaticism. He called for peaceful coexistence of different religions and inspired the people towards religious simplicity:

ليس في الغابات دين لا ولا الكفر القبيح
فإذا البلبل غنى لم يقل: هذا الصحيح
إن دين الناس يأتي مثل ظل ويروح
لم يقم في الأرض دين بعد طه والمسيح

أعطني الناي وغن فالغنا خير الصلاة
وأنين الناي يبقى بعد أن تفتنى الحياة

"There is no religion in forest, certainly not, and infidelity is not repugnant.

When a nightingale sings, don't say: this is truth.

People's religion like a shadow comes and goes away.

No religion on the earth after Taha and Christ.

Give me the flute and sing. Singing is the best prayer

*Wail of the flute will remain after the life ends*²⁴

²³ Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Spirits Rebellious*, Translated by H.M. Nahmad, p. 84.

²⁴ Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Al-Mawakib*.

He says in his book "The Prophet"

"Your daily life is your temple and your religion. Whenever you enter into it take with you your all. Take the plough and the forge and mallet and the lute, the things you have fashioned in necessity or for delight. For in reverie you cannot rise above your achievement nor fall lower than your failure and take with you all men: For, in adoration you cannot fly higher than their hopes nor humble yourself lower than their despair. And if you would know God, be not therefore a solver of riddles. Rather look about you and you shall see Him playing with your children. And look into space; you shall see Him walking in the cloud, outstretching His arms in the lightning and descending in rain. You shall see Him smiling in flowers, then rising and waving His hands in trees."²⁵

Al-Raihani had a opinion different from Jibran about religious freedom. He assumed that religion should be used to unite the people for the emergence of a national consciousness and not to use it to create differences among the sons of the soil. He wished that there should be one religion in every Arab nation that is 'nationalism'. For this purpose, he utilized his pen and laid his life. On the occasion of a school function, he said addressing the students.

" إنكم في هذه المدرسة إخوان وإن اختلفت لهجاتكم العربية، وتعددت مذاهبكم الدينية. ولكن لا فضل لكم في هذا الإخاء، وهو ركن من أركان التعليم الحر الراقى، إنما فضلكم فيها ستحملونه إن شاء الله إلى الوطن - كل إلى بلاده - من هذا الروح المقدس، روح الإخاء الذي سيضم تحت لوائه المسلم والمسيحي

²⁵ Jibran Khalil Jibran, *The Prophet*, p. 105-6.

والدرزى، كما سيجمع بين اللبناني والسورى والعراقي والفلسطينى...
كلنا ندين بدين التوحيد. كلنا نوحده الله ولا نرجع فى النهاية إلى سواه.
نحن أبناء الأديان التوحيدية، وما موسى وعيسى ومحمد غير رسل الإله الواحد،
رسل التوحيد. فإذا كان إلهنا واحداً، ولساننا واحداً، وبلادنا فى سهولها وجبالها
وصحاريها واحدة، ومصائبنا السياسية كلها واحدة، أفلا ينبغى أن يكون الوطن
كذلك واحداً فرداً لا تقسيم فيه ولا تجزئة؟!...

عندما أفكر فى المذاهب والطوائف الدينية-بليتنا الكبرى- وفى أولئك
المتعصبين جهالاً أو نفاقاً، الذين يكفرون الناس و يتعيشون بجهل الناس، أذكر
بيتين من الشعر الإنكليزى لصديقى الأمريكى الشاعر الكبير إدوين مركهام،
ترجمها: "إن المتعصب رسم دائرة صغيرة وجعلنى أنا الكافر خارجها ولكنى-
والحب عونى - غلبناه، فرسمنا دائرة كبيرة وجعلنا ضمنها..."

"You all are brothers in this school, though your Arabic dialects are different. Your religions are many in number but no one among you have distinction in this brotherhood. This is a part of developing independent education. Your only distinction is that you will carry this brotherhood, if God wishes, to your country - everyone of you- from this holy spirit, the spirits of brotherhood under which Muslims, Christians and Druzes will assemble, similarly it will bring Lebanese, Syrians, and Palestinians together..."

We all are indebted to the religion which believes in the unity of God. We all declare that God is one. We don't go back otherwise at last. We are the followers of those religions, which believe in the unity of God. No Moses, No Christ, No Mohammad but prophets of one God. When our God is one, our language is one, our country with its plains, mountain and desert is one and whole political disasters are one, should the nation not be one where there is no division and split.

When I think of religions, religious groups and of the hypocrats

*and ignorant fanatics and those who accused the people of infidelity and make a living with ignorance of the people, I remember two verses of my American friend, a great poet, Idwin Markaham. The translation of the verses is: The fanatic drew a small circle and made me out of it because I am non believer. But – Love is my aid – we beat him and drew a big circle and made him its part.*²⁶

Mikhail Nuaima followed the path of Jibran. Sometimes, he even repeated his words although his own expressions lacked the severity of Jibran. However he too called for freedom of thought from the religious servitude and emphasized that religion was above all ideologies and sectarianisms. For him humanity not nationality is an union. There are no division in it. Every religion and sect comes out of a single spring and their destination is one.

As for Ilya Abu Madi, he was a Christian by birth like Jibran, Raihani and Nuaima. He also believed in freedom of thought and rejected the religion which created difference amongst mankind. He called for tolerance and highness of faith and for the emulation of nature which had no religion and sect.

All the emigrants believe in God and invite to Him. But they don't see through the religion. They want to see all human beings as creatures of one God whatever their religions and sects are. There is no distinction between one another and there should not be discrimination amongst them.

When a new constitution was introduced in Syria in 1950, Islam was declared as official religion. The emigrants were taken aback. What is the meaning of reform and national unity? There was an outcry over it. The people raised their voices demanding that

²⁶ Amin al Raihani, *Al-Raihaniyat*.

religion is for God and the country for all. Even George Saidah composed a poem condemning the act.

WOMEN EMANCIPATION

Woman is born for domestic affairs and this domesticity bears the halo of religious significance. Her work in the home and her role as supportive wife and loving mother were designed by God himself in her honor. To attempt to change this God-willed order of task distribution and to compete with male who toils outside the home is sinful and will lead to the corruption of the whole order of being. Only as wife and mother a woman will achieve rank, honor and even her self-hood. This was general notion about women in Arab society. Their position was at its worst during the Ottoman period. They were never allowed even to leave the house and on the rare occasion when they found themselves outside its walls, they were always under the close control of their family and relations. Seldom could one see a Muslim woman ever closely veiled enter a shop or a bazaar or any public place.

There was no change in these conditions until the advent of the 20th century, when Qasim Amin raised his voice in Egypt, calling up his nation to grant her daughters their freedom and their social rights. He lashed out against the Hijab as the main barrier to women's growth and the main source of their ignorance. He used this term in the sense of seclusion in the home, sexual segregation, and the face veil. He insisted on women's right to mobility outside the house. After that all the Egyptian newspapers lent their pages to the discussion of the problem in which both the followers and opponents of Qasim Amin took up their pens, adducing arguments of the most varied kind for and against the emancipation of women.

However, in Lebanon and Syria the condition of women was different. Hijab or sexual segregation was not the problem of

importance there. Therefore, Mahjar writers- mostly from Lebanon and Syria dealt with other women related issues and rights, for instance, freedom to chose marriage partners, right to act independently and protection from oppression of parents and other family members. Jibran pointed to such problems in his article “Al-Obudiya”. He says :

دخلت منازل الأغنياء الأقوياء وأكواخ الفقراء الضعفاء فرأيت الأطفال
يرضعون العبودية مع اللبن، والصبيان يتلقنون الخضوع مع حروف الهجاء، و
الصبايا يرتدين الملا بس المبطنة بالانقياد والخنوع والنساء يهجن على أسرة الطاعة
والامتثال.

*“I entered the houses of the rich as well the huts of the poor. I saw the children suckling servitude with milk, the youth learning obedience with alphabets, the girls wearing dresses filled with submission and the women sitting silent on the umbilical cord of compliance”.*²⁷

Jibran and other writers made a number of such remarks. Initially they started to arouse the people with the call for ‘educate the girls’ and then with the demand for the “complete freedom of women.” In this regard, the writers wrote articles and stories and poets composed poems condemning the parent’s oppression and cruelty in marriages and heritages.

Jibran feels the agony of a girl when she was forced to marry against her will. He describes it as a ‘tragedy’ and says:

“Those who come forth from out of the infinite and return thereto and have tested naught of life’s truths, know not the meaning of a woman’s agony when her spirit stands between the man whom

²⁷ Jibran Kalil Jibran, *Al-Awasif*, p. 10.

*Heaven has willed to love and the man to whom the laws of his fellows have bound her. It is a 'tragedy writ' in the blood and tears of womanhood.*²⁸

Further, he becomes more furious and describes the girl who falls prey in the hands of traditions and customs. The girl narrates her story:

*"This, then, is my story and this is my protest before heaven and earth. I shall sing it and tell it, but people will close their ears and hear not, for they fear the revolt of their spirits and they are afraid lest the foundation of their society be shaken and fall about their heads. This is the rough and uneven path I have trodden ere attaining the summit of my happiness. If Death should come now and bear away, my spirit would stand before the throne on high without fear or trembling, but with hope and rejoicing; and the coverings of my secret thoughts would fall away before the great Judge and reveal them white as snow.*²⁹

A woman writer, Salma Saegh, a member of Al-Usba al-Andulusia wrote a stirring article, "Al-Nisf al-Mansi' (The Forgotten Half) in the memory of an Egyptian woman leader, Huda Sharawi. In her article, she demanded complete women's right to freedom and lashed out against the men's attitude towards women. She says:

"ماتت هدى شعراوى، ومات قبلها قاسم أمين، ومات قبلها الإمام بطرس
البستاني، ماتوا جميعاً وأصواتهم تدوى: يا قوم! تعهدوا الأساس تعهدوا الأسرة،
تعهدوا المرأة لأنها نصف الأسرة، ونصف الأمة، ونصف الدولة.
وستظلون يا سادتي الرجال-أرباب الأمر في لبنان وسوريا ومصر والعراق

²⁸ Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Spirit Rebellious*, Translated by H.M. Nahmad, p. 11.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 19.

والحجاز واليمن- ستظلون تبون على الرمال، حتى تعيدوا - كل فى وطنه - إلى نصف الأمة و نصف الدولة حقها الشرعى الصريح السليب، الذى طالبت به هدى شعراوى ، وظلت تطالب حتى طارت روحها إلى خالقها.

تقول إحدى النساء الظريفات: " ليس للرجل عيوب لا تحتمل ... وكل ما يفعله من الأذى هو نتيجة النسيان... "

ولكن من النسيان ما يضحك ، وآية ذلك انضمام لبنان و معه الدول العربية إلى منظمة الأمم المتحدة، وقبوله ميثاقها الكامل، وفيه نص صريح على تقديس الحريات، وأولها حرية الجنس- والجنس هنا يعنى الرجل والمرأة-... ولكن لبنان مع إخوانه ينسون هذا الميثاق ساعة يحظرون على المرأة التمتع بالحق الوطنى الكامل.

ومن النسيان ما ييكى حقا، فعلى مقربة من مدينة اليونسكو- حيث أحرقوا البخور فى تمجيد لبنان وحضارته البعيدة- قامت بناية السجون ، حيث تربط الطبقات المنحطة من مجرمين ولصوص ونشالين. إن كل هذه الطبقات ، ومن يمثّلها من الذين يعيشون موقتا خارج السجون، تملك الحق الوطنى، حق إدارة البيت اللبنانى، وتقرير مصير اللبنانى. أما الطبيبات والمحاميات، أما اللواتى صرفن الأعمار فى تهية هذه الجماهير المثقفة من فتيان أما الرهبات الناذرات نفوسهن للخير، والسيدات الحاملات عن أكتاف الخزينة اللبنانية كل مشاكل الإسعاف العام، أما كل هذه المواقب من النساء التقيات فمحرومات من الحق الوطنى بفعل النسيان الأثيم!.....

"Huda Sharawi died. Before her Quasim Amin and before him Butrus al-Bustani died. All of them are no more. While their voices are reverberating. O, my people ! be committed to the principles and family as well as to the women. Because she is half of the family, half of the nation and half of the country.

O my masters, the men ! You will remain authority in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Hejaz and Yemen - You will remain building houses on sands till you give back -in every nation- to half of the nation and

half of the country their clear legitimate right which was wrenched away". Huda Sharawi demanded for the same. She continued demanding for it till she died.

One of graceful women says: Man has no defect unbearable... whatever he harms, is the result of his forgetfulness.

