CHAPTER IV

From Eco-Consciousness to Infinite Consciousness

Verily, it is impossible for the mirror of the soul to reflect in the imagination anything which does not stand before it. It is impossible for the calm lake to show in its depth the figure of any mountain or the picture of any tree or cloud that does not exist close by the lake. It is impossible for the light to throw upon the earth a shadow of an object that has no being. Nothing can be seen, heard, or otherwise sensed unless it has actual being. (Secrets of the Heart 252)

4.1. Introduction

The aesthetic experience that becomes the fulcrum of Gibran’s literature, leads one to an intense, unified and sensitive search for the Infinite. One identifies the urge to respond to the call of the soul, to know the world consciousness and to become one with the Eternal Being. In the earlier chapters, the mind and the senses were treated as necessary tools in the process of attaining bliss. Yet, they may not be competent means to attain the final “Truth,” for this can be grasped only through transcendent insight. Although, the theories and procedures described in the systems of Indian poetics are not confined to any particular era, race, nation or culture and though they address the universal concerns of all humanity, a progression has to be made from here to reach the essential nature of consciousness itself. All the detours taken so far in this thesis through mind dependent, scholastic tools had been an inseparable part of inevitable literary response on the part of an ordinary researcher. But in this chapter the plunge is into the reality of the timeless, away from the phenomenal external form of things. This chapter entitled “From Eco-Consciousness to Infinite Consciousness,” tries to show the human potentiality to explode into actuality as every human being is potentially greater than what he/she appears to be. And therefore, one’s enquiries have to go beyond individual
inclinations. It is a pilgrimage towards the vast unseen. Through the structure of creative art, Gibran has captured the multitude of life in its endless variety. His works are the product of “internalized yoga” where the reader rests in beatitude. His employment of dhvani, vakrokti, aucitya, his deft handling of the sthāyibhāva and vyābicaribhāva, his concrete and abstract representations, embellishments and detours play their role to an ascending oneness vertically, and a closing in and gathering of all energies horizontally from the outer to the inner. Each unit becomes part of the whole, interwoven and interlocked. After circumambulation, one wonders at the cosmic order and unity revealed through his works. Navigating the world in wonder, one enters into śūnya. Despite the cultural specifics, his impersonalized intensity of the mood of compassion leads the reader into the language of the transcendence. To Paul Brunton, “All that is truly grand in nature and inspiringly beautiful in the arts speaks to man of himself. Where the priest has failed his people, the illuminated artist takes up his forgotten message and procures hints of the soul for them” (309).

This chapter speaks of Gibran’s initiative, integrative, synthetic and syncretic way of visualizing the supreme-reality – the ultimate reality perceived in multiple shades by different ego centres in different states of consciousness. The taste of rasa which the reader experienced in his/her movement along with Gibran through his words and symbols in the second core chapter expands into an effort to discover that bliss in the created world, and crystallizes into total trust and surrender in this core chapter. Gibran’s works turn out to be an object of meditation to move into the beyond – towards the ultimate meaning, the ultimate “oneness” or advaita. It is a movement in love and trust and therefore plays down scientific investigation, using evaluatory tools. What started as “Gangotri” in chapter two becomes The Ganges in the next core chapter, winding its way towards the great sea of Infinite consciousness in this chapter. An awakened
consciousness has only one world in common and that is existence. One becomes “A pure spring from which all thirsty souls may drink” (Tears, G. W. bk. 8.39). According to J. Krishnamurti, “If you accept any theory, you are bound by that theory, if you practice any system, however complicated, however ancient or modern it may be, you are a slave to that system” (48). Without any theoretical prop, this chapter analyses the social injustices identified by Gibran, probes into the causes, establishes a direct contact with life, speaks of the essence found in the different religions and records the researcher’s present attempt to bring before humanity, the forerunner of a voice. This chapter brings into focus, “the voice of a hidden recondite and mysterious being” (Brunton 306). Gibran in his awakened state becomes a “Link between this and the coming world,” and “he is an angel, sent by the Goddess to preach the deity’s gospels” (Tears 39). His drawings and paintings become “a step from nature toward the Infinite and turns out to be a mist carved into an image” (Sand, G.W. bk. 3.83). His works are a category apart that move on many levels, some implicit, and others explicit and explanatory.

It is his existential response that flows as verbal communication. In his later works, Gibran has almost reached the state of nirvichāra samādhi, a state where dualities are dropped, a pure and empty state where his consciousness is filled with truth and love, and where he is alone with his consciousness in total harmony and bliss. With the realization of ritāmbhara, polarities merge and opposites become complementary. It is at this stage that his Almustafa in The Prophet is ready to board the ship, which is to bear him back to the isle of his birth. Soon he would be a “boundless drop” in the boundless sea both as the sea and the seafarer. In his solitude, and distance he had been nearer to his people for he says, “And I hunted only your larger selves that walk the sky. / But the hunter was also the hunted; / For many of my arrows left my bow only to seek my own breast” (Prophet 93).
If Gibran is approached through principles, theories, systems or philosophies, one is likely to miss him as he is a man of “being” and not a man of knowledge. As an Asamprajnata, he has shared his “being” with humanity, has moved from knowledge to knowing and has diverted one’s attention from the realm of death to the realm of life. The first satori that happens at the aesthetic rapture derived from Gibran’s works becomes a means to the highest joy possible. To Abinavagupta, rasa is indeed alaukika and it is adbhutapuspavat (a wondrous flower) which is self-created and is above and beyond its constituent parts. It has no beginning and no end, and this wonderful literary experience almost attains a mystical status. It is transcendent, wonderful and miraculous, it transcends individual ego and takes the sahêdyô or sumana to the unseen, the unmanifest and the hidden in a work of art. It transcends the ordinary levels of reality and since its ultimate goal is śânta rasa, rasa which arises in a state of consciousness free from all obstacles, it can also be called rasa-samâdhi (42,52). This may be treated on par with Patanjali’s ‘nirvikalpa samâdhi or nirvitarka samâdhi where time and space disappear, where all logic loses its validity, where scriptures lose their surface meaning and where perceptions shed their significance. To Patanjali, nirvitarka samâdhi is attained when the memory is purified and the mind is able to see the true nature of things without obstruction (Osho, Yoga. vol. III.109).

Choosing to read Gibran itself may be an experience akin to savitarka samâdhi, where the ever active logical mind wants to move from the periphery to the centre. It is a moving away from the surface to have a glimpse of the real, the real that which keeps filtering in, but is partially obscured because of the mind that is functioning. One approaches a work of art with knowledge culled from the past, with a personal ideology, with words and facts gleaned from scriptures, teachers, and religious leaders and from his or her own sense perceptions. It is in a state of chaos that one looks for guidance in a
work of art and a true work of art never fails. Gibran’s works direct one to achieve a state of equilibrium through the other eight rasas which hold the possibility of the perception of truth. In the Indian tradition this leads to transcendence of both the experience and of the Self towards self-realization and the hypothesis is that rasa experience at its peak is similar to self-realization and in self-realization universal humanity becomes a possibility.

One approaches the works of Gibran with the desire to penetrate reality but in aesthetic rapture what happens to the reader is a kind of nirvichāra samādhi, where reality starts penetrating one’s soul. The mind is set aside and one experiences a short lived direct contact with the universe. Though the original emotions flood in after this experience the thirst begins and the reach for the eternal bliss starts gathering force. So far, having moved in logic with the logos and the oikos, the reader’s thirst almost takes him/her to a fountain where duality dissolves, contemplation ceases and a “being” surges. At one level, if savitarka (savikalpa) is the first step, nirvitarka (nirvikalpa) becomes the last step and at another level if savichāra is the first step, nirvichāra is the last step. According to this classification of Patanjali, Gibran’s works lead one to direct knowing through indirect knowledge. Through reasoning and logical thinking one reaches the state of vichar or contemplation. Gibran himself admits that he has never been able to utter that “winged word” and it is left for the reader to seek and find that word that has escaped logic, reasoning and neat classification. It is the state of nirvichāra samādhi of the sage poet, where all that he is left with, is nudity, purity and emptiness. That’s why his paintings are nude, as they are the expressions of a “being” that has entered into Infinity. Each work of Gibran becomes a door towards the whole. The entire universe becomes a net of consciousness in direct knowing and this aprokshānubhūti (immediate knowing) of Gibran can be discerned by any ordinary reader with repeated readings of his works. The same words which initially lead one into a relationship, to an experience, to maturity,
ripeness and seasoning lose their flavor texture and meaning, when they become objects of meditation. One is led only towards emptiness; a vacuum – a nothingness. His metaphors, words, poetic techniques and embellishments that have been understood logically yearn for an existential response. The waves subside and the quest begins.

The reader begins to hear the music of the unuttered “winged word” and longs for an understanding of the Infinite consciousness. To reach this state one has simply to move in intensity, intimacy, ecstasy, trust and faith along with Gibran, defying classification, definition and logic. His springs would ultimately take one to the ocean of oneness by showing that there is no distinction between the knower, the known and the acts of knowledge, and that Brahman is not an object to be known but the eternal subject (pratyayātman) the inward Self of all. In the words of Sankara, “Sages realize the Supreme Truth, Brahman, in which there is no differentiation of knower, knowledge and known, which is Infinite, transcendent and the Essence of knowledge Absolute” (qtd. in Pandit 11-12). This knowledge (jnānā) is an inward light, the nature of which is intuitive insight. It is this (jnānā) that frees one form samsāra.

In one of his letters to Mary, in March 1925, Gibran has expressed his anguish over his inability to verbalize his innermost deathless Self. He says, “which one of us, Mary is able to translate the language of the invisible world into that of the visible? Which one of us can say, In my soul burns a white flame, and such and such are its causes or such and such is its meaning and such and such will be its effects?” (Love 92). In a later letter drafted in the year 1930, he observes, “And when I became able to utter the first letter of my word, I found myself down on by back with a stone in my mouth…However, my word is still in my heart, and it is a living and a winged word which I must utter in order to remove with its harmony the sins which my jabbering has
created” (Self, S.T. bk. 4.92). This is the plight of an enlightened soul who has gone beyond all polarities.

