

Ameen Rihani's Humanist Vision of Arab Nationalism

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“I am a Lebanese, volunteering in the service of the Arab homeland, and we all belong to it. I am an Arab volunteering in the service of humanity, and we all belong to it.”¹

With such vividness, pride and unwavering courage Ameen Rihani pronounced what I would call his “tri-centric” belonging; and repeatedly called upon his compatriots to follow his example. Summarizing a life commitment to the Arab homeland and culture and to world society, to “universal humanity”, Rihani advocated his humanism and “dialectical identity” to his Arab contemporaries. Rather than excluding the “other”, this kind of identity is dynamically related to something larger than itself. It is, like humanism - in the Hegelian sense – not an “exclusionary game”, but “as a dialectical process, it is an inherently inclusionary project.”² It is this kind of identity, which Rihani insisted on embracing to counter his feeling of insecurity as a Christian Lebanese in the heart of the Arab world, and to avoid the loss of distinctiveness as an Arab citizen of the world. It is thus important from the onset to emphasize that Rihani’s loyalty to the smaller circle, born of love to his country of birth, Lebanon, in no way contradicted his loyalty to the greater Arab homeland, and his dedication to serve his people as he served the cause of humankind.

I say unwavering courage because Rihani lived in a world and a time not unlike ours. A world divided between dominant and dominated, powerful and weak. And like today’s world, some liked to divide it between “civilized” and “uncivilized”, and perhaps between “good” and “evil”. Like many of us Arabs in the West today, Rihani happened to belong to both the Arab world and the West. And he did not waver in his belonging to either. His pride in his Leban-Arabness did not weaken during times of crisis. Rather, because of the many crises facing his people, his tri-centrism became more assertive, and his determination to serve the Arab cause, as a humanist (from his position as an Arab-American) grew even stronger. For him, one cannot be humanist without being oneself

first. For “no matter how much we let ourselves go in the absolute love of humanity, we cannot forget, if we are fair, the love of our own country (*al-watan*).”³

In this article, I discuss the dialectical relationship between Rihani’s sense of belonging, to the national and the universal, and his humanist vision of Arab nationalism. I argue first that Rihani adopted this humanist outlook as a positive response to his trans-cultural and often painful formation in two different worlds: East and West. His life and intellectual career, both as writer and activist, reflect his tireless endeavor to balance his East-West belonging in a dynamic association that aimed at bringing both worlds together for the sake of both, and the sake of humanity. His vision of a “humanist” Arab nationalism is the intellectual outcome and political framework of such endeavor. I use humanist here in both meanings: “universal” and “rational”. Thus, I discuss his vision, not only in terms of his concern to see the Arabs contribute to human civilization and play a role on the world stage, but also in connection with his commitment to see a new Arab society established on rational, universal principles of human progress, such as freedom, justice and equality.

Between East and West: Citizen of the Universe

Rihani was hardly 12 years of age when he migrated to New York (1888) where he discovered, not only the huge gap between the rich and the poor, but also, and above all, the wide divide between East and West.⁴ But from the infernal world of materialism, which dominated every aspect of life, he sought an escape in the cultural diversity, which he found in New York. Through an exceptionally rigorous program of self-education in Arab and Western literatures, Rihani was the first Syrian Lebanese immigrant to force his own way in the world of intellectuals, contrary to the expectations of his family and the prevailing norms of his fellow emigrants. His early published contributions in Arabic (1898), which convey his rebellion, also reflect his inner struggle with the tension of two cultures. This was primarily expressed in the conflict he experienced between writing in English, his adopted language, and in Arabic, his native tongue.⁵ This initial contact with the West proved to be crucial for Rihani’s intellectual development, and the shaping of his identity. His keenness for self-education, and particularly his wide-ranging readings in both Arabic and Western literatures, sharpened his innate tendency to seek philosophical and

spiritual truth from both sources. It also faced him with the question of coming to terms with the resulting cultural conflict between two different worlds.