But some forgetfulness is laughable. The example is the affiliation of Lebanon and other Arab nations with U.N. and the acceptance of its whole Charter. In this Charter, there is a clear paragraph to respect the freedom - first of them is the freedom of gender that means man and woman. But Lebanon with its brother states has forgotten the charter and prohibits the woman to enjoy the complete national right.

And some forgetfulness is lamentable. For instance, near the city of Yunesco - where frankincense was burnt in the glory of Lebanon and its far-reaching civilization - prisons were built where all down-trodden communities of culprits, thieves and pickpockets were tied up. Every one of these communities and those similar to them who are living temporarily outside the prisons have the nationality right and right to administrate Lebanon and its self-determination right. As for women doctors, lawyers and those who spend their lives to prepare a group of young men and women, and the nuns who vow to serve for the welfare of the people and take the burden of all general medical problem in Lebanon, all these devoted women are deprived from the national right because of sinful forgetfulness."³⁰

³⁰ From an article, 'Al-Nisf al-Mansa' by Huda Sharawi published in the magazine *Al-Usba*, 1949.

The Mahjar Writers wanted woman to be considered a free human being and to be granted the inborn rights every human being possesses and of which she had been deprived. This would certainly benefit in the progress and perfection of the society. For this, they attacked not only the existing systems but also called for women to come forward. Because women are the mothers of the new generation. If woman is strong, she can not be oppressed. Mari Bani Ataullah, a woman writer of Mahajar Literature gives description of society in her article "where is the humanist leader" and calls for mothers to eliminate the system which causes the ills, ailments and short comings. She says:

"تصاب البلاد بوافدة من الأمراض السريعة الانتشار ، فنجابها حالا بالتلقيح الإجبارى ضنا بأرواح العباد أن تضحي .

ثم تمنى البلاد بوافدة من الطاعون الإنسانى ، كالسلب والنهب والتعدى والقتل، فترى تلك الأرواح التى حافظنا على كيانها أولا متروكة لأيدى القدر تتنازعها كما تشاء ، كأن لا مصل يشفى ولا يد طبيب تداوى .

وتنتشر على العالم قاطبة وافدة اجتماعية تحصد الأخضر واليابس، وتدك معالم العمران، وتنهار معها صروح المدنية فلا تتحرك يد طبيب اجتماعى واحد للقضاء على القوة المسببة ، وإراحة الإنسانية من شرورها .

فهذه الأمراض وتلك ليست سوى نتيجة سوء التربية وفساد الأخلاق وتشويه برامج التعليم ، لأننا فى كل أعمالنا إنما نضع المراهم على الجراح، ونخفف وطأة الأوجاع بالمخدرات دون أن نسعى إلى تجنب أسباب العلل، واستتصال جراثيم الأمراض من أسسها ، بعد أن أصبحنا نحشو الأدمغة بالعلوم ، ونغض النظر عن الأخلاق التى فسدت وانحطت ، وأصبحت وحدها السبب الأهم فى هذه الكارثة الكبرى التى يواجهها العالم ...

لهذا أريد أن أنادى الأمهات - أمهات العالم بأسره، كى يسعين فى مؤتمراتهن إلى إبادة كل برامج التربية والتعليم الحاضرة، ويعمدن إلى سن برامج

جديدة وقوانين نزيهة وشرائع قويمه، تعلم أبناء الجيل الجديد كيف يتمردون على القوى الغاشمة، وتولد فى نفوسهم كرها للحرب ومسببها ، وتفهمهم قيمة وجودهم فى الحياة، وأنهم خلقوا لمكافحة الفناء قبل أوانه، لا ليكونو عرضة لرغائب قادة خلعت نفوسهم من الشعور الإنسانى، كهؤلاء الذين يحملون مقدرات العالم فى هذه الجيل الملىء بالشر والويلات .

لقد ضحت الإنسانية من فظائع هؤلاء القادة الميكانيكيين الذين لا قلب لهم ولا ضمير ولا رادع. فأين نجد الرجل الإنسانى العالى الذى يتولى قيادة العالم الجموح، ويقف به عند محطة السلام، فلا يقود الشبيبة الزاهرة النشيطة إلى الفناء بجرعة من شفتيه الناريتين ، ويقضى على معالم العمران بذرة من مخترعاته الجهنمية...."

"Country is stricken by epidemic. At present we counter it with compulsory vaccination in order to keep back the life of the people. Then the country is hit by human plague such as plundering, robbery oppression and killing. We see those lives we have protected first, are playing in the hands of fate as they want. As if there is no prayer to recover and no doctor to treat.

The social epidemic spreading all over the world is harvesting everything either green or dried and devastating the landmark of culture and driving away the places of civilization. But not a single social doctor moves to eliminate the causing force and rescue the human being from its evils. These diseases are not only the result of mal-nurturing, bad morality and deforming education system. Because we put ointment on wounds and lessen the pain by drugs without making an effort to prevent the cause of disease and eliminate the germs after we have filled the minds with science overlooking morals which have been perverted and corrupted and became the main reason behind this great catastrophe that the world is facing to.

Therefore, I want to call the mothers - mothers of the entire world in order to make efforts in their conferences to eradicate all existing education and nurturing systems and embark upon to form new systems as well as neat and clean laws and powerful rules that teach the new generation how to rebel against brute forces and create in their soul hatred against war and its causes. They can understand their lives, because they are born to fight against destruction before the time comes and not to become a prey to the interest of the leaders who have no human consciousness like those who have world potentials in new generation filled with evils and woes.

Human being has cried for the corruption of manipulative leaders who have neither heart nor conscience nor inhibition. Where we will get word-wide humanist leader who can lead unruly world and bring it at the platform of peace and security and who does not lead the energetic and blooming youth to destruction by his fiery lips and put an end to the landmark of civilization by an atom of his hellish invention.”³¹

³¹ From an article, '*Aina Howa al-Qaid al-Insani*', by Mari Bani Ataullah, published in the magazine *Al-Usba*, 1949.

POVERTY

Poverty has been a major issue of concern for emigrants and was also one of the main reasons behind their migration to countries of wealth and affluence. There has been no essential development in the social and economic conditions since the Ottoman period. In spite of fertile lands and immense natural resources, the peasants continued to vegetate in conditions of abject poverty and unspeakable squalor. The weakness of centralized administration increased the influence of feudalism. The nexus between religious men and feudal forces aggravated the situation.

Jibran points to the oppression against the peasant and the arbitrary attitude of feudal lords in his story "the cry of the graves." A girl narrates her story saying :

"An officer of the Ameer came to our field to assess the tax and collect the tribute. When he saw me he looked at me with favour and I was afraid, and he levied an extortionate tax on my father's field – a tax so great as to be beyond even a rich man's purse. Then he seized me and carried me off by force to the palace of the Ameer in place of gold. I begged him with weeping to have pity on me, but he heeded not. I adjured him by my father's year but he showed no mercy."³²

In the same story, he illustrates the life of a wretched and poverty ridden- family who has to face the wrath of the Ameer. The story was narrated by a women of the family.

"He is my faithful husband and kind companion and father of my children. I have five children crying out in their hunger. The eldest of them is eight years and the youngest is yet suckling. My man was not a

³² Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Spirits Rebellious* translated by H.M. Nahmad, p.33.

thief; he was a peasant who farmed the monastery's land. But he received naught from the monks save a loaf of bread, which we divided, up when evening came, leaving nothing for the morning.

Since the days of his youth has he watered the fields of the monastery with the sweat of his brow, and with the strength of his arms made its garden grow. When he grew feeble and his strength diminished through years of toil, he fell sick and the monks sent him away, saying that the monastery had no longer need of him. They told him to go and send his children to take his place in the fields as soon as they were of age. He wept and I wept and he implored them to have pity on him for Jesu's sake and entreated them by the angels and saints. But they had neither compassion nor pity for him or for our children, naked and hungry. So he went to the city and sought work there, only to return empty-handed, for the dwellers in that mansion would not employ save strong young men. In the end he sat by the wayside and begged. But people would not give him alms, they said, charity is not for those given to sloth and idleness, and passed him by. One night need so possessed that our children lay prostrate with hunger and the suckling sucked at my breasts and found there no milk. A change grew over my husband and he went out hidden by the darkness of the night and entered a vault of the monastery. There the monks stored the crops from the fields and the yield of the vineyards. As he was about to return to us carrying with him a basket of flour, the monks awoke from their sleep and seized hold of him ere he had taken a few steps. They struck at him and reviled him. When morning came they delivered him up to the soldiers, saying : 'Behold a thief came to plunder the monastery of its gold vessels'. Then they led him away to the prison and thence to the scaffold, to fill the bellies of the vulture because he has tried to fill the bellies of starving children with grain his

*own sweat had garnered when he served the monastery.*³³

Such illustrations of an oppressed and wretched family are reflected many times in Jibran's writings be it prose or poetry. Being an artist and a philosopher of his time he truly gathered the pieces of shattered life and made it his first source of inspiration. The above mentioned picture of poverty and suffering of human beings given by Jibran is both true and vivid. He preferred to tell a story, a way of handling the subject which he rightly considered more impressive than mere sermonizing and admonishing.

The other man of sense of humanity and who anguished over pain and plight of his countrymen, Amin al- Raihani showed his deep and sincere association not merely by his writings but by his action, too, inspiring other fellow emigrants. When Lebanon was stricken by the great famine during First World War in 1916, Raihani started to make all efforts to collect the wealth and affluence from his emigrant brothers for the hungry sons of his soil. He dedicated his writings to this humanitarian work and made himself an ideal for others. He fasted two days and gave the cost of food to the famine stricken people. He appealed to emigrant to fast at least one day and donate the price of meal of that day to their brothers in the homeland. For the same purpose he formed a committee of emigrants in order to collect donations.

In his writings, Al-Raihani dealt with a lot of social problems and gave subtle opinions to solve the regarding poverty, he says in an article "poverty and its necessities":

³³ Jibran Khalil Jibran, *Spirits Rebellious*, translated by H.M. Nahmad. P. 36-38.

”إن الفقر لحليف الجهل، وأليف القذارة ، ورسول الفوضى.ولكن ما هو سبب الفقر؟ هي مسألة أقدم من يعقوب بن إسحق بن إبراهيم الذى خدع خماه ليكثر غنمه فيجنى من ذلك مغنما. نعم هي مسألة قديمة، ولكنها تظل جديدة لأنها لا تحل ما دامت الأحكام فى أيدي ذوى المآرب والأغراض الذاتية...“

” إن خيرات الأرض تكفى سكانها إذا وزعت توزيعا عادلا على الجميع. فالقمح الذى يزرع فى الولايات المتحدة سنويا يقوم بقوت سكان الأرض كافة،. ولكن مع وجود هذ القدر الوافر من القمح لا يزال المتسولون والبائسون يطوفون أسواق المدن الكبرى ، وكثيرا ما يموتون جوعا، ولا يزال الملايين من الفقراء عاجزين عن ابتياع اللحوم كل يوم...“

”إذا كانت خيرات العالم غزيرة ألا يجب أن تسود القناعة والسعادة فى جميع البشر؟ ألا يجب أن يكون الكل على مبلغ الكفاية؟ متى يستريح الأفراد من التخمة، ويأمن الجمهور من الجوع؟ كم يموت من الممولين بالانتفاخ ، وكم يموت من المساكين بالانقباض!؟“

“In fact, poverty is a companion of ignorance and friend of dirtiness and a messenger of chauism but what is the reason behind poverty? This is a very old question. There is a Yaqub Bin Ibrahim who misled his father in law and order to increase his sheep and collect the wealth. Yes, this is an old question but will have been new. Because it will not be solved until the power remains in the hands of opportunists. Crop of the land will be enough for the people, if it will be distributed fairly to all. Though the wheat, distributed in USA yearly, can feed all the human being, in spite of availability of a huge quantity of wheat, beggars are still roaming around the market of big cities and most of them are dying of hunger and thousands of poor are unable to buy meat every day.

If the crop of the world is in pecasly, is it not necessary that contentment and prosperity prevailed in mankind? Is it not necessary

*that all persons get a sufficient quantity? When will individuals be saved from indigestion and people get away from hunger? How many wealthy die of obesity while so many poor die of hunger?*³⁴

However, it is noteworthy that emigrant writers and poets interested in social problems have one thing in common; they all came from the country which was almost ruled by anarchy and economic chaos. Therefore, their interest in social problems and misery of the people is due to proximity and deep connection with their country and its people. They are familiar with the problems and their interest in it is sincere. One of the most prominent of them is a poet of joy and hope, Ilya Abu Madi, who filled his poetry with optimism and called to love life and disregard the problems and extortion of life. He diagnoses a lot of defects of the society and feels pity on wretched people. He says, about an orphan in his Ode 'Yatim' (orphan):

إنتى كلما تأملت طفلا	خلت أنتى أرى ملاكا سوريا
قل لمن يبصر الضباب كثيفا	إن تحت الضباب فجرا نقيا
اليتيم الذى يلوح زريا	ليس شيئا، لو تعلمون، زريا
إنه غرسة ستطلع يوما	ثمرا طيبا وزهرا جنيا
ربما كان أودع الله فيه	فيلسوبا أو شاعرا أو نبيا
إن يك الموت قد مضى بأبيه	ما مضى بالشعور فيك وفيا
إن هذا الطفل الصغير ملاك	كيف ترضون أن يكون شقيا؟

Whenever I think of a child, I find him equal to a land lord.

