INTRODUCTION

The present work ‘JIBRAN KHALIL JIBRAN AS A PHILOSOPHER: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ‘AL-NABI’. Is a comprehensive study, it is basically projected on the Philosophical works of Khalil Jibran. Furthermore, a study on his life and works in general and a special pondering to his Philosophical novel ‘Al-Nabi’ in particular and an effort will also be made to study some works of prominent Philosophers of the world, who are mostly comparable with Jibran’s mind and thought.

Khalil Jibran

Khalil Jibran, born on 6th January 1883 and died 10th April 1931, was a celebrated Lebanese-American artist, poet and writer. He wrote in both English and Arabic and is considered a pillar of Arabic Mahjar (migrant) literature. Jibran is the third best selling poet of all time, behind Shakespeare and Lao-Tzo, the Chinese founder of Taoism. He was also an accomplished artist, especially in drawing and Watercolour.

Jibran began his career as a literary man writing in both English and Arabic language. By the 1930’s, Jibran had become a prominent and charismatic figure within the Lebanese community and New York literary circles. While most of Jibran’s early writings were in Arabic and most of his work published after 1918 was in English. He is chiefly known in the English speaking world for his 1923 book ‘The-Prophet’ (Al-Nabi), an early example of inspirational fiction including a series of Philosophical essays written in poetic English prose.

In the Arab world, Jibran is regarded as rebel both in a literary and political sense. His romantic style was at the heart of a renaissance in modern Arabic literature, especially prose poetry. His style, which
broke away from the classical school, pioneered a new romantic movement in Arabic literature of poetic prose. In Lebanon, he is still celebrated as a literary hero. Jibran also took part in the New York Pen League, also known as the ‘immigrant poets’ (*al-Mahjar*).

Khalil Jibran has his own way of writing in both the languages. As he thoroughly studied the books of Indians, Christian Scriptures especially Bible and Torah, likewise he crammed the Muslim Sufis especially Ibn-al-Fariz, Ghazali, Ibn-al-Arabi and Hallaj. This influenced his style of writing.

Jibran was a great admirer of poet and writer Francis Marrash (1836-1873) whose works he had studied at Al-Hikma school in Beirut. Jibran’s works echo Marrash’s style, many of his ideas, and at times even the structure of some of his works. The concept of universal love propounded by Marrash, in particular, has left a profound impression on Jibran.

Among the literary men and Philosophers who impressed Khalil Jibran the most was the famous German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Jibran was impressed by his personality, his philosophy and especially his rebellion against the religious traditions and values. He was also influenced by his crystal and lively style of writing as he was fascinated by the Nietzsche’s character of ‘Zarathustra’, his philosophy and teaching. The energetic and vital style of Nietzsche’s writing impressed him to a degree that he repented his past writings.

The success of his writings in English owes much to a woman called Marry Haskell, a progressive Boston school headmistress ten years his senior whom he met in 1904. The two formed an important friendship that lasted the rest of Jibran’s life. Haskell influenced not only Jibran’s personal life, but also his career and she became his editor.
‘Al-Nabi’

Jibran’s best known work is ‘The-Prophet’ published in 1923, a book composed of twenty-six poetic essays, which was later translated in Arabic entitled ‘Al-Nabi’. The Prophet is an impartation of wisdom that is timeless beautifully written and thought-provoking. The Prophet is considered a wonderful companion to keep close to us as we experience this wonderful Journey called life. One finds it beautiful, thought-provoking and moving. Indeed the book has strong religious implications, yet at the heart of it remains its power, its universal appeal: the desire to explore the human spirit. Through its ethereal language and celestial beauty, Jibran’s ‘The-Prophet’ has a way of speaking and reaching people at different stages in their life. It has this magical quality that ‘the more you read it the more you come to understand the words’. It is a perceptive book wherein life is delved deep and explored in its possibilities, celebrated and glorified in all its nuances.

