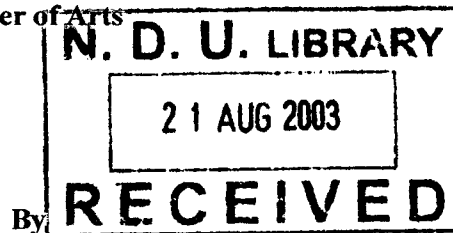


NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY - LOUAIZE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, TRANSLATION, AND EDUCATION

THE UNITY OF BEING IN AMEEN RIHANI'S
THE BOOK OF KHALID

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree**

Master of Arts



By
Roula T. Ghawsh

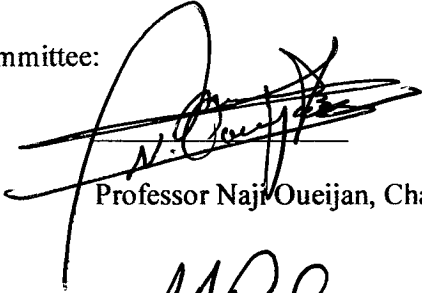
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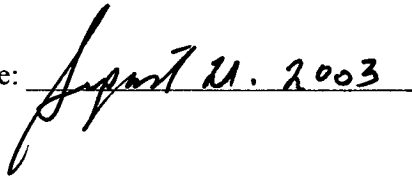

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Foreword

A poet, essayist and philosopher, Ameen Rihani was born in Freike-Lebanon and emigrated to the United States in 1888 at the age of 12. He wrote numerous articles and books, the most famous of which is The Book of Khalid, a novel about a young man who immigrates to America from Lebanon and struggles to reconcile the culture of his heritage with the culture of the West. Throughout this novel, Rihani speaks of uniting the best of both worlds. Referring to himself as “a citizen of two worlds,” Rihani embraced the American values of justice, equality, and freedom, while also yearning for the fidelity, simplicity, and the lofty spirituality of the Orient. In fact, he says through the voice of his protagonist Khalid: “The spiritual and natural are so united, so inextricably entwined around each other, that I cannot conceive of them separately, independently” (Khalid, 242).

Reading Rihani’s The Book of Khalid, one cannot but notice his earnest belief in oneness in the fullest sense: the oneness of God, the oneness of Nature, the oneness of Man, and the oneness of all Religions. His belief is based on an equation that maintains the role of this binary opposition: spirituality/materialism. To him, the spirituality, which is not based on the tangible world, remains imaginary and illusory. Also, the materialism that does not seek the possibility of reaching and transcending the spiritual remains dry and limited. Indeed, Khalid accepts both facets of being without neglecting any, and he believes in the fact that they are complementary to each other.

I chose to discuss Rihani’s The Book of Khalid for several reasons. First, my admiration and appreciation of the works of Ameen Rihani, especially that I identify myself with most of his reconciling ideas. Second, the importance of this great writer in the East and the West. Third, The confessional conflict in my country, which I

witnessed since I was a child made me look for an Arab-American literary figure who believes in universal peace, tolerance, fraternity, and love.

In this work, I discuss how the prevailing idea of The Unity of Being in Rihani's The Book of Khalid is a clear reflection of Bahatism, American Transcendentalism, and Christian Mysticism. In chapter one, I discuss Bahatism in The Book of Khalid by referring to Rihani's hero, Khalid, who professes this doctrine and declares that everything in life must be viewed in the scope of love. Like the Bahais, to him "love is the divine solvent and the splendour of God" (The Book of Khalid, 295). Moreover, his rejection of sectarianism calls expressly for a unity of all religions. To Khalid, religion comes deep not only from the human heart but from the heart of the world to convey this sense of openness, tolerance, and love.

In chapter two, I discuss American Transcendentalism in The Book of Khalid by exposing briefly its basic tenets and by shedding light on its key figures: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman. I draw parallels between Emerson's essays "Nature" and "The Over-Soul" as well as Whitman's poem "Song of Myself" and Rihani's hero Khalid. I also draw parallels between Thoreau's "Walden" and Rihani's hero Khalid. I discuss how the issue of the Over-Soul being united with all other beings and transferring to them divine attributes is highlighted and reflected in The Book of Khalid. Indeed, Khalid expresses the basic principle of Transcendentalism, which proclaims that the soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world and contains what the world contains. Khalid's unfailing belief in Man and his capacities are equal to his belief in God. To achieve this indwelling divinity, Khalid makes opposites meet and dissolve and thus the spiritual world to him is as important as the material one.

In chapter three, I discuss Christian Mysticism in The Book of Khalid by showing how love, the basic driving force in mysticism, is hailed by Khalid. Khalid believes that through the mystical love, which is unconditional, deep, and divine, the two traditions of the East and the West can at last understand one another and begin to work together to heal a broken world. Also, I draw parallels between Khalid and the great mystics St. Augustine and St. Teresa of Avila, who believe that through unrestricted, unselfish, and pure love our soul becomes possessed by God. In fact, this belief goes in parallel with Khalid's concept of Universal love.

Scholars have not tried, before, to combine between these three trends of thought in The Book of Khalid. Previous studies dealt with one of these aspects at a time. This thesis attempts to put the three together and see them as a continued pattern in this major work of Rihani.

Chapter I

Bahaism in The Book of Khalid

Ameen Rihani's The Book of Khalid is not a simple book to read, mainly because it is loaded with philosophical, political, and social views, which go beyond the scope of traditional fiction. Every word in Rihani's work must be read, reread, digested, and thought of before one is able to perceive Rihani's thought. In this chapter, however, I will limit my discussion to Rihani's perception of Bahaism and its influence on The Book of Khalid. My discussion will involve four main points that constitute the backbone of Bahaism: unity of religions, universal love, unity between the physical and the metaphysical worlds and the Pantheism of the Prophets.

In his prayer, which precedes "Book The Third" of The Book of Khalid, Rihani's hero, Khalid, addresses God saying:

In the religious systems of mankind, I sought thee, O God, in vain;
in their machine-made dogmas and theologies, I sought thee in vain; in
their churches and temples and mosques, I sought thee long, and long in
vain; but in the Sacred Books of the world, what have I found?

A letter of thy name, O God, I have deciphered in the Vedas, another in the
Zend-Avesta another in the Korân. Ay, even in the Book of the Royal
Society and in the Records of the Society for Psychical Research, have I
found the diacritical signs, which the infant races of this Planet Earth have
not yet learned to apply to the consonants of thy name. The lisping infant
races of this Earth, when will they learn to pronounce thy name entire? Who
shall supply the vowels that shall unite the gutturals of the sacred Books?

Who shall point out the dashes, which compound the opposite loadstars in the various regions of thy heaven? On the veil of the eternal mystery are palimpsests of which every race has deciphered a consonant.

And through the diacritical marks, which the seers and paleologists of the future shall furnish, the various dissonances in thy name shall be reduced, for the sake of the infant races of the Earth, to perfect harmony (218).

Obvious in the prayer above is the fact that Khalid seeks the unity of various world religions, which profess God's name in different spellings. Khalid finds God in all religions and not in a single separate religious doctrine. To him, there is a certain link among religions, which convey the Divine inspiration, which, in turn, is continuous and cannot be separated. Khalid's belief echoes Baha'u'llah's:

Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute. God, the Creator, said: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message (Bahais Online).

Moreover, Khalid asks: when "will the lisping infant races of this Earth" learn to pronounce God's name "entire"? This question implies Khalid's desire for the unity of religions, since it calls upon all races to pronounce the name of God. To Khalid every race has deciphered a consonant of the letters of the name of the Almighty and tends to reduce all the various dissonances in his name to reach perfect harmony. This harmony is begotten from a sense of unity or oneness usually praised by the Bahais. In fact, the basis of the Bahais' doctrine lies in the following: the oneness of God, the oneness of humankind, and the oneness of religion. In other words, the Bahais believe in a single and ultimately unknowable God who is given different names. The knowledge we do have of God derives from his various prophets who instruct us.

Also, there is a single human race, and we are all members of it (Fieser 425). In fact, Baha'u'llah proclaims:

O ye people of the world! The virtue of this most great Manifestation is that we have effaced from the Book whatever was the cause of difference, corruption and discord, and recorded therein that which leads to unity, harmony and accord. Joy unto those who practise! (Holley 140).

The Bahais seek unity to achieve harmony. They reject all that which causes difference, corruption, and discord. They promote unity, harmony, and accord, or what is better referred to as “universal brotherhood”. Baha'u'llah advises his followers:

Consort with all religions in joy and fragrance; show forth that which is declared by the Speaker of the Mount[Christ]; and render justice in affairs. The followers of sincerity and faithfulness must consort with all the people of the world with joy and fragrance; for association is always conducive to union and harmony, and union and harmony are the cause of the order of the world and the life of nations (qtd. in Holley 145).

Therefore, to Baha'u'llah, solidarity and association among all religions beget solidarity, understanding, and order among nations. Baha'u'llah goes as far as saying that in the unity of religions lies world peace:

There has appeared an infernal instrument, and such atrocity is displayed in the destruction of life, the like of which has not been seen by the eye of the world, nor heard by the ears of nations. It is impossible to reform these violent, overwhelming evils, except the peoples of the world become united in affairs, or in one religion. Hearken ye unto the voice of this oppressed one, and adhere to the Most Great Peace! (Holley 150).

Baha'u'llah's views reverberate in Khalid's prayer: "And through the diacritical marks, which the seers and paleologists of the future shall furnish, the various dissonances in thy name shall be reduced, for the sake of the infant races of the Earth, to perfect harmony." Khalid's prayer, then, implies his knowledge of and interest in some precepts of the Bahai order, especially that he shows interest in another Bahai principle, that of universal love. This is very clear in the conversation, which takes place between Khalid and Mrs. Gotfry, who is a Bahai herself. Mrs. Gotfry's words: "Love is the new religion . . . The only religion" (Khalid, 295), reflect Baha'u'llah's saying: "O ye friends! Fellowship, fellowship! Love, love! Unity, unity! So that the power of the Bahais Cause may appear and become manifest in the world of existence" (Balyuzi 506). It is worth noting here that the words "fellowship, love, and unity" are written in such a manner to indicate the movement from the whole to the part. In other words, fellowship, love and unity embrace not only the macrocosm or the whole world but the microcosm or the individual, as well. Khalid professes his belief in universal love when he says: "Everything in life must always resolve itself into love . . . Love is the divine solvent; Love is the splendour of God" (295). In saying that, Khalid is in line with the boundless, unselfish love advocated by the Bahais. Indeed, Fieser states that to the Bahais "the great unselfish love for humanity is bound by none of these imperfect, semi-selfish bonds; this is the one perfect love possible to all mankind" (450). Along the same lines, Khalid says:

I'm not starving for pleasure . . . nor for the light free love of an exquisite caprice. Those little flowers that bloom and wither in the blush of dawn are for the little butterflies. The love that endures, give me that. And it must be of the deepest divine strain, as deep and divine as maternal love. Man is of Eternity, not of time; and love, the highest attribute of man, must be

likewise. With me, it must endure throughout all words and immensities; else I would not raise a finger for it. Pleasure, Shakib, is for the child within us; sexual joy, for the animal; love, for the God. That is why I say when you set your seal to the contract, be sure it is of the kind which all the Gods of all the future worlds will raise to their lips in reverence (Khalid, 298).

Khalid gives a divine eternal attribute to love, which is in line with the Bahai concept of universal love. The love advocated by Khalid is unselfish, unrestricted, and unconditional. It is that love which promotes sacrifice and calls for universal brotherhood, irrespective of nations and races.

Furthermore, Khalid undoubtedly, renounces materialistic, ephemeral, and temporal love. He wants deep, eternal, divine, and unselfish love. To him, Man is heavenly and not earthly. Thus, love that is his loftiest attribute should be divine and eternal. Besides, Khalid calls for a divine love advocated by Baha'u'llah, when this latter addresses himself to God in a supplicating tone saying:

Bring them together again, O, Lord, by the Power of Thy Covenant, and gather their dispersion by the Might of Thy Promise, and unite their hearts by the dominion of Thy Love! Cause them to love one another so as to sacrifice their spirits, expend their money and give up their desires for each other's sake! O Lord . . . make them to characterize themselves with the characteristics of the spiritual! (Holley 263).

According to Boulos Sarru', Baha'u'llah's call for unity through "the Power of Thy Covenant," "The Might of Thy Promise," and the union of hearts by the dominion of "Thy Love" is a combination of three stages of the divine Transaction with man: Covenant of obedience in the Garden; Covenant of obedience to Abraham; and the Covenant of love through Jesus (Salvation). Hence the Bahais summed up the Jewish

and Christian motifs of love and unity (P.I.). Moreover, Baha'u'llah's address reflects his wish for the people to become characterized by the spiritual. In other words, Baha'u'llah, like Khalid, wants love, which is the Bahais' highest attribute to be characterized with divine characteristics.