Say those who see the fog very thick that there is a beautiful dawn under the fog.

The orphan seems to be little but he is not little, if you know.

³⁴ Amin al-Raihani, *Al-Raihaniyat*.

He is like a plant that one day will bear good fruits and flowers.

There is a possibility that Allah may lay down in him as philosopher of poets or prophet.

If death has taken away his father, your sense hasn't gone away.

No doubt, this little child is a rich man. How do you accept that he is miserable.³⁵

مهلًا فقد أسرقت في الخيلاء	قل للغنى المستعز بما له
ماء، ومن طين خلقت وماء	جبل الفقير أخوك من طين ومن
وتجود بالآلاف في الفحشاء؟	أتضن بالدينار في إسعافه
ذل السؤال ومنة البخلاء	انصراًحاك، فإن فعلت كفيته

He says in his kasida (The Poor) 'Al-Faqir'.

"Say the rich who is proud of his wealth! you have exaggerated your pride. Your brother, the poor, was made of soil and water and you are also created with the same.

Do you keep back Dinar at the time of his help and become openhanded in monstrosity.

Help your brother ! If you do, you will protect yourself from grace of stinginess and him from humiliation of begging.³⁶

³⁵ Isa al-Nauri, *Adab al-Mahjar*, p. 218.

³⁶ Isa al-Nauri, *Adab al-Mahjar*, p. 218.

CHAPTER THREE

EMINENT PROSE WRITERS OF MAHJAR LITERATURE & THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIETY

❖ *Amin al-Raihani.*

❖ *Jibran Khalil Jibran.*

Amin al-Raihani

The first Arab Literary name to Shine in North America was that of Amin al-Raihani, a self-made Lebanese writer, orator and the most widely traveller of his generation. But furthermore, he was a messenger of humanity, freedom and unity as well as a social philosopher and preacher of Arab nationalism. He worked for Arab unity before the Arab could understand the meaning of unity, its importance and necessity. A writer says about him “*A Whole World in a man.*”¹ Writing about him requires to depict a full account of his achievements or else it will be injustice to his multi dimensional personality and talent.

Amin Bin Faris al-Raihani was born in a village of Lebanon, al-Fraika on 24 November 1876 and died in 1940. During this period, almost 74 years, he travelled more than 20 times between America and many countries in the Arab East since he was 12 years old. He travelled Arabian Deserts where he met their kings and Amirs and became closely associated with their people. Regarding all these, he wrote many books in around 50 volumes. Some of them were in Arabic and some in English. Most of them were published during his lifetime and the remaining after his death by his brother, Albert al-Raihani. Albert did this to renew his brother’s national and literary message.

Amin al-Raihani at first entered a school in his village, Al-Fraika and became a pupil of Al-Khuri Marqas in the Chruch of Mar Marun. Soon he was under the guidance of No’oum Makarzil, a school

¹ M.A. Musa, *Amin al – Raihani hayatuhu wa Atharuhu*, p.126.

teacher. When he came 12 years of his age, he went to America with his uncle, Abduh and his teacher, No'oum Makarzil. His uncle admitted him in a school to learn English language. He stayed there for not more than one year and started working with his father and uncle. At the age of 17, he turned his attention to theatre and set out to travel to American countries with a famous theatre group. After around three months, he came back and joined the business of his father and uncle once again.

However, he did not stop the study. He joined a night school and continued it. He was very fond of reading English and French books. Meanwhile, a creative storm seemed to rage within him. So he started writing articles expressing his ideas and feelings in Arabic language. Thereafter he sent them to the magazine, 'Al-Huda' started by his teacher, Nu'oum Makarzil. His teacher made necessary correction in his articles before they were published. Al-Raihani's essays were the first to rouse the consciousness among émigrés to social problems and showed ways of reforming them.²

In 1898, al - Raihani fell ill and returned to Lebanon. After recovering his health, he started teaching English language in a school, Qarna Shahwan near al-Fraika. In this school he came across with a book of al-Maarri, *Luzumiyat*. He studied it attentively. He was very impressed with the writer and his humanist approach in poetry. He promised himself that he would translate it into English to transmit the message of this wonderful poet to the Western World.

At the time when al-Raihani knew Abu al-Ala al - Marri, he was not aware of Arab World, its people and the importance of nationality.

² Ismat Mahdi, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 142.

Because there was nothing to guide him on this purpose but foreigners and their books. His heart was indented a lot by this. Thereafter the idea to tour Arab countries began to ripen in his mind in order to get information about them and their people. Finally, the idea was translated into reality and he began to travel the Arab countries whenever he got opportunity. After that, he described his experience and observation in his travelogue in Arabic and English. In this regard, some of his best books are in Arabic 'Muluk al-Arab', 'Tarikh Najd al-Hadith', 'Qalb al-Iraq', 'Qalb Lebanon', 'Al-Maghrib al-Aqsa' and in English Son of Saud and Najd, Around the Arabian banks, The Cities of Yemen.

Undoubtedly, al-Raihani was considered a great source of information about Arabs and their countries. Perhaps, he was the first Arab writer who thought of modern time and Arab unity which was not possible without knowing each other or to put it more exactly, it was almost impossible to identify the actual conditions of Arab countries, their people, living standard, customs, traditions and means of life. Therefore, he collected information about kings and Amir's of Arab countries and explained the different conditions and varying environment in which every section was living.

In fact, al-Raihani aimed to create a picture of the Arabs that portrayed their grandeur, lofty spiritual ideals and national aspirations. On the other hand, he directed his energies towards acquainting his people with the best in the Western culture and achievement. His many speeches and articles scattered in Al-Raihaniyat and other books, all sought to open the eyes of his countrymen to

unity, progress, freedom and modern techniques.³ His deep aspirations led to the dream of an Arabism, the grandness of which remains unsurpassed. He visualized the possibility of renewed glory on a pan-Arab scale.⁴

The literary effort of al-Raihani is not merely of nationalist value but it includes moral and social reforms as well. In other words, his literary message covers human life in general. The following passage clearly shows that he was a practical and realist man:

أنا الشرق ، عندى فلسفات، وعندى أديان، فمن يبيعنى بها طيارات؟!

*"I am the Orient; I have philosophies and religions, who would sell me aeroplanes for them".*⁵ In an article, al-mandub al – Asma' he pointed to moral decadence of the people and inspired them to get rid off humiliation. He says:

"إن كنت مكتئبا فلا تكن يائسا ، وإن كنت يائسا فلا تكن جامدا، وإن تكن جامدا فاذا ذكر أنك خلقت للخلود ، فهل تريد أن تخلد كالجمود؟ إن المذلة لفي الحياة الجامدة، لا فى الموت. وإن الموت على رأس الجبل لنور يضى، فإن مت فى الغور ذليلا ، عشت خالدا فى المذلة، وإن عشت حرا كريما، ومت حرا كريما، كانت الحرية ركنا والكرامة نورا للخلودك السعيد... إن الصحة والمال والبنين لأشياء تذكر إذا ما ذكر الجمال وحسن الحال، ولكن أجمل منها الشجاعة وعزة النفس، وأجمل منها الحرية والمثل الأعلى فى الحياة... إن غضبة لكرامة الخير من اليسر والسلامة . وإن جنونا فى سبيل الحق والحرية لخير من الرصانة والعبودية.

³ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, vol. One, p. 86, 87.

⁴ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, vol. One, p. 86, 87.

⁵ Marun Abbud, *Al – Raihani*, p. 73.

وإن عزا في الممات لخير من حياة شاكية باكية، تتوسد اليأس، وتلتحف
الخنوع..."

*"If you are dejected, don't be depressed. If you are depressed, don't be ossified. If you are ossified, keep in mind that you are born for eternity. Do you want to eternalize yourself as an ossified? Humiliation is in a motionless life but not in death. If death comes on the top of the mountain, the light casts upon it. If you die in a cave with humiliation, you will live in the same manner forever. If you live as an independent and liberated, you will be the same after death. The freedom is a basic element and dignity is an illumination for your blissful life. Health, wealth, and children are mentioned when beauty and prosperity are cited. But bravery and self-respect as well as freedom and ideal life are more beautiful than them. The fit of rage for dignity and madness in the right path and freedom are better than calmness and slavery. Similarly, honourable death is better than complaining and weeping life which has laid its head on depression and covered itself with servility."*⁶

Al-Raihani dealt with a lot of social problems. Instead of his factual description, almost his all travelogues, books and speeches reveal a strong solicitude for the social reform of Arab world and for raising the society from the abyss of misfortune, ignorance, hunger and servitude to the stairs of fortune, education, prosperity and freedom. He called for social revolution and wrote a stirring article,

⁶ As quoted by Isa al - Na - Ouri, *Adab al - Mahjar*, p. 199.

'Modern Civilization'. He says in this article.

"بشر فلاسفة الجيل الثامن عشر بالإخاء والحرية والمساواة، ونهض تلاميذهم السياسيون فطالبوا بهذه الحقوق، وسل الشعب سيفه في أكثر ممالك أوروبا تنفيذًا لمطالبه، فحدث ما حدث من الثورات والفتن في آخر الجيل الثامن عشر ونصف الجيل الآخر. وما ذا كانت النتيجة؟ هل تتوجت الحرية؟ هل شملت المساواة الناس؟ هل توارت اختلافات الأمم وتلاشت الضغائن وحزازات الصدور؟..."

تأمل هؤلاء العملة الفقراء الذين يطلبون من أصحاب المعامل زيادة أجورهم كي يستطيعوا القيام بمعاشهم ومعاش عيالهم، فإن كل ذى عقل يفكر وقلب يشعر يرى صحة دعوى العملة واعتدال مطالبهم ... ولكن هل يصغى أصحاب الشركات لصوت الشعب؟....

يقولون إن الحرية الشخصية مطلقة لكل فرد في الحكومات الحرة المستقلة. وما جوابنا لهم إلا أن الجرائم اللفظية التي تحدث با لعشرات كل يوم في المدن الكبرى ليست إلا بعض نتائج تلك الحرية. فالتسميم والقتل والطلاق التي تزداد حوادثها يوما فيوما، كلها من مظاهر التمدن الحديث الموهوم.

أما الإخاء فكلمة لا معنى لها في معجمات اللغة... إن هذا التمدن الناشئ بين الكنائس والمكاتب والملاهي والمتاحف والقصور، والمشيد على المال والتجارة والظلم والاستئثار، لا يولد إلا الرذيلة والجهل... وإذا زحف جيش الجهل على معاقل تمدننا الزاهر الباهى يجعل عاليها سافلها... وقصارى القول أن الخطر على تمدننا الكاذب هو من الداخل لا من الخارج، هو من أنفسنا لا من الأعاجم البرابرة."

"18th century philosophers propagated fraternity, freedom and equality. Their political students gave impetus to these rights and the people pulled out their swords in most of the European countries to meet their demands. Then, the revolution and civil strife took place in

the last and half of the last generation. What was the result? Was the freedom crowned? Did equality prevail among the people? Did the differences among the nations disappear? Did hatred and rancour annihilate?.....

“Think of wretched workers who are demanding the increasement of their wages from the owners of the factories to provide bread for their children and family. Every wise – man thinks and realises the validity of the demands of the workers. But do the owners of the factories pay heed to the voice of the people? “They say that the personal freedom is inevitable for every individual of autonomous governments. We have no reply for them, but heinous crimes which are committed a dozen times every day in big cities, are nothing but some results of that freedom. Poisoning, killing and divorce which are increasing day by day, all these are manifestations of imaginary modern civilization.....