In a distant and timeless place a mysterious titular prophet Al-Mustafa, the chosen and the beloved, walks the sands. He is about to sail back to the isle of his birth after his sojourn at the city of ‘Orphalese’ for twelve years.

He ponders over the years of knowledge he gained while residing in the city and the difficulty at the approaching hour of his departure. Before boarding his ship he is stalled by the citizens who are also saddened by his parting, and so they urged him to speak to them for one last time. At the moment of his departure, he wishes to offer the people gifts but possesses nothing. The people gather around, each asks a question of the heart, and the Wiseman offers his wisdom as gift.

Through the character Al-Mustafa, Jibran drew the picture of a perfect human being and revealed a philosophy, spirituality and a vision that gives a further outlook on life presenting another side of the questions one asks every day.
The Prophet is not a religious book, but it is spiritual, and Jibran was clearly a man who embraced the best of Christianity, Judaism and Islamic teaching.

**Statement of the Problem**

Khalil Jibran (1883-1931), the establisher of ‘Rabita al-Qalamiyya’ (*Pen-Association*), was undoubtedly a great writer, poet, painter, humanist and of-course a great Philosopher. When he was in New York he was associated with paintings and writings. His first major work was a book on music. In his exhibition of paintings in 1904, he met Marry Haskell, who changed his life and recognized his talent for painting.

The establishment of ‘Rabita al Qalamiyya’ with several emigrant writers like Mikhail Nu’ima, Nasib Arida and Abdul Masih Haddad from Lebanon was the most productive period of Jibran’s life. He wrote eight important books in Arabic and an equal number in English. Among them ‘Al-Arwa al-Mutamarridah, ‘Al-Ajniha al-Mutakassira, ‘Arais al-Muriq, ‘Al-Nabi’, ‘Dam’a wa Ibtisama’, are prominent.

Jibran, the twentieth century literary genius is one such sage artist who woke the peoples of the world to the voices of a large humanity. Embarking upon a voyage of discovery, Jibran achieved name and fame as an established writer in two completely disparate cultures- Eastern and Western. His works bear the distinctive flavour of ancient wisdom and mysticism as well as scientific inclination of the West. His intentions cannot be fathomed easily. While the Western humanity closed its doors towards inwardness particular after the death of Socrates and Jesus, the East had always closed its doors to objective things and matter. In fact, the sages of the East were moving inwards conquering duality. Emerging from the East, Jibran too became the greatest voice of the twentieth century, whose art according to Josephine Preston Peabody, “pointed out the beautiful inwardness of things”. With great gratitude for existence, Jibran could
easily embrace, absorb, revitalize and transcend alien cultures. With a distinct intelligence and a sensitive soul, he knew the world around him without the intermediary of the senses. Bushrui says that Jibran becomes “a compass needle for a ship lost in the units of the sea.”

His words go beyond the mere evocation of the mysteries and do not lend easily to induction, interpolation, extrapolation and interpretation. Viewing his paintings or reading his works brings about reconciliation between spirituality and temporality and the East and the West. By accepting his adopted culture, he has passed through it without being lost in it and with alertness, intelligence, consciousness, constant witnessing and watching, he has transcended it. To use his own words, “He is a garden without walls, a vineyard without a guardian, a treasure house for ever open to passers by”.

If, for William Butler Yeats, it was the sands of Sligo Bay, the emerald loughs, the rivers of Western Ireland and the legendary mountains of Ben Bulben that provided an inexhaustible store of symbol and image to fire his poetic spark. For Jibran, it was the sacred groves of Lebanon, its hills, streams, waterfalls, copses, ethnic groups, ruins of the temples of Astarte, the lofty snow capped mountains, the mighty cedars, and the blue Mediterranean that stimulated his dreams and reveries. His land also provided the social and geographical context for so many of his works. His imagery is close to the symbolism of the “subliminal consciousness” and he lived up to his own declaration, ‘I know I have something to say to the world that is different from anything else’. He saw life as a mystery to be lived and not as a riddle to be solved. Jibran’s is an enchanting world which lies beyond the world of thought, of science, of Research and of logic. In his letter to May he observes-

“In my work I am as solid as a rock, but my real work is neither in painting, nor in writing. Deep inside me, may, there is another dynamic intelligence which has nothing to do with words, lines or
colours. The work I have been born to do has nothing to do with brush or pen.”