A third common point between Khalid and Bahatism is the unity between the physical and metaphysical worlds. Ameen Albert Rihani argues that Ameen Rihani believes in the intersection of the physical and metaphysical worlds. To him the abstract world and the concrete one are complementary: "This choice made it inevitable for Khalid to believe that the spiritual lies beyond the physical. The metaphysical world presupposes, and indeed necessitates the existence of nature. Also the physical without the metaphysical remains dry, limited and relative."¹ Ameen Albert Rihani goes on to say that "Khalid's belief in the unity of being is based on his personal experience in two worlds having conflicting views over Being. Two views that are opposed apparently and similar in essence"(208).² There is undoubtedly continuity between the part and the whole, the beginning and the end, the spiritual world and the physical one. Yet, the physical world is based on the principle of ascending motion, which elevates it to the spiritual world. In other words, the physical world strives continuously to reach the higher degree of the spiritual world, which is that of perfection. Furthermore, "Khalid, like Rihani, believes in the metaphysical world on a logical basis, and we see that the spiritual and physical powers are not conflicting but in harmony as they are complementary"(A.A.Rihani 210).³

And indeed, Khalid overcomes the conflicting powers of the material versus the spiritual within himself when he says:

Ay, I would even rear an altar to the Soul in the temple of materialism, and an altar to Materialism in the temple of the Soul. Each shall have its due,

each shall glory in the sacred purity and strength of life; each shall develop and expand, but never at the expense of the other (Khalid, 237).

Khalid is “equally devoted both to the material and the spiritual” (Khalid, 237).

However, he goes even further to promote the merging of the material and the spiritual:

The spiritual with me shall not be limited by the natural it shall go far above it, beyond or below it, saturating, sustaining, purifying what in external nature is but a symbol of the invisible. Nor is my idea of the spiritual developed in opposition to nature, and in a manner inimical to its laws and claims (Khalid, 241).

Ameen Albert Rihani asserts that “Khalid’s belief in the complementariness of the material and the spiritual incites him to look at the possibility of reconciling the conflicting aspects in some forms of being. This is done through a quasi-mystical meditation”(210).⁴ I believe that when confronted with any problem, one has to retreat from the rest of the world to settle the conflict with a clear conscience away from all outer influence. One has to meditate and ponder to come up with a wise solution. Khalid’s meditation was almost mystical as he is not a mystic. Doesn’t he look at the possibility of reconciling the physical and spiritual aspects in him? From this perspective, I accept quasi-mystical meditation because the term in itself holds the meaning of reconciling the material and the spiritual. One is not totally immersed in mystical meditation but still attempts to reconcile the material part in him with the spiritual one. Khalid says after having retreated to himself:

I sit down. Shut my eyes, compose myself, and concentrate my mind on the mobility of things . . . The resignation and passiveness of the spirit should

always alternate equitably with the terrible strivings of the will (Khalid, 237).

To Khalid, the great efforts of the will are essential in the process of reconciling the material and the spiritual. To the Bahais, will is a key instrument for man to acquire a divine attribute and it should tread in the divine footsteps. In the words of Baha'u'llah:

Will is the center or focus of human understanding. We must will to know God; just as we must will in order to possess the life He has given us. The human will must be subdued and trained into the will of God. It is a great power to have a strong will, but a greater power to give that will to God. The will is what we do; the understanding is what we know. Will and understanding must be one in the cause of God (Bahai Scriptures, 503).

It is worth noting that Nietzsche's "will for Power" was very much in vogue in philosophical and literary circles in Rihani's time (Sarru', P.I.). To Roberto O'Brien, Nietzsche's will for power "seeks to give an account of consciousness, knowledge, and truth in terms of the preservation and enhancement conditions of power centers" (3). To Nietzsche "it is through consciousness and its will to power that the human species schematizes the vast chaos of changing power configurations and imposes an order upon Becoming (O'Brien, 4). Nietzsche believes that will plays a role in imposing order, which is a divine attribute. Thus, the Bahais go in line with him since they consider will as a key issue for man to acquire a divine attribute. Khalid also would agree with Nietzsche since order entails reconciliation and will is a primary element in reconciling the material and the spiritual. Furthermore, Khalid accepts both facets of being, the material and the spiritual, without neglecting any, and he believes in the fact that they are complementary to each other. As a matter of fact, Khalid's

belief in one of the aspects of the unity of being is based on an equation, which acknowledges the role of both the material and the spiritual. To him spirituality, which is not based on the tangible world, remains imaginary and illusory. Also, materialism that does not seek the possibility of reaching and transcending the spiritual remains dry and limited. This is obvious in his assertion: “The spiritual and natural are so united, so inextricably entwined around each other, that I cannot conceive of them separately, independently” (Khalid, 242). This belief goes in line with the Bahais’ idea of the harmony between both worlds, a harmony that would lead to the comprehension of reality. In other words, unity begets harmony and leads to the understanding of the one reality common to all.

The theme of unity is further mirrored in Baha’u’llah’s teachings on science: “His writings portray science and religion as different yet harmonious approaches to the comprehension of reality” (Bahais Online). To the Bahais, both paths are essentially compatible and mutually reinforcing. To them, the scientific method is humanity’s tool for understanding the physical side of the universe. It is the key to new technologies. Yet, the revelation of God offers to humanity a basis for value and purpose; “It provides answers to those questions of morals, human purpose, and our relationship to God that science cannot approach” (Bahais Online).

Hence, the complementary aspect of both the physical and spiritual worlds leads to the assumption that they are inseparable and united. Indeed the spiritual in Khalid goes far beyond the natural; yet it is not opposite to it. There is an equal interaction between both worlds where each takes its due fairly to reach a harmonious situation. Complementarity means that we have two different and separate entities, which do not necessarily form a single entity. Whereas in unity, there is one single entity. However, sometimes two things that complement each other fuse into a single entity

that englobes the harmony of essences. Khalid refers to the essences of both the spiritual and the natural. These two worlds differ apparently but are similar in essence since the physical world strives continuously to reach the high degree of the spiritual world.

The last common point, which I intend to discuss in this chapter, is the Pantheism of the Prophets, like Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Muhammad, and others. Many are those who have spoken of Rihani's deep connection with pantheism; yet before I delve into this issue in The Book of Khalid, I shall give a brief definition of "pantheism". J. H. Farley states:

Just as the waves are part or mode of the ocean; just as each finite space or time is part of one infinite square or time, so is each finite thing a part or phase of the one infinite existence; . . . Just as space is the background and possibility of figure, so is God the background of the world. Possibly in the crudest form of pantheism the world source may be supposed to emit the finite or even to pass to a species of self-redemption (512).

Pantheism advances the belief that each finite thing is a part of the one infinite existence. This notion is found in The Book of Khalid, especially when Khalid retreats in the mountains of Lebanon and dwells in the valley of Freike, where he experiences the living intertwinement between man and nature. This pantheistic view is advanced by Ameen Rihani himself in his Ar-Rihanyyat: "I felt that my spirit was separated from my body . . . I felt that the spirit of the valley was united with me and that my spirit was united with the valley. The valley and I are but one" (7).⁵ Rihani like Khalid becomes a part of nature just like nature becomes a part of him; this deep sympathy shows that nature resolves itself in Man and vice versa. Here, man, who is the finite, resolves in the whole or in the spirit of nature or in the infinite. The finite is

that which could be measured, whereas the infinite is the immeasurable or innumerable. Nature encompasses many innumerable things and thus is infinite. Ameen Albert Rihani explains that "Nature according to Khalid becomes the cradle for supplication, prayer and spiritual meditation. Man is part and parcel of nature, which is part and parcel of Being, which ends in God"(212).⁶ Indeed, Khalid sees nature from a pantheistic point of view when he says: "The first church was the forest; the first dome, the welkin; the first altar, the sun" (Khalid,162). This again reflects the idea of the unity in pantheism, whereby each finite thing is part of the infinite existence, symbolized here by the church that is a reflection of divinity. Here also, I would like to compare Khalid's concept of nature to that of the Bahais. To Khalid, nature provides a perfect setting for acquiring a divine attribute. To the Bahais, nature remains a jungle with barren trees without the work of the holy manifestations of God who are the Prophets. These divine figures are the cause behind the blooming of nature, that is, they adorn the world of being and train it in the ways of divinity. In fact, Baha'u'llah says:

Leave these mountains, these hills, to the world of nature and they will remain a jungle, and you will not find any fruitful tree among them. But a true gardener changes this forest and jungle into a garden, training its trees into fruitful ones, and causing numerous kinds of flowers and myrtles to grow therein. In the same way these holy Manifestations of God are the ideal gardeners . . . As the holy Manifestations of God are the ideal gardeners, they, therefore, train these human trees and cause them to become fruitful and bestow upon them freshness and verdancy in order that they may grow day by day and produce every kind of pure fruit (Bahai Scriptures, 298).

Khalid also says: “No, I do not have to prove to my brothers that my love of nature is but second to my love of life. I am interested in my fellow men as in my fellow trees and flowers” (Khalid, 188). This is another clear confession of Khalid’s belief in the unity of the natural and the spiritual. Moreover, Khalid believes in the pantheistic principle that the human course in nature emanates from the divine in it and that the two courses inevitably meet. Hence, he says in a contemplative tone: “Here in this grand Mosque of nature, I read my own Korân. I, Khalid, a Beduin in the desert of life, a vagabond on the highway of thought, I come to this glorious Mosque, the only place of worship open to me, to heal my broken soul” (Khalid, 190). Khalid, like Baha’u’llah, “sees the world as an emanation of God, distinct from, yet illuminated by God’s being; this maintains the immanence of God’s attributes, while still conserving God’s transcendence. Baha’u’llah endorses this view as true Pantheism” (Fieser 449). Along the same lines, Baha’u’llah says:

Every sect has followed a way and held fast to a rope; notwithstanding their blindness and ignorance they account themselves as endowed with judgement and perception. Among them are the mystics (Sufis) of the Islam religion. Some of these souls hold to that which causes indolence and solitude. By the life of God, this lowers man’s station and increases pride . . . Those souls (Sufis) have affirmed ideas concerning the stages of “Divine Unity” which are the greatest cause of addicting people to idleness and superstition. They have, indeed, removed the distinction and imagined themselves to be God. The True One is sanctified above all; but His signs are manifest in all things. (qtd. in Holley 146-7).

Also, the prophets believe that the first emanation from God is the bounty of the kingdom, which emanates and is reflected in the reality of the creatures (Fieser 150).

Thus, Khalid's saying "This grand Mosque of nature" mirrors the idea that the world emanates from God or that God is reflected in the objects of the universe. Reflecting on this issue, Abdul Hameed Siddiqi, believes that: "This universe and all that is therein have no separate existence of their own, that is, the Glory of God is reflected in every virtue, every action and every sentiment" (38). Moreover, Baha'u'llah highlights the idea of divine manifestation in his statement: "Oneness, in its true Significance, means that God alone should be realized as the one power which animates and dominates all things, which are but manifestations of Its energy" (qtd. in Holley 157). Thus, Khalid's Mosque is a symbol of divinity; it is reflected in nature, the object of the universe. In other words, nature emanates from Allah, the Glorious Being. The fact that nature emanates from Allah implies that it is part of the whole. This means that there is unity and harmony between nature and God.

Thus, it is clear, from what has been discussed above that the basic tenets of Bahaism are mirrored in Rihani's The Book of Khalid. Accordingly, Khalid adopts the principle of the unity of religions on the grounds that all religions come from one sacred origin and communicate through the Messengers, the plan of God. Khalid also finds God in all world religions and believes in their complementariness. Khalid also adopts love, which is deep, eternal, and divine. He meets the Bahais in his belief that the physical and metaphysical worlds are in harmony and concordance. And finally, Khalid reflects the Bahais' belief in the pantheism of the prophets, who believe that the world is an emanation of God. Yet, the following question arises here. Are these common points between Khalid and Bahaism a sheer coincidence or do they reflect the influence of Bahaism on Rihani?

Rihani writes on Bahaism in Al-Huda magazine:

I want to feel free with my readers to the point that I consider them a priest and they consider me the person who is confessing so that I may open my heart to them and allow them to enter into it, the reader should not be surprised if I make him stop at a new decorated door in Persia . . . The door through which the Bahais enter to see the Lord Jesus who has come a second time as they allege. These Bahais have the right to preach about any religions . . . And we have the right to know what is behind their door, be it good or evil. Is it the door of delusion, or the door of rightness? Is it the door through which we come out when we leave this world, or the door through which we enter, when our tourism ends and we reach the other world? Is it the only door separating the two worlds? Isn't there any space between our world and the heavenly castle, whose door is possessed by the followers of the new sect that is widespread now in America and claims that Abbas Baha'u'llah who is residing now in Akka is the promised Messiah in the Qu'ran and the Gospel (Shazarat Min 'Ahd As-Siba, 8).