As for fraternity, this word has no meaning in the dictionary of the civilization that developed among churches, offices, places of entertainment, museums, palaces and those places which are built on wealth, trade, suppression and investment. Nothing is created but depravity and ignorance. When the army of ignorance marches to the beautiful and radiant fortress of our civilization, it will be demolished. In brief, the menace to our fallacious civilization is from inside not from outside and it is from us not from barbarian foreigners”.⁷

Undoubtedly, al-Raihani was a traveller with vision and a writer with commitment. He dedicated himself with his heart and soul for the cause of Arab unity and defended his country and its dignity. At the same time, he raised his voice against declining spirit of Arab

⁷ Al – Raihani, *Al – Raihaniyat*, vol. I.

nationalism and targeted social evils. His book, *al-Mikari wa al-Kahin* is a scornful attack on religious men. On the other hand, his two novels, 'Kharij al- Hareem' and 'Zanbaqa al-Ghaur' revolve around the social, national and political problems and seek to evolve solutions. *Kharij al- Hareem* reveals how Germany was handling the affairs of Arab East arbitrarily during the Turk regime. Then, it calls on the women of Arab nation to come out of the prevailing veil system and participate in the affairs of the nation with courage and strength.

Al-Raihani weighed his ideas of society and its issues thoroughly since his childhood and before he got used to hold his pen to translate his feelings in articles, speeches and books. His soul rose against what his county was suffering from and what the people surrendered to. When he was able to express his out-burst, he started to pour his grudge with passion on every kind of ignorance, oppression and servitude of religious men and feudal lords. As a result, they made counter-attacks and accused him of being heretic. They tried to convince the simple and ignorant people that his conscience became corrupt and he was trying to destroy religion and sow doubts in the minds of the people. His books were blacklisted and not allowed for Catholics to read them. The churches imposed excommunication on those who dared to read his books.

This, however, did not deter al-Raihani to "say his words and walk on his way" in any manner and with a single-minded devotion he carried on his mission with unflinching sincerity. He believed in truth that always exists but ignorance, oppression and servitude are subject to end. As he devoted himself to bring about marked changes in social fabric, he fought against French Occupation in Lebanon and Syria and British Occupation in Egypt, Iraq and Palestine. Similarly, he loathed the industrial activity of New York and his spirit never

acclimatize itself to the pollution of the city. He kept on thinking of fresh air and clear skies of Fraika:

Call me Oh Goddess of the Valley, call me Oh Goddess of the forest.

*Remember me Oh Goddess of life, and help me.*⁸

This great intellectual and spiritual leader was pained by existing interdistance, conflict and division among sons of Arab nation. Whosoever reads his book, 'Muluk al-Arab' and his other books on individual Arab Kings together with his lectures and debates on the Arab cause, will find how Raihani strove with his full strength to remove enmity from the heart of the kings and Amirs. He mediated between the King of Najd- Abdul Aziz of Saud family- and Amir of Kuwait until the understanding between two settled the dispute. Similarly, he attempted to bring the king of Hejaz—al-Husain bin Ali—and al-Sharif al-Idrisi into a brotherly and friendly alliance in order to unite both countries for the interest of the Arab. He himself prepared a draft agreement. Though he could not succeed but he was very keen to unite the Kings of Hejaz, Najd, Yemen and Idrisi to form an Arab Empire.

Thus al-Raihani linked the literature, social reform and nationalism together. He was, indeed, a true and honest messenger who spread the message of love, brotherhood and co-operation in Arab society. At the same time, he was a transmitter between the East and the West. He conveyed the Western message of progress and

⁸ As quoted by Ismat Mahdi, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 142.

freedom to the East and the spiritual message to the West.

Although al-Raihani had to face the wrath of clergies and feudal lords of Lebanon in particular, he received reverence, honor and friendly reception wherever he went –Iraq, Egypt, Arab West, Palestine all parts of Arab Peninsula. In the appreciation of his literary activities, sincere efforts for social reform, battle against corruption and call for awakening the Arab East, he was honored a number of times. Marun Abbud says in his book ‘Amin al-Raihani’:

”... وكما توج فولتير من قبل ، توج الريحاني بإكليل من الغار فى حفلة شائقة أقامها على شرفه نادى الثريا الأمير كانى كما أنبأنا سليم سر كيس فى مجلته المعروفة باسمه، قال: لم أحضر حتى الآن حفلة تتويج ملك من ملوك البلدان والأبدان ، فهذه لا يدعى إليها إلا أصحاب التيجان ومن كان على طريقتهم . على أننى وفقت إلى حضور حفلة تتويج أحد ملوك البيان، أريد به أمين الريحاني الكاتب البليغ والشاعر المجيد، صاحب المؤلفات الراقية فى اللغتين العربية والإنكليزية.”

“As Voltaire was crowned before, al-Raihani was crowned with diamond in a splendid felicitation ceremony organized by the “American Surayya Club.” Salim Sarkis reported this event in his magazine known by his name itself. He said: I did not attend such a ceremony to felicitate Kings of countries. On this occasion, none was invited but celebrities and some rising stars of their time. Nevertheless, I was lucky enough to be present in the crowning ceremony for one of the literary kings that was Amin al-Raihani, the prolific and celebrated writer, poet and the man of high ranking books in both Arabic and English.⁹

⁹ As quoted by Isa al - Na - Ouri, *Adab al - Mahjar*, p. 360.

Al-Raihani lived as an emigrant with Jibran, Nu'aima and their compatriots. He wrote with them in 'Al-Funun', 'Al-Saeh', 'Al-Huda', 'Miratul Ghurab' and other newspapers and magazines of the country of migration. By 1904, he had already published three books in Arabic, in addition to his translation of "Luzumiyat'. He met Jibran in Paris around 1911 and later, in America. The two kept up a literary friendship until their relationship suffered relapse. Before the First World War they, with others, tried to form a literary society, but when the society was eventually formed in 1920, al-Raihani had already embarked on his career as a roving missionary for Arab unity¹⁰ and achieved world-wide fame as a true literary and national messenger and social reformer. His contribution to the society and literature will remain fresh for long.

¹⁰ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, vol. One, p. 88.

Jibran Khalil Jibran

*“Love is a strange laugh in the depth of soul”.*¹¹ This love completes the trinity of noble personages — sincerity of **‘human being’**, longing of a **‘poet’** and vitality of an **‘artist’**. This trinity formed a man of letters called Jibran Khalil Jibran. As human being he loved human being beyond the regional, national and religious aspirations. To him, every man is his brother tied in the bond of great humanity which cannot be broken into parts in any case. *“Jibran discovers acknowledges that “humanity is the spirit of divineness on earth” and “what I now say with one tongue, tomorrow will say with many”.*¹²

As a poet Jibran sketched with the blood of the heart and wrote with the prime of soul to sing joys of humanity and weep over its sufferings “Jibran’s figure of the poet stands at the top of his hierarchy, far and away the highest of the mankind. As contemplation of the stars may lift the spirit of some or the spirit of others, so in his case the background of his time-scarred country provided a vision of the great and the small, the many and the one, the things that perish and the things that endure, which is the measuring-rod of the poets”.¹³ In his youthful revolt against priestcraft he showed a spiritual affinity to the English poet William Blake. As time went on, other aspects of the Occidental mystic’s philosophy combined to influence Jibran’s writings and drawings as well.¹⁴

¹¹ Jibran Khalil Jibran, *The Earth’s Gods*.

¹² Robert Hillger Says in the Introduction of *“A Tear and a Smile”* of Jibran Khalil Jibran translated by H. M. Nahmad.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid.

As an artist, Jibran designated with streaks of human tendency and illustrated human hopes and pains. He utilized his heavenly talent to lead humanity to beauty, goodness and right path as well as love, happiness and freedom. It is not to be wondered that he was the first Arab writer of Modern Arabic literature who proclaimed absolute faith in the unity of being.

”يرى صورته في كل الصور ، ويسمع صوته في كل الأصوات“

He always “*sees his figure in every figure and hears his voice in every voice*”¹⁵ He says:

”خيل إلى في أمس أنى ذرة تتموج مرتجفة في دائرة الحياة بغير انتظام،
واليوم أعرف كل المعرفة أنني أنا الدائرة ، وأن الحياة بأسرها تتحرك في بذرات
منتظمة“

“*Yesterday a thought came to me that I am an atom floating in the circle of life without any systematic order. But today I do realize that I am the circle and life is moving around me in atomic orders.*”¹⁶

No doubt his love was for the sake of love not for the materialistic purposes. Is there anything above the love of human being?

Jibran linked joy to ‘**sorrow unmasked**’ and sorrow to ‘**changing seasons**’. He tried to convince the human being that harsh realities were an integral part of life. Every one had to face them with the conviction that emotional pain was nothing but a cleansing process. He says “*I would not exchange the sorrows of my heart for the joys of multitude. And I would not have the tears that sadness*

¹⁵ Jibran Khalil Jibran, *A Tear and A Smile*, translated by H.M. Mahmud, p.1.

¹⁶ Ibid.

*makes to flow from my every part turn into laughter. I would that my life remain a tear and a smile. A tear to purify my heart and give me understanding of life's secrets and hidden things. A smile to draw me nigh to sorrow of my kind and to be a symbol of my glorification of the gods. A tear to unite me with those of broken heart; a smile to be a sign of my joy in existence.”*¹⁷

In addition to symbolism and humanism that crossed all limits, Jibran could not distance himself from nationalist emotions and wrote down on this topic especially in his book, *al-Awasif* (The Storm). He says under the title of '*Mata Ahlī*'.

"لو ثار قومي على حكاهم الطغاة وماتوا جميعا متمردين ، لقلت إن الموت في سبيل الحرية لأشرف من الحياة في ظلال الاستسلام، ومن يعتنق الأبدية والسيف في يده كان خالدا بخلود الحق."

*"If my people revolted against oppressive rulers and all of them died as rebels, I would say that death for the freedom is much more respectable than the life in the shadow of surrender. Whosoever embraced eternity and sword, would become immortal like eternity of God".*¹⁸

He adds saying:

"إن العواطف التي تجعلك يا أخي السوري تعطى شيئا من حياتك لمن يكاد أن يفقد حياته ، هي الأمر الوحيد الذي يجعلك حريا بنور النهار وهدوء الليل."

¹⁷ Jibran Khalil Jibran, *A Tear and A Smile*, translated by H.M. Mahmud, p. 1.

¹⁸ As quoted by Isa al - Na - Ouri, *Adab al - Mahjar*, p. 214.

“O my Syrian brother! The emotion that bestowed a little life upon you while you were about to lose your life, is the main reason behind making you free like the light of the day and calm of the night.”¹⁹

In his nationalism, Jibran was fiery and extremely violent that was nothing but his love for the nation and true longing to see the country free from humiliation like a sparrow that moulted its wing from the drop of the rain to welcome the dawn of the freedom and dignity with its full open mouth and strong wing. In this regard, he wrote a stirring article, “**Ya Bani Ummi**”. He says:

" ناديتكم فى سكىنة الليل لأريكم جمال البدر وهىة الكواكب ، فهبيتكم من مضاجعكم مذعورين ، وقبضتم على سيوفكم وربما حكم صارخين: أين العدو لنصرعه؟ وعند الصباح، وقد جاء العدو بخيله ورجله ، ناديتكم فلم تهوامن رقادكم ، بل ظللتم تغالبون مواكب الأحلام...أرواحكم تنتفض فى قابض الكهان والمشعوذين، وأجسادكم ترتجف بين أنياب الطغاة والسفاحين، وبلادكم ترتعش تحت أقدام الأعداء والفاطحين ، فماذا ترجون من وقوفكم أمام وجه الشمس ؟ سيوفكم مغلقة بالصدأ، ورماحكم مكسورة الحراب، وتروسكم مغمورة بالتراب، فلماذا تقفون فى ساحة الحرب والقتال؟! ... أنا أكرهكم يا بنى أمى، لأنكم تكرهون المجد والعظمة ! أنا أحتقركم لأنكم تحتقرون نفوسكم!"

I called you out in the calm of the night to show you beauty of the moon and gravity of stars. You woke up from your beds terrified and held on your swords and javelins while you were shouting: Where is enemy? We will defeat him. In the morning, when the enemy came by horse with his men, I called you out again. But you did not wake

¹⁹ As quoted by Isa al - Na - Ouri, *Adab al - Mahjar*, p. 214

up from your slumber and remained in dreams... your spirits were trembling in the hands of jugglers and priests, your bodies were shivering under the oppressors and your country was shaking under the feet of enemies and conquerors. What do you hope standing against the sun? your swords cannot be used due to rust. Your javelins are broken and shields are piled with soil. So why are you standing in the battle field? O, my people! I hate you because you hate dignity and pride. I look you down because you look yourselves down."²⁰

In the same tune, under the title of "***Your Lebanon for You and My Lebanon for Me***, he says:

"هل بينكم من يمثل العزم فى صخور لبنان ، أم النبيل فى ارتفاعه ، أم العذوبة فى مائه ، أم العطر فى هوائه؟ هل بينكم من يتجرأ أن يقول: إذا ما مت تركت وطنى أفضل قليلا مما وجدته عندما ولدت؟ هل بينكم من يتجرأ أن يقول: لقد كانت حياتى قطرة من الدم فى عروق لبنان ، أو دمعة عين بين أجفانه ، أو ابتسامه على ثغرة؟!...."