This “white flame” that burns behind his words penetrates the reader’s soul plunging him/her into the realization that both the epistemological distinction of subject and object and ontological distinction between the “finite being” and “being” itself is false. Since the Absolute is beyond the mode of thought or intellection it can be inferred to, only symbolically and not in terms of descriptive modes of thought. Since reality is non-dual, characterless and distinction less, Gibran has tried to integrate a quarter century of his spiritual evolution in communicable metaphors and symbols. Within his words there is a palpable and tangible silence, in spite of the fact that every language is basically dualistic. In Introduction to Metaphysics, Bergson says,

Language is incapable of apprehending and expressing reality. But language may be used in another way, not to represent, but to bring the nearer to a point where he himself may transcend language and pass to incommunicable insight. It is a dialectical ladder which, when we have ascended, may be kicked away. (Kunjunni 294)

However, the words of a realized soul have to be taken on trust as a hypothesis, and that’s how this study, “Gibran’s Aesthetics as a Spiritual Quest towards a Universal Humanity,” becomes just a working arrangement or just a direction to help scattered humanity live in unity as envisioned by him.

This universal humanity becomes a possibility in the state of Infinite consciousness. When thoughts are shed, one moves into the Infinite and the part becomes the whole, because all boundaries are dissolved. When dream boundaries disappear the part becomes the whole. While the first two core chapters have used theories as an opening, here the researcher has tried to pass through that opening without clinging to it,
lest the opening gets closed. While the signs, signals, words and concepts of Gibran can be studied under a theoretical framework, the real significance defies logic and has to flower from within. While Gibran’s message has been understood in the earlier chapters, here, his gift to humanity has to be understood without distortion of details. So, the attempt here is purely to infer rightly from the *agama* of Gibran. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh says that *agama* means the words of those who have known (*Yoga*, Vol. 1.117). It is an understanding sans logic. Instead of using logic to arrive at mistaken conclusions, inference is resorted to in order to arrive at the source. If logic becomes the first step, contemplation becomes the last step. Further, to Rajneesh, logic cannot touch a rose, but can only cut it and to quote his words, “Science is rape, poetry is love” (*Rajneesh, Yoga* Vol. III.123). Without pre formulated conceptions or conjured up imagination this chapter moves in simple trust towards Infinite consciousness, “for analytical treatment will not help us in discovering the vital point in art. For, the true principle of art is the principle of unity” (Devy 144).

### 4.2. From nescience to essence

Gibran felt no purpose in his art or in his intellectual cleverness if it could not transcend physical consciousness. In his works he has tried to explore the vast mental regions and mocks at the futile efforts of egoistic and selfish individuals hankering to obtain happiness through diverse activities. He feels sorry for his characters who are engaged in objective consciousness. Humanity is sunk variously in the manifold nescience and Gibran through his art tries to save them from the snares of death. Every human being has to walk towards self-realization, if one is not to deceive oneself. Through his sad musings and angry anguish he invites humanity to transcend the limitations of relativistic consciousness. The individual is invited to move from a mass of relativities or unintelligible relations towards the Absolute. The transient affection and the
defective faiths of his protagonists pour themselves out on objects of sense landing them in misery and misfortune. From diversifying creativity one has to move towards the unifying principle as both multiplicity and unity are the creative powers of the Absolute. While the one leads to nescience the other leads to essence – an ascent to knowledge and unity. In *Sand and Foam*, he says, “I am the flame and I am the dry bush, and one part of me consumes the other part” (*G.W*. bk. 3.57).

Gibran’s expressions are often that of a man in unity. He is one at home where the small “I” has merged with the universal “I” and he feels unlimited in all that he speaks and does. His compassion cannot be easily fathomed by one who has not reached that state. He shows one the path to redefine oneself and inch steadily towards self-perfection by shedding all threads of identity. He conceives of a global society devoid of exploitation, negativities, crime, hatred and fanaticism. Through his epigrams, parables, short essays, poems, novella, plays and prose poems, he addresses extremism, injustice, tyranny and corruption, undermining disunity that hampers the progress of the soul towards perfection. The sorrow of phenomenal life is perceived as rooted in the clinging to relational living fed by misconceived thoughts. These thoughts which are objectified consciousness lead to ignorance and suffering.

In *Broken Wings*, he tells the story of a love that beats desperately against the taboos of Oriental tradition. He always strives and searches against all odds for the essence and the spirit of all things. He is intent on expressing a timeless and universal literature. In *Sand and Foam* he says, “Words are timeless. You should utter them or write them with a knowledge of their timelessness” (21). From *The Madman* to *The Wanderer*, Gibran’s writings echo the language of the King James authorized version of the Bible, the incantational tone of the Song of Solomon and carry the rhythm of the Psalms. Like most Arabic literature, it is in the esoteric, figurative and imaginative style
because great truths fail to fall within the ambit of language and ordinary expressions. Every word of a mystic creates ripples in one’s consciousness, and that is one’s Infinite being. Gibran tries to lead humanity away from fragments. As J. Krishnamurthy has said:

…that while you listen, you not only hear the words, which are only a means of communication, a symbol that needs to be interpreted by each one, but also, through the words, that you discover your own state of mind, discover the things to which you are committed yourself, discover for yourself, the things to which you are tied hand and foot, mind and heart - actually discover it and see whether it is possible to break down the things to which you are committed, to find out what is true. (On Freedom 55)

In his short narratives Nymphs of the Valley (1906) Spirits Rebellious (1906), a novella entitled The Broken Wings (1912) and the book of aphorisms, A Tear and a Smile, Gibran plays the role of a social reformer who is so tormented by the dire political, social and economic conditions of his countrymen. His attack is against the social set up that restricts the material and spiritual freedom. He criticizes a society that discriminates against the poor. His writings serve as a pole star to the lost humanity clamoring for unity. In one of the fictional parables, in Nymphs of the Valley entitled “Martha,” the eponymous protagonist is deserted by her abductor after she gives birth to his illegitimate child. She is forced to sell her body to bring up her boy. Unfortunately, she dies when her son turns five and the priests refuse to pray over her because of her poverty and the kind of life she was leading. The narrator comforts her thus before she dies:

You are oppressed, Martha, and he who has oppressed you is a child of the palaces, great of wealth and little of soul. You are persecuted and despised, but it were better that a person should be the oppressed than that he should be the oppressor; and fitter that he should be a victim to the frailty of
human instincts than that he should be powerful and crush the flowers of life and disfigure the beauties of feeling with his desire. The soul is a link in the divine chain. The fiery heart may twist and distort this link and destroy the beauty of its roundness, but it cannot transmute its gold to another metal, rather will it become even more glittering. (G.W. bk. 7.19-20)

Thus, the pure spirit remains unreached by “the dross of flesh,” and lives in the Kingdom of God, which is pure light. Martha’s journey begins with a longing to experience love at its most intense, but is unfortunately trapped, shattered, and then finally gets “deliverance from the bonds of existence” (21) with no priest to “pray over her remains” (24). In “Yuhanna the Mad,” Yuhanna passes “the days of his youth between that field of wonder and beauty and the book of Jesus, filled with the light and the spirit” (52). As a radical spiritual seeker Yuhanna tries to lead the flock to truth, but they in their divided state are drenched in mistaken and misrepresented doctrines and dogmas, and they fail to see the real Jesus, the enlightened master of God consciousness. In their ignorance they fail to understand that the Jesus whom they worship is beyond the confines of church, Christianity, and even religion. Here, Gibran tries to bridge the gap between the preaching of Jesus and the practices of the established church. The teachings that flow from the pulpit are not those that Yuhanna has read in the Gospel. This young shepherd whose calves trespass on the property of the church, unworthily finds himself standing in the midst of a corrupt and influential monastery. He strips the veil that hides convenient compromises made in the message of Jesus. He says, “Have mercy, O Jesus, on these multitudes joined together as one by Thy name on the day of the Resurrection. Have compassion on their weakness and humility” (Nymphs, G. W. bk. 7.74). Humanity in its stupor, has lost sight of the knowledge of the Self, and often fails to identify the one
who is on the side of truth. Yuhanna’s God consciousness has created its own reality, has
offered to open a path for it, for which reason he is dismissed as insane, both by his
parents and the clergy. The field hallowed by the feet of Jesus has turned into a “battle
ground where the feet of the strong grind the ribs of the outcast, where the hand of the
oppressor blights the spirit of the weak” (70).

Like *Nymphs of the Valley* (*Ara`is al. muruj*), his book of three parables called *Spirits Rebellious* (*Arwah al Mutamarridah*) takes as its central theme the oppressive social conditions in Lebanon, and deals with it, in still more outspoken and defiant tones. But unlike the former work, here, Gibran has tried to give some positive alternatives. While Yuhanna is crushed by corruptive power, Khalil, the protagonist in “Khalil the Heretic,” is strong enough to resist oppression. Though he is flogged and imprisoned in a dark, insect infested cell for his audacity, his spirit remains unbroken. Rachel, a widow and her daughter Miriam give him refuge after being thrown out of the monastery. Sheik Abbas orders his arrest for his revolutionary utterances. At the trial, Khalil defiantly defends himself against the false charges and vehemently attacks his detractors through a long sermon. As a result, the crowd turns against the Sheik, overthrows him and rejoices at the good tidings of the love secrets between Khalil and Miriam and congratulate one another “upon Khalil’s becoming their beloved neighbor” (bk.11.339). Here again, Gibran uses Khalil the heretic as his mouthpiece to drive home the spiritual truth that true light is that which radiates from within. Gibran, through this narrative also tries to show that Khalil the heretic is one who seeks the treasure of his destiny only by living out his destiny. His courage serves him throughout his crises and he is one who tries to penetrate the soul of the Universe which is love in all totality. Further, he realizes that his mission is to bring spiritual perfection into contact with the material plane. Gibran reveals this through Khalil’s long speech to the village people who have congregated at the house of
Sheik Abbas, upon his arrest. The general action and message of the narrative are universally applicable through time and space. Gibran’s is a life in spirit which yearns to free humanity from its blind perceptions.