Rihani's saying that the new sect, "which is widespread in America" and which claims that Baha'u'llah is the promised Messiah in the Gospel, refers to Baha'u'llah's proclamation of the fact that he is the coming Messiah, for he says:

Say verily, I have not intended the mention of Myself, but that of God, were ye of the just, nothing could be seen in Me but God and his commands, were ye of those who reflect. Say verily, I am He who is mentioned by the tongue of Isaiah, and the One whose name hath adorned the Bible and the Gospel (qtd. in Holley 96).

Furthermore, few critics have dealt with the issue of Khalid and Bahaism in their research work; however, none has gone as far as saying that Rihani is a Bahai. For

instance, Victor El-Kik believes that Rihani's writing about Bahaism and his promise to write more about it reveal his sincere interests in Bahaism. El-Kik states that there are two manuscripts on Bahaism in Rihani's private library in Freike. One book is in Arabic; it is entitled The History of Bahaism or the Key to the Door of Doors, written by doctor Mirza Muhammad Mahdi, and published in al Manar Magazine in Egypt, in 1321 A.H. The other is in English and is entitled: Bahai Scriptures, Selections from the Utterances of Baha'u'llah and Abdul Baha, edited by Horace Holley in 1923. In the margins of this book there are several comments written by Rihani in English (El-Kik 14).⁸ For example we see the following comments on pages 140-141: "to harmonize and unite," "for peace," "a universal language." This proves Rihani's focus on unity and harmony that are promoted in Bahaism. Again on page 150, we see his comment "one language and one religion." This shows that Rihani learnt about Bahaism and that he was interested in its philosophical dimensions. It is worth noting here that Dr. Ameen Albert Rihani was kind enough to give me the chance to personally flip through the pages of the Bahai Scriptures. And, indeed, I have found Rihani's handwriting not only on the pages mentioned by El-Kik but on several other pages as well.⁹ For example on page 43 Rihani writes: "Gosh" opposite to a passage which reads that the divine Elixir immediately causes the West of ignorance to reach the East of knowledge. This also reflects Rihani's endeavour to unite the spiritual East with the material West. Moreover, about fourteen pages are marked with sidelines indicating Rihani's interest or approval of certain ideas in Bahaism.⁹ For example, a sideline is marked on page 145 that indicates Rihani's interest in consorting with all religions in joy and fragrance. To Rihani this is an important issue since it caters to his belief in the oneness of religions. The comments written by Rihani in the margins of these pages imply his meditation on issues related to Bahaism. Yet, what struck my

attention most is the fact that Bahai Scriptures was published in 1923, that is, twelve years after the publishing of The Book of Khalid; this implies that Rihani must have read other works on Bahaism than the ones in his library. This also implies that Rihani may have been acquainted with Pantheism first and then discovered Bahaism as he was writing The Book of Khalid. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Gotfry, one of Rihani's main characters and acquaintances, is a clear evidence of Rihani's knowledge of Bahaism. According to Sarru':

Rihani was primarily influenced by the American Romantics and Transcendentalists, who, among other things, were influenced by Persian Sufi Literature. The Bahais resonate in Persian Sufism, Christian mysticism, and Romantic divinization of Nature. Rihani's unity of Being matched, in certain respects, the Bahais'. And in this, Rihani and the Bahais were in the same proximity; especially with the tempering influence of Gotfry (P.I.).

Rihani refers to Bahaism in the part that exhibits Khalid's conversation with Miss Gotfry, who used to go on a pilgrimage every year to Akka to meet Abbas Effendi, the leader of Bahaism. In this part, Khalid declares his belief or his interest in Bahaism. Khalid talks about the trial of Baha'u'llah in Rhodes and the reply of this latter, "I am neither a camel-driver nor a carpenter", in allusion to Muhammad and Christ, to the question: "Of what religion are you?" Khalid tells Jamilah or Mrs. Gotfry, "The priestess of Bahaism," "If you ask me the same question that was asked the Buha, I would not hesitate in saying that I am both a camel-driver and Carpenter, I might also be a Buhaist in a certain sense" (Khalid, 294).

Hence, Khalid's assertion that he is both a Camel-driver and a Carpenter and probably a Bahaist reflects his belief in the complementariness of religions. It is worth pointing out here that the dialogue between Khalid and Gotfry is open-ended. They do

not reach an agreement over the one concept of truth. Gotfry says that according to Swedenborg, who is not her apostle, love is seeing the same truth as that seen by the beloved. Khalid replies that Swedenborg has expressed a great truth and asks if she can love him in the light of that truth (Khalid, 341). Emmanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish philosopher and theologian, who started Transcendentalism as a reform movement in the Unitarian church is mentioned by Miss Gotfry. She says that he is not her apostle, that is, he is not a Bahai, yet she quotes him on an issue that supports her discussion with Khalid. She wants Khalid in the name of love to see the same truth as that seen by her. But Khalid asks her if she can love him in the light of that truth she sees. Rabi'a Abi Fadel takes Khalid as the mouthpiece of Rihani when he asks if Rihani via Khalid sees the same truth as that seen by Miss Gotfry. Abi Fadel believes that "Rihani wants to convince Gotfry that his dream lies in the establishment of an invincible Arab empire. Yet, she is not ready to assimilate and understand his idea. Hence, the difference is seen between the cause of Rihani and that of the priestess of Bahaism."¹⁰ She says: "I cannot see all that you see." Khalid says: "Then you do not love me" (Khalid 304). But, Mrs. Gotfry does not lose hope because she wants to make Khalid a true apostle of Bahaism. "The old torch relighted after many centuries by Allah" (Khalid 307). Mrs. Gotfry insists repeatedly on Khalid that he will become an apostle of Bahaism; she insists that his star and hers are one. She refuses to marry him and prefers that they become united under the same spiritual star and be in the same orbit. She says to Khalid: "The trend of the current of your life is beyond your grasp. Beyond your comprehension, I know. And you must listen to me. You must follow my advice" (Khalid 241). Khalid's reply to her was that he could not understand her and that in his ideas lies the very essence of Bahaism without being a Bahai himself: "My truth, Jamilah, can you not see that? Love and faith, free from all

sectarianism and all earthly authority. What is Buhaism or Mohammedanism or Christianity beside them?" (Khalid, 342). Thus, Khalid's faith is free from all sectarianism, which sometimes begets fanaticism. Indeed, Khalid echoes the voice of Rihani who "disliked fanaticism of any sort and was an enlightened and tolerant voice that admired the religions and political freedom of his adopted country but never turned his back on the spiritual and traditional heritage of his Arab roots" (Philip Kennicott, 22). Moreover, Khalid insists on establishing a strong Arab empire "where the Male and Female of the Spirit shall give birth to a unifying faith, a unifying art, a unifying truth (Khalid, 342). This implies that Khalid, like Rihani, endeavors to reconcile East and West, Islam and Christianity, spirituality and materialism in order to achieve a unity that aspires to the divine essence. Thus, he refuses to embrace Buhaism alone. When Mrs. Gotfry says to him: "Vagaries, chimeras . . . Buhaism is established, and it needs a great apostle." Khalid replies frankly: "I cannot" (Khalid, 342).

Finally, we notice how Khalid is determined to be free from the restrictions of confessions and religions, and how he chooses from religions the values of love and faith, which are applicable at any time or place. Khalid refuses to follow the advice of Miss Gotfry without adopting a fanatic attitude regarding her Bahai faith. On the contrary, he adopts from Bahaism that which does not oppose his tolerance and national commitment as well as his global views. Accordingly, Bahaism is not Khalid's religion but one of his intellectual and spiritual sources. He cannot embrace it or embrace any religion alone since his faith is "free from all sectarianism and all earthly authority." Pluralism and diversity in his religious affiliations enrich his spirit of liberation as well as his sense of selection. Thus, religion becomes to him "purely a work of the heart, the human heart, and the heart of the world as well" (Khalid, 318).

In other words, religion is not bound by harsh earthly authority or bitter fanaticism as that of the Jesuit monks who imposed severe laws on Khalid back in his hometown, Baalbek. To Khalid, religion comes deep not only from the human heart but from the heart of the world to convey this sense of openness, tolerance and love.

Here one may wonder whether Khalid is the mouthpiece of Rihani, or not. Suheil Bushrui in his article *The Thought and Works of Ameen Rihani*, sheds some light on this issue when he says that Rihani was:

a man who believed passionately in the oneness of the world's religions and the brotherhood of all nations, devoting his entire life to promoting the cause of East-West understanding. Rihani's religion was . . . an earnest belief in oneness in the fullest sense: the oneness of God, the oneness of Nature: The oneness of Man, the oneness of all religions (Bushrui Online).

To support his idea Bushrui quotes the following words of Rihani written in his Literary Will in Arabic in September 1931:

I counsel you to adhere to unity. In theoretical terms, religion is that luminous living link between man and his one and only God. In spiritual terms, religion is the joy derived from discovering, without mediation the mysteries that lie behind this unique link. In practical terms, religion is above all, the recognition of the Divine Truth spoken by whoever has taught a single letter from the book of love of piety, and of charitable deeds. (qtd. in Bushrui online)

Rihani, thus, advocates oneness of God, nature, Man and, religions just like Khalid sees God in all world religions and believes in the unity of religions. Furthermore, Rihani, like Khalid, believes in universal love and brotherhood as well as in the unity of the natural and spiritual world. Also, Rihani paves the way for Khalid to profess his

belief in establishing a strong Arab empire “Where the Male and Female of the Spirit shall give birth to a unifying faith, a unifying art, a unifying Truth” (Khalid, 342).

Rihani says: “To graft the strenuosity of Europe and America upon the ease of the Orient, the materialism of the West upon the spirituality of the East, this to us seems to be the principal aim of Khalid”(Khalid, 239). Khalid’s belief in the unity of the natural and spiritual worlds, the physical and metaphysical worlds is obvious in the following:

I have frequently moved and removed between extremes; I have worked and slept in opposing camps. So, do not expect from me anything like the consistency with which the majority of mankind solder and shape their life. (Khalid, 240).

In fact, Rihani like Khalid, has emigrated to the States and experienced both Art and Work, Devotion and Trade Romance and Religion, however he did not cling to any of these extremes. Khalid voices Rihani when he says:

The West for me means ambition, the East, contentment: my heart is ever in the one, my soul, in the other. And I care not for the freedom, which does not free both; I seek not the welfare of the one without the other (Khalid, 241).

In his prayer “The Naj’wa,” Rihani declares his firm belief in the unity of the natural and the spiritual when he addresses himself to God saying that he survives in The Almighty:

I am the beginning of eternal life;
I am the eye of Love and Might,
Because I live in thee,

And because I am aware of thy prayers.

You are the whole of life, first and last,

And I survive in Thee.

(Hymns of The Valleys, 73)

Finally, Rihani meets with Khalid in what regards their perception of universal love, or divine love. Rihani shares his hero's belief that Man is of Eternity, not of time; and love the highest attribute of man, must be likewise. Rihani gives his hero a divine attribute incarnated in the act of drinking the cup of pain. In fact, it is only when man is baptized in pain and sacrifice that he experiences divine and pure love. So Rihani gives the attribute of divinity to that love which is pure and heavenly. He renounces love without pain and calls it impure. Like his hero, Rihani believes in oneness in the fullest sense: oneness of God, oneness of religions, and oneness of Man and Nature; however, unlike Mrs. Gotfry, he cannot be considered a follower of the Bahai order although he meets the Bahais in certain major issues.