Finally it is clear that in the writings of Jibran we find some Philosophical aspects. This is the subject by which he impressed his inner feelings in different subjects. Though we find more or less philosophical ideas in his writings, it is ‘Al-Nabi’ (The-Prophet) by which he achieved wider position in the field of philosophy. ‘Al-Nabi’ is the widely accepted philosophical book in which like a good philosopher he gives some definite solutions of the questions like birth, death, happiness, sorrowness, poverty, anger etc.

Jibran can be considered as a great philosopher by his writings on philosophical ideas, which reflect in his book ‘Al-Nabi’. We would try to discuss the major philosophical ideas of Jibran through this research work.

**Significance of the study**

In this research work I would like to find out the ways Khalil Jibran describes the philosophical aspects which are shown in his famous novel ‘Al-Nabi’. And this analysis could help the students worldwide to know about the works of Khalil Jibran, because his poems of this novel titled as ‘on love’, ‘on eating and drinking’, ‘on houses’, ‘on clothes’, etc. are great revealing the aspects of spiritual values in human life.

For the readers, it would be hoped that this analysis on the novel ‘Al-Nabi’ can give an idea of philosophy on life that the spiritual values are important in order to regulate in individuality in human life. The poems of this novel are great in showing the spiritual values that make people think with different methods, which make everything become meaningful for their life, even for the society.
Scope and Limitation

The scope of the study is philosophical ideas of Khalil Jibran which appear in his novel ‘Al-Nabi’. The study is limited on this novel only because this book shows the physiological needs of human life. Like what Rafael Rega Maran says that human physiological needs are cloths, foods and houses, which are the main subject matter of this novel.

Methodology

In the study of this novel the library research is applied, which also includes the use of internet resources. Furthermore in the analysis literary approach is used with figures of speeches as tools to understand the deep meanings in this novel.

Objectives of the study

This doctoral thesis entitled ‘Jibran Khalil Jibran as a Philosopher: A study with special reference to ‘Al-Nabi’ is a modest endeavour to read and analyze the works of Jibran, a Lebanon born prophet and poet, with a view to delving deeper into his aesthetics, his eco-sensitivity and his quest for the Absolute. Jibran’s every presence pervading the pages of whatever he wrote or painted triggers a Journey in human ultimately leading to a spiritual quest and realization, capable of establishing universal humanity.

Any writer who strives to create a better humanity could be looked upon as a divine being and the present study attempts to investigate the sort of humanity that Jibran envisioned. Consequently, the pivot on which this research work revolves is the entire corpus of the creative works of Khalil Jibran the most loved writer across the Globe. If only humanity could be sensitive enough to internalize his universal philosophy, it would transcend all barriers, and hear the spiritual melody of eternity behind the clamorous shrieking of the world.
In short we can mention the following points as the general objectives of this study.

1. To understand the Philosophy of Jibran that he has contributed in Arabic literature.

2. To highlight about the Philosophical thoughts of Jibran in his writings.

3. To find out the position of Jibran in the field of Philosophy.

4. To evaluate the theme of ‘Al-Nabi’ as a Philosophical master Piece.

**Organization of the study**

The present work is a humble approach in assessing, highlighting and evaluating the major Philosophical thoughts and imagination of Khalil Jibran through his masterpiece novel ‘Al-Nabi’. This study has been organized and designed in five chapters besides the ‘Introduction’ and ‘Conclusion’ as shown below:

Chapter-I: Life and works of Jibran.