In “The Cry of the Graves,” Gibran deals with the iniquities of a corrupt and exploitative judicial system. The first accused is a young man charged with the killing of a commander in the Emir’s army who is condemned to be beheaded. The second is a young woman accused of adultery, condemned to be stoned to death, and the third accused is an old man, who is condemned to be hanged for stealing a sacred vessel from a monastery. As the story unfurls, the reader learns that the young man killed the commander only to defend his fiancée from an attempted rape, the young woman had merely been talking to her lover and, the old man had been driven to steal in dire need to feed his hungry little ones. The author who participates in the action as an observer and commentator, says:

Three human beings, who yesterday were in the lap of life, today fell as victims to death because they broke the rules of human society. When a man kills another man, the people say he is a murderer, but when the Emir kills him, the Emir is just. When a man robs a monastery, they say he is a thief, but when the Emir robs him of his life, the Emir is honorable. When a woman betrays her husband, they say she is an adulteress, but when the Emir makes her walk naked in the streets and stones her later, the Emir is noble. (Spirits Rebellious, K. G. Reader. bk. 1.19)

Gibran is against the very idea of conquering crimes with more crimes and labeling cruel acts as justice. This story overflows with the vision of Jesus, whose mission had been to break down ossified structures, to discover for oneself the things to which one is committed, to discover, the ignorant law and the fossilized customs, to cultivate the
highest form of thinking through which one could move into the non-dual state and arrive at the “Truth.” Gibran has made it very clear that worshipping in a fragmented state can never solve human problems. He appeals to humanity to change on voluntary basis and not to change with a motive; because the latter can never bring about a real radical change. Gibran does not advocate reactions or psychological resistances. The questions raised by Gibran here have to be applied fundamentally, deeply and inwardly to reach the essence.

Gibran’s religious folk tend to become enemies of society as they all have a mind that is young and fresh with new outlook, capable of investigating and finding out what is beyond all the fragmented pieces which humanity has put together and called religion. His protagonists reveal a great deal of self-inquiry into oneself a self-knowing that begins to question every system, every authority and every structure of society. The essence of Gibran’s energy arises from his denial of conflict both from “within” and “without”. Distinction between an “outside world” and an “inner realm” of the mind become arbitrary. While humanity struggles in resistance, great minds move into total freedom and start questioning every institution, the family, religion, marriage, tradition, the values, the educational system and the whole structure of social and moral organization. They move from knowledge to knowing, they see beyond the said, learn beyond the language and hear beyond the heard. An eternal process operated within Gibran and he found himself pushed forward into places where he was needed most or his words were likely to be understood.

“Warde-al-Hani” (“Madame Rose Hanie”) and the “Brides Bed” are tales of sincere love. Warde al Hani examines the tragedy of a forced marriage. Though shunned and vilified, the protagonist Madame Rose Hanie is liberated as she follows the “cry of
her heart.” Moving from the unconscious static state to the overflowing flux of life, and by breaking her bondage with the past, she proves that she is alive.

In the “Brides Bed,” when Laila is deceived by Selim’s rival who tells her that Selim is no longer in love with her, she begs Selim to run away with her. But Selim being a prisoner of social customs, advises her to return to her new husband. Lyla stabs him and as he dies he cries. “Lyla you have rescued me from life’s suffering. Let me kiss the hand that broke the chains and let me free. Kiss me and forgive me for I have not been truthful” (Tears 91). Gibran seems to say that death is the plight of the one who is not true to one’s inner voice. It is also an attack on society that focuses on destroying, exploiting, humiliating and disrespecting individuals, who deviate from man-made laws.

As an integrated being, Gibran would not be manipulated by man-made strategies. As a complete being, he has experienced the plenum of felicity. The Mundaka Upanishad states: “The Lord of love shines in the hearts of all. Seeing him in all creatures, the wise forget themselves in the service of all” (Easwaran, 193). His fiery writings show that his soul has already grown beyond the five senses to a plane of higher enjoyment. In a letter to Ameen Guraieb he says, “I feel, within me, a hidden power that wishes to dress its nakedness with a beautiful garment of great deeds. This makes me feel that I came to this world to write my name upon the face of life with big letters” (Self, S.T. bk. 4.32).

In a divided society ridden by self-interests, disorder, confusion and conflict, individuals who are sharply alone, clear, aware and sensitive are rare. They are sages, prophets, seers, great spiritual masters and master mystics who have stepped out of the portals of a conditioned mind – a mind that has been the cause for wars, confusion, conflicts, misery, agony, loneliness, violence, brutality and hatred. Gibran teaches humanity, to observe, to look, to examine its own beliefs and feelings with choice less awareness – a way of looking at things without the interference of the accumulated
knowledge. Also he calls humanity to be in communion with the entire universe without any acceptance or denial but with total surrender. To be in direct contact eliminates space which results in immense peace. It is the silence and wisdom to hear discourses even in the glances of speechless animals. Gibran in his “The Speechless Animal” lends voice to a dumb dog that weeps out its heart:

I am a miserable creature who served the son of Adam with faith and loyalty. I was man’s faithful companion, I guarded him day and night. I grieved during his absence and welcomed him with joy upon his return. I was contented with the crumbs that fell from his board, and happy with the bones that his teeth had stripped. But when I grew old and ill, he drove me from his home and left me to merciless boys of the alleys. (Thoughts, S T. bk. 3.80)

The trees, the flowers the birds and the animals are all part of Godliness and God is the soul of the Universe. It is existence in a different form and reverence towards it, sharing and giving one’s peace, love and joy would be a form of worship for the one who is in the awakened state of consciousness. Gibran is thus a potential seed, split by the elements and brought to life, to undermine the foundation of the ages. He is one who has freed his mind from bonds that are the results of so many pressures, a mind that has brought about a mutation out of time instantly. Otherwise such great works as The prophet, and Jesus the Son of Man, would have remained unuttered exalted words. Meditating on the highest divinity for an average human becomes possible only through persons who have realized the Supreme. Thus, through poets, seers and prophets humanity contents itself with relative realizations of cosmic powers, which are ultimately intended to lead them to the Absolute or the “Father.” Always there is the natural spiritual impetus which drives the soul to know itself in essence, when it surrenders its part-
consciousness to the whole-consciousness. It then crosses the gravitational regions of
disintegrating and diversifying nature and enters the region of the integrating drive which
runs like a spiritual gravitational force towards the Absolute and they enter into vichar or
contemplation. In The Garden of the Prophet, when the man asks the question. “What
say you of God, and who is He in very truth?” Almustafa replies:

Think now, my comrades and beloved, of a heart that contains all your
hearts, a love that encompasses all your loves, a spirit that envelops all
your spirits a voice enfolding all your voices, and silence deeper than all
your silences and timeless.

Seek now to perceive in your self-fulness a beauty more enchanting
than all things beautiful, a song more vast than the songs of the sea and the
forest, a majesty seated upon a throne for which Orion is but a footstool,
holding a sceptre in which the Pleiades are naught save the glimmer of
dew drops. (32)

To Gibran, the entire universe is laden with stories, meanings and messages and
this divine gift is manifested spontaneously for his readers. It becomes the unuttered call
to work towards the discovery of this divine gift. Gibran’s discussions in The Forerunner
illustrate his belief that the limited notions of truth entertained by the literal meaning are
only fragments of unlimited reality. Thus, in “Other Seas,” a fish is ridiculed because he
suggests “above this sea of ours, there is another sea” (G. W. bk. 5.45). In “Knowledge
and half knowledge,” the fourth frog that floats on a log down the river with the other
three frogs is pushed off the log into the river, just because he seems to have had a
glimpse of truth in its fullness. He says, “each of you is right, and none of you is wrong.
The moving is in the log and the water and our thinking also” (39). It is for this sane
observation that the fourth frog meets its end, because his three friends could never admit
that their individual observation was not the whole truth. The wise frog understands that the river is capable of moving and transforming what is around it. A river joins many rivers and streams on its winding way before its final merging with the sea. To this frog, the soul of the world has spoken through its movement that, everyone is partially right and that nothing is totally wrong in this or with this universe. As Paulo Coelho says, “Nothing in the world is ever completely wrong… Even a stopped clock is right twice a day” (Brida 99). This parable of the frog shows that great human souls who have exchanged the stasis of life for its fluidity, flux and movement have always been condemned by society. In “Beyond My Solitude” Gibran observes:

Too young am I and too outraged to be my freer self.

And how shall I become my freer self unless I slay my burdened selves, or unless all men become free?

How shall my leaves fly singing upon the wind unless my roots shall wither in the dark?

How shall the eagle in me soar against the sun until my fledglings leave the nest which I with my own beak have built for them? (The Forerunner, G. W. bk. 5.52)

It is the story of a young man seeking his freer Self that lies beyond his “burdened self.” Thus, the parables in The Forerunner define his social concepts and illustrate his belief that the individual must first understand himself/herself before any social or personal transformation can take place. In both The Procession and “The Tempest,” Gibran explores the dualist mind set, the good and the evil, sovereignty and slavery, weakness and strength. He has made use of Sufi figures like, God’s fool “the king hermit” “the slave” and “the saint,” to intensify his search for that part of himself that “though ruled in flesh rules in spirit” (The Forerunner, G. W. bk. 5.14). He concludes The
*Forerunner* with the words, “you are your own forerunner; you are the stranger passing by the gate of my garden / And I too am my own forerunner, though I sit in the shadows of my trees and seem motionless” (2).

In “The King Hermit,” the narrator meets a young King living in solitude among the mountains, after having renounced his kingdom on his own will, to live in the wilderness. The narrator feels that “he who renounces a kingdom must needs be greater than a kingdom” (*The Forerunner, G. W. bk. 5.11*). Actually, here it is not an enforced dropping of the kingdom. It is not a repression, but a dropping off, that happens out of awareness and he wants to know from the young man the “secret of his heart.” In this story Gibran encapsulates the Sufi ideas of journeying and “yearning” whereby a person longs for the divine state he or she has previously known. The narrator is surprised to learn that the King Hermit simply does not want to rule over those who “assume his vices and attribute to him their virtues” (12).