From an early period of his career, and constantly moving between East and West, Rihani's main concerns were channeled in two inter-related intellectual pursuits: an active commitment to the cause of his people, and an increasing openness towards, and participation in, Western literary and cultural life. His interaction with the Arabic communities in New York and Arab societies back home alerted him to the issues of Arab backwardness, ignorance and religious fanaticism.⁶ And while he was addressing these national questions, he began to address universal issues including the problems of the West's material, spiritual and intellectual conditions.⁷ It was partly due to this national-universal commitment that he became known as *Faylasuf al-Freike* (the philosopher of Freike), a title, which was to remain associated with his name all his life and after his death.⁸

Despite his disappointment with certain aspects of Western culture and way of life Rihani continued his vigorous interaction with this culture, not only through intensifying his readings in Western literatures, but also through addressing the Western readership in English. His extensive readings in Arabic had deepened his appreciation of the Arabic heritage. He felt exceptionally "proud" of the Arab philosopher poet Abu al-'Ala' al-Ma'arri (d. 1058), so he decided to become "his translator" in the West.⁹ *The Quatrains of Abu l-'Ala* was not only Rihani's first published work in English (New York, 1903) but also the debut of his career as a leading representative and interpreter of Oriental culture in the West.¹⁰ The culmination of his concern with bridging East and West was *The Book of Khalid*, which was the first book ever authored in English by an Arab. It was also Rihani's best expression of his aspirations to universal citizenship. Even in the West, Rihani's *Khalid* was then seen as "a citizen not of the Occident nor of the Orient", but as "a poet singing to the universe and to the Superman".¹¹

Reclaiming the Arab Identity

But this universal citizenship doesn't seem to have given Rihani the comfort he was seeking. And after this series of transformations, he would embrace again his "essential" Arab identity. It is interesting that the reclaiming of this identity happened while he was in New York, despite his interaction, or perhaps because of this interaction, with the Western

culture. In an autobiographical statement in *Muluk al-'Arab*, he himself explains his cultural metamorphosis from a Maronite in the Lebanese Mountain to an Arab nationalist promoting the interest of the Pan-Arab movement. His rich but painful life experience in the West seems to have contributed to this development. And his readings of Western literatures on the Arabs and Arabia introduced him to the Arab glories and urged him to cross the Arabian frontiers.¹² This rediscovery of his cultural identity was the most important motive behind his decision to further search for his Arab roots in the land of his ancestors. On 25 February 1922, Rihani set foot, for the first time in his life, on the soil of the Arabian Peninsula, thus beginning what was to become the most important journey of his career.

Through his Arabian travels, Rihani regained the comfort of feeling of belonging. Throughout his journeys, he enjoyed a special status as a “dear” visitor amongst his own people, in spite of his religion.¹³ The trust engendered by his sincere Arab identity and commitment, and the bond of language, culture and common concerns were stronger than the barrier of religion. His genuine interest in the Arab cause gained him the confidence of Arab rulers, and helped him play an important role in creating some mutual understanding between them. On the other hand, his knowledge of the Arab land and people, and the fact that he was the product of two civilizations, Eastern and Western, made him a “distinct” traveler in Arabia. Being an Arab coming from the West, on what he considered as an Arab national mission, gained him enough confidence to criticize, when he deemed it necessary, certain aspects of underdevelopment and backwardness in Arab life.¹⁴ And while he proudly described the glory of Arabia and its people, he fairly criticized them and called upon them to unite and adopt modern means of progress, in order to face the challenges of the modern world.¹⁵

The Arabian travels reinforced Rihani’s sense of the Arab dimension of his identity, but not in isolation from the other two dimensions, the Lebanese and the humanist. His belief that the “Arab homeland” was “the heart of the world”¹⁶ has now been established. The Arab cause, including the liberation of Lebanon and Syria and the question of Palestine, became the pivotal axis of his national-universal preoccupations. And from his position as a humanist, he became a prominent advocate of the Arab national movement, and the first Arab ever to publicly defend the Arab rights in Palestine in the international arena.¹⁷ His interest in the question of Palestine of course is still particularly relevant today, and deserves

special attention, which is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say here, that when Rihani undertook his lecture tour in America and Canada (1929-1939), to counteract Zionist propaganda and defend the Arab Palestine cause, he did this as a true believer in justice and freedom as basic human rights; and because he believed, as a humanist, “that the peace of the world depends in a measure upon peace in the Holy Land.”¹⁸