Chapter-II: The Contemporary Philosopher of Jibran.

Chapter-III: Jibran’s Contribution to Philosophy.

Chapter-IV: Themes and Techniques of ‘Al-Nabi’.

Chapter-V: Al-Nabi: An Analytical study.

Chapter-I: This Chapter has been divided into nine sub-chapters, such as-

1:1 A Short sketch on his life.

1:1 (i) Jibran’s early life

1:1 (ii) Education
1:1 (iii) Jibran as Exile and Lover
1:1 (iv) A Journey toward greatness

1:2 Works of Khalil Jibran
1:2 (i) Jibran the Romantic
1:2 (ii) Jibran’s Contribution to the Arabic literature
1:2 (iii) Jibran as an Artist
1:2 (iv) Jibran and ‘Al-Rabitah al-Qalamiyya’
1:2 (v) Jibran: Briding East and West

Chapter-II: This chapter has been divided into five main points. Such as-

2:1 (i) Rabindra Nath Tagore
2:1 (ii) William Blake
2:1 (iii) Rilke and his Philosophical deeds
2:1 (iv) Ameen Rihani
2:1 (v) Mikhail Nuaima

Chapter-III has been divided under the three sub-chapters, such as-

3:1 (i) An introduction to his Philosophical works
3:1 (ii) Jibran’s Philosophy
3:1 (iii) Philosophical Metaphor used by Jibran

Chapter-IV has been divided main into two but sub chapter one also been divided based on the each title of the poem.

4:1 Themes of ‘Al-Nabi’
4:1 (i) Theme of his replay on ‘Love’

4:1 (ii) Theme of the subject ‘Marriage’

4:1 (iii) Theme of the saying on ‘children’

4:1 (iv) Theme of his Lecture ‘Giving’

4:1 (v) The view of khalil Jibran on ‘eating and ‘Drinking’

4:1 (vi) Theme of the chapter ‘Work’

4:1 (vii) ‘Joy’ and ‘sorrow’ is an essential part of life

4:1 (viii) Theme of speaking on ‘houses’

4:1 (ix) Khalil Jibran has forwarded an importance of the
‘cloth’

4:1 (x) Justice of Khalil Jibran on ‘buying and selling’

4:1 (xi) Khalil Jibran’s thinking on ‘crime and punishment’

4:1(xii) An account on subject ‘Law’

4:1 (xiii) Theme of his poem of ‘Freedom’

4:1 (xiv) A brief note on ‘reason and passion’

4:1(xv) Saying of Jibran Khalil Jibran on ‘pain’

4:1 (xvi) Theme of Lecture on ‘Self knowledge’ and
‘Teaching’

4:1 (xvii) Theme of the Lecture on ‘friendship’ and
‘Talking’

4:1 (xviii) Theme of the saying on ‘Time’

4:1 (xix) Theme of his Saying on ‘Good’ and ‘Evil’

4:1 (xx)’Prayer’ in the voice of Khalil Jibran
4:1 (xxi) Philosophical comments on ‘Pleasure’

4:1 (xxii) Theme of poem on ‘Beauty’

4:1 (xxiii) Theme of his poetry ‘Religion’ and ‘Death’

4:1 (xxiv) Theme of latest speeches of novel ‘Al-Nabi’

4:2 (i) Techniques applied of ‘Al-Nabi’

Chapter-V has been divided into two main studies. Such as-

5:1 (i) Jibran’s thoughts in ‘Al-Nabi’

5:1 (ii) Spiritual Values of Jibran in ‘Al-Nabi’

I am confident that no works on this topic have been published so far; nor I am aware of any unpublished research work done thereon. It is expected that this humble effort will reveal a glorious part of the study of Arabic literary history, which might be proved to be a stepping stone for the further study to explore the main Philosophical views of the writings and painting of Khalil Jibran and his contemporary Philosophers of the world.