*Is there anyone among you who demonstrates his firmness like rock of Lebanon, its high dignity, sweetness of water or fragrance in the air? Is there anyone who dares to say; My life is like the drop of blood in the vein of Lebanon and tear on its eyebrow or smile on its face?*²¹

A zest for nature, a power of contemplation, a passion for freedom, a love of romance all come surging up in Jibran's exquisite

²⁰ As quoted by Isa al - Na - Ouri, *Adab al - Mahjar*, p. 214.

²¹ Ibid, p. 215.

writings. If any one person is to be credited with heralding the Romantic movement and at the same time bringing it to its climax, it is this prophet of solitude.²² He left his literary and artistic creation as the fragrance of love, which offered a real love to the life of a thirsty. His rebellion against society, the clergy, outdated traditions, the inherent ills of the nation, influenced the mind and thinking of the generation. He and al-Raihani were the first true rebels in Arabic literature who rejected not only the aggressions inflicted by the outer world, but also the stupor, the fetters, the inertia, the fanaticism, the ignorance and stagnation of their own people.²³

To understand the life of Jibran requires a thorough study of his writings because his life was nothing but a series of vicissitudes which were manifested time and again in his literary outputs. He is a furious poet in '*Al-Ajniha al-Mutakassera*', a rebel in ('*Al-Arwah al-Mutamarrida*', *Ara'is al Muruj*, *Al-Awasif* and *Hefar al-Qubur*), a dreamer in (*Dam'a wa Ibtisama*), a philosopher in (*Al-Majnun*, *Al-Sabiq* and *Al-Mawakib*) and a guide in (*The Prophet*). He illustrates human love in all these books and incites his love to continue digging graves to bury those things which cause to spoil happiness due to foolishness of some vested interests to gain honor, prestige, power and wealth at other's costs. At the same time, he attacks ignorance, weakness and wickedness of life. These attacks find expression in most of his books sometimes with woes and sorrow, at other times with outburst and revolt and oft-times with embarrassment and commotion.

Jibran's literary creation is wide and varied. He wrote eight

²² Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, vol. One, p. 95.

²³ Ibid, p. 98.

important books in Arabic and an equal number in English. His Arabic books include: ***Ara'is al Muruj*** (Brides of the Valley), ***Al-Arwah al-Mutamarrida*** (Spirits Rebellious), ***Al-Ajneha al-Mutakassera*** (Broken Wings), ***Al-Mawakib*** (The Processions) and ***Al-Awasif*** (The Tempests) which contains his reaction to the First World War and articles in poetic prose entitled ***Dam'a wa Ibtisama*** (A Tear and A Smile).

His English books are: ***The Madman*** (Al-Majnun), ***The Prophet*** (Al-Nabi) ***The Forerunner*** (Al-Sabiq), ***The Earth's Gods*** (Aleha al – Ardh) ***Jesus, Son of Man*** (Yasu Ibn al-Insan), ***Sand and Foam*** (Raml wa Zabad), ***The Wanderer*** (Al-Taeh) and ***The Garden of The Prophet*** (Hadiqa al-Nabi).

Jibran's first book, ***Ara'is al-Muruj*** is a collection of three short stories. The first story '***Rimad al-Ajyal wa al-Nar al-Khalida***' moves around the theory of transmigration of souls. He was a believer of the same inasmuch as he influenced his lifetime friend, Mikhail Na'aima who, later on, carried this theory and made a topic of his beautiful artistic novel, '***Leqa***'. The second story of the book is '***Marta al-Banniya***' (Martha of the village of Ban) which is a poignant story and tells of a Lebanese village girl, an orphan working as a cowherd and housemaid. She grows up into a beautiful lass and as unspoiled as the nature around her. At sixteen, when she is sitting at a spring one day, a richly dressed man approaches on horse-back. He stops on the pretext of asking the way. Despite her initial shyness, we are led to understand that she goes away with the stranger; for we are told that the cow returned alone to its stall, and no more is seen or heard of girl in her village. The second part of the story opens with the author sitting on the terrace of a hotel in Beirut. A five year old boy comes along selling flowers. The author takes pity on the poor, frail boy and

asks him his name and age and whose son he is. He finds that the mother is that same Martha about whom he had heard so much – for a mysterious disappearance had been a regular topic of conversation locally. He goes with the boy to a hovel in a Beirut slum and meets Martha who is dying. She tells the author her story; how the horseman told her he loved her, and kissed her. The poor girl was not used to kisses, and was deceived. The rider took her to Beirut, where he set her up in luxury as his mistress. Tiring of her later, he deserted her, and she was compelled to give her body to his friends to earn a livelihood. She finally ended up in utter degradation, with a son to bring up. She dies, muttering the Lord's prayer – '*forgive us our trespasses.*' The author and the small boy bury her in a field outside the city, as the priest refuses her a Christian burial in a proper cemetery.²⁴ On the other hand the third story of the collection is "***Yuhanna al-Majnun***". This is among Jibran's many stirring stories, for instance, Khalil al – Kafir of Al-Arwah Al-Mutamarrida. The story makes severe attacks on religious men and feudal lords altogether.

The second collection of short stories of Jibran is '***Al-Arwah al-Mutamarrida***'. When this book was completed in 1908, he was only twenty five years old and was yet to occupy a place in literary world. The contents of this book are more out spoken bolder and forceful than the stories that were written earlier. Jibran lashes out against religious and political vested interests and delivers his messages through imagery and symbolism. The language in which these stories are written, is even more beautiful.

The first story, '***Warda al – Hani***' tells us about an unhappy girl who leaves her husband and his wealth and prefers to live in

²⁴ John A. Hay Wood, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 131, 132.

poverty with a man whom she loves. The girl rebels against the very foundation of stabilized society and set at naught the sacredness of marriage vows. The reason is that the marriage is performed against her will, as was largely the custom, to a man who is much older than her and there is neither love nor spiritual affinity between them.

The second story is '**Sorakh al-Qubur**' (The cry of the Graves). Though it is a Lebanese tale of bygone days, its message is timeless and universal. It is a story repeated time and again in our own as in other ages – of the oppression of the weak at the hands of the strong; of the crushing of the people's liberty by a tyrannous authority, and of the condemning of innocent men and women by judges set up in office by corrupt hands.

The story '**Sorakh al-Qubur**' revolves around three persons. One of them is a youth who defended a girl's innocence with his life and saved her from the grasp of a soldier. The second one is a wife who does not commit any crime save "*the love had touched ere lust ravished her body.*" The third one is a poor wretch whose arms were broken in the fields of the monastery. When he becomes senile, the monks sends him away saying that the monastery has no longer need of him. After failing to seek bread for his young children, his despair drives him to monastery to seek a return for his sweat and toil. The monks seize hold of him and deliver him upto the soldiers. The first of these man is sentenced to be beheaded, the second one to be stoned (as in Islamic Law) and the third one to be hanged. Thereafter, the author goes into the fields outside the city where the nearest and dearest of each of the three takes the body to bury it, at the same time explaining the circumstances of each crime, in such a way as to justify it or at least show mitigating circumstances. Jibran exposes the evils of corrupt customs, which lead to crime and blind justice,

which punishes it.²⁵

The third story '*Madja al-Arus*' (The Bridal Couch) is the shortest story in this volume and a simple tale of a wedding feast that began in joy and ended in sorrow. It takes place in a village of North Lebanon in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Here again Jibran paints a portrait of an unhappy girl forced into marriage by custom and tradition. But unlike '*Warda*' this bride does not see her true love consummated: she slays her lover, who is among the merry-makers, before plunging the knife into her own heart.²⁶

Like the preacher of old, Jibran clothes his sermons in parable. In '*Khalil al-Kafir*' he uses as his mouthpiece a shepherd boy Khalil in a monastery. He eats dry bread and sleeps among the pigs, while the priest live in luxury from the charity they extract from the poor. Khalil rebels against the erring priests and is branded a heretic. He is sent away from the monastery in a stormy night and is saved from death by a widow who gives him shelter. Caught later by the feudal chief, Khalil is brought to trial on charges of being a heretic, but draws the support and sympathy of the whole village by his truthful stand. The feudal chief is killed and Khalil marries the daughter of the widow, who saves him.²⁷

As for *Al-Ajneha al-Mutakassera* (The Broken Wings), Jibran the author of *The Prophet* and many other books reveal the poignant secrets and sorrows of first love in this mystical masterpiece. Whosoever goes through this novel, will find Jibran as an artist sketching with words, as a poet and a writer devising beautiful

²⁵ John A. Hay Wood, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 132.

²⁶ H.M. Nahmad in the Introduction of '*Spirits Rebellious*'.

²⁷ Ismat Mahdi, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 149.

meanings, as a lover of humanity and human society demolishing the obstacles for the development of humanity and human society. An effective and outstanding description as well as delicate and beautiful diction are striking features of this story.

Al-Ajneha al-Mutakassera refers to Jibran's first love to a young girl, Salma Karamy whom he meets during his study in "The Law School; in Lebanon Salma reciprocates his love. She is the only child of his father, Farris Effandi Karamy. Jibran describes her as an ethereal beauty and himself as a youth filled with spiritual solicitude. Both of them love, too much, with each other and believe to be one in two different bodies. Salma's father is a man different from all other Lebanese fathers of their time. He is attributed as a Liberal, loving and just man who welcomes blossoming love between them. But the establishment, in this case a local Archbishop forces Selma to marry his nephew, Mansour Bey. Jibran describes his wounded feelings:

*"Sorrow linked her spirits and mine, as if each saw in other's face what the heart was feeling and heard the echo of a hidden voice. God had made two bodies in one and separation could be nothing but agony."*²⁸

In his last meeting with Selma before her marriage, Jibran promises to love her forever and the love continues exasperating Salma until she dies. Salma lives in her husband's house for almost five years. During this period her father dies and she has to face the pain of oblivion of her wayward husband who neglects her and spends her money on his pleasure. To her tragic life is added the sorrow of not having any children. Her only solace is Jibran but they part as 'scandals' came in their way. Jibran then describes how he throws himself on her grave and weeps inconsolably for her.

Al-Ajneha al-Mutakassera is like his other stories with respect to texture and fabrication. However it contains spiritual life and

²⁸ Jibran Khalil Jibran, *The Broken Wings*, translated by Anthony R. Ferris, p. 31.

happiness as well as the conflict between love and obligation. At the same time, it points to the shortcomings of society and oppressive environment (the people and the man made laws, especially marriage law) and makes severe attacks on religious men who do not live according to religion but exploit it for their vested interests.

Al-Awasif (The Tempest) is another collection of Jibran's short stories. The most important among them is Al - A'sifa. Its main character is Yusuf al-Fakhuri a thirty years old young who left worldly life and lives in a lonely hermitage silently away from the people. For, he wants to liberate his soul from different kinds of servitudes, for example, of life, of bygone days, of education, customs, manners and dead persons. He does not see anything in the life of the people but dissimulation, servitude and hypocrisy.

"Al-Samm fi Dasim" is one of the most powerful stories of '***Al-Awasif***. Its leading character, Faris al-Rahhal is a young leader of his village. He brought wealth, beauty and dignity together and gets married to a young and beautiful girl. But his marriage stirs up the envy of the villagers. After three months, he discovers that his wife is involved with his friend. Thereafter he leaves the village secretly. But before that he writes a letter to his friend and gives it to a priest for his friend. When his friend goes through the letter, he comes to know that Faris al-Rahhal has left the village, because he did not want to be obstacle between him and his love. At the same time, he wishes him to take care of woman whom he loves. When he realizes how his friend faced his betrayal with utmost generosity and sacrifice, he does not find escape from suicide.

Jibran's next step was his experiment in poetic prose in which he wrote articles published in the Mahjar news paper, al-Mohajir.

They were so well received that Nasib Araida later printed some of them in the collection entitled '*Dam'a wa Ibtisama*'. *Dam'a wa Ibtisama* is important not only for its poetic prose but also for its contexts, dwelling universal problems such as man's conflict with fate and the theory of the transmigration of souls.²⁹

Dam'a Wa Ibtisama (A Tear and a Smile) exhibits somewhat emotional philosophy at its most untamed. If the parables and observations lack the serenity of '*The Prophet*' or '*The Madman*', they have some compensating vigor, almost a rashness, of approach, natural to a young writer who had he been born in the West, would have been a late recruit of the romantic school. The book is more Eastern, however, than his later writings. It is probable that in these Arabic compositions he was writing for his countrymen at home in exile. That is a larger audience than many are aware of, and international in scope.³⁰

Thus, Jibran, a wayward genius and more than a philosopher whose works have been translated into several languages, contributed a lot to transform the literature and life. His great love of freedom, his deep belief in human brotherhood, his great zest for spiritual progress were infectious and stimulating. His struggle was centered on finding one's identity not only as an individual against society but also as an individual in society facing a stronger and often hostile world. He had his particular talent, certain definite ideals and a certain doctrine to advocate. These ideals were new in the context of modern Arabic frame of thought, and in order to express them, he had of necessity to find his own language and methods. To this we must add the fact that he was assimilating, as fast as he could, attitudes and ideas from the Western sources with which he came into contact. His burning genius did not seem to stumble or falter, and words, expressions, modes and

²⁹ Ismat Mahdi, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 151.