Progressive and Secular Arabism

Rihani’s political activism helped crystallize his idea of Pan-Arabism, a most cherished idea in the modern Arab world since the beginning of the 20th century. As early as 1909, he had provided the first territorial definition of the “Arab homeland” (*al-watan*) as comprising geographical Syria, Mesopotamia and the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁹ This was perhaps the first unambiguous political (as distinct from cultural or linguistic) definition of the idea of Arab nationalism. However, unlike some other Arab intellectuals (Sati‘ al-Husri or Constantine Zurayq for example), Rihani did not develop this idea into an elaborate theory.²⁰ But, it is possible through a careful reading of his various writings, to outline his vision of Arab nationalism, which was drawn from his own experiences and his perception of the reality of Arab societies of his time.

In the 1920s, Rihani came to the conviction that Arab nationalism was the salvation of the Arabs, and unity was their means to restore justice and fight against colonialism and Western expansionist plans. Because of his realism and practical approach, his concept of unity evolved with the changing social and political circumstances of his time. It is against the background of such change that we should understand his gradual transformation from an “Ottoman” reformist to an Arab nationalist advocating a Syrian Lebanese unity and Pan-Arabia first, and then to a “pan-Arab” nationalist calling for a broader cultural, geographical and political pan-Arab unity. This, he saw, would comprise the Peninsula, Iraq and geographical Syria (including Lebanon and Palestine).²¹ Despite his awareness of the Arab cultural identity of Egypt and the Maghrib,²² like many Arab nationalists of his generation, Rihani excluded both regions from the political map of pan-Arab unity.²³

Of course, Rihani shared many ideas with his contemporary Arab nationalists. He, like most of them, considered geography, history, language and culture as essential elements of Arab nationalism. He differed, however, in the degree of emphasis, and in his awareness

of the existence of other equally important elements, which other nationalists underestimated or entirely overlooked. In this paper I focus on those aspects that make Rihani's vision of Arab nationalism distinctly humanist.

Rihani was a historian with a dialectical understanding of Arab history. Although a loyal nationalist, he did not have a romantic attitude towards the past, nor did he overestimate the Arab national past in relation to that of humanity as a whole. On the contrary, Rihani was perhaps the first modern Arab intellectual to deal critically with the Arab past, with the aim of rejecting its negative influences, and learning from its positive aspects.²⁴ He believed that any Arab national renaissance or reform movement should start from a balanced and conscious look at the Arab past, which was not an example to be followed blindly. Such view was the basis of his idea of progress as an essential condition to achieve Arab unity. Progress required shaking off the way of thinking which had shackled the Arabs to their past, but not complete rejection of this past. He always asserted his pride in the Arab contribution to world civilization, and he stressed that the Arabs were entitled to their share of the glory of this civilization just as the Europeans. But he believed that nations today should be able to achieve progress with today's science, and only by combining the positive values of their cultural heritage, with the positive values of Western civilization could the Arabs advance. The two processes of borrowing and seeking inspiration from the past are inter-related in a dynamic relationship, which would create a new society, a nation capable of keeping up with other modern nations and of playing an effective role on the world stage.²⁵

With his deep appreciation of the Arabic cultural heritage and his pride of being part of this culture, Rihani considered it, with the exception of religion, as being the same in the whole Arab world.²⁶ In this vision, language takes priority over religion. Naturally, Arabic was the first expression of his Arab identity. Of course, Rihani acknowledged the Islamic dimension in Arabic culture, which, he insisted, was upheld by Muslims as well as Christians.²⁷ But he distinguished between Arabism and Islam and asserted the priority of Arabism. This is best manifested in his famous expression in 1938: "the Arabs were before Islam and before Christianity and they will remain after Islam and after Christianity. The Christians as well as the Muslims should know that Arabism (*al-'uruba*) is before everything and above everything."²⁸ Rihani was one of the pioneers of the modern secular

Arab nationalist discourse.²⁹ While not completely rejecting the relation between Islam and Arabness, he always insisted that Arabism was distinct and went beyond Islam to embrace all Arabs, Muslims and non-Muslims, even those like himself, who live outside the geographical borders of the Arab homeland.