Endnotes

- 1- " هذا الخيار حتم على خالد الاعتقاد بأن الروح كامن خلف المادة . . . إن عالم ما وراء الطبيعة - يفترض، بل يستوجب، وجود الطبيعة. وكذلك الطبيعة دون الما وراء تبقى جافة، محدودة ونسبية؛ الريحاني، أمين ألبرت. فيلسوف الفريكة- صاحب المدينة العظمى. بيروت: دار [Translations from Arabic into English are mine all throughout] الجبل، 1987، ص. 208.
- 2- . . . هكذا يترجح إيمان خالد بوجود الوجود. وهو إيمان مبني على اختياره الشخصي لعالمين يتخاضمان في نظرتهما إلى الوجود. نظرتان متعاكستان في الظاهر ملتقيتان في الجوهر؛ المرجع عينه، ص 208.
- 3- " هذا الموقف الفكري الذي يخلص إلى قبول الغيبيات قبولا عقلانيا، ينتقل من أمين إلى خالد حيث ينكفي للتصادم بين القوى المادية والروحية ويتحول إلى تعاطف وتأخ وتكامل؛ المرجع عينه ص 210.
- 4- "ويبدو أن قناعة خالد بإمكانية التواصل بين المادة والروح قد حفظه على التطلع إلى احتمال جمع المتناقضات في بعض مظاهر الوجود، وذلك عبر رؤيا تأملية تكاد تكون متصوفة؛ المرجع عينه، ص 210.
- 5- أحسست بأن روحي انفصلت عن جسمي . . . شعرت بأن روح الوادي قد اتحدت بي وروحي قد اتحدت بالوادي فأنا إذا والوادي سواء؛ الريحاني، أمين. الريحانيات. دار الجبل، الطبعة العاشرة، ص 7.
- 6- "تستحيل الطبيعة في نظر خالد، مهد الإبتهال والتعبد والتأمل الروحي. فإذا كان الإنسان جزءاً لا يتجزأ من الطبيعة، فهذه جزء لا يتجزأ من الوجود الذي ينتهي إلى الله؛ الريحاني، أمين ألبرت. فيلسوف الفريكة - صاحب المدينة العظمى. بيروت: دار الجبل، 1987، ص 212.
- 7- See these comments on pages: 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 149, 150 and 151.

- 8- Rihani's handwriting is marked on pages: 15, 43, 75, 112, 137, 138, 152, 153, 154, 155, 202, 203, 262, 287 and 322.
- 9- The sidelines are on pages: 20, 71, 96, 103, 108, 129, 145, 157, 160, 190, 204, 230, 263, 309 and 419.
- 10- "فهل رأى الريحاني الحقيقة كما رأتها غوتفراي؟ أراد الريحاني إقناع غوتفراي بأن حلمه هو في إنشاء إمبراطورية عربية لا تقهر. لكن لم تكن مهتأة لتستوعب فكرته وتقدمها. وبرز التباين هنا، بين القضية التي تشغل الريحاني، وتلك التي تشغل كاهنة البهائيتين"؛ لبي فاضل، ربيعة. الفكر الديني في الأدب للمهجري. بيروت: درا الجيل، 1984، ص. 513.

Chapter II

American Transcendentalism in The Book of Khalid

In this chapter I will investigate the influence of American Transcendentalism on Ameen Rihani in The Book of Khalid by shedding light particularly on its key figures: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman. However, at this early point it is worth exposing briefly the precepts of Transcendentalism.

American Transcendentalism was an important movement in philosophy and literature that flourished during the period between 1836 and 1860. It began as a reform movement in the Unitarian church with the Swedish philosopher and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg who believes that “man completes creation” (Sigstedt, 13). Moreover, Sigstedt states that “In his treatise on *The Infinite* Swedenborg demonstrated the existence of the Infinite and the unique role of man in the order of creation (13). Transcendentalism was based on a monism holding to the unity of the world and God, and the immanence of God in the world (Oxford Companion to American Literature 770). James E. Miller, Jr. says that for the Transcendentalists, the soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world; it contains what the world contains. Furthermore, according to Transcendentalism the one reality is the vast spiritual background of existence, the Over-Soul, God, within which all other being is unified and from which it derives its life (12). Because divinity dwells in the world, every part of it, no matter how small it is, is a microcosm, comprehending within itself all the laws and meaning of the whole. Therefore, the soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world and contains all what that larger soul contains. To the Transcendentalists, nature is the embodiment of spirit in the world of sense.

Idealism is among the basic beliefs and fundamental principles of Transcendentalism. In fact, the key figures of this movement, Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman share a fundamental belief in a higher reality of ideas, in a metaphysical realm of spirit that is screened, and yet symbolically revealed, by the material world. To Alice Tyler, "Transcendentalism meets with Pantheism and is especially designed to be a sort of American-style natural religion. The Transcendentalists looked upon nature and the physical world as the manifestation of a divine, yet impersonal power"(56). Tyler argues that the Transcendentalists did not revere the supernatural in a direct way, but rather admired and worshipped it through the natural, its visible image and reflection. Similarly, they considered the cosmos as a vast, all-embracing whole, a true Universe or oneness in which every individual thing forms part of an intricate and larger harmony (56).

Moreover, Tyler states: " Through their sublime mysticism the Transcendentalists made the direct contact between the individual soul and its creator"(57). To her, Transcendentalism was at once a faith, a philosophy, a mystical religion and an ethical way of life. It is "a transference of supernatural attributes to the natural constitution of mankind" (O.B. Frothingham qtd. in Tyler 57). Through this transference man had the power to go beyond the realm of his senses and to perceive that that lay beyond all physical phenomena. Thus, Transcendentalism was based on the fundamental belief that the individual soul is identified with God and that instinct, insight, and intuition are the tests and methods of realizing that union (58).

Upon reading chapter one in "Book The Third" of The Book of Khalid, one can trace certain ideas of American Transcendentalism. Khalid says:

Let the I deny the stars, and they will nevertheless roll in silence above it.

Let the not – I crush this I, this " thinking reed " and the higher universal I.

rising above the stars and flooding the sidereal heavens with light, will warm, remold, and regenerate the world (227).

While the Transcendentalists believe that the Over-Soul or God who dwells in the world, breathes life into it, Khalid goes as far as saying that even if the world denies itself, the Universal I will give it life again. Thus to Khalid, the world derives its life, from God, the Universal I. Moreover, Khalid advances the oneness of the natural and the spiritual, a belief, which echoes the transcendental belief that Divinity indwells in the world and that every part of the world comprehends within itself the whole. Thus, to the Transcendentalists and Khalid, the soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world and contains all what that larger whole contains. Indeed, Khalid declares:

The spiritual and the natural are so united, so inextricably entwined around each other that I cannot conceive of them separately, independently. And both in the abstract sense are purportless and ineffectual without Consciousness . . . You may impregnate them with philosophy, nourish them with art; they both emanate from them, and remain as skidding clouds, as shining mirages, as wandering dust, until they find their exponent in Man (Khalid, 241).

When Khalid says that the spiritual and the natural “are shining mirages until they find their exponent in Man” (241), he is echoing Emerson’s belief that there is a divinity in man and that there is a transference of supernatural attributes to the natural constitution of Mankind. This transcendentalist idea about the divinity in man is clearly mirrored in Emerson’s essay “Nature,” in which he says:

Standing on the bare ground, my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-

ball I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God " (1075).

Consciousness, a divine attribute, is transferred to Man who renders both the natural and the spiritual effectual. This transference occurs when man goes beyond his senses and perceives beyond all physical phenomena, that is, when man uses consciousness, which is a divine, supernatural attribute.

In saying "I am part or particle of God" Emerson refers to the microcosm and macrocosm. He believes that each part of nature contains all within it. Every particle in nature is related to the whole and partakes of the perfection of the whole. Each particle is a microcosm and faithfully renders the likeness of the world. Moreover, Emerson's confirmation that: "One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime" (1074) reflects the idea of the emblematic nature, which is advanced by him, especially because he believes that every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. Also the above quote points to the idea of the Over- Soul; the idea of the indwelling divinity, "the wise silence and the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related" (Emerson, 745). Along the same lines, Khalid attaches a great deal of importance to Man equated with consciousness; he says:

I tell thee that Man, that is to say Consciousness, vitalized and purified, in other words Thought- that alone is real and eternal. And Man is supreme, only when he is the proper exponent of nature, and spirit, and God: the three divine sources from which he issues, in which he is sustained, and to which he must return. Nature and the spiritual without this embodied intelligence, this somatic being, called man or angel or ape, are as ermine on a wax figure. The human factor, the exponent intelligence, the intellective and

sensuous faculties, these, my Brothers, are whole, sublime, holy, only when, in a state of continuous expansion the harmony among themselves and the affinitative ties between them and nature, are perfect and pure (Khalid, 242).

Khalid equates consciousness and intelligence with man. To him consciousness begets a divine attribute in man. As for intelligence, it is the reason behind which the natural and the spiritual acquire a certain meaning. In other words, the natural and the spiritual are meaningless without man who is endowed with a vitalized consciousness and an embodied intelligence. The Transcendentalists believe that there lies an indwelling divinity in man resulting from the primacy of the mind and the connection of the individual intelligence with the divine. Thus, the primacy of the mind or consciousness and the individual intelligence give man a divine attribute.

Furthermore, Khalid associates man with consciousness or thought and gives him a divine attribute of eternity when he says, "that alone is real and eternal". Khalid, like Emerson, combines the individual intelligence with the divine one and qualifies man as supreme only when he represents equally Nature, the Spirit and God, which are three divine sources tracing his beginning and his end. Thus, we notice again the transcendental influence and the belief that the Over-Soul is unified with all other beings that derive their lives from God and consequently, acquire supernatural attributes. Emerson expresses the idea of the indwelling divinity in man in his essay "The Over-Soul"; he says:

The supreme Critic on the errors of the past and the present, and the only prophet of that which must be, is that great nature in which we rest, as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere; that Unity; that Over-Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with

all other . . . Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the Eternal One (744-745).

Moreover, Emerson believes that the individual soul mingles with the universal soul and that man is meant to be a god sitting among gods. He says when man transcends his limited self his true self is manifested. In his "Over-Soul", he says that Man must greatly listen to himself and withdraw himself from all the influences of other men's beliefs (756). Similarly, Khalid says:

Yes, I am equally devoted both to the material and the spiritual. And when the two in me are opposed to each other . . . I sit down, shut my eyes, compose myself, and concentrate my mind on the mobility of things. If the clouds are moving, why, I have but to sit down and let them move away. I let my No-Will, in this case, dominate my will, and that serves my purpose well . . . The resignation and passiveness of the spirit should always alternate equitably with the terrible strivings of the will (Khalid, 237).

When Khalid says that he will shut his eyes, compose himself and concentrate his mind on the mobility of things, he is transcending his limited self to reveal his unlimited one and so to resolve this opposition between the material and the spiritual. Khalid echoes Emerson's idea of self-transcendence, which means self-actualization. In other words, without going beyond the "passional self or ego", the true self cannot be manifested (Versluis, 67). Accordingly, Emerson says: "But if he would know what the great God speaketh, he must go into his closet and shut the door; as Jesus said . . . He must greatly listen to himself, withdrawing himself from all the accents of other men's devotion" (751).

According to the Transcendentalists the individual soul is identified with God and is united with it. Khalid undoubtedly adopts this belief expressed by Emerson in his “Over-Soul” whereby he says: “Within man is the soul of the whole.” Along the same lines Khalid says:

No, the spiritual ought not and cannot be free from the sensuous, even the sensual. The true life, the full life, the life, pure, robust, sublime, is that in which all the nobler and higher aspirations of the soul AND THE BODY are given free and unlimited scope, with the view of developing the divine strain in Man . . . God, Nature, Spirit, Passion – Passion, Spirit, Nature, God – in some such panorama would I paint the life of a highly developed being. Any of these lacking, and the life is wanting, defective, impure (Khalid, 242).

Khalid considers that a highly developed being begins and ends his life with God who is the beginning and the end. Khalid himself started out a life vibrant with passion when he traveled to the States and indulged himself in the pleasures of the flesh, then when he returned to Lebanon he experienced spiritual love with his cousin Najma. Afterwards, Khalid who was crossed in love and rejected by the religious authorities in his hometown, sought refuge in nature which was like a bridge for him to reach the skies where God dwells. As a boy Khalid was brought up in a very religious and traditional family where he spent the days of his boyhood between the fascinating scenes of nature and experienced the lofty spiritual ideals after which he was immersed in passion upon his voyage to America.

Here Khalid’s double faceted experience recalls the picture of another key figure in American Transcendentalism: Henry David Thoreau who retired for two years to Walden Pond in an intensely individualistic experiment in living all on his own (Tyler 59). Thoreau says: “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front

only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach" (1769).

Thoreau retreated to the woods to regain a serene and healthy life. He says:

What is the pill, which will keep us well, serene, contented? Not my or thy great-grandfather's, but our great-grandmother Nature's universal, vegetable, botanic medicines, by which she has kept herself young always, outlived so many old Parrs in her day, and fed her health with their decaying fatness (1841).

As for Khalid, he retreated to nature to regain an innocence he had lost in the material world. Furthermore, to Khalid, the harmonious existence and the balance between the spiritual and the material leads to a divine and pure being. Khalid stresses the importance of the human will above all other issues and believes that it is the basic factor behind man's success. Hence by doing so he is reflecting Emerson who believes that there is a divinity in man, which he seeks to find in nature. Emerson's basic teachings focus mainly on individualism. Similarly, Khalid focuses on the human will:

Not the Church, surely, nor the state, not science, nor sociology nor philosophy, nor religion. But the human will shall influence that star and make it yield its secret and its fire. Each of you, O my Brothers, can make it light his own hut, warm his own heart, guide his own soul! Never before in the history of man did it seem as necessary as it does now that each individual should think for himself, will for himself, and aspire incessantly for the realization of his ideals and dreams (Khalid, 142).