³⁰ Robert Hillyer in the Introduction of *A Tear and A Smile* by Jibran Khalil Jibran,

tones were magically transformed at his hand into literature.³¹

Jibran was born of poor parents and brought up in the condition of squalor and poverty. His father was indolent and alcoholic whose frequent tantrums terrified the youngster. His mother, the daughter of a priest, was an intelligent woman and resolute but helpless in the atmosphere of tension and brutality. To escape from this environment and "*to bury poverty forever*", Jibran migrated in 1895 with his widowed mother, a half brother and two sister to United States and settled in Boston. But life in America with its emphasis on material progress evoked a strong reaction on Jibran.³² In 1898, he was sent back to Lebanon to learn Arabic language. He joined Madrasa al-Hikma (The Law School) where he also took lessons in French, Arabic and Bible.

Jibran returned to Boston with disappointment and rage against the unjust social system and its traditions. The death of his sister, Sultana soon thereafter shattered his belief and drove him to anguish. He exclaimed! "*My God died with Sultana. How can I live without God?*" Then tuberculosis took its toll of the family members. His eldest brother and mother died, and Jibran all by himself had to take care of his sister, Marianna.³³

He later studied art in Paris, then returned to America in 1912 and settled in New York, till his premature death of Cirrhosis of liver and tuberculosis in 1931. He imbibed Arabic, French and Anglo-American culture. Many were the influences upon him including, for a time, Nietzsche. To some critics, these various influences seem to coalesce into a thoroughly integrated personality. For them, he represents the liberated human spirit, and one of the first Arab symbolists. He was indeed, a mystic, a sufi, an artist and a writer with an intuitive knowledge of the fragility of the emotional being. Orthodox belief meant little to him at the end of his life. Though he was brought up as a Maronite, he rejected Catholicism on his death-

translated by H.M. Nahmad.

³¹ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, p. 99.

³² Ismat Mahdi, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 144.

³³ Ibid p. 144, 145.

bed.

In New York, Jibran met several émigré writers from Lebanon. In 1920, with Mikhail Nu'aima, Nasib Arida and Abdul Masih Haddad he formed a literary society of Arab writers, '*Al-Rabita al-Qalamiya*' to become its moving spirit. This was the most productive period of Jibran's life. His writing in English and Arabic started winning him wide acclaim.³⁴ Though Jibran lived a greater part of his life in New York City, he could not really forget his Lebanese roots. He was so attached to Beshari, his birth place that he willed royalties from his books to the town and its people. He never married and remained loyal to one particular woman friend with whom he corresponded for nearly two decades.³⁵

³⁴ Ismat Mahdi, *Modern Arabic Literature*, p. 145.

³⁵ Humra Quraishi in an article, *Gibran's verses Give Unfailing Solace*, Published in *The Times of India*, May 29, 2001

CHAPTER FOUR

EMINENT POETS OF MAHJAR LITERATURE AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIETY

❖ **FAUZI MALUF**

❖ **ILYAS HABIB FARHAT**

FAUZI MALUF

Many personalities in this world have achieved a place in the popular imagination due to their scholarship, as thinkers, philosophers, reformers, writers and poets. Fauzi Maluf is one of those who made his mark in people's mind and hearts as poet. His poetry carries lessons for humanity at large, in that he chronicled social ills and evils without seeking the reasons thereof. Though he is characterized by extreme pessimism but in his pessimism there is a heart-catching element which gives it a note different from that found in the works of others, for instance, Jibran Khalil Jibran and his own brother Shafiq Maluf.

Fauzi described himself in his unfinished autobiography, 'Shu'la al-Azab' that he was born on 21 May, 1898, in a Lebanese village, Zahla. His father was a great Arabic scholar who devoted his life for the development of Arabic language and literature and also trained a group of literary figures for the same purpose. Afterwards, this group raised the flag of Arab nationalism and heightened the stature of Arabic Literature in the homeland as well as in alien nations where they settled down, for example, America and Latin America.

Fauzi Maluf got primary education in his native village Zahla, then he was shifted to Beirut for higher education. He was very fond of Arabic and French literature. He also learnt Spanish and Portuguese in Brazil when he migrated from Lebanon in 1921. Meanwhile, he started writing Arabic poems while he was still 14 years old. At this stage, he did not get recognition. He also tried his hand at writing in prose which remained unpublished in his lifetime.

In 1918, Fauzi was appointed as a private secretary of the Arab Medical Institute in Damascus (capital of Syria). In 1921 he set out to a new World, Brazil with his brothers and other relatives to establish a factory of silken wares in Sao Paulo. But weaving silken wares, did not distract him from Knitting bridal garments of sensitive poetry and literature. He made a name for himself amongst the Arab and the European communities. He formed 'The Zahli Club' in Sao Paulo in 1922 and continued it with his wonderful literary outpourings. His important novel, 'Ibn Hamid au Suqut Gharnata' (Son of Hamid or the fall of Granada) was presented in this Club. Thereafter it was published in the magazine, 'al-Usba' then, printed in Lebanon. Fauzi contracted a serious illness and was admitted in the Hospital. Doctors advised him to undergo surgery which failed. On 17 January, 1930 he died after battling for his life for 40 days in the hospital.

Fauzi led a moral life and set an example of good behaviour. He invested his personal effort to a better society where there were no discrimination and division in the name of religion, sect or class. Dr. Phillip Hitti's reflection just about sums up the man who had "...impressed me (Phillip Hitti)". No doubt, Fauzi had a high character, good behaviour and good relation with the people. He was always ready to help and co-operate with others. Such moral and character of Fauzi attracted admiration of the Arabs and the Europeans and made him an ideal for the younger generation of the Arabs who were able to take Arabism to a height. His country and his people were always proud of him. But this young man who possessed wealth, beauty, rejuvenation, fame and outstanding poetry and deserved honour and respect in every place, was low-spirited extracting from his heart the contemplation of pain and pessimism. He was so pessimist that his most of the poems

were coloured with it. Consequently, he was indignant about life in particular and society in general. He did not see even an iota of good things and a place for happiness in both society and life. This pessimism was conducive to personal ease and comfort of the poet since his childhood.

However, Fauzi was an important emigrant poet of his generation who heightened the stature of Arabic literature in the world. Arab nations hold him in high esteem. Though his poetry highlight pessimism, it is not devoid of social aspects describing ills and evils of the society. He poured his grudge in his poems without seeking reasons and wrote under one of his paintings explaining the life:

كل هذى الحياة وهم، وهذا ال رسم وهم ، وما أنا غير وهم
غير أن الرسوم تبقى طويلا وأنا أحمى بروحى وجسمى

The whole life as well as this painting are illusion and I am nothing without it.

Though paintings last for long, I will vanish with my soul and body.¹

He wrote under another painting in which he seemed to be gloomy.

وقفت أجيل الطرف فيما يحيط بى فلم أر حولى ما يش له ثغرى
فلا تعجبوا إن كنت فى الرسم عابسا فما الذنب ذنبى ، إنما الذنب للدهر

I started to see my surrounding. But I see nothing around which makes me smile.

¹ Shafiq Maluf, al-Zikra, p. 51

*Don't be surprised if I am gloomy in the painting. This is not my sin but the sin of time.*²

Such sorrowful songs were accompanying him until his heart overflowed with pain and pessimism. He composed his verses pressing his pains and summarizing pessimism that started with tears and ended with the same. He says under the title of 'Lughz al-Wujud' (riddle of existence):

برعم الزهر ! ما وجدت لتبقى بل ليمضى - بك الخريف
هذه حالنا : خلقنا لنشقى ولتقضى - بنا الختوف

*O, bud of flower! You have nothing to be alive but autumn will vanish you.*³

Our condition is the same. We are born to face hardship and death will finish us.

Thus, he reached an extreme end of pessimism absolutely contrary to Ilya Abu Madi, the poet of joy and happiness who always called the people to enjoy life even in hardship and trouble and be hopeful towards life. Because joy and sorrow, grace and disgrace are an integral part of life. Some people encounter with happiness and beauty while others with sorrow and hardship. In fact, the source of pessimism in Fauzi's poetry is his deep contemplation in the prime of his youth, wealth, beauty and affluence. Fauzi did it unintentionally about death and pain of life. Though every one of us passes through such inevitable contemplation, it was perennial in Fauzi's life which

² Shafiq Maluf, al-Zikra, p.11

³ As quoted by Isa al-Na-oori in Adab al-Mahjar, p.468.

caused severe and bitter pessimism.

This sensitive poet suffered from an emotional shock which affected his life and thought badly. The distress and agony of this shock stuck to him. Consequently he started thinking of life as a shadow of terrible offence. He wished death to get rid of tear and pain. He says:

عشت بين المنى، يراود نفسي حلب من طيوفها وعقام
أقتفيها وفي يدي فؤادي ثم ألقى وفي يدي حطام

I lived among wishes to entice myself pouncing on fantasy and futility.

I follow them while my heart is in my hand and I curve them when vanities are in my hand.⁴

In an ode, he addresses death and calls to be prompt in taking his youthfulness and throbbing heart. The following verse appears to be story of his pessimism. He says:

لم يبق لي في الأرض من بغية ما الأرض إلا جنة الأحمق

To me, nothing is on earth but wishes and the earth is fools' paradise.⁵

One of the most radiant element of Fauzi's poetry is love. He traced it in various forms. He expressed disgust over everything to

⁴ As quoted by Isa al-Na-oori in Adab al-Mahjar, p.470.

⁵ Ibid, p471.

which man loves such as wealth, fame and knowledge. But when he reaches the love, he stands passionately to take a quick breath and calm down the stroke of rebellious heart. He says:

الحب؟ قف ياموت واشفق على قلبى ودعه لحظة يخفق
لى بغية قبل الردى، ليتها تمت فلم آسف ولم أفرق
وتلك: أن ألمح محبوتى فنحن بعد اليوم لن نلتقى!

Love? stay O, my death, have mercy on my heart and give it time to beat.

I have desire ere the death. How I wish to have accomplished without my chagrin and departure!

That is: if I do not see my beloved today, I will never meet her after today.⁶

It is learnt that Fauzi fell in love with a beautiful girl but could not succeed. This failure exasperated him throughout his life. Thereafter he migrated to Brazil to bury this pain but to no avail. However, he composed beautiful and celestial songs, 'Ala Bisat al-Rih' which he sang on the earth and flew to his eternal nest. He met there with his soul riding on Bisat al-Rih (carpet on the wind) that made fun of poet's sufferings and emotions in search of eternal freedom in this ephemeral world.

'Ala Bisat al-Rih' is the most important work of Fauzi Maluf. Its involvement with the soul and its ultimate freedom; with life's absolute slavery, its shackles and burdens; with the dualism of good and evil; its distinctly abstract atmosphere, are definitely more aligned to the

⁶ As quoted by Isa al-Na-oori in Adab al-Mahjar, p.471.

thematic adventures and attitude of the Northern poets.⁷ It is mentioned in its 'Introduction' that it is a collection of deep moral odes connected with one idea to another prevailing contemplation on philosophy. The readers will see the dreaming soul of the poet who is aware of the most beautiful appearance of the nature and the deepest living emotions.

The poet imagines himself going on a journey over the clouds where he meets his soul and rejoices in the union. Exhortations against the evil of man on earth are uttered without hesitancy or compassion. The pessimistic tone of the poem and its imaginary framework are directly Romantic.⁸ The following excerpt from this poem shows something of the purity and nobility of poet's imagination:

فتألين حول جسمي جماعات	ملآن الجو الفسيح دويا
واذا بي اعى هنا لك اشياء	ولما حدثت لم ارشيا
فكأنى فى الحلم نشوان صاح	تتوالى رؤى الخيال عليا
مالعيني والنور شع بقربى	لم تميز الا فراغا خليا؟
طوقتنى الأشباح، ها هي حامت	ثم اهوت ترف بين يديا
ولها كاختلاج اجنحة النحل	زيز يطن فى اذنيا
انها كاللهات نفحا ولفحا	وكموج الشعاع نشر او طيا
غمرتنى بالغيم ينضح طلا	واحتوتنى بالريح تنشر ريا

They (The spirits) thronged around my body, they filled the vast air with their din.