In common with other nationalists, Rihani highlighted the Arab ethos, “the noble characteristics”, which contributed to their glory. He considered such noble qualities of pride, dignity, self-respect, faithfulness, sincerity, courage, generosity, hospitality, valor, love of glory, and above all love of freedom, as essentially distinct traits of the Arab nation. It was these “immortal” qualities, which brought him back from America and attracted him to the life in the desert. With a romantic turn of phrase, Rihani admits, “they tied [his] heart to that of the Arabs in a thread of hair stronger than any other tie.”³⁰

However, Rihani does not fail to observe that the noble traits may not be found in the soul of every Arab everywhere.³¹ He also notes that the Arabs have their own failings too. Whether Bedouin or urban, the Arab in his opinion, can be “... swift and violent in his reactions, jealous of his freedom; he is self-centered, ... a respecter... of authority only when authority has something to give besides orders.”³² His comments suggest influences of the Western Orientalist tradition, particularly as reflected in earlier Western travelers. But it is more likely that Rihani is presenting his own frank and candid observations and analysis, in the same way as earlier scholars such as Ibn Khaldun and other loyal Arab scholars have done.

Although he was proud of his Arab blood,³³ and writing in a period when purity of blood was still considered important in both Eastern and Western thought, Rihani didn't see race, or ethnicity, as an essential element to determine Arab identity. Instead, he identified common interest (*al-maslaha*), political and economic as the most important and perhaps the strongest of all national bonds. Liberation from foreign occupation and domination is the highest political national interest, which more than any blood or cultural ties would determine the people's will and desire to live together as one nation.³⁴ He, for example, argued that the people in Lebanon and Syria shared a common interest in getting rid of the mandate and whether they were of pure Arab blood or not they were Arabs by choice and preference, and were willing to unite with the Arabs of the Peninsula.³⁵ Rihani here

highlights the importance of will and aspiration in determining Arab identity, and desire to join Arab unity, a remarkable novelty in the Arab nationalist discourse.³⁶

Arab Unity, Democracy and Human Rights

With such national unifying factors, Rihani saw that the Arabs were a nation and must eventually become a state. In 1939, on the eve of the Second World War, he realized that the establishment of one Arab state under one ruler, i.e. Pan-Arab unity, was impossible. But he anticipated the establishment of an “Arab confederation, following the pattern, more or less, of the United States of America”. This would comprise the already established regional entities in the north and in the Peninsula as a first step towards Arab unity. He was optimistic the people in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine would welcome the union with Arabia, if the two powers (France and Britain) that were in control were to withdraw from the region to make such confederation possible. He doubted France and Britain would sincerely welcome such development. But he was almost sure that because of their fear of Ibn Sa‘ud, who in Rihani’s opinion, was destined to lead the Pan-Arab movement, and to safeguard their interests with the Arabs, the two powers would begin to look with favor upon such move.³⁷

Because his concept of Arab unity was not isolated from social, intellectual and political development, Rihani offered a practical plan to establish and organize such unity. In the Peninsula, he suggested development of just and civil political institutions, infrastructure and human resources. And in the north, he insisted on democratic civil government, secular national education and economic development, liberation from foreign rule and domination, and then complete unity with other Arab countries. These conditions are essentially related to his ideas of progress, democracy, justice and freedom, which Rihani emphasized as basic human rights, that are indispensable for the building of the new Arab nation. It is such emphasis that makes Rihani a pioneer of democracy and human rights in the modern Arab nationalist discourse.