This theme of self-observation continues in “The Greater Self” where Nufsibaäl, King of Byblus’ naked Self steps out of a mirror made by magicians. The symbol of the mirror emphasized by Gibran in this parable is one of the most immediate symbols of spiritual contemplation in general for it reveals the union of subject and object. In “The Greater Self,” the naked Self warns the king. “If you were mightier yet, you would not be king.” The naked man also tells him that if he had been the mightiest, or the “wisest,” he would not have chosen to be the king. Only when the king awakens to his own wrong psychic functions and weeps bitterly, he is crowned (23). In Sufi thought when the heart becomes a pure mirror, the world is reflected in it as it really is, “For a being’s knowledge of himself in himself is not the same as knowledge of himself by means of something other that acts for him like a mirror. Such a mirror shows him to himself in the form
corresponding to the ‘plane of reflection’ and the reflection resulting from it” (qtd. in Bushrui and Jenkins 202).

For Gibran, the basis of the fragmentation and tyranny of his own time was psychological. The raging chaos of world war I, the seething slums and desecration of the environment in East coast of America, the poverty, pestilence and persecution of his own people during that terrible period of reciprocal destruction, the violation of human rights in the East and the West and all kinds of oppression led him to make a clarion call to humanity to awaken to the truth, that they in their wondrous diversity are a manifestation of one spirit. Humanity should not deem itself as an isolated planet because within it is locked the whole universe. The Dhammapada states: “one who conquers himself is greater than another who conquers a thousand times a thousand men on the battlefield” (104-105). Also it adds that, “one should be victorious over oneself and not over others and when one attains this victory, not even the Gods can turn it into defeat’ (135). Today, two words have become the oft repeated mantra of the writers and critics, “Gibranite” meaning a new or different person, and “Gibranism” meaning freedom in all things.

In the analysis of the view aired by Gibran in his differently fashioned earlier fictional and poetic works, one could see that the author here is not a mere dreamer or idealist but a social rebel, and a regenerative visionary in the sphere of religion. It is seen that all oppressive systems and outworn and outdated customs which undermine human welfare on the social front and human unity on the religious front stand exposed and denounced. For example, institutions like marriage and monastery draw his flak as they fail to fulfill their basic function of promoting healthy human relationships and paving the way for a holistic vision of cultural diversity and religious unity. The mechanized civilization that he saw around him was moving on wheels in its nescient state because it had no wings to move into essence. His earlier work represent the twilight of an epoch
with a new dawn concealed in its wings. The impersonalization and abstraction experienced through *rasānubhava* suggests an inner meaning – an impersonal emotion which evokes a transcendental heightened experience. The inner dynamics of Gibran’s words and the lines and shades in his drawings symbolize an inner state of unity. The dominant and subsidiary emotions that constitute the ultimate *rasa* experience are constituents of a cosmic design with its underlying unity.

4.3. **The underlying unity**

Gibran knew how to live the essential, and his quest was related to the total life in every sphere physical, mental, intellectual, supramental, personal, social and cosmic. Whenever his eyes lighted upon something it was viewed in the context of totality. He never detached himself from the light of this totality. Of the many masters who experienced their subtle influence on him, Gibran very much echoes the message of unity expressed by Abdul-Baha who says:

> All the divine manifestations have proclaimed the oneness of God and the unity of mankind. The fundamental truth of the manifestations is peace. This underlies all religion, all justice. Read the Gospel and the other Holy Books. You will find their fundamentals are one and the same. Therefore, unity is the essential truth of religion and when so understood, embraces all the virtues of the human world. (qtd. in Bushrui and Jenkins 253)

A Gospel is supposed to be “Godspell” and therefore it has to be understood in that right sense to live in peace and harmony. In “A Poets Voice,” Gibran craves for his homeland, rhapsodizes the beauty of his birth place, yet takes the whole earth as his abode because that is where humanity thrives, which is the spirit of divinity. Here he tries to reach out to infinity through culture specific idiom. When divine souls walk on earth, speak of love and point towards the path of life, people only mock at their words and
teachings. Gibran saw the difficulty in breaking the restrictive mental barriers constructed over the ages. Though the Nazarene and Socrates were killed, according to him, they are eternally alive. “Ridicule cannot triumph over the followers of Deity. They live and grow forever” (*Tears, G. W.* bk. 8. 82).

In his state of awareness Gibran moves from the periphery to the centre, and again from the centre to the periphery. Just as Gibran moves away from the Word and the World, if humanity were to move in awareness without getting fixated anywhere, if they learn to hear the voice of the angels and if they are born anew, they will not remain like a blank sheet in the book of existence (*Broken Wings. S.T.* bk. 1.20). Humanity has to die to its split state, and be integrated, one and organic, flexible and flowing, so that they melt and merge with the cosmos. The Holy Bible says, “very truly, I tell you, no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born from above” (John 3.3). This Kingdom, of God cannot be reached through philosophical speculations, theories or hypothesis but it is an existential happening where one is totally alone, with one’s consciousness without any object. Each one is called to write one’s own script based on one’s own understanding in a state of aloneness. In “Of Life” Gibran extols the loneliness that encompasses each one’s life:

Your life, my brother, is a solitary habitation separated from other men’s dwellings. It is a house into whose interior no neighbours gaze can penetrate. If it were plunged into darkness, your neighbour’s lamp could not illumine it. If it were emptied of provisions, the stores of your neighbours could not fill it. (*Voice, S. T.* bk. 2.43)

The entire religious search has to begin from the centre, and Gibran who knew the science of silence has used his words only as pointers or road maps. He has his own poetic way of saying or describing truth through certain metaphors. It is the music of the
unuttered which he feels he has never been able to say. In his letter to May Ziadeh he records his inability in verbalizing the ultimate realization. “I was born to live and write a book only one small book – I was born to live and suffer and to say one living word, and I cannot remain silent until life utters that word through my lips…” (Portrait, S.T. bk. 4.92). It is the cry of a soul in its utmost humility and purity to present the recognized truth in its authenticity. While the majority of humanity stifles the voice of their inner silences, Gibran has listened to it, interpreted it and has taken the reigns of life in his hands with self-mastery and love.

His intention was not to leave any reader surrounded by shards of shattered faith, but to save them from institutions that have arrogated to themselves a religious authority. This is the dawning of Gibran’s spiritual light, and his illumined consciousness seeks ways and means to impart that experience to lift humanity. His is the compassion of a Buddha who wished to instruct humanity even after his enlightenment. It is the agony of an awakened soul who has moved away from language, words and symbols to a shapeless winged word – a word that comes when all thoughts have ceased. It is the cessation of language which heralds an end to knowledge culture, family, society civilization etc, because these things rest purely on language. Now the reader’s journey that has started with signs, symbols and words, has to reach this wordless state, the headless, thoughtless state where everything is total bliss. Humanity’s prime aim should be to hanker for that “translucent element” which is nothing but one’s divine state (33).

Gibran helps humanity to be conscious of its interconnectedness with the universe, to celebrate and appreciate the beauty of diversity and to evolve as “Buddhas.” In the wake of the world war, Gibran was highly conscious of the need of the hour to be loyal to the human race as a whole, to build a harmonious and sustainable society leading to world unity and world peace. In “A Poet’s Voice” he says “Humans are divided into different
clans and tribes, and belong to countries and towns. But I find myself a stranger to all communities and belong to no settlement. The universe is my country, and the human family is my tribe” (Tears, G.W. bk. 8.80).

It is in its human weakness, and ignorance that humanity stands divided cleaving to kingdoms, empires and provinces. Gibran believes that “Humanity is the spirit of the Supreme Being on earth,” but people are busy in singing their own clan’s anthem and in “sharpening their swords” (81). Gibran’s fervent yearning is for wholeness and oneness and one sails along with him in this growing awareness of an underlying unity within the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds. His is not a mere intellectual assent, but a passionate conviction, a cloudless certainty, an understanding and flowering of consciousness which he finds difficult to verbalize. Repeatedly he says, “I came to say a word I shall say it now. But if death prevents its uttering, it will be said by Tomorrow, for Tomorrow never leaves a secret in the book of Eternity” (85). It is here that he becomes the most fit person to lead humanity, for, his instrument of speech is born of silence. His greatest creative energy comes from his love for humanity, for he says:

You are my brother and I love you. I love you worshipping in your church, kneeling in your temple, and praying in your mosque. You and I all are children of one religion, for the varied paths of religion are but the fingers of the loving hand of the Supreme Being, extended to all, offering completeness of spirit to all, anxious to receive all. (82-83)

This is the mystic state where Gibran sees no difference of “within” and “without,” time and space, myself and the other. Gibran gives the loftiest possible image of a human being. According to Buddhism, such a person is a bodhisattva in terms of what he wants to give to humanity. If the arhant is one who has won permanent release from samsara, the bodhisattva is one who chooses to return to the world and open the
doors of truth to ailing humanity, through their own understanding. That’s why in *The Prophet* he says, “If in the twilight of memory we should meet once more, we shall speak again together and you shall sing to me a deeper song. / And if our hands should meet in another dream / we shall build another tower in the sky” (98). Gibran registers his strong faith in reincarnation like Pythagoras, Plato, Virgil and Plutarch, who believed in the doctrine of reincarnation (Kersten 111). Gibran also believes that he would be back to fulfill what had been undone:

O Mist, my sister, my sister Mist,
I am one with you now.
No longer am I a self.
The walls have fallen,
And the chains have broken;
I rise to you, a mist,
And together we shall float upon the sea until life’s Second day,
When dawn shall lay you, due drops in a garden,
And me a babe upon the breast of a woman. (*Garden* 55)

Though he knows very well that at the end of twelve years of his stay in Orphalese, he has been able to open only a window towards truth he does not lose heart, but encourages, appreciates and instills hope in the people to hope for the best. Perhaps, then their song would be deeper because they have already started dreaming of self-realization. Buddha, one of the greatest explorers of consciousness, with regard to the first *satori* or a glimpse has said the following, “One day’s glimpse of the deathless state is better than a hundred years of life without it. One day’s glimpse of dharma is better than a hundred years of life without it” (Easwaran 136).
Remaining in a world of temptations and snares, Gibran attains this awareness of the Absolute, and helps others to free themselves. Lord Krishna in The Bhagavad Gītā extols the same principle when he says, “O Bharta (Arjuna) ! whenever virtue (dharma) declines and vice (adharma) is in the ascendant I incarnate myself on earth (as an avatar) appearing from age to age in visible form, I come to destroy evil and to reestablish virtue” (4.7-8).