⁷ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic poetry, vol. One, p. 72.

⁸ Ibid, p. 72-73.

Suddenly I felt the presence of many things, yet when I gazed I saw nothing.

As if I were in a dream, intoxicated yet sober, vision after vision approaching me.

When the light was around me, why did my eyes see only empty space?

The phantoms compassed me round, there they were, circling round, then falling, quivering in my hands.

Like the pulsing wings of bees, they hummed in my ears.

Like hot, panting breath, like waves of sunlight, now narrowing, then widening out.

They immersed me in dewy clouds and clothed me in a fragrant wind.⁹

This is a wonderful creation of the poet who feels that he is tied with his body on the earth while his soul roaming freely in the endless space among the eternal and high spirited souls far from worldly greed, hatred, distress, evils, desires and dirt. The poet worries about the evils which he saw in this world. The reasons are either pride, greed or hypocrisy. He wants all of them to be destroyed from the world so that mankind can celebrate happiness and prosperity.

⁹ Fauzi Maluf, *Ala Bisat al-Rih*, p. 133-4.

ILYAS HABIB FARHAT

Ilyas Habib Farhat was “the most spontaneous of Mahajar poets, North and South and one of the most authentic poets of all modern Arabic poetry.”¹⁰ Some critics and writers on Mahjar recognized his poetry as a mirror of his life. His themes were mostly tied up with general events and showed deep concern with the problems of Arab East and human society in general. In this, he must have been helped by his basic goodness, pride and dignity. He was so deep-rooted in genuine poetry that Prosody, Grammar and Rhetoric had no importance in his poetic life. The importance was of natural talent and capability to produce true poetry. He was the only emigrant poet who did not receive regular school education.

Farhat was born of poor parents in a village of Lebanon, ‘Kafr Sheema’ on 8th November 1893 and brought up in the environment of poverty and hardship. He learned from the life more than what he learned in the school. He left the school of his native village and joined ‘Madrasa al-Shuwaifat’. But he stayed there only seven days. After that he was admitted in school of ‘Shahroor Valley’. Hardly one month he studied there and said good-bye to the school forever. During this period, he was not different from other village children. The only thing which distinguished him from other children was his talent of reciting and memorizing Lebanese Zajal (popular Arabic poem in strophic form).

At the time, when he dropped out of school, he was merely 12 years old. Thereafter he started battling against life with patience and endurance. He sought permission from his family for working in a factory of Beirut. The family allowed him to go and he set out with his friend to work in a paper factory. Along with his friends he slept in the factory and went back to his village on every Saturday in the evening

¹⁰ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, vol. One, p.80.

but on Monday he came back to Bierut. Farhat had no consistency in working. He always shifted from one factory to another.

At the age of 17, Farhat left his country and reached Brazil where his two brothers were living in a small village, Marya. He stayed with them not more than one year. Thereafter all of them shifted to the city, Joyeys de Fora. When he was around 20 years old, he set off from the city to the capital of Minas State known as horizontal beauty (Bello-Borizonte). He started working there in a small shop. Meanwhile he came to know of Sao Paulo, the capital of Brazil and its literary and journalistic activities. So he decided to see the capital and meet Shukri al-Khuri, the owner of 'Abi al-Haul' (an Arabic magazine) which was in forefront to make severe attacks on the oppressive rule of Ottomans in Lebanon and Syria. On the other hand, he viewed the literary environment of Sao Paulo better than other places. Finally he set out to the capital and met Shukri al-Khuri. Farhat got associated with the magazine, 'Abi al-Haul' but this association did not last for long and suffered a jolt, because he found Shukri inclining towards the French. At the same time, he came into contact with other literary figures in Sao Paulo, for instance, Rashid Salim al-Khuri, Taufiq Du'oun, Goerge Hassoon Maluf and so on.

In Brazil, Farhat experienced a very tough life. He toiled a lot to improve his condition but did not find anything except depression, failure and hardship of life which almost stuck to him. There is a touching and tragic revelation in the following verses about himself:

قد حاربتة الليالى الغدر عاصمة عينيه تعصر صاب اليأس فى فيه
وقد تجاوز حد الاربعين وما ينفك يقذف من تيه الى تيه

*Treachrous nights have fought him, blindfolding his eyes,
squeezing poisonous despair into his mouth.*

*He has passed his fortieth year and is still tossed
helplessly from wilderness to wilderness.¹¹*

In his long ode 'Hayat Mushaqqat', Farhat portrays the struggle and bitterness of life which he witnessed in the country of migration. He says pointing to the misfortune and repetition of its days and nights in uniformity to the extent that he lost hope for the betterment and change of life.

Farhat distilled fluid of sustenance from hard stone walking between deserts and valleys or riding on calves which made rounds on solid rocks. Instead of such gracious struggle and vicissitudes of life, he did not forget his roots. In the following poem he addresses his dead parents:

وبقيت صابرة على بلواك	لهفي عليه مضي بدهاء حنينه
امل اللقاء هو الذي ابقاك	إن كان اهلكه الفراق فانما
وتجوس كل سفينة عيناك	انفقت عمرك ترقبين رجوعنا
خرساء لقنها فؤادك فاك	وتحملين الريح كل رسالة
.....
ايامها في وحدة النساء	اشقى النساء على الثرى ام قضت
خال من الحداث والضحاك	ابناؤها ملأوا البيوت وبيتها
صورا على الجدران دون حراك	سحروا بمزعوم الغنى فتحولوا
والعين تنذرهما، نهاك نهاك	الاذن توهمها سماع حديثهم

Alas! for him! he passed away sick with longing, and you

¹¹ Farhat, Al-Saif, p. 96.

remained patient in your affliction.

If he has been killed by parting, hope of reunion has kept you alive. You spent your life awaiting our return, your eyes scanning every coming ship.

Asking the wind to deliver to your children the mute message of your heart.....

The most miserable of women is a mother who spends her life in solicitude like a hermit.

Her sons filling many homes, her home empty of talk and laughter.

(Gone), enchanted with the myth of affluence, they became no more than silent pictures on the walls.

Their mother's ears seem to hear their voices, but her eyes warn her of truth.¹²

After nine years of migration to Brazil, Farhat entered into the partnership with Taufiq Du'oun, a stablished writer and critic, to start a magazine 'al-Jadid'. The first literary creation which was published in the magazine was a muwashshah (a post classical form of Arabic poetry) entitled 'Ya Jama'a'. This was attributed to his beloved whom he left in the city of horizontal beauty (Bello-Borinzote). Both Farhat and Dhu'oun remained as partners until Dhu'oun started separately his own magazine, 'al-Dalil' in 1958.

Farhat was very upset with the increasing conflict between Syrians and Lebanese at the end of the First World War. Similarly, he

¹² Farhat, Al-Saif, p. 138-9.

was annoyed with the journalistic approach of the Lebanese communities which favoured the French Occupation in Syria and other Arab countries and assailed Amir Faisal. He did not find any Arabic newspapers and magazines in Brazil advocating Arab nationalism except al-Zahrawi of Goerge Atlas and al-Miqra'a of Salim Lubki. So he participated in editing al-Miqra'a and Dhu'oun was persuaded to merge his magazine with the same. The trio started attacking the enemies of the country and Arab nationalism. These attacks led to the threat to trio. The upshot was that Salim was murdered and Dhu'oun had to go underground. But Farhat withstood firmly challenging the situation. He brought out some issues of al-Miqra'a but he could not continue it due to lack of resources. He tried to seek financial assistance from his countrymen in Brazil but could not succeed.

In fact, this period affected Farhat's life a lot. The passion for freedom and nationalism were intensified. His courage and firmness became stronger and the spirit of struggle was sharpened. Though the pressure of necessities worn him out and forced to work roaming here and there, his poetic life proceeded undeterred and unrestrained. He continued to be in touch with literary figures and activities. When the condition of Syria became complicated and the revolt broke out, he composed nationalistic odes and published them in the magazine al-Afkar.

In his national involvement which is usually commented on and praised, being so different from similar poetry written in the Arab East, Farhat expresses a personal joy and deep suffering. When he addresses

the whole Arab world, his voice expresses also his private feelings with great poignancy and ardour. To the oil Kings in the Arab world he says:

يا صاحب الآبار تقذف ثروة	تكسو النفود من الربيع برودا
ان الشيبة فى الازقة عندما	كالمال عندك فى البنوك ركودا
فاذا جمعنا القوتين تحركت	فى اليد عاصفة تهز البيدا
منا رجال للجهاد ومنكم	ذهب تحوله الرجال حديدا
.....
فافتح لنا باب الرجاء تثب على	صهيون رغم الانكليز اسودا

Oh, Lord of the wells that gush with riches, that clothe the desert with the robes of spring.

Our young men are idle in the streets, like your gold which is frozen in banks.

When we were to unite men and gold, a storm would gather in the desert and shake the desert.

From us the fighting men, from you the gold which men change into steel.....

Open the doors of hope to us, inspite of the English, we will spring like lions on the Zionists.¹³

Farhat viewed his country and found it a stiff corpse in the hands of the Turks. It was plundered and divided between the French and the English, but his countrymen were engaged in abusing, fighting and becoming hostile to each other in the name of religion and sect. Most of them were running blindly after the French. The Christians and the Muslims were feeling disgusted at each other. Maronites and

¹³ Farhat, Al-Kharif, p. 217-8.

Druzes were fighting, Chatholics and Orthodox were harboring hatred against each other. On the other hand, the religious men rather to bridge the gaps and spread the message of amity, fraternity and integrity, were adding fuel to the burning flames of hatred and hostility. Such conditions find expression in Farhat's poetry. He says:

كلماته بالنار فى كبدى	ومن الحوادث حافظ طبع
وطن أعز على من ولدى	أفكان يمكننى السكوت ولى
بين الذئاب مضعضع الجلد	وأنا ابنه ألقىه منطرحا

Some incidents in my country cause to burn my heart

Is it possible for me to be mute while my country is more beloved than my sons.

And I am her discarded frail son among the wolves.¹⁴

The human element in Farhat's poetry is remarkably natural and spontaneous, with no traces of affected attitudes and stereotyped cliches. In the following touching extract from his poem, 'Hafidati' addressed to his granddaughters, old age is a fact made bitter when the little girls depart, but is bearable in their young presence:

فراش الروض والزاهر	حفيداتي ، حبيباتي
يطوف بساحها البشر	نأين وهن لى دنيا
وجف - اما الذى النضر	وهن - وقد ذوى عودى
وضاق الخلق والصدر	فضاق البيت لى وحدى
.....

¹⁴

Farhat, Al-Kharif, p.206.

وفي دنيا النوى واد
اسير عليه يحدونى
فالقا هن فى وهمى
والتمهن ظمانا
فراشات على شيبى
وما فى حومها بدع
فشيب الجد ازهار
خيالى فوقه جسر
فؤاد ماله صير
فيا وهمى لك الشكر
فيحلو فى فمي المر
تحوم وكلها طهر
ولا فى حبها سر
لها من عطفه عطر

My darling grand-daughters, my flowers, my butterflies!

They are gone far away and world of joy is gone.

They are my tender twigs, now that my bough is withered and dry.

This empty house has shrunk and my spirits have dwindled.....

But over the chasm of parting my fancy build a bridge on which I walk, prompted by an impatient heart.

I meet them in my dreams – oh happy dreams ! – and I kiss them with thirsty lips and the bitter becomes sweet.

Little innocent butterflies, fluttering around my age; no falsehood in their movement, no furtiveness in their love.

Their grandfather's white hairs are flowers perfumed with tenderness.¹⁵

¹⁵ Farhat, Al-Kharif, p. 175-6.

Farhat's life since the childhood was characterized by freedom; freedom of thoughts and actions with which he grew up. The free and progressive environment gave rise to this characteristic. On the other hand, the hardship of life, religious fanaticism and sectarianism ripened it. As a result, the concept of freedom became his religion, habit and the most important element of his poetry which was manifested time and again in his poetry especially which was composed after migration.

Farhat's literary works cover in three published diwans, a booklet of his autobiography and a number of odes scattered in different newspapers and magazines which were not included in his diwans. Later on, some nobles of Arab community in the country of migration decided to collect his scattered poems and published them in appreciation of his nationalism, his sincerity and outstanding poetry.