We clearly see here Emerson's idea of the primacy of the mind. Khalid's belief that every individual should think for himself in order to achieve success implies his firm belief in the primacy of the human mind and in its unfailing capacity.

Moreover, Khalid goes as far as considering the individual as sacred, “The sacredness of the Individual, not of the Family or the Church, do I proclaim” (Khalid, 143). This sacredness reflects a divine attribute, which consolidates the transcendental view of the indwelling divinity in man. Besides, Khalid’s love of nature and his reverence to it emphasizes the idea of the Transcendentalists who believe that the soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world and contains all that larger soul contains. Also, it shows the idea of how the Transcendentalists looked upon nature as the manifestation of a divine power and how they worshipped the supernatural via the natural. Thus, Khalid says: “No, I do not have to prove to my Brothers that my love of nature is but second to my love of life. I am interested in my fellow men as in my fellow trees and flowers”(Khalid, 188). Also, Khalid gives a divine attribute to nature: “These pine parasols under which I lay me, forgiving and forgetting, are fit for the Gods” (Khalid, 189). “Yes, the pine forests are the great mosques of Nature” (Khalid, 190). These quotations clearly mirror Emerson’s idea that the beauty of nature exists as a physical reflection of spiritual beauty. Emerson asks in his essay “Nature”: “Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe?” (1073). Just as nature is alive and developing, so are human beings. Thus, to Walter Edward Dunnavent, “The concept of nature goes beyond the sentimental appreciation of the beauties of forests and rivers; it goes from the material to the spiritual, from the old and accepted to the new and untried” (15). This concept of nature is mirrored in The Book of Khalid where the hero sanctifies nature and finds in it a healing effect:

Here in this grand Mosque of Nature, I read my own Korân, I Khalid . . . I come to this glorious Mosque, the only place of worship open to me, to heal my broken soul . . . But where so one turns there are niches in which the

living spirit of Allah is ever present . . . I dream my dream of contentment and resignation and love (Khalid, 191).

Dunnavent believes that all the various aspects of nature make Khalid feel that it is friendly and supportive, “He feels close to nature and nurtured by It”(41). Khalid treads in the footsteps of Thoreau who says: “To be alone was something unpleasant. But I was at the same time conscious of a slight insanity in my mood, and seemed to foresee my recovery” (1837). Khalid realizes the transforming power of the spirit behind nature. He goes to the woods sick in body and soul; and after spending a year in nature’s arms, he is totally healed. Moreover, Dunnavent stresses the transcendental issue of the importance of the Individual. “Man has the divine within himself and is surrounded by it” (24). Thus, Emerson’s saying: “Who can set bounds on the possibilities of man?” (1073) reflects Emerson’s belief that man’s connection to the divine has unlimited prospects for growth. Thoreau echoes this same idea in Walden saying: “However mean your life is, meet it and live it; do not shun it and call it hard names” (1778). Here Thoreau is inciting man to believe in his great potential and to act accordingly regardless of how cruel life may be. To Dunnavent, Khalid also believes in the importance of the individual. “He believes that he, too, has a great mission in life; his mission is to create a great Arab Empire bordering the Orient and Occident” (Khalid, 26). In fact, Khalid says: “The Orient and Occident . . . of both I sing, in both I glory, to both I consecrate my life, for both I shall work and suffer and die” (Khalid, 246). The Transcendentalists believe in the importance of the individual and in the supremacy of the mind. A great individual is the one who uses his strong capacities in order to attempt to change society for the better. Khalid endeavors to create a great Arab Empire that combines the best of both the Orient and the Occident. As mentioned before, Khalid, like Rihani, seeks a common platform where East and

West can meet even on philosophical and spiritual terms. Khalid admits that an individual can influence other people and that the opinion of the individual can become the opinion of the many (Dunnavent 27). On this issue Khalid says:

A mighty tidal wave leaves high upon the beach a mark which later on becomes the general level of the ocean. And so do the great thinkers of the world, the poets and seers, the wise and strong and self-denying, the proclaimers of the Religion of Man (Khalid, 325).

In addition, Dunnavent speaks of the issue of spirituality in Transcendentalism. To the Transcendentalists, the spiritual is far more important than the material and the material is a reflection of the spiritual. Emerson, in his essay, "Nature," says, "The visible creation is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world" (1073). As for Thoreau, he says in "Walden" that people must become explorers of themselves:

. . . there are continents and seas in the moral world, to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, but . . . it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific ocean of one's being alone (1798).

So when people accept their inner life and follow it, they realize that outward circumstances exist to promote it, not to destroy it (Dunnavent 19). Thoreau experienced solitude when he lived alone by Walden Pond for two years and he grew wiser. He acquired wisdom from Mother Nature for he says:

An elderly dame, too, dwells in my neighborhood, invisible to most persons, in whose odorous herb garden I love to stroll sometimes, gathering samples and listening to her fables; for she has a genius of unequalled fertility, and her memory runs back farther than mythology, and she can tell me the

original of every fable, and on what fact every one is founded, for the incidents occurred when she was young (1840-1).

Thus, solitude is a productive activity, which brings people closer to God. To Dunnavent, Khalid reflects this spirituality of the transcendentalists (20). One tends to agree with Dunnavent when he says that Khalid sees a relationship between the spiritual and the material and that the material depends on the spiritual. Yet, to Khalid the spiritual is as important as the material and not more important than it. In fact, according to Transcendentalism, the world or the material derives its life from the universal I or the spiritual. Hence, Khalid says: "But the soul is not dependent on health or disease. The soul is the source of both health and disease. And life, therefore, is either a healthy or a diseased state of the soul" (Khalid, 219). Indeed, Khalid's spiritual labor affects positively his physical body and consequently he successfully seeks refuge and health in his retreat in the woods.

In the introduction to Ameen Rihani's book, The White Way and the Desert, Alan Nichols states:

One of Rihani's strongest literary and spiritual influences, not fortuitously, was Walt Whitman, for the two men shared a transcendent vision informed by a deep appreciation for and appreciation of life as it is lived by humans down on the ground. The amalgamation of the ideal with the real in the crucible of fire speaks of a passion of an intellectual giant whose literary contribution to the world raised him to the heights with the Great American poet (7).

Indeed, Whitman is hailed as one of America's greatest poets. He was undoubtedly a faithful student of Emerson and the Transcendentalists. The theme of Emerson's essays, mainly in his "Over-Soul" is "the spiritual oneness of Being and intuitive

identity . . . Emerson's essays might have been a channel through which Indian ideas were transmitted to Whitman" (Chari qtd. Bradley & Blodgett, 928). The idea of the Over-Soul is common to Emerson and Whitman. Whitman believes that the Over-Soul or "The Kosmic Spirit" is nothing but the self. In his "Song of Myself" he expresses this cosmic vision. Thus, being aware of this cosmic consciousness, the poet, freed of all hindrances, becomes perfectly fluid and reflects within himself the cosmic existence (Chari, 930). Chari goes as far as saying that while Whitman seeks to embrace the Infinite, he goes on continuously inventorying and he stresses the spiritual unity of the world, not its multiplicity. With him opposites meet and dissolve (930). "I fly those flights of a fluid and swallowing soul/ My course runs below the soundings of plummet/ I force surfaces and depths also"(Whitman, 2223- 2229 ll. 800-801; 988).

Reading The Book of Khalid, one cannot but notice the shared views between Whitman and Khalid. Thus, when Khalid says: "But my faith in man . . . is as strong as my faith in God" (Khalid, 113), he is reflecting Whitman's idea of the unlimited individual whose personality admits no limitations and who in thought is the whole world. As a matter of fact, Henry Myers believes that " Out of the American democracy of 1855, Walt Whitman constructed . . . a spiritual democracy governed by two principles, one the unlimited individual, the other the equality of individuals" (873). To achieve the equality of individuals, a person should be endowed with a personality that admits no barriers; he should see through space and time, he should become everything and admit no limitations. To Whitman, a man in thought is the whole world and everything comes within his experience (Myers 871). Thus, Khalid is putting man on an equal footing with God and giving him an unlimited attribute. Khalid says:

From his Transcendental height, the Superman of America shall ray forth in every direction the divine light, which shall mellow and purify the spirit of Nations and strengthen and sweeten the spirit of men. In this New world, I tell you, he shall be born, but he shall not be an American in the Democratic sense. He shall be nor of the old world nor of the New; he shall be, my Brothers, of both. In him shall be reincarnated the Asiatic spirit of origination, of Poesy and Prophecy, and the European spirit of Art, and the American spirit of Invention (Khalid, 113).

Khalid is relating "the divine light" to the superman of America who shall purify and strengthen men. By being identified with God, man is released from the limitations of space and time and is granted a direct vision of truths. This Union with the self, which is of the same essence as the Universal spirit, enables man to work miracles in Nations and among his fellow men. Malcolm Cowley states that when Whitman was writing "Song of Myself" he believed that there is a distinction between one's own personality and the deeper Self. To him, "the Self . . . is of the same essence as the universal spirit and that true knowledge is to be acquired not through the senses or the intellect but through union with the Self" (qtd. Bradley & Blodgett 922). Furthermore, this true knowledge is available to every person since within each one is hidden a divine self. Hence, the divinity of all begets the equality and immortality of all, as well as the universal duty of loving one another (Cowley 922). In fact, the opening verses of Whitman's "Song of Myself" reflect this idea clearly: "I celebrate myself and sing myself, / And what I assume you shall assume, / For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you" (2198 ll. 1-2-3).

Moreover, Khalid says that this superman shall be born in America, but "he shall not be an American in the Democratic sense." In other words, this superman shall not

only believe in the good old cause of liberty, equality, and fraternity but he shall also adopt a spiritual democracy, which believes in the unlimited individual. This unlimited individual, who is an all - embracing personality, shall admit no barriers and shall be the sum-total of his experiences. Thus, he shall not be restricted to the East alone or the West alone, he shall be of both. He shall acquire attributes from both worlds and give vent to his personality by accepting this multiplicity and containing these multitudes. Indeed, Khalid is reflecting the view of Whitman whose perception of “equality is much more than a political ideal; it is an eternal fact in the real world of unlimited personalities; it is a great first principle” (Myers qtd. Bradley & Blodgett 872). Thus, Whitman says in “Song of Myself”: “In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barley – Corn less, / And the good or Bad I say of myself I say of them” (2211, ll. 401-402). Furthermore, Myers states, “a real equality, between unlimited personalities, is discovered only by piercing through the coverings and turmoils to the insides of beings” (873). In other words, a person will find all beings equal in his eyes in the inner world; that is, in order to discover this equality one must dig through the surface to the inside. By doing so, a man will admit no limitations and will be as Whitman believes, the sum total of his experiences (Myers 871).

Whitman’s idea that a man is as unlimited as his experience and that in thought he is the whole world is also reflected by Khalid, who says: “I tell thee that Man, that is to say Consciousness, vitalized and purified, in other words thought – that alone is real and eternal” (Khalid, 241 -242). In relating man to Consciousness and Thought, Khalid is giving him a divine attribute, which is that of eternity. I must point out here that Consciousness and Thought are synonyms for Divinity since God is the embodiment of Truth and eternity. Here we see Whitman’s deep influence on Khalid since Whitman expressed this idea at the end of “section 48” in his “Song of Myself”.

one and all is self: "All these I feel or am" (2224 l. 837). To him this unifying vision dissolves opposites and reaches oneness with the All. This vision frees the poet from the attachment to the finite and leads him to the infinite. Thus, Whitman sings of human beings in the mass. Also, he enters into all and becomes all. "I am large, I contain multitudes" (2240, l. 1325).

Betsy Eikkila believes that in section 36 of "Song of Myself" Whitman appears to be "on the verge of losing faith in the divine potency of the individual and the regenerative pattern of the whole" ("Walt Whitman", Online). In fact, these verses convey this sense of despair:

Delicate sniffs of sea-breeze, smells of sedgy grass and fields by the shore,
death messages give in charge to survivors,

The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the gnawing teeth of his saw,

Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short wild scream, and long, dull
tapering groan,

These so, these irretrievable (2228 ll. 941-946).

To Eikkila, Whitman resolves the crisis by remembering the divinity of Christ as a dwelling power within and not outside every individual. Thus, being divinely empowered, the poet declares his absolute faith in the "form, union, plan" of the universe. Khalid resolves the crisis in a similar way; but he not only loses faith in the indwelling divinity, he rather goes as far as denying it:

Let the I deny the stars, and they will nevertheless roll in silence above it.

Let the not-I crush this I, this "thinking reed", and the higher universal I,

rising above the stars and flooding the sidereal heavens with light will warm,

remold, and regenerate the world (Khalid, 227).