It is important to note at this stage that despite his criticism of the abuse of democracy in the West, Rihani still believed that constitutional parliamentary civil rule, based on people’s freedom and participation regardless of religious differences, remained the best means to build the new Arab society. Nevertheless, his advocacy of democracy

in the Peninsula was a cautious one because of the special circumstances in Arabia of his time. This is not only an indication of his practicality and pragmatism,³⁸ but also of his rationalist, humanist approach in dealing with the problems of Arab societies. This is why I see Rihani's Pan-Arab nationalism as both a rational reflection on, and an endeavor towards, the realization of Arab unity and the reorganization of Arab society. And this is why I understand his humanist vision of Arab nationalism not only from the perspective of his concern with the place of the Arab nation in world society, but also in the light of his endeavor to reorganize Arab society on universal principles of human progress.

Rihani was concerned about foreign occupation and its divisive impact on the Arab nation. To overcome its state of fragmentation, he believed the Arab nation needed a national spirit, which would integrate all its fragmented elements in one unit. This national spirit (*al-ruh al-qawmiyya*) is Arabism (*al-'uruba*), which is primarily the consciousness of the essential qualities of the Arab nation. Arabism of course, is not identical with any religion or ethnicity. Because "Arabism is before everything and above everything."³⁹

Arabism, Rihani argues, is not simply an intellectual or a political ideology. It is "an all-embracing spirit which induces one to co-operate and unite with one's brothers in order to have a strong sovereign country which provides them all with security and happiness." Arabism means to replace the small and lost nationalisms, all sectarian and regional nationalisms, with one big nationalism, which would not accept the fragmentation and differentiation between majorities and minorities." In Rihani's Arabism, "the Christian and the Muslim, Druze and Alawite, are one and equal."⁴⁰

Rihani has identified sectarianism as one of the major obstacles to Arab unity and progress. He believed that unity would remain impossible unless the narrow sectarian identity was replaced with Arabism as a broader national identity. And he argued in favor of secular pan-Arab nationalism to counteract all the sectarian and regional nationalisms. He insisted that in a secular Arab national state under a government established on rational "solid civil bases", not on religious hegemony, all citizens would be equal in rights and duties. The fear of minorities would be unjustifiable, and Europeans would no longer have a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of the nation.

In secular Arab nationalism, Rihani found a solution to the minority problem in the Arab world, which has continued to preoccupy many Arab intellectuals since the mid 19th

century.⁴¹ For if unity were based on ethnicity, parts of the Arab world would be excluded, particularly in the north, where the original blood identity was lost under the influences of different invasions. And by excluding religion, he found a place for the religious minorities to feel secure and comfortable in a society where they could exercise their rights freely and on equal footing with other citizens. Thus, he finds the solution to the dilemma of Christian Arabs like himself. A narrow Christian Lebanese patriotism, for example, would encircle the Christians in a small country hostile to its Muslim surroundings. And as Christians in a Muslim state, the Lebanese would feel outside a specifically Muslim political order. Thus he saw secular Arab nationalism as the only solution to give the Christians, and other minorities, an identity as equal citizens, and to give everyone an equal opportunity to the best of their ability. This kind of emphasis on freedom and equality as basic human rights, and as the foundation of unity, is what distinguishes his vision of a humanist Arab nationalism. It is this form of nationalism, this all-embracing non-religious national solidarity (*‘asabiyya*), which as he optimistically believed, would lead the Arab nation in the battle of civilization and liberation. Because “Arabism is the greatest patriotic power, the unbeatable power which Europeans will respect.”⁴²

The Arab Nation: A “Small” Nation Striving for Freedom, Justice and World Peace

Rihani did not write a separate treatise on the Arab nation, but on the basis of his various writings, it is possible to draw a dynamic picture of this nation. This is a nation that survived a harsh natural environment and centuries of ignorance and oppression, and was still striving for freedom, independence, national sovereignty and unity like every civilized nation.⁴³ It may be a “small” nation, i.e. not a great power, but its rich cultural heritage, great contribution to the civilization of humankind, and sacrifice for the sake of right and freedom, especially during First World War, placed it on equal terms with the greatest nations of the world.⁴⁴