In the last vignette of Jesus the Son of Man, the man from Lebanon, a nineteenth century commentator mourns for the sad plight of humanity that has despised and mocked Jesus and has turned Him their “distant self, their far off cry and their passion.” (88) This man from Lebanon observes that humanity has not awakened to the dawn of Jesus, has not risen from its seat to meet Him or “to scale the ridges of His hills” (88). To quote him:

But master, sky-heart, knight of our fairer dream
You do still tread this day;
Nor bows nor spears shall stay your steps.
You walk through all our arrows, you smile down upon us, And though you are the youngest of us all You father us all,
Poet, Singer, Great Heart, May our God bless your name,
And the womb that held you, and the breasts that gave you milk And may God forgive us all. (88)

These lines convey a universal meaning within and outside cultural boundaries. Further, it is the saga of a man whose knowledge has turned existence towards Him, for, in knowing Himself, He has made Himself known. But in spite of his pervading presence, He is still a stranger knocking at the door of the unknown. Also, in the old Essene sect, the common belief is that when a man is transformed, he becomes his own father (Osho, Mustard Seed
Thus, this passage is highly revealing as it also speaks of the non-dual state of Jesus and it is in this state that Gibran celebrates the virgin birth of Jesus, where the man and woman within Him had met to negate each other leaving behind oneness which is “virginity.” Though humanity keeps hankering after this state, it is done only in a state of ignorance and that is why they have to be forgiven.

Gibran was greatly influenced by Abdul Baha whom he conceived as a receptacle of the Holy Spirit. He wonders at Baha’s realization of unity in diversity which could be discerned in the following lines:

The sun is one but the dawning points of the sun are numerous and changing. The ocean is one body of water but different parts of it have particular designation Atlantic, Pacific, Mediterranean, Antarctic etc. If we consider the names, there is differentiation, but the water, the ocean itself is one reality. Likewise the divine religions of the holy manifestations of God are in reality one, though in names and nomenclature they differ. (qtd. in Bushrui and Jenkins 252)

Humanity is like drops of water hanging in the air and behaving like a prism, dividing the rays of the sun into seven hues. It is in ignorance that the mind divides the one into many. For Gibran true religion is joyous and liberating, teaching and freeing one from bondage, and placing him/her unfettered upon the earth. Moreover, true religion gives wings to soar aloft into the realms of love and freedom, and roots one in justice, thus making all equal. Though Gibran had in mind the total wholeness where dichotomies disappear, binaries blur, dualities dissolve, and boundaries burst, he knew that unity without an acceptance of diversity would fail, and he believed in separateness in togetherness. His ideas regarding freedom and unity had been highly infectious and stimulating to a whole generation of succeeding writers. In the words of his famous biographer Suheil Bushrui, “His
innovative prose contained a strong poetic shade, and after Gibran, Arab writers were able to experiment on any level and in any sphere of literature because he had liberated the creative spirit” (194).

*The Prophet* is a loving book on love with the holy love of a prophet. This slim volume waxes rich in its ecstatic mode, because here it is the “being” that teaches, and not the ideas or the organizations, created by him. It is the outpouring of the divine element called the heart. Once Gibran told Mary to follow her heart in all that she did for “your heart is the right guide in everything big” (qtd. in Bushru and Jenkins 220). To the Irish poet writer George Russel, nobody has spoken with so beautiful a voice since the “Gitanjali” of Rabindranath Tagore. The concept of love in *The Prophet* is wounding and painful. Awareness becomes intense only in moments of suffering. Yet, it can lift one to ecstasy, and this is a trait found in the writings of both the Sufis of the East and the Christian mystics of the West. His Almustafa is Christ, the most powerful personality in history, who first perceived the Kingdom of Heaven in the human heart. Almustafa’s words may be interpreted with the help of a dictionary but never the man himself. The Biblical Jesus admonishes the teachers of the law, who have mistaken notions, “How terrible for you teachers of the law that you have kept the key that opens the door to the house of knowledge; you yourselves will not go in, and you stop those who are trying to go in!” (Luke 52). Probably Jesus hints at their inadequate alertness in encountering a realized soul, and in not harnessing all their energies to realize the truth.

*The Prophet* reverberates with the language of the Bible, and contains in one form or another, all the major Sufi ideas of the universal Self, unity of life and death, unity of body and soul, unity of good and evil, unity of time and place, unity of religion, unity of humankind and collective responsibility, the divine in the human soul, and the relationship between essence and form. In his letter to May Ziadeh, dated Dec. 1923,
Gibran observes, “They tell me, May, that I love people and some reproach me for loving everybody. Yes, I love all people, I love them entirely without discrimination or preference. I love them as one unit; I love them because they are of God’s spirit…” *(Love 69)*.

Gibran’s *The Prophet* marks the ending of one phase and the beginning of another. The created world is organically one with the creator and there is a deep love relationship between the two. They fulfill each other, are entwined with each other and therefore, it becomes impossible for Gibran to separate himself from “God’s spirit.” With regard to his *The Prophet*, he has made the following observation to May in his letter dated 9 May, 1919:

*The Prophet* – this is a book which I thought of writing a thousand years ago, but I did not get any of its chapters down on paper until the end of last year. What can I tell you about this Prophet? He is my rebirth and my first baptism, the only thought in me that will make me worthy to stand in the light of the sun. For, this Prophet had already “written” me before I attempted to “write him,” had created me before I created him and had silently set me on a course to follow him for seven thousand leagues before he appeared in front of me to dictate his wishes and inclinations. *(Love 23)*

Like every mystic, Gibran has seen the hidden gift in every human heart waiting to be identified and has therefore, given his literary output as a gift to humanity to make their own voyage of discovery. Further, he has realized love to be the supreme flame that keeps one active, and gives a life of beauty, truth, silence and other priceless things. To a person in love, existence is not a dead existence, it is full of light, overflowing with love and in order to experience that love, one has to be attuned to the world of values.
Almustafa in *The Prophet* takes care not to answer knowledgeable questions of people with whom he had lived for twelve years but when Almitra the seeress, asks a question which is embedded in a quest, Almustafa answers it with such beauty, poetry and truth. To him love becomes both a crowning and a crucifixion. Through this single statement he answers the whole alchemy of human transformation. The love that he speaks of here is the blissfulness, the ultimate benediction that comes by crucifying the past. Humanity is in an impoverished state because it has forgotten the cosmic law of love that is giving. When love grows in an individual he/she becomes filled with God and such an individual drops belief in countries and nations. Such enlightened individuals become children of the universe. But Gibran seems to understand the limitations of the human mind with its desires, and therefore, gives directions:

- But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires.
- To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night.
- To know the pain of too much tenderness.
- To be wounded by your own understanding of love;
- And to bleed willingly and joyfully. (12)

Like a loving mother teaching her toddler to walk, Gibran goes step by step so that the ultimate goal may be reached, He further tells:

- To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving;
- To rest at the noon hour and meditate love’s ecstasy;
- To return home at eventide with gratitude;
- And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips. (12)
Truth is revealed everywhere, every moment and in everything and these “desires” are means to seek God in the running stream, in the pain of tenderness, in every dawn, at every noon and at eventide. When existence is viewed with love, the response too, then, would be only in terms of love. Love has no ego in it, no haggling, no conditions and it simply flows expressing a higher quality, settling all the lower ones in the bottom.

Gibran loved humanity with the hope that one day humanity would open its heart to him. He spoke with a “childlike candour,” a kind of simple talk that would reach human hearts like Beethoven’s deathless music. To May, he wrote that the manifestations of the heart are rudimentary things, whereas rhetoric is a social vehicle. He also spoke of himself as a lover of “God of life” and “of humanity,” and his wish for the absolute is thus expressed: “I wish you knew how much I long for the absolute, the white absolute, the absolute in the storm, the absolute on the cross, the absolute that cries but does not hide its tears and the absolute that laughs and is not embarrassed by its laughter” (60). This is a mystery that is beautiful, blissful, total and complete and this is the cry of a man who wants to become the Absolute, the solitary peak and the source of all. According to Swami Krishnanada:

The universe is one organic unity sustained by the single being of God, of whom everything is a part, and who is the inner and outer reality of everything. Absolutism is the highest point, the culmination of all true philosophy, according to which the Absolute spirit or the Absolute God is the only reality. (102)

To the Pharisees who asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God would come, his answer was “The Kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, “look, here it is!” or “There it is!” for, in fact, the Kingdom of God is among you” (Luke 16. 20-21). All reality known to humans is limited to the Self and that
is how the Pharisees, came out with this question. The world subsists in one’s consciousness which is the Great Self of all. When one realizes the real nature of the Self one rises from the consciousness of being something to the consciousness of being everything, where the knower and the known, the enjoyer and the enjoyed are one, and where one is lifted above all desires and sees nothing outside. It is a discovery and not an invention. It is the mind tired of wandering, settling down in the “Self.” Chandogya Upanishad states that whatever is outside us, is also inside us, “One who meditates upon and realizes the Self discovers that everything in the cosmos – energy and space, fire and water, name and form, birth and death, mind and will, word and deed, mantram and meditation – all come from the Self” (140-41).