Thus, the regenerative pattern of the whole is restored through the universal I or the indwelling divinity. Whitman's faith in the "form, union, plan" of the universe reflects his faith in harmony and stability begotten from Divinity. As for Khalid, he believes that the universal I or the indwelling divinity will reshape the world and make it undergo a second birth. Whereas Whitman sees harmony and form, Khalid sees a rebirth to achieve such a harmony. In addition, Khalid clearly reflects Whitman's idea of making opposites meet and dissolve; he says:

No, the spiritual ought not and cannot be free from the sensuous even the sensual. The true life, the full life, the life, pure, robust, sublime, is that in which all the nobler and higher aspirations of the soul AND THE BODY are given free and unlimited scope with the view of developing the divine strain in Man (Khalid, 242).

Khalid places the soul and the body on an equal footing, where they meet and dissolve and, consequently, they cannot be separated from each other. Indeed, both are needed to achieve the indwelling divinity in Man. To Whitman the Over-Soul or "Kosmic spirit" is the same, as one's own self, which is different from one's personality. This self is of the same essence as the universal spirit. In other words, the soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world. While putting emphasis on the spiritual unity of the worlds, Whitman constantly makes opposites meet and dissolve. Hence, he says: "I have said that the soul is not more than the body / And I have said that the body is not more than the soul" (2238 ll. 1269-1270).

Thus, after having traced the gist of the transcendental movement with three of its key figures: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman, we can say that the issue of the Over-Soul being united with all other beings and transferring to them divine attributes is highlighted and reflected in The Book of Khalid. Indeed,

Khalid expresses the basic principle of Transcendentalism, which proclaims that the soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world and contains what the world contains. Khalid's unfailing belief in Man and his capacities is equal to his belief in God. Moreover, to achieve this indwelling divinity, Khalid makes opposites meet and dissolve. Thus, the spiritual world is as important as the material one; and by being so; both worlds are inextricably entwined and necessary to achieve the connection of the individual intelligence with the divine one. In fact, Khalid's superman belongs neither to the Western world, nor to the Eastern one. He is an all-embracing personality who admits no barriers.

Again the question arises here whether Khalid is the mouthpiece of Rihani, the author or not. Rihani, the narrator criticizes Khalid and accuses him of being moonstruck with respect to the issue of transcendentalism:

But Khalid, though always invoking the distant luminary of transcendentalism for light, cannot arrogate to himself this high title . . . And Khalid's distance from the orbit of this grand luminary seems to vary with his moods; and these vary with the librations and revolutions of the moon, Hallucinated, moonstruck Khalid your harmonizing and affinitative efforts do not always succeed. That is our opinion of the matter (Khalid, 244).

Furthermore, the narrator accuses Khalid of rarely speaking of stability: "Only by standing firmly in the center can one preserve the equilibrium of one's thoughts. But Khalid seldom speaks of equilibrium; he cares not how he fares in falling on either side of the fence, so he knows what lies behind" (Khalid, 244). Rihani goes as far as denying the harmony between the material and the spiritual hadn't it been reflected in the superman who is an all-embracing personality, who admits no limitations and whom Khalid admires. Thus, the narrators says:

Howbeit, we can not conceive of how the affinity of the mind and soul with the senses, and the harmony between, these and nature, are possible, if not exteriorized in that very superman . . . on whom Khalid often casts a lingering glance of admiration (Khalid, 245).

Yet, in spite of all these accusations, the narrator adopts Khalid's view in associating man with consciousness and giving him a divine supernatural attribute. Thus, to the narrator, if man doesn't rise to a higher consciousness, he shall suffer and die, for death denies no one:

So there you are, we must either rise to a higher consciousness on the ruins of a lower one, of no-consciousness, rather, or go on seeming and simulating, aspiring, perspiring, and suffering, until our turn comes. Death denies no one (Khalid, 245).

The fact that Rihani shares with Khalid one of the basic beliefs in Transcendentalism, which is the idea of the indwelling divinity in man and how the Over-Soul is unified with all other beings who derive their lives from God and acquire divine attributes, brings us to the following question: Are these common points that were previously exhibited, between Khalid, the mouthpiece of Rihani, and Transcendentalism a sheer coincidence or not?

A Lebanese emigrant who traveled to the United States in the early twentieth century, Ameen Rihani was most probably influenced by the philosophical currents of thought prevailing in the New World. Geoffrey Nash in his book: The Arab writer in English claims, "Rihani's initial aim was to join Arabic and Anglo-American culture in an interpenetrative space within which individual writers from both traditions might operate" (1). In fact, Rihani's readings into American literature and thought widened his scope of vision on the cultural front and opened the door for him to

explore new intellectual horizons. To Nash, Rihani's interest in the American Transcendentalists is "explicable in the terms of this space" (1). In other words, Rihani's objective to reconcile the East and the West and show their complementary aspect, explains his deep interest in American Transcendentalism, especially that Emerson believes that the spirit world is to be attained through this world rather than by ignoring it, that is, the spiritual world and the material one are inextricably entwined. Moreover, to Khalid, it is through love that we opt for a spiritual attempt seeking union with divinity. The one motivating force behind the work of the heart is love, but not any kind of love. It is love that goes beyond common desires for the materialistic and the physical. It is love that breaks all barriers between Self and Other, thus elevating all that enables the fusion of self with Other, especially if this Other is Divinity itself. William Johnston asserts: "It is precisely love that leads one beyond thoughts and images and concepts into the world of silence. The inner eye is now the eye of love"(19). The issue of the inner eye and the eye of love would inform the issue of the unity of Being in the following chapter in which I discuss Christian Mysticism in The Book of Khalid.

Chapter III

Christian Mysticism in The Book of Khalid

I shall try in this chapter to show parallels between Christian Mysticism and The Book of Khalid. Yet, before drawing the parallels it is worth giving a brief exposition of Christian Mysticism. Historically, the word mysticism is associated with the mystery religions or mystery cults, which flourished in the Greco-Roman world in the early centuries of the Christian era. Eleusinian, Dionysian and Orphic mysteries attained great popularity, attracting thousands of spiritually hungry devotees to their esoteric and erotic rites and ceremonies. The mystic (mystes) was the initiate who in an oath of secrecy swore to be silent or literally, to keep his mouth shut (muein) about the inner working of his new-found religion (Johnston, 15). In its original meaning, then, mysticism is associated with mystery and secrecy and the occult. The word mysticism (like much of the terminology of the mysteries) passed into neo-platonism where it was associated with secrecy of another kind. Now it meant deliberately shutting the eyes to all external things, a practice which was central to neoplatonic meditation: one excluded the world in order to rise up to the one and to be "alone with the alone." The neo-platonists Plotinus and Proclus, use the word "muo" of the closed eyes of one who is rapt in profound contemplation; while the eyes of the body were closed, the inner eye was open and was searching for wisdom (Johnston, 16). Moreover, Christian Mysticism is defined as "an immediate knowledge of God attained in this present life through personal religious experience" (Cross & Livingstone, 46). Evelyn Underhill states that Christian Mysticism is: "the belief in or the pursuit of unification with the One or some other principle; the immediate consciousness of God; or the direct experience of religious truth"(11). Also, she argues that while mysticism, according to its historical and psychological definitions,

is the direct intuition or experience of God, Christian Mysticism unites the teachings of Jesus with the spiritual cosmology of neo-Platonism. Pagan philosophers like Plotinus had a great impact on Christian Mysticism, as did saints and theologians like John the Evangelist. By the fourth century in the Christian era, men and women were abandoning “worldly” matters to seek, through dedicated prayer, meditation, and contemplation, the experience of holiness and Divine presence and favor (12).

Meditation and contemplation are experienced through the inner eye. The inner eye searching for wisdom is the eye of the heart; and that which opens it is nothing but pure love. Khalid believes in love as a source of power when he says: “The power of the soul is doubled by the object of its love, or by such labor of love as it undertakes” (Khalid, 128). Along the same lines, Johnston confirms that “Mysticism is based upon the indwelling of the spirit and the divinization of man” (22). In fact, God, who is Love, infuses his gift of love into the soul. When man responds to this call he receives the Holy Spirit, who is love personified (Johnston, 21).

In the Gospel, Jesus says:

If you love me, you will obey my commandments, I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive Him because it cannot see Him or know Him. But you know Him, because He remains with you and is in you (John 14:15, 16, 17).

Yet, the divine nature in man is nothing but an analogy that doesn't make us gods but divine creatures. Our divine nature does not entail that we become gods. Nonetheless, man participates in God's life through Grace. It is impossible to place God and man on an equal footing; what exists between them is a certain analogy. Khalid believes in the divinization of man and in his strong capacity and determinedness, for he says in

reply to the Hermit who tells him that human life is insignificant and evanescent: "But it lies within us, O my Brother, to make it significant and eternal" (Khalid, 222). It is true that the idea of eternal life is not related strictly to Mysticism but Khalid is speaking here about moments of eternal truth. However, man, endowed with a divine nature through an act of grace, does not become a God but participates in God's life. According to the Act of Glory, God gives us Himself as a Father and we are his adopted sons. Jesus says:

I pray that they may all be one. Father, may they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me. I gave them the same glory you gave me, so that they may be one, just as you and I are one: I in them and you in me, so that they may be completely one in order that the world may know that you sent me and that you love them as you love me (John 17: 21, 23).

Hence, grace is a divine attribute dwelling in us yet sin chases it away. Sarru' believes that St. Peter charts the path of the believer to divinization, that is, the faith and the acts attending it. Grace is an act from God that allows man through Faith to benefit from divine endowments. Indeed it is through faith that we acquire divinity. (P.I.). St. Peter, in his Second Epistle, says:

In this way he has given us the very great and precious gifts he promised, so that by means of these gifts you may escape from the destructive lust, that is in the world, and may come to share the divine nature (Peter II, 1:4).

This grace does not put us on an equal footing with God, but it makes us divine creatures. Our union with God is not in essence. But the indwelling spirit transforms us into the body of Christ and makes us cry out: "Abba Father!" (Romans 8:15). Or

the same spirit enlightens our inner eye and shows us the glory of the Son so that we cry out, "Jesus is Lord!" (Johnston, 22).

Khalid's mysticism calls for self-denial. "Khalid himself says that to be truly, deeply, piously in love, one must needs hate himself. How true, how inexorably true!" (Khalid, 17). Khalid implies that fusion with the other is impossible unless self denies itself and goes beyond its limited egoistic boundaries. "This is a basic Christian paradox: To win the after life you have to lose this one. To obey God you have to disobey yourself" (Sarru', P.I.).

This process of transcending the self is explained by the well-known scholar Friedrich Heiler, who defines mysticism as "that form of intercourse with God in which the world and self are absolutely denied, in which human personality is dissolved, disappears and is absorbed in the infinite unity of the Godhead" (qtd. in Johnston 45). Khalid makes it clear that "everything in life must always resolve itself into love . . . love is the divine solvent; love is the splendour of God" (Khalid, 295). He believes in the boundless, unselfish and, perfect love:

I'm not starving for pleasure . . . nor for the light free love of an exquisite caprice. Those little flowers that bloom and wither in the blush of dawn are for the little butterflies. The love that endures, give me that. And it must be the deepest divine strain, as deep and divine as maternal love. Man, must be likewise. With me it must endure throughout all words and immensities; else I would not raise a finger for it. (Khalid, 98).

Along the same lines, Johnston says that the mystical, religious and unrestricted love is a universal love from which one's enemies are not excluded. It is the love of God united with the love of the world. It is the love that prompts good Samaritans everywhere to pick up the destitute and dying in the streets to help the

underprivileged, to give a glass of water to the little one. It is a love that may drive a person to abandon everything for a life of solitude in a hut in the desert (65).

Moreover, Johnston says that the basic thing in mystical life is not to love but to receive love, not to love God and man but to let yourself be loved by God and man. In other words, to let yourself be loved, you should show good deeds, which are the fruits of unselfish love. Hence, when you love unselfishly, you do good to others and allow yourself to receive love. Similarly, Khalid's openness and his belief in universal brotherhood lead him to embrace mystical love. Furthermore, Johnston says: "Don't put barriers in the way; don't put a defense mechanism; let love come in because human love is a response to divine love . . . this is the key to mysticism" (89-90). Khalid calls for a deep, divine love because to him man is of Eternity; that is, to Khalid, man is endowed with a divine nature. I may go as far as to say that to Khalid man ought to be a mystic since he is of Eternity and his love is boundless, deep, and pure. Johnston confirms: "Mysticism is like that; and the mystics are men and women in love, in love without restriction" (95).