In 1925, his first collection of quatrains, 'Ruba'iyat Farhat' was published. It showed him to have mastered in the literary language and to have overcome the obstacle of scanty education. Though this volume was very small with respect to number of poems, the quatrains were of varied objectives, rhymes and meters and were characterized by rebellion against human society, its traditions, rites and rituals as well as religious, political and social atmosphere. Scornful soul, sharp criticism or pessimism prevail in most of quatrains but each one of them leads to sincerity, humanity and grandeur of social belief. This volume also reveals that Farhat was desperate to reform the corrupt society stricken by calamity, division, arrogance with depravity, greed, oppression, subjugation, humiliation and servility. He was successful to depict the real picture of the society in this collection of quatrains. He says about the miserly rich man:

to depict the real picture of the society in this collection of quatrains. He says about the miserly rich man:

كم من غنى بخيل . كلما لحت عيناه وجه فقير خف يستتر
ترنو إلى ماله الوارث قائلة: "لا يؤكل الجوز إلا حين ينكسر"

There are so many miser rich men, whenever they see the poor, they hide themselves.

Their eyes gaze at their inherited wealth saying: "The Walnut cannot be eaten until it will be broken".¹⁶

He says about some married life that is virtually a hell but its manifestation in public seems to be blissful:

كم في البرية من زوجين ما برزا . إلا بسيارة تزهو كسيار
فإن تضمهما جدران قصرهما . قاما بتمثيل دور الهر والفار

There are so many spouses in the world. They do not appear in public but with a splendid car.

And once they enter their palace, they are like cat and mouse.¹⁷

Farhat's second diwan, 'Diwan Farhat' carries different issues. The major sections of this diwan include emotional and nationalistic odes. However, it is not devoid of descriptive, genomic and social poetry. Those poems which were composed during 1918 and 1932 find place in this volume which was published in 1932.

Later on, in 1952, Farhat's third book of allegorical verse entitled 'Ahlam al-Ra'i' was published. In this small volume which contains a biting and bitter satire on the power and might of both clergymen and the rich, a herd of sheep and their dog comment on the wickedness of man. He says on behalf of sheep addressing herdsmen:

¹⁶ As quoted by Isa al-Na-oori in Adab al-Mahjar, p. 487.

¹⁷ As quoted by Isa al-Na-oori in Adab al-Mahjar, p. 487.

الذئب لا يسطو إذا لم يجع وأنت تسطو جائعا ومتخما
بل أنت يا إنسان عند الشبع والرى ما تزداد إلا نهما

Wolf attacks when it is hungry, but you assault whether you are hungry or satiated.

O, human being ! when you are satiated and quenched, your greed intensified.¹⁸

Farhat was extremely harsh towards man and his wickedness. He says in the language of his dog (Al-godroof) that dogs at first were human beings, then Creator promoted them to dogs:

قد جاء في اللوح الذي أعطانا
أنا خلقنا مثلكم أعوانا
للشر نمشي معه ما ماشانا
ونلبس الباطل في دعوانا
عمدا قميص الحق والقبطانا
... لكنه أرسل من رقانا
مسددا برعظه خطانا
إن مان منا واحد أو خاننا
أرجعه خالقه إنسانا

It is mentioned in the table of the Divine law that is given to us

We are created as flowers similar to you.

Certainly, we move along with evil whatever we like

But who promoted us, sent us with its strong sermon.

¹⁸ Farhat, Ahlam al-Ra'I, p. 57.

*If any one of us tells a lie or betrays, the Creator will bring him back as human being.*¹⁸

Farhat passionately desired an ideal society where frankness, trust and truth prevailed. The society must be epitome of nobility, pride, glory and bravery. Similarly he dreamed of a society which stood on welfare, justice, chastity, modesty, fraternity and contentment. But what he found the people- most of them were Arabs- were against it. As a result he started scoffing and criticizing to the extent that he sometimes preferred animals and monsters to human beings. He elaborated that wolves and monsters were nobler than human beings because they killed when they were hungry but the man harms and kills for no good reason.

Religion is one of the burning issues of Farhat's poetry. He does not believe in existing forms of religion. To him, religion exists in an immaculate heart. It has no relation with what clergymen and priests added from rites and rituals. He could not imagine under any circumstances that religion created differences among sons of one nation or human society in general. Though he was a Christian by birth and brought-up, he did not practice it nor did his sons do so. In some of his odes, he points to his pursuit of some priest to baptize his daughters but kept himself restraining from this.

Farhat was not the first Arab writer who attacked religious men, plurality of religion and rituals. There were other men of letters who expressed their anguish about religion, for instance, Raihani and Jibrān. But Farhat, no doubt, was more furious and radical than them. Perhaps the great reason behind his antipathy was religious differences

¹⁸ Farhat, *Alham al-Ra'i*, p. 103-4.

which created a great havoc in his country. There would not have occurred the massacre of 1860 in Lebanon, if there were no religious differences. The French would not have succeeded in Lebanon, if they had not divided Lebanese on the basis of religion. Religion was a strong factor to weaken the Arab East and their people and caused for the corrupt administration.

CONCLUSION

Though there may be different opinions about the importance of Mahjar literature, its cradle of revelation and its literary beauties, it has certainly deep concern with human society. Impulsive emotion, lofty thinking, and gentle sensitivity are its striking features. It will be injustice to study it overlooking its social and political background. Therefore, I have dealt in the first chapter with a brief description of the history of Syria and Lebanon during the migration period covering the pros and cons of social, political and economic conditions of the Levant (Syria and Lebanon) and the Arab East in general.

In the political sphere, the Levant was full of turmoil and overbrimming with a great unrest in the 19th century until the other colonial power, France finally edged herself into a position of strength. During this period, frivolous and off-handed policies of the rulers pushed the Levant into critical position. Many troublesome incidents occurred. The Turk administration was disgusting for the subjects in order that they could not bear it and the government intensified oppression and tyranny. The political curbs were imposed on groups as well as individuals which made the life tough. The situation continued in the same manner. Ignorance, fanaticism and sectarianism were on the rise. The struggle for power between Druzes and Maronites with understone of social conflict intensified and it led to the massacre of more than 11000 Christians in 1860. Many a time, equality among all citizens, freedom to live with dignity and protection of properties were promised by the Ottomans but these reforms were not implemented sincerely.

After introducing the 'The Organic Regulation', some positive steps were taken. But the confinement of Mount Lebanon, according to Regulation, was unjust and oppressive, because its people were deprived from the coastal lands particularly the part of Beirut and from the fertile plans stretched in front of them. Therefore, the Lebanese began to feel narrowness of their mountain due to over population and decided to migrate to other fertile lands. The regulation also brought out economic disorder which resulted in poverty, depression and lack of livelihood. Besides, there were some social and psychological reasons which forced the countrymen to leave their beautiful country.

Thus, most of the Lebanese moved towards America and engaged themselves in several professions. At first, the emigrants had no intention to settle down permanently but they wanted to earn money in every possible way and return to their homeland. For this, they devoted themselves as hard workers striking in every field of life. They moved from place to place to sell different things. They got benefited from their experiences and came to a new life socially, psychologically and monetarily. But after the First World War, numerous factors forced them to settle down permanently. As a result, their passion for their own country diminished and longing to return evaporated due to unfavourable conditions of their country and their assimilation in the new ambience as well. All these I have discussed in the first chapter. Similarly, I have also tried to outline the merits and demerits of the migration in this chapter.

In the second chapter, I have attempted to establish the relation between literature and society through different opinions and concepts. Undoubtedly, literature has close connection with particular social

institutions. It not only reflects the values and experiences of society but implicitly functions to control and generates social action as well. On the other hand, writers and poets being members of the society have a specific social status, recognition and reward because of their sincere efforts to portray real pictures of the society and their deep concern for a better society free from all kinds of evils and shortcomings. They express themselves honestly, concretely and realistically. They have a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of reality as a whole.

In this chapter, 'Sociology of Mahjar Literature' deals with different views and critical analysis of Mahjar Literature regarding social ills and ailments and attempts to reform them. The Mahjar writers express their solicitude for the society with different tones and modes and illustrate the society within a certain framework. Some of them adopt violent and extreme measures while others prefer to give sermons and admonishes. But they all have same objective to create an ideal society where justice, equality and fraternity prevail in all spheres of life. Humiliation, depravity, moral decadence and all kinds of sectarian and religious flows must be shorn of by furnishing human society and guiding the mankind to live a better life with regard, honor and dignity. In their nationalist emotion, the Mahjar writers and poets enflame the solicitude of Arabs and Arabism. They consider Arabism like a religion before every religion to the extent that they prefer to be heretic if any religion suggests them to hate the Arabs.

Further, I have mentioned some outstanding and striking problems of the Arab World during migration period. Then, I have given a special description about religious freedom, emancipation of women

and poverty. This is by no means an extensive enumeration of ills, ailments and shortcomings harassing the Arab nation at the turn of the 20th century but they were most acute of all and had a great impact on Mahjar Literature.

As for the religion, it played an effective role in human society in general and Arab society in particular. The Mahjar writers and poets were not against religion but religious fanaticism which created a great havoc in social fabric of Arab East. They opposed vigorously the rigidity and the prevalence of the arbitrary attitude of religion and its men. Because it became a tool of exploitation and oppression in the hands of privileged groups of the society, for instance, feudal lords, government officials and clergies. Whenever they sensed a threat to maintain their powers and privileges, they started creating differences among the people in the name of religion. If there were no religious differences, there would not have been the massacre of 1860. This was also the reason behind the French Occupation and the Turks' oppression and the corrupt administration. Therefore, the emigrant writers and poets targeted religious fanaticism in their literary creations and called for religious freedom.

Similarly, the emancipation of women was a major issue of concern for emigrant writers. They advocated liberation of women from the shackles of social and religious traditions. They demanded that women must be given rights to mobility outside the house, to choose their marriage partners and to act independently. At the same time, they inspired them to come out of the veil system and participate in the welfare of the society. They also had the opinion that women should be

considered a free human being. This would certainly benefit in the progress and perfection of the society.

Summing up this chapter I have discussed poverty which had been a burning topic of Mahjar Literature and also one of the main reasons behind the migration. The writers and poets devoted their pens for this issue. They described the situation of the poor and their sufferings and subsequently showed the luxurious life which the wealthy led in their palaces. They also claimed that it was not admissible that a minority of rich people should have the power to seize the proceeds of the toil of the majority. The oppressed and the poor had the same right to live in welfare and happiness.

In the third chapter, I have focussed on two prose writers, namely Amin al-Raihani and Jibran Khalil Jibran. Though there were some other prose writers also, these two were considered the epitomes of Mahjar Literature. Both contributed a lot to human society in general and Arab society in particular. Amin al-Raihani was a great messenger of humanity, freedom and unity. He dedicated himself for the cause of Arab nationalism and travelled many countries for the same purpose. His writings reveal a strong solicitude for the social reform of Arab World and for raising the society from the abyss of misfortune, ignorance, hunger and servitude. At the same time, he was considered to be a great source of information about the Arab World, its Kings and Amirs as well as its people, customs, traditions and varying environment.

As for Jibran, he was not only a painter, a writer, a poet and a philosopher, but a prophet of solicitude as well. His utterings are not complicated, nor are they confusing. They are direct, they touch us and

tell us in the simplest of ways that harsh realities are an integral part of life that everyone has to face them with conviction, that emotional pain is nothing but a cleansing process. He spread the fragrance of love and rebelled against society, the clergy, the outdated traditions and inherent ills and evils of the nation. His works have been translated into several languages. His great love for freedom, deep concern with humanity and his great zest for the nature and spiritual progress influenced the mind and thinking of the generation.

In the fourth chapter, I have illustrated two poets, Ilyas Farhat and Fauzi Maluf and their contribution to the society. Among the most authentic poets of modern Arabic Literature, Farhat occupies distinct place and is characterized by his basic goodness, pride and dignity. Though his life was full of distress, depravity and failure, his poetry revealed not merely his rebellious approach towards human society, outdated traditions, religious rites and rituals but his extreme love and passion for his country as well. To him, Arabism was like a religion inasmuch as he preferred to be branded a heretic, if religion advised him to hate Arab nation. Scornful soul, sharp criticism or pessimism prevail in most of his quatrains but each one of them leads to sincerity, humanity and grandeur of social belief. He wished desperately an ideal society which stood on welfare of the people, justice, chastity, modesty, fraternity and contentment.

As for Fauzi Maluf, he was a talented and inborn sensitive poet having the innate delicacy of art and aesthetics as well as far-reaching imagination of truth and goodness. Though pessimism is a basic element of his poetry, he did not see the society in isolation. His poetry bears lessons for humanity at large. He describes ills and evils of the

society without seeking reasons and solutions. In fact, pessimism was conducive to his personal ease and comfort since his childhood. But this did not deter him from human service. He was always ready to cooperate with others and help the person in need. The Arab nation regarded him with high esteem.

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