Gibran has tried to lift the veil of unconsciousness so that one will witness the arising of “knowing.” He warns people not to rejoice in the waves but to plunge into the depths and not to divide time and eternity, matter and mind, earth and sky, roots and flowers etc. Only when one becomes whole inside he/she would begin to proceed from existence to essence. In Sand and Foam Gibran says, “It was but yesterday I thought myself a fragment quivering without rhythm in the sphere of life. Now I know that I am the sphere, and all life in rhythmic fragments moves within me” (2). To him “A grain of sand is a desert, and a desert is a grain of sand” (3). Even a particle of sand has its history hidden in the whole physical world. Gibran’s is not an intellectual search but an intelligent carnival of love, and he acknowledges that with his intellect, he had been creating only ripples when he was just thrown into the “wondrous” lake by God. But when he reached the depths he “became very still” (5). Elsewhere he says, “The real in us is silent, the acquired is talkative” (15). In another parable he says that once in every hundred years Jesus of Nazareth comes to meet the Jesus of the Christians in Lebanon and after their discourse each time Jesus of Nazareth is reported to have told Jesus of the
Christians, “My friend, I fear we shall never, never agree” (77). These lines seem to echo the words of Jesus of the Gospel, “What I say is true, because I know where I came from and where I am going you do not know where I came from or where I am going. You make judgments in a purely human way. I pass judgment on no one” (John 8. 15.16). Being non-judgmental is the state of an individual who has rejected the non-essential for the essential. As for Jesus, it is the cultivation of a deep love relationship between the Father and the Son fulfilling each other and being together.

Thus, the Biblical Jesus is very clear in his statement that empirical experiences should not be taken as standards for judging the real. All actions to reach the real, demands a self-transformation and that, only knowledge which is not merely of the world, is eternal. The unity that underlies cultural and regional divides is sought to be metaphorically manifested in most of his parables and poems. There is in every human soul, he stresses again and again, the potential to realize its inner power and move towards the Infinite where the human and the non-human meet and merge in a kind of cosmic harmony that sages and seers in all ages have envisioned. It is in this non-dual state that one experiences what ancient Indians have called śānta rasa and what Greeks have called ataraxia, and it is from here that the peak of consciousness beckons them.

4.4. From eternity to eternity

Gibran’s artistic oeuvre contains the song of a prophet who has conquered the mind, has witnessed all the games of the mind, dropped all polarities and has understood the soul’s existence from eternity to eternity. The Bhagawad Gītā says, “The soul is never touched, it is immutable, all pervading, calm, unshakable, its existence is eternal” (2.24). It also adds that the soul cannot even be pondered by the reasoning mind for it is unmanifested and formless (26-27). In “The Anthem of Humanity” Gibran insists, “I have existed from all eternity and behold, I am here, and I shall exist till the end of time, for
my being has no end” (K.G. a fan site). The Ātma Upanishad states “The supreme self is neither born nor dies” (287). In the Bible, Jesus tells the Jews, “very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am” (John 8.58).

Gibran has scurried for an opening wedge into the essence of life and has struggled hard to change his reticence into communication and his strangeness into understanding. In “The Anthem of Humanity,” he has recorded his acquaintance with the teachings of Confucius, the wisdom of Brahma, the insight of Buddha, the effulgence shed by Yaweh on Moses, the miracles of the Nazarene, the words of Prophet Mohammed, the might of Babylon, the glory of Egypt, and the grandeur of Greece. He also acknowledges his acquaintance with the sorcerers of Endor, the seers of Assyria, the prophets of Palestine, the wisdom of India, the Arabian Peninsula and the West. Thus, he confirms his existence from eternity to eternity, where his being has no end (Kahlil Gibran; a fan site p 4). Here, the reader, along with Gibran circumambulates as a pilgrim does the stupa, in clockwise but ascending direction. His multitude of experiences in its endless variety, create a dominant mood, and its flowerings, like a lotus petal evoke a state of heightened aesthetic experience. The staggering multiplicity in gleaning wisdom is just an artistic expression to show totality and eternity. It shows its resilience, sensitiveness and intense concentration to see life beyond the range of vision.

In “The Tempest” Yousif El Fakhri leaves civilization in search of a fresh awakening of spring, of new prairies to partake of “the bread and wine of life from the vases” which he had fashioned with his own hands and “to live in the awareness of life and enjoy kind thoughts and beautiful silence.” To him, “It is an awakening within the spirit; he who knows it, is unable to reveal it by words; and he who knows it not, will never think upon the compelling and beautiful mystery of existence” (Secrets, K.G. Reader bk. 2.85, 87). Such awakening knows no words, but it has to be put in words and
therefore, it becomes imperative on the part of the reader to break down the word, or the symbol and to go behind it, to penetrate all the layers of conditioning and thinking and this is possible only for an alert individual. Paulo Coelho who is another note from the same symphony as Gibran, says in his *Aleph*, “ANYONE WHO KNOWS GOD CONCEPT CANNOT DESCRIBE HIM. ANYONE WHO CAN DESCRIBE GOD DOES NOT KNOW HIM” (121). Irma Zaleski in her book *Who Is God?* says, “The mystery of God is bigger than the formulas that try to express God in words” (68).

Gibran’s poetry is a happening and it carries the signature of the divine. Even his paintings are poetry in colour throbbing with a divine spontaneity. His poetry has taken him over, and especially in *The Prophet*, Gibran is neither the doer nor the knower, and as Jung has put it, a “nutrient medium” a passage, a vehicle and a messenger of bringing a holy message, acting as a bridge between the human and the Divine. In a scientific era that is too much lost in destructive technology, and where technological development is lopsided, Gibran’s works become a sequence that lead from one to the other showing humanity the path of love, life and spontaneity, and unravelling their natural and inevitable essence of life, in order to give birth to a new kind of humanity. The call is just to be amoral, to be innocent and non judgmental, and to move from the plane of thinking and feeling into one’s own being. In *Sand and Foam*, he muses thus, “Our mind is a sponge; our heart is a stream. / Is it not strange that most of us choose sucking rather than running?” (*G.W.* bk. 3.12).

Gibran’s works are the songs of a prophet, filled with God experience, and that’s why the aesthetic experience is so absorbing and total. In every page of his work he dances like the *Nissan* breeze bringing glad tidings of spring. Like a raging tempest he destroys the old, and never forgets to replace them with the fresh and the new. His own words about Khalil the heretic can be fittingly applied to him, “There resides our beloved
Khalil, whose life’s history was written by God with glittering letters upon the pages of our hearts, and they cannot be effaced by the ages” (Spirits, G.W. bk. 11.340). If one were to fall in accord with his writings, then moving into Infinite consciousness becomes a possibility. Gibran’s words and paintings are two of the many doors that lead one to the ultimate shrine of bliss. Through his art, one can relate with reality and feel something of the beyond. In his creativity the creative writer Gibran has simply disappeared allowing the divine to flow through him, and his creativity flows from his consciousness, and therefore, it has the potential to transform the whole quality of human consciousness on earth.

Gibran lays emphasis on the underlying unity amidst mind boggling diversity. He dreams of a permanent unity of religions, permanent unity of nature and a permanent unity of humanity. In “Resurrection” he says, “For in one soul are contained the hopes and feelings of all Mankind” (Voice, S. T. bk. 2.92). He aims at restoring the lost balance between a scientifically, technologically and politically advanced world, and a morally and socially retarded world. People, according to him, are in “narcotic slumber” (95). His scathing attacks are on the existing economic, social and political order. He longs to create a universal humanity that enjoys equality, non-discrimination, total freedom, peace and harmony. As a spiritual master, he knew well that, what is amenable to the senses may not be the final truth because what is intuitively realized is more fundamental. He is reported to have told Mary, “This country needs hundreds of soul, doctors … they must have a universal consciousness and be able to help people look in a different direction” (qtd. in Bushrui and Jenkins 188).

In spite of the giant leaps made by science and technology, the universe is still not an open book, and it has its own unresolved mysteries. Humans gain knowledge by means of the senses (pratyāksha) and that forms the basis of their knowing and judging their
experiences of the world. When inferential conclusions are drawn from *pratyāksha* using the mind as internal instrument, then it becomes *paroksa* knowledge – a knowledge that is hidden but can be inferred rationally. While, these two types of knowledge together constitute the “scientific actuality,” there is one more category of knowledge which is direct, sudden and immediate, and this knowledge is termed *aparoksa*. The totality of truth revealed by Gibran’s *aparoksa* knowledge includes and supersedes the “scientific actuality” and therefore, becomes more than a philosophical reality. This is gained by an illumination or divine intervention and Gibran glows with *aparoksa jnana*. He saw the Absolute behind the negated visible universe. He saw God in the very universe that physically confronted him, and also saw it as a manifestation of the immutable spirit. Unlike ordinary humans, Gibran became conscious of his being, that is already there, perfect, Absolute and ecstatic. To a reader who surrenders to his works; the door opens to the divine. The euphoria experienced through his works does not stop, but becomes an opening to the entire existence. To use his own words from “The Death of the Master,” he is one of the “gifted souls in whose hands God has placed a viol to soothe, the spirit with heavenly music, and bring his fellow men close to life and the Beauty of life” (*Voice, S.T.* bk. 2.36).

It is in *The Prophet* and *Jesus the Son of Man* that Gibran’s vision of the Infinite is amplified. There is nothing higher than knowing the essence of the Self which is divinity in miniature form. In his portrayal of Jesus, in *Jesus the Son of Man*, Gibran shows Jesus to be the son of man who has risen above all dualities and who takes comfort in the transcendental silence, aspiring for the realization of the eternal good for the entire universe. According to Rachel’s exposition of Jesus:
Nay, Jesus was not a phantom, nor a conception of the poets. He was a man like yourself and myself. But only to sight and touch and hearing; in all other ways, He was unlike us.

He was a man of joy; and it was upon the path of joy that he met the sorrow’s of all men. And it was from the high roofs of His sorrows that He beheld the joy of all men. He saw visions that we did not see, and heard voices that we did not hear; and He spoke as if to invisible multitudes, and ofttimes he spoke through us to races yet unborn.