In addition mysticism is a journey of love. It is the answer to a call of love; and every stage is enlightened and guided by a living flame, a blind stirring, a love which has no reservations or restrictions, a love which is divine (Johnston, 135). In Corinthians I, St. Paul considers that love is superior to any charismatic gift and has no limitations whatsoever; it "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things . . . love never ends" (Corinthians I, 13: 78). And for Paul this is a love which is patient and kind, not jealous or boastful, nor arrogant or rude (Johnston, 135). In short, it is the love, which Khalid calls for. A love divine, perfect, and pure. Khalid meets the mystics again when he was:

disappointed, distraught, diseased, . . . worsted by the Jesuits, excommunicated, crossed in love . . . but with an eternal glint of sunshine in his breast to open and light up new paths before him, Khalid, after the fatal episode, makes away from Baalbek. He suddenly disappears . . . in the Lebanon mountains perhaps . . . let us reverence the privacy of man, the sacredness of his religious retreat. For no matter where he is in the flesh, we are metaphysically certain of his existence (Khalid, 181).

To Johnston, "once called, the mystic starts out on a journey. And what a journey, this going forth into the desert and into the void! The journey is filled with conflict from the very beginning" (97). In Khalid's case the forest is a haven, a sort of peaceful refuge where he can have spiritual healing and reconciliation. To Johnston, the conflict lies in staying in or leaving the forest. The man who sees the footprints or feels the call of God, is supposed to answer it, but he also wants to stay in the forest. He knows the forest; it is a familiar place; it has its crude and sensual joys. In the end, the man refuses to stay and chooses to follow the call of love heard in the distance (97). But Khalid finds in it "signal manifestations of the triumph of the soul over the diseases and adversities and sorrows of mortal life" (Khalid, 182). Moreover, to Khalid: "the soul is not dependent on health or disease. The soul is the source of both health and disease. And life, therefore is either a healthy or a diseased state of the soul" (Khalid, 219). Khalid believes that love lies in his terraces: "And every chink in my terrace walls seems to breathe a message of sweetness and light and love" (Khalid, 183). To him the one who is in love loves all:

Now all the inhabitants of my terraces and fields seem to echo this sublime sentiment of their Goddess. The air and sunshine, nay, the very rocks are imbued with it. See, how the fissures in the boulders yonder seem to

sympathise with the gaps in the terrace walls: the cyclamen leaves in the one are salaaming the cyclamen flowers in the other (Khalid, 183).

Just like the hermits and ascetics isolate themselves in nature to seek union with the Almighty, who is the embodiment of Love, Khalid believes that nature reflects divine love and forms a bridge for man to be united with his Maker. Furthermore, Khalid says:

Yes, this one single, simple act of love brings forth an infinite variety of flowers to celebrate the death of the finite outward shape and the eternal essence of life perennial. In complete surrender lies the divineness of thing eternal (Khalid, 184).

By saying that in complete surrender things acquire a divine attribute, Khalid reflects the belief that mysticism is based on the indwelling of the Spirit and the divinization of man. Jesus said that if we love Him, we would obey his commandments or surrender to His Will, and He would send us the Spirit who is love personified and who is in us. According to the Gospel of St. John:

After Jesus finished saying this, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your Son, so that the Son may give glory to you . . . I have made you known to those you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me. They have obeyed your word, and now they know that everything you gave me comes from you. I gave them the message that you gave me, and they received it; they know that it is true that I came from you, and they believe that you sent me (John 17: 1, 5-8).

Khalid further says: "My native terraces are rich with faith and love, luxuriant with the life divine and the wondrous symbols thereof" (Khalid, 185). Thus, it is only with

strong faith and unrestricted love that divine life is bestowed through an act of grace on us. Moreover, Khalid says that love makes us reach divinity. "I tried hard to hate and detest myself, as you advise [Monsieur Pascal], and I found that I could not by so doing love God. It is in loving the divine in man, in me, in you, that we rise to the love of our Maker" (Khalid, 56). Here, Khalid is obviously referring to the unrestricted, deep and pure love, which is the cornerstone of Christian mysticism and all established religions, especially Christianity, and according to Sarru', Christianity elevated love to divinity (P.I.). Khalid believes that love has extraordinary healing powers that save the grief-stricken souls. In fact, he says: "no matter how deep and poignant our sorrows, we can always rise from them, harp in hand, to an ecstasy, joyous and divine" (Khalid, 57). When man is able to love as divinely as his maker, no sorrow, no matter how poignant it is, can ever control him. According to Sarru', the liberating influence of love enlarges man's orbit beyond the limitations of matter; hence, man becomes all encompassing and encompassed with the divine attraction. This explanation links beautifully with Transcendentalism and Christian Mysticism (P.I.). Love is to Khalid, as well as to the Christian mystics a crucial element to attain divinity. Khalid says:

Only two flames uniting produce a third; but a flame and a name, or a flame and a sponge, produce a hiff and nothing. Oh, that the children of the race are all born phoenix-like in the fire of noble and sacred passion, in the purgatory, as it were, of love (Khalid, 242-243).

Along the same lines, Walter Hilton says: "Whenever a soul is united to God in this ecstasy of love, then God and the soul are no longer two, but one: not, indeed in nature, but in Spirit. In this union a true marriage is made between God and the soul,

which shall never be broken (qtd. in Steven Katz 153). So the two flames, God and the soul, are united in the fire of divine love and become one.

Khalid's concept of mystical love meets with that of St. Augustine and Teresa of Avila: two very well-known Christian mystics who left behind them a whole series of teachings and philosophy in the Christian Church. According to Denise Carmody, St. Augustine became the father of Western mysticism because he struggled so diligently for so many days. The faith that Augustine sought to understand committed him to a lightsome God who was the source of the world that Genesis describes. This God was also the Father of Jesus Christ and so was the Trinitarian divinity that the relations of Jesus Christ with his Father and Spirit implied. This God spoke and loved, all the while remaining hidden in light inaccessible. The Incarnation and Redemption did not remove the hiddenness of God. What they disclosed about God only deepened the divine mystery, showing that its morality, its goodness and love, were as profound as its unlimited being. Ingredient in the mystical tradition that Augustine fathered is a recognition, encoded in the very moment of peak experience of ultimate reality, that human speech, indeed human totality cannot express ultimate reality adequately. The more intensely we know God, by God's gracious drawing of our minds and hearts into the divine mystery, the more profoundly we realize that God simply is outside all categories, and that God's expressing what we are is more central to any mystical encounter than our realizing or expressing what God is (202-203). St. Augustine, the great Church teacher puts love in the forefront, and Khalid does the same. Thus, according to Jacques Maritain, Saint Augustine believes that:

What comes absolutely first, what illuminates, judges, measures, what gives the right of jurisdiction over all things, *spiritualis iudicat omnia*, what springs in the Christian's breast, like waters of Paradise, to fructify and

renew the whole expanse of knowledge, is the gift of the Spirit in the might of love (199).

This gift of love given to us by the Holy Spirit carries many powers, which Khalid believes to acquire through loving in a divine manner, that is, in pure, deep, and unrestricted love.

Khalid resorts to the inner eye to resolve his conflicts. He even retreats to the woods for a spiritual healing where he was able to encounter divine love and be united with God. When the spiritual world and the material one are in a state of conflict and opposition, Khalid, says:

I sit down, shut my eyes, compose myself and concentrate my mind on the mobility of things. If the clouds are moving, why I have but to sit down and let them move away. I let my No-Will, in this case, dominate my will, and that serves my purpose well, to be sure, every question tormenting us would resolve itself favorably, or at least indifferently, if we did not always rush in, wildly, madly, and arrogate to ourselves such claims of authority and knowledge as would make Olympus shade with laughter (Khalid, 237).

To Khalid, all our problems and torments would fade away if we withdraw ourselves from all things. In other words, by resorting to the inner eye we would have the divine wisdom to solve all our conflicts. Along the same lines Saint Augustine

repeats and enforces the lesson that the soul will only succeed in finding God by a return and progression *ad intus*, by a withdrawal from things and the senses in order to dispose itself for ascents in its own inmost self. For it is a question of meeting, in the depths of the heart, him who abides there as in his temple, and in whom the heart can find rest, not indeed the God of philosophers and scholars, who may be attained without faith, nor even the

God of theologians, who may be attained without charity, but the God of Saints, the life of our life offering Himself to us by grace and in love (Maritain, 199).

It is worth to point out here that in comparing priorities, St. Augustine goes first with the god of Saints, then with the god of theologians, then, and if need be, with the god of philosophers. While Khalid goes first with the god of Nature, then with the god of philosophers, then with the god of theologians, and stops at that point. Thus, to Khalid the god of nature is primarily important for man to achieve union with God.

Johnston, concurs with Maritain and says that the great theologians of antiquity realized their theological achievement through their inner eye. Saint Augustine calls it “the master within,” the *magister internus*. They were united with Christ, they, too, died and rose. If they wrote about sin and redemption, this was because they experienced these things in their lives. If they wrote about the love of God, it was because they experienced the love of God as a living reality. “Their theology reflected their faith, the living faith, the mystical faith that burned in their hearts out of the fullness of their hearts they spoke and wrote” (Johnston, 55).

Khalid believes that a union between the soul and the body is necessary to develop the divine strain in man. In fact, he says:

No, the spiritual ought not and can not be free from the sensuous, even the sensual. The true life, the full life, the life pure, robust, sublime, is that in which all the nobler and higher aspirations of the soul AND THE BODY are given free and unlimited scope, with the view of developing the divine strain in Man, and realizing to some extent the romantic as well as the material hopes of the race. God, Nature, Spirit, Passion—Passion, Spirit, Nature, God—in some such panorama would I paint the life of a highly developed being.

Any of these elements lacking, and the life is wanting, defective, impure
(Khalid, 242).

The statement echoes Augustine's:

We have two natures: that of the body and that of the soul. The nature of the body is the soul and the nature of the soul is God. The union between the soul and the body is essential because they form one nature and one divine person. And so, just like the soul gives life to the body, which it enjoys, God, without being an image of the soul, gives the soul His supernatural life. Hence, this life establishes a real union between God and us. In this union our soul is perfected and divinized (Maritain, 200).

Similarly, the Spanish Carmelite nun, Teresa of Avila says: "I think I read or heard somewhere that our life is hid in Christ or in God (for that is the same thing), or that our life is Christ . . ." (Fieser, 368). To this Spanish mystic, God will unite our tiny achievement with His greatness and make both of them into one (Fieser 368). St. Teresa of Avila, a Doctor of the Church and the most Catholic of Saints and mystics, is a sixteenth-century Spanish nun who had an immense impact in the new world. In a period in which religion had in large part degenerated into pomp and ritual, Teresa advocated a return to interiority, mental prayer, and simplified life-style (Mujica, 62). Moreover, Tessa Bielecki says:

Teresa of Avila was a towering personality who moved easily in and out of many worlds . . . a passionate bride of Christ ardently longing to give herself totally to the Beloved . . . she founded the Discalced Carmelites and inspired a school of spirituality that continues to enliven thousands of men and women today . . . Her writings are classic, contemporaneous with every age. Because they are primordial – concerned with fundamental human

questions- they are also perennial: as relevant to our century as to those that precede us and those that will follow (15-16).

As seen previously, Khalid seeks refuge through the inner eye, in God or in solitude. In his "The Uses of Solitude" he writes:

Every one's life at certain times, is a temple, a Hermitage, or a Vineyard: every one, in order to flee the momentary afflictions of Destiny, takes refuge either in God or in solitude, or in work . . . God and solitude are luxuries which only a few among us nowadays can afford. But he who lives in the three, though his life be that of a silk larva in its cocoon, is he not individually considered a good man? Is he not a mystic, though uncreative, centre of goodness? Surely, his influence, his Me alone considered is living and benign, and though it is not life-giving (Khalid, 209-210).

Khalid considers God, solitude and work as luxuries. To him a man who lives in God, or in solitude or in work is a good one. He calls him a mystic that is, a divinized person. Saint Teresa of Avila believes that our soul is the dwelling of the Most High and so divine nature lies within us and grants us the power to overcome all afflictions:

And should by chance you do not know

Where to find Me,

Do not go here and there;

But if you wish to find Me,

In yourself seek Me.

Soul, since you are My room,

My house and dwelling,

If at any time,

Through your distracted ways
I find the door tightly closed,

Outside of yourself seek Me not,
To find Me it will be
Enough only to call Me,
Then quickly will I come,
And in yourself seek Me (qtd. in Bielecki, 41).

To Saint Teresa of Avila the soul of the just person is a paradise where the Lord finds His delight. Wherever God is, there is heaven, where His Majesty is present, all glory is present. All one has to do is go into solitude and look at Him within oneself and not turn away from so good a Guest but with great humility speak to Him as to a father (Bielecki 41-42). So, Khalid like Teresa seeks God when he goes into solitude where he finds his refuge within himself.