And Jesus was often alone. He was among us yet not one with us. He was upon the earth, yet he was of the sky. And only in our aloneness may we visit the land of His aloneness. (29)

Thus, Jesus could enter a state of Infinite oneness, where things lose their separateness, where perception and relatedness are no more, where the subject and the object coalesce in a state of supreme bliss. The one luminous consciousness which appears to be split up into the diversity of a world due to the fluctuations in the knowing process of humanity is just one universal vibration which is received by the senses in different forms. When transcendence of thinking annihilates the individual, the pure being begins to emerge. Gibran has viewed Jesus’ essence as complete unity with God, and only those who are attuned to higher things and are on a quest, could see His real essence. This essence is a speck of God, the soul substance inside each individual, and it is this “essence” that should be striven for, by humanity to be universal. If one could rise up to this spiritual state, one could conquer death and enter into eternity. One would reach the state of nirvichara samādhi from where one can move into nirbheej samādhi. A person with divine sight or “second attention” knows himself/herself as pure being that has moved from appearance to essence. In the words of Kabir:
I have learned from Him how to walk without feet, to see without eyes, to hear without ears, to drink without mouth, to fly without wings. I have brought my love and meditation into the land where there is no sun and moon, nor day and night. (Tagore 48)

Once humanity realizes that the world is flowing through each one of them, the universe begins to operate with them because their desires are identical with God’s (Father’s) desires. According to Gibran, every man and woman, is a longing for the divine, destined for godhead like the seed that bears within it a longing, a fulfillment that is God. Gibran places total faith in the capacity of each individual, as a self-evolving organism, to become divine by realization. He believes that God is latent within everyone, as a greater Self and that this can be realized through aspiration or yearning. In the sermon on Good and evil, Almustafa says:

In your longing for your giant self lies your goodness and that longing is in all of you.

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

And in others it is a flat stream that loses itself in angles and bends and lingers before it reaches the shore. (The Prophet 66)

In Infinite consciousness, all pluralities get dissolved, and there is no internal or external differentiation. If God is non-dual, then plurality has to disappear and the “pygmy-self” has to merge with the “giant-self.” The truly transcendental viewpoint does not admit that the world we experience at a day to day level is the truth or whole of life. As Clare Colebrook states, “In order to arrive at the very life of things, we need to go
beyond any single or specific event and ask how events, differences and ‘singularities’ are possible” (Wolfreys 220). The very term “universe” and not multiverse suggests that both the human and the non-human world are in essence the Absolute itself. This truth cannot be grasped through dull Metaphysics or idle intellectual quibbling or through empirical consciousness but through realization and experience.

Gibran appeals to humanity to replace mistaken ideas with correct ones, and to replace illusion with reality. Inspired by Jesus the Nazarene, Gibran believes in consciousness as a shared phenomenon. When Jesus of the Gospel says, The father and I are one or Abide in me as I abide in you, He is speaking for all, as in the spiritual path one becomes less isolated as an individual and more universal as an expression of consciousness. In a state of separation, one loses sight of the essence and the soul level of existence seems to be far away. God consciousness grows as one begins to realize that one is in everyone else, and everyone else is in one. It is then that every being is perceived as an essence, or a pure being. The goal of God consciousness is full inclusion.

When the soul is no more trapped in duality, universal humanity becomes a possibility. All human creative energies have to be directed away from diversifying creativity to the unifying one. Instead of descending to ignorance and separation, one is asked to ascend to understanding and unity. Gibran’s appeal to humanity is to dissolve the ego consciousness and reach the divine through aesthetic and eco-consciousness.

To Mikhail Naimy, the message of *The Prophet* is that “man’s end is nothing short of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence and immortality” (qtd. in Bushrui and Jenkins 224). Swami Krishnananda, in his treatise on the Vedanta philosophy and its methodology says:

The omnipotence of the Absolute nature degrades itself in the individual in the craving for self-exaltation and supremacy over others, which is the
effect of the misapprehension of the true relation existing among
individuals. The universal natures of omnipresence and omniscience are
cast down into the states of clinging to individual life and individual
conceit respectively. (144)

A whole perception that emanates from the centre, capable of casting its glance all
around in all directions and dimensions alone can give glimpses of the inner. In his play,
“The Blind,” Gibran extols the special vision of David Rugby, and Anna’s gradual ascent
into David’s limitless world. Anna’s other worldly, kinesthetic blindman’s buff, her
capacity to corroborate with her father, and hear and feel along the same wave length, her
affectation of blindness that endows her with the sixth sense reveal Gibran’s submerged
motivation in his treatment of “The Blind.” The play displays his mellowing optimism
and defines his commitment to the universal transcendence of the individual spirit or what
can be termed as “the larger consciousness of the world” (43). The exit line of David
Rugby, “I understand now, Anna. I understand.” (104) reminds one of the omnipresent
madman’s statement during the course of the play. “She is learning the language of the
night, my lady fair. And in that language, every word is a star, and only God can make the
sentences” (98). At the moment of truth, Anna’s world turns out to be stars of light. The
love of David Rugby for his wife’s daughter is one that rises to the spiritual level.

Humanity tries to get wisdom in verbosity, which is only a collection of empty
words. The essence is the real wisdom where humanity lays bare completely the layers of
identification, and sheds the difference between its individual Self and the universe. Here
the wholeness is manifested as soon as the vacuity is awakened. Gibran has used his
words as a trap door for his readers to enter into the Kingdom of God. They only bring
one closer to the door, and once people get close they tend to forget the words and fall
into total silence. Through his words he tries to take off the wisdom contained in words and establishes a kind of silence.

One needs the mastery to walk in wisdom, through language and then move out of wisdom, out of language and mind. Culture, civilization, science, religion, philosophy etc. depend on language for their survival but one needs no language to communicate with oneself or to address the centre. Gibran appeals to humans to live in wisdom and not in the mind for one who lives in the mind would feel the absence of one’s own presence. Truth involves a loss in the world of experience. The dream objects will have to disappear in order to have a waking experience. An awakened soul knows nothing of dualities, divisions and dichotomies. One reaches the fountainhead of freedom. It is a deep communion with truth. While speaking of crime and punishment, Almustafa says:

And you who would understand justice, how shall you unless you look upon all deeds in the fullness of light?

Only then shall you know that the erect and the fallen are but one man standing in twilight between the night of his pigmy-self and the day of his god-self,

And that the corner-stone of the temple is not higher than the lowest stone in its foundation. (43)

Like Jesus, Gibran’s mission was to demolish the established hierarchical institutions with structures and sanctions, and to awaken humanity to its own cosmic potentiality. In “John the Madman,” Gibran reveals the distinction he often made between true Christianity, as represented by the life and teachings of Jesus, and the diluted form of Christianity that is practised by the people:

Oh Jesus, they have built these churches for the sake of their own glory, and embellished them with silk and melted gold…. They left the bodies of
Thy chosen poor wrapped in tattered raiment in the cold night….They filled the sky with smoke of burning candles and incense and left the bodies of Thy faithful worshippers empty of bread…. They raised their voices with hymns of praise, but deafened themselves to the cry and moan of the widows and orphans. (Secrets 163)

Bushrui records Mary’s observation in her journal Beloved Prophet thus: “Most of us live in but two or three rooms of the house of our being. Kahlil lives in all of his” (132). To humanity that is at cross roads, Gibran tries to map out the spiritual journey to God-consciousness that would annihilate conflicts and crises in their lives. In his attempt to bridge the chasm between humanity and God he unseals his awakened soul through art, giving aesthetic relish to the reader to rise beyond the mundane and experience the Absolute. The Absolute, according to Ibn Arabi, is manifested in the phenomenal world through the divine names or archetypes “In truth, there is but one single essential reality (haqiqah)” (qtd. in Bushrui and Jenkins 214).

As stated earlier, to Mansur Hallaj it is, “Ana al-Haqq,” or “Truth” which is one of the ninety nine names of the creator as enumerated in the Qur-ān:

And he who brings the truth
And he who confirms
(And supports) it, such are
The men who do right. (Sura 39:33)

The Sufis prefer it to all others, as it indicates a wider conception of Deity (Masani 1). The Sufi concept of “unity” of being, dissolves nature in God, insisting on the principle “All is God,” as against the naturalistic pantheon that dissolves God in nature, its maxim being “God is All.” Like William Blake, Gibran believes in impulse and creativity, in the
unity of being and in the larger consciousness. Both the artists have tried to retain the
clear and pure intuition and awareness in their work and have aimed at awakening the
lapsed souls of humankind. They have endeavored to create a new world based on truth
and unity.

Long before Jung could recognize the motion of psychic energies, Blake affirmed
that eternity is not in space, but is within the Self. In *The Madman*, Gibran explores the
dichotomy between form and essence. Bereft of the seven masks, the madman is all praise
for the thief who has stolen his masks thus helping him to find his freedom and safety in
his madness, the freedom of loneliness and the safety from being understood. In *The
Madman*, he tries to show that to be understood is to be enslaved. In the parable, “God,”
the narrator does not receive any answer from God when he in his ignorance asserts the
apparent dichotomy between him and God as master/slave, creator/created deity/devotee
etc. However, after thousands of years, realization dawns on him and he says, “My God,
my aim and my fulfillment, I am thy yesterday and thou art my tomorrow. I am thy root
in the earth and thou art my flower in the sky, and together we grow before the face of the
sun.” It is then that God leans over him and whispers words of sweetness, and enfolds
him like the sea that enfolds the brook that runs into her. In “The Seven Selves,” the
seventh self is the “do – nothing self” the one who sits in the dumb, empty nowhere and
nowhen, while all the other six selves are busy re-creating life. Then as the six selves
retreat to sleep “enfolded with a new and happy submission,” the seventh self remains
“watching and gazing at nothingness, which is behind all things.” In “The Other
Language,” the narrator regrets having “forgotten the language of the other world.” In
“The Blessed City,” Gibran mourns over the lot of the people who according to the
scripture have cut off their offending eyes and hands, and so leaves the blessed city
immediately because he is an adult who could read the scriptures (Madman G.W. bk 4. 23-44).

   It is with clear-sightedness, serenity, self-restraint, fortitude, faith, collectedness of mind, and yearning for liberation from bondage that he follows the path of spiritual meditation. His spiritual knowledge is gained not so much through the precision of reason and logic, but through, image, art, and beauty. The implication is perhaps that one’s inability to embrace the great truth makes one demand a God who is relative to the material world. When thoughts recede and when the individual is annulled, together with it, God and the world sink into pure being. The Self which is the Absolute includes the entire universe and far transcends it. Unity amidst humanity demands a heart to heart feeling of oneness among its inhabitants. The Upanishads state that truth is not a state of dynamic change and action, as this marks limitation and perfection, but it is one of perennial calm, limitless joy and permanent satisfaction. The Indian aesthetics seems to be grounded on this premise, as śānta rasa derived from a work of art is totally non-dual tranquil and utterly perfect. To reach this state one has to fulfill the conditions of the lower, the lesser and the grosser states. The more limited states of manifestation have to be complied with their demands before one could reach the highest state of the metaphysical being. That is the reason why this study has used the aesthetic experience and eco-spirituality as the two main rungs to reach the highest rung of the supreme ladder.