As previously discussed, Khalid places love in the forefront and attaches a great importance to it, to him love is a source of life when he says:

And what is thought, and what is God, and what is Matter, and what is Spirit? They are the mysterious vessels of life, which are always being filled by love and emptied by logic (Khalid, 227).

To Khalid, love is the source which fills everything be it natural or supernatural, with love. But Khalid is referring here to the deep, pure, and divine love. That love which is selfless and unrestricted. To Saint Teresa of Avila "This high level of love does not discount the physical but integrates it into a higher selfless concern for the spiritual perfection of the other" (52). Therefore, both the physical and the spiritual are required to achieve a divine perfection. Here Khalid's idea of the unity of the natural

and spiritual is recapitulated again. “The spiritual and natural are so united, so inextricably entwined around each other, that I can not conceive of them separately, independently” (Khalid, 241). Moreover, Khalid considers love as well as light and will as a source of divinity. In fact, he says:

Light, love, and will-the one is as necessary as the other; the one is dangerous without the others. Light, love, and will, are the three eternal, vital sources of the higher, truer, purer cosmic life (Khalid, 247).

According to Khalid, love is one of the three vital elements for the high, true, and pure divine life in which lie power and glory. So love is a source of perfection and divinity. Similarly, Saint Teresa of Avila relates perfection to Divinity: “I believe that, since our nature is bad, we will not reach perfection in the love of neighbor if that love doesn’t rise from the love of God as its root” (56). Thus, perfection is attained when it rises from divine love. Furthermore, Khalid says:

A heart as simple as this desert sand, as deep in affection as this heaven, untainted by the uncertainties and doubts and caprices of modern life, . . . only in such a heart is the love that endures, the love divine and eternal (Khalid, 343).

To Khalid deep, pure, divine love lies in the heart of the innocent who has not been stained by evil, greed and selfishness. Along the same lines, Saint Teresa of Avila says: “This love is all the more authentic because it seeks to give more than to receive. Although mere chemical attractions have usurped the name “love” only self-oblivious generosity truly merits that name” (52). Khalid, like St. Teresa, believes that the innocent love dwelling in the hearts of the little ones like Najib is the real, authentic, and generous love.

After having traced certain parallels between The Book of Khalid and Christian mysticism, it is worth discussing Rihani's concept of mysticism as implied in the introduction of his famous book, A Chant of Mystics And Other Poems. In fact, this would be a projection of Khalid's mysticism or Rihani's mystic trend after The Book of Khalid. Suheil Bushrui and John Munro argue that Ameen Rihani "sought his mystical experience through the world, more in the manner of St. John of the Cross" (18). In fact, St. John of the Cross is one of the great Church teachers who taught the Spanish Carmelite nun, Teresa of Avila and who helped her throughout the Discalced Reform. According to Bushrui and Munro Rihani was a Sufi or a Mystic, thus clarifying the notion that Sufism is not an exclusively Muslim sect (18). However, Sufism appealed to Rihani because it belonged to both East and West. A Maronite Christian issued from Mount Lebanon, Rihani was totally conscious of the tensions and conflicts boiling among the several confessions in his country. He believed that to resolve the conflict, one has to adopt the Sufi or Mystic path, which leads to reconciliation between both East and West. Rihani, says in his poem "A Chant of Mystics,"

We are not of the East or the West;

No boundaries exist in our breast:

We are free (106).

Moreover, the editors argue that Rihani was drawn to mysticism because of the confessional structure of Lebanon and because he did not want Christianity and Islam to be at enmity (22). In fact, Rihani meets very much with Johnston who believes that it is at the level of mysticism that the two traditions of East and West can at last understand one another and begin to work together to heal a broken world (29). This

is very true since Rihani's main purpose was to reconcile both the East and the West in order to reach a better world.

As was discussed, love is the key to Christian mysticism. Love that is divine and free from greed, ambition, intellectual pride, blind obedience to custom etc. Rihani reflects this idea in "The Chant of Mystics," where he speaks of Man being near God in proportion as he is away from the world's vanities (Bushrui & Munro 19-20). In other words, the more man is drawn to God the more his love grows divine.

Yea, Man is as near the Beloved
 As far from the world he may be;
 He is full of the beauty of Allah
 As he's void of the *Thou* and the *Me*
 Life and the world we abandon

That the life of the world we may see (Chant III, ll. 102 - 107).

Rihani, like his hero believes in the divine source of love. He says:

Where the Garden of God is a bloom on Love's radiant strand,
 There is our temple, our home, and our own native land (Chant III, ll. 146-
 147).

Moreover, to Khalid man is of Eternity. This same belief is echoed in "A Chant of Mystics," whereby Rihani says:

But glory incarnate are we.
 O think us not mortal, for we
 Are the light on the foam of the sea (Chant IV, ll. 211-213).

Also, Khalid's religion is purely a work of the heart. To him the motivating force behind the work of the heart is the love pure, eternal and divine. This same belief is shared by Rihani in "A Chant of Mystics:"

The heart is a treasure of gold in the dust-pit of things:

'Tis the rebeck of love and of love forever it sings;

'Tis the pearl in the sea and the phare on the shore of the Mind;

'Tis the ear of the deaf and the all-seeing eye of the blind.

(Chant V, ll. 245-248).

We notice how in Rihani's mysticism the mind and the five senses work together to aspire and inspire the Creator. They aspire to reach Divinity and inspire It in return so that It may see Its reflection in them.

Rihani alludes to the idea of the oneness of religions, which advocate all of them divine love. He says:

The heart is the maker of dreams, the alembic power:

'Tis the gate to all beauty, the key to the ivory tower;

'Tis the crown of the Buddha, the Christ, 'tis the sword of the Prophet;

'Tis the flame in the temple of faith, and of reason, the flower.

(Chant V, ll. 249 - 252).

For Rihani's mystic, religions are one. They are the different expressions of one goal, which is divine love. Rihani, like his hero, believes that the heart is the dwelling of eternal love, which begets power and beauty. Also, he believes that it begets a love divine shared by Divinity. Rihani's poem "Renunciation" expresses the idea "That love should be the dynamic force behind everything that is thought, uttered or accomplished, for only through love can enlightenment and eventually salvation be

attained” (Bushrui & Munro, 20). Here Rihani shares with Khalid the idea that love is the source of life, divinity, and salvation. He says in his poem “Renunciation:”

The pilgrim went again his way
 And dwelt with love upon the shore
 Of self-oblivion; and one day
 He knocked again at the Beloved’s door.
 “Whose there?” –“It is myself”, he now replied, and suddenly the door was
 opened wide (79).

Like his hero, Rihani believes in love advocated by the Christian mystics, who believe that in love alone can man reach the high level of divinity and be freed from all his afflictions.

Finally, it is worth noticing that Khalid’s Christian Mysticism was reached, not through the Church dogmas but through his own understanding of mysticism, in spite of the similarities with St. Augustine and Teresa of Avila. Khalid focused on the essence of Christianity, which is unselfish love. He did not attach importance to the Church authorities and their dogmas. It’s true that there is no Christianity without a Church but I believe that the Church is the body of Christ and we, believers, are members of His body. The faithful believers form the Church and not the rigid dogmas. In his Letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul asserts that the Church is the body of Christ:

Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the Church; and Christ is Himself the Savior of the Church, His body . . . A man who loves his wife loves himself. No one ever hates his own body. Instead, he feeds it

and takes care of it, just as Christ does the Church; for we are members of His body (Ephesians 5: 22-23-29-30).

We see how Khalid seems to advance the idea that love is power and that man is of Eternity. Khalid's assertion that in complete spiritual surrender things acquire a divine attribute reflects the belief that mysticism is based on the indwelling of the Spirit and the divinization of Man. To Khalid, it is in loving the divine in man that we attain the love of our Maker. Undoubtedly, Khalid refers to the unconditional, and pure love, which is the cornerstone of Christian mysticism. Khalid, like St. Augustine, believes that the gift of love carries many powers and that looking through the inner eye helps us experience the great love of God. Moreover, Khalid, like St. Teresa of Avila, seeks God when he goes into solitude, where he finds his refuge within himself. To Khalid, love is the source, which fills everything, be it natural or supernatural. Similarly, St. Teresa of Avila believes that sublime love doesn't disregard the physical but integrates it into a higher selfless concern for the spiritual perfection of the other. And since mysticism is based on the indwelling of the Spirit and the divinization of man, Khalid calls for self-denial, which is the basis of mysticism. "Khalid himself says that to be truly, deeply, piously in love, one must needs hate himself. How true, how inexorably true!" (Khalid, 17). In fact, this is very true, for Jesus Himself said: "The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to give his life for them" (John 15:13). Finally, we can say that the unity of Being is achieved since Christian Mysticism is the direct experience of God who is the center of the universe and the focal point in religion.

Conclusion

At the end of my research work I cannot but say that Bahá'ism, American Transcendentalism and Christian Mysticism are currents of thought, philosophy and religion that begot Rihani's concept of the Unity of Being. Yet, this perception of the Unity of Being influenced the formation of Rihani's universal identity. In fact, speaking through the voice of his protagonist, Rihani declares that he belongs to both the East and the West, of both he sings and to both he gives praises.

Many authorities on Rihani rightly consider The Book of Khalid as an expression of the author's philosophy. It is not sheer coincidence that the story of Khalid, the young Lebanese emigrant to America, contains many allusions to Rihani's own life experiences. To Nathan Funk, Khalid

Receives inspiration for reconciling the irreconcilables: East and West, spirituality and materialism, soul and science, heart and head, God and nature, male and female. He has a vision of a world big enough for both dervishes and stockbrokers, in which it is possible to amalgamate the best of the West with the best of the East: the soul of the East and the mind of the West" (Palma Journal 182).

The idea of reconciling both East and West is the major theme in all Rihani's works as if he is haunted with the idea of achieving a new pattern of being, a "Higher Superman." We can notice Rihani's eagerness as well as his anxiousness to establish a peaceful world in which the materialism of the West is attenuated by the spirituality of the East and the idleness of the East is invigorated by the pragmatism of the West. To Ameen Albert Rihani The Book of Khalid carries a message advancing universalism, which is a result of Ameen Rihani's deep interaction with the powerful West and the spiritual East. Indeed, he lived both the challenges of the East and of the

West to the fullest. As a result, universalism reflected in his ideal superman came through (Palma Journal 24). In other words, his ideal human being promoted universalism that has to do with human rights, liberty, culture, etc. Accordingly, his “Higher Superman” is neither from the East nor from the West. He is from both.

It is worth to point out that Rihani’s theme of universality is the precursor to what we call today the phenomenon of globalization. Rihani brought up the issue long before anyone could fathom that the cultures and economies of East and West would become as interrelated as they are today. One might go as far as saying that man facing globalization is the core idea in The Book of Khalid. Today’s globalization implies the fall of boundaries, cross-cultural communication, economic exchange, etc. and the world tends to become a small village. It is not surprising then to say that Rihani’s attempt to reconcile the East and the West is an attempt at bringing together both worlds on a deep humanitarian level. Indeed, he calls for the unity of religions and considers love to be the divine solvent and the splendour of God. Also, he believes in the divine potential of Man, which enables him to embrace tolerance, peace, and universal love away from all greed and selfishness. About a hundred years after the publishing of The Book of Khalid, is Rihani’s vision of establishing a new world order in which his ideal human being would take from the wisdom of Asia, the art of Europe, and the science of America, still a far-fetched dream? Where does Rihani’s universalization stand with respect to today’s phenomenon of globalization? As we know, universalization has to do with human rights, liberty, culture, and democracy. By contrast, globalization is about technology, the market, tourism, and information. Nowadays, universalization is vanishing because of globalization. The globalization of exchanges puts an end to the universalization of values. Rihani’s belief in oneness in the fullest sense tends to be achieved through universal values

such as love. But today's virtual global culture has replaced universal concepts with screens, networks, numbers, etc. In the universal, there was still room for a natural reference to the world but now globalization opened the door to violence characterized by the supremacy of technical efficiency and positivity, total organization and the equivalence of all exchanges. What's more important is that the violence of the global puts an end to the social role of the intellectual and here one might ask: in the absence of values, what sort of human being is formed? I'm afraid that Rihani's vision of establishing a new world order is quite unreachable. His ideal divine Man cannot set foot on today's ground where there is no place for human values such as universal love. Rihani's concept of the Unity of being and his strong belief in oneness in its fullest sense tend to be strange nowadays because the global is replacing the universal. And it seems clearer, everyday, that Rihani's perception of the Unity of Being is becoming more and more out of reach at times when it is mostly needed.

It is worthwhile mentioning here that the study of Bahatism, Transcendentalism, and Christian Mysticism in The Book of Khalid could be projected, as well, to most of Rihani's English and Arabic works. This expanded study might be the subject of a similar thesis or dissertation that discusses the issue as a major trend of thought in Rihani's literature.

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