   Though beings are separated in their modes of mentality, the call here is to shed their differences, and aim at the attainment of a common goal, the achievement of a common purpose, for, the truth of them all is one, and all their paths must meet at the point of perfection. What is Infinite must be division less existence. The Rig Veda states: “The one being, the wise diversely speak of” (Krishnanada 18). The substance by itself does not change, only our modes of perception changes. Therefore, truth remains that,
existence is without any evolution or involution within itself. A liberated soul does not revel as the lord of others, it sees no distinction, but has the eternal experience of the essence of Infinity. In the “Song of the Soul” in *Tears and Laughter*, Gibran says:

> It is a song composed by contemplation,
> And published by silence,
> And shunned by clamor,
> And folded by truth,
> And repeated by dreams,
> And understood by love,
> And hidden by awakening,
> And sung by the soul. (G.W. bk. 8.43)

Through these lines it is evident that his is a soul that has reached an awakening, has opened up to a “wordless song” within the depths of his soul, which refuses to “melt with ink on parchment” and engulfs and flows in a “transparent cloak.” He does not have the audacity “to sing in voice, the song of God” (*Tears* 42-43). Gibran felt that his duty was to teach humanity about its “Larger self which contains all men” (*Garden of the Prophet* 50). His duty was to lift humanity’s allegiance from the ego to the soul. Owing to linguistic limitations his words could not reach the expanding boundaries and therefore as often as possible he speaks in the Biblical language employing, metaphors, imageries and symbols. Some of his works are in the form of parables that cry for a deeper analysis.

The aesthetic relish experienced by a reader on reading the works of Gibran permits the hidden fragment of the submerged negative energy to come to the surface and then taper off gently leading one in the process towards the unity of being. One gets healed of negative energies like anger, fear, anxiety and goes back to śānta – one’s natural and original state. This higher happiness leads one to the knowledge of truth.
Gibran’s higher faculties lead one to the depths of one’s soul and in aesthetic rapture one
breaks away from the surface strings of the mind to hear the melodies of a greater voice.
As one gets closer and closer to this *rasa* experience, the vision expands and one’s joy in
the humans and the universe increase considerably. As Aurobindo says:

> The poet is then something more than a maker of beautiful word and
phrase, a favoured child of the fancy and imagination, a careful fashioner
of idea and utterance or an effective poetic thinker, moralist, dramatist or
story teller: He becomes a spokesman of the eternal spirit of beauty and
delight and shares that highest creative and self-expressive rapture which
is close to the original ecstasy that made existence, the divine ānanda.

(Sethuraman 405)

Gibran wants to show that the criminal and civil laws are made to appear as if
rooted in God’s commandments. But in truth, the teachings of Jesus and other spiritual
masters have been muddled, obscured, altered corrupted and distorted over the centuries.
In “Khalil the Heretic,” Khalil makes a poignant observation to Rachel when he says:

> …Vain are the beliefs and the teachings that make man miserable, and
false is the goodness that leads him into sorrow and despair, for it is man’s
purpose to be happy on this earth and lead the way to felicity and preach
its gospel wherever he goes. He who does not see the Kingdom of Heaven
in this life will never see it in the coming life. We came not into this life by
exile, but we came as innocent creatures of God, to learn how to worship
the holy and eternal spirit and seek the hidden secrets within ourselves
from the beauty of life. This is the truth which I have learned from the
teachings of the Nazarene. (*Spirits, G.W.* bk. 11.298)
Through the outer, he penetrates the inner and by touching upon the foam and froth on the shore, by undermining disunity, Gibran leads one to consider, observe and be aware of the different forms of enslavement of one’s own minds. The call is to perceive and pierce the outline, the fragment, the periphery and become a light unto oneself. The individual Self may be subject to every changing phase, but within that Self lies the eternal spirit of human unity beyond one’s direct knowledge and it is this universal spirit that has reached its culmination through Gibran’s work of art.

In “Slavery,” he addresses humanity as “slaves of Life” dragging their heavy chains. Different types of slavery baffle him. There are apprentices slaving for the artisans, artisans slaving for the employer, employers slaving for the soldiers, soldiers slaving for the governor, governors slaving for the kings, kings slaving for the priests, priests slaving for the idols, infants nursing the milk of slavery from the mother’s bosom and “children learning submission with the alphabet.” The wives are seen retiring to their beds of “Obedience and legal compliance.” He addresses slavery as “an everlasting ailment bequeathed by each generation unto its successor.” Wherever he turns, he is able to see only different types of slavery – blind slavery, mute slavery, deaf slavery, ugly slavery, subtle slavery, twisted slavery, bent slavery, perpetual slavery etc.

Contemplating over the “Continuation and contagion” of slavery, the author walks lonely in the “Valley of the shadow of Life” and at night when the spirits emerge from the hidden corners, he happens to see a cadaverous spectre falling to her knees, and on inquiry identifies this “ghastly shadow of a corpse” to be liberty. He asks liberty “where are your children?” and the tearful, weak liberty gasps, “one died crucified, another died mad and the third one is not yet born” (Secrets, K.G. Reader, bk.2. 93-96). Gibran has wielded his pen to rewrite the destiny of humans. His relation with the world becomes the
relation of union. One who has attained fulfillment enters into all things – *sarvam evá vishanti* (Tagore, *Selected Essays* 213).

Gibran had a firm belief in the unity of religion and the unity of being which directed his attention to universal ecumenicalism. His creed involves a diverse strand of beliefs that speak only of one truth. One can find traces of the Upanishads, Syrian Neoplatonism, Judeo Christian mysticism, Islamic Sufism and the Bahai teachings on universal love and the unity of religion in his works. He was influenced by the spiritual elements which he gleaned from his readings of Ibn. Rushd, Ibn.al.Farid, and al-Ghazali. He has forged his own personal spiritual philosophy in which he has connected all the traditions and joined William Blake in declaring that “all religions are one” (Bushrui and Jenkins 266). He was always inclined towards the doctrine of divine unity, which is known as *tawhid* in the Sufi tradition.

Gibran’s highest teachings are accomplished in the language of the heart. He bore in his life the testimony of his intimacy with the entire universe. Gibran becomes the individual man existing for “man the great” expressing himself through his literature in service and worship. The universal soul that knocks the doors of sages in meditation has knocked the same door for Gibran and Gibran has responded through his artistic realization and had extended his domain of literature into the depths of mystery. In *The Prophet*, Al Mustafa, the chosen one, who has realized the passage in himself from the human to the divine, and is therefore ripe for emancipation and reunion with the Absolute becomes the guiding prophetic hand to humanity that is exiled in their spatio-temporal existence from their true selves. *The Prophet* is the pinnacle of his artistic endeavour, and the twelve illustrations found here, unarguably surpass his earlier illustrations. Like his message, his creative illustrations generally do harmonize so well with his poetry. In fact,
it is a prose poem painted on a limitless canvas. By igniting the inner light, Gibran has proved that an awakened humanity can burst through the bondage of sleep.

4.5. Conclusion

Like science relying on experiments, religion has to rely on experience. What scientists discover in the outside world is discovered by mystics in the inner world. They are the scientists of the soul, and their method, unlike science that relies on observation, is awareness. In his essay “What is Art?” Tagore posits, “…the truth is, analytical treatment will not help us in discovering what is the vital point in art. For the true principle of art is the principle of unity” (Selected Essays 19). The canon worthy Gibran with his exceptional accomplishments has won a permanent place among the leading writers in world literature and his popularity continues unabated and is reflected in the growing interest in his work both in the European and the Asian countries.

Gibran’s techniques start with where humanity is, and then slowly leads to a state of being which is beyond description and a logical step by step syllogism. His words penetrate deep, and within the words there is a silence, palpable and tangible. Without going against society, Gibran advocates a dropping out of its investments. His effort is to bring one’s potentiality to the point where it explodes into an actuality, where the seed splits open and that which had been hidden from eternity becomes manifested. If the God in each person is brought to the plane of manifestation, his purpose would be fulfilled and his aesthetics as a spiritual quest would succeed in establishing another Kretha yuga.59 The supreme goal of an individual consciousness is, apart from discovering the nature of itself, it should discover its inseparable link with the various components of the material and living universe and the supreme consciousness designated as Brahman in the Indian context.
While scientists like Max Planck and Niels Bohr admit that consciousness cannot be understood within the scientific framework, scientists like Roger Penrose are advocating the need for a new science to satisfactorily explain the phenomenon of consciousness. According to them consciousness cannot be understood within the scientific framework. Niels Bohr admits:

We can admittedly find nothing in Physics or Chemistry that has even remote bearing on consciousness. Yet all of us know that there is such a thing as consciousness, simply because we have it ourselves. Hence, consciousness must be part of nature or more generally of reality which means that, quite apart from the laws of Physics and Chemistry, as laid down in quantum theory, we must also consider laws of quite a different nature. (qtd. in Singh 177-78)

Also Biswas in his essay “Science, Spirituality and Sāmya – The Tripod of Consciousness Research,” says that some of the most outstanding scientists of this century like Schrödinger, Penfield, George Wald and Penrose have found it impossible to explain consciousness or mental function on the basis of the existing knowledge about the human brain (Singh 387). Thus, there is a law beyond investigation, a grand unified theory yet to be evolved which alone can give a deeper understanding of life and Gibran has succeeded in spelling out this unlettered law to invigorate the conscience of humanity towards universal humanity. His works are packages of divine guidance brought to humanity with love and compassion and this study has treated them as a means to find a way back again to the source. In a deeper sense, both scientists and literary artists are engaged in a search for the ultimate meaning of life and the universe. While the scientific path tries to explain the nature of reality within rationality, a literary artist like Gibran has done it within and beyond rationality.