To be able to defy the challenges lying ahead, the Arab nation should be progressive in its aims and methods. The Arab nation could contribute to the civilization of humanity, but only when national secular education expands to embrace modern sciences and philosophy, because only such education would develop the “new Arab nationalism” into “universal” nationalism. As an active and dynamic nation, Rihani expected the Arab nation

to borrow certain Western values (but not to blindly imitate the West). In return, he expected it to give the West certain values of the East. With modernization, the Arab nation would survive; keep up with world progress and counterbalance Western expansionism.⁴⁵

At the international level, Rihani insists, the Arab nation would have a positive relationship with both Eastern and Western nations, a relationship between equals without any superiority or inferiority complexes. He is adamant that the Arab nation is a peaceful nation, but would not accept foreign domination over any of its countries. In a paper written originally as an introduction for the Bludan Congress on Palestine (1937), he argues that “the southern coast of the Mediterranean from Alexandretta to the Egyptian borders is Arab and it will remain Arab despite what happened in Alexandretta, in Lebanon, and in Palestine. The Arab nation protests against every injustice done against its rights and as a united nation in the future, it will seek to terminate this injustice,” not through expansionism but by maintaining friendly relations with other nations in order to establish peace and fraternity. Its foreign relations would be established on co-operation and mutual understanding, and strengthened with multilateral treaties of commerce and friendship.⁴⁶

It is important here to emphasize Rihani’s relentless fight against political oppression and injustice inflicted by the mandatory powers upon the Arabs, particularly in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. The ultimate expression of his commitment to this cause is captured in distilled form in his political will and testament, which he personally wrote in 1931 and addressed to his “people”, and to his “companions and brothers in humanity.”⁴⁷ In the first article he declares, “Peoples right for self-determination is sacred. I enjoin you to struggle for its sake (*usikum bil-jihad fi sabilih*) wherever it was”. He warns that, “a powerful free nation does not deserve its freedom and power as long as there are still in the world destitute oppressed nations.” “Fight against mandatory governments and all oppressive governments”, he wrote. By urging *jihad* upon his people (yes – *jihad!*), Rihani certainly didn’t declare a “Holy War” against the West as some so-called “Middle East experts” interpret the word *jihad* today. Although he urged everybody to fight for freedom “everywhere and by every means”, he certainly favored the spiritual struggle (*al-jihad al-ruhi*) and peaceful resistance (*al-muqawama al-silmiyya*) including “revolt, boycott and going on strike”, even welcoming imprisonment and punishment for the sake of right and

freedom.⁴⁸ More than fifteen years before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Rihani declared freedom a sacred universal human right.

Facing these challenges, Rihani still defines the Arab renaissance (*al-nahda al-'arabiyya*) in three words: unity, peace and education. These concepts are interdependent to the extent that the one could not be achieved without the other and without inter-Arab as well as Arab-West co-operation. He argues that the world should aim at universal fraternity and co-operation. To be able to contribute to this movement, the Arab nation should first unite, and continuously work towards this aim through education and by implementing the spirit of universalism among the people. But he insists that the success of this aim depends on co-operation of other nations, especially Western, which should give the Arab nation the chance for peace and progress.⁴⁹

It is clear that, Rihani's nationalism did not take refuge in the past; nor did it express itself in xenophobia (like the German style nationalism of the 1930s for example).⁵⁰ For Rihani did not hesitate to criticize the Arabs in order to stimulate their progress and unity. And while proud of his Arabness he did not express fear or hatred of other nationalities.

More than a mere idea or ideology, Arab unity, in Rihani's thought, was a realistic programme for a real society. More than a geopolitical framework in which the lost Arab grandeur can be reconstituted, his project of the "Greater Arab Homeland" was conceived, not in terms of physical or military power, but in terms of civilization. Based upon a system of political and social values, his perception of Arab society differed from that of Sati' al-Husri's, for example, who saw "nationalism before and above every thing, even before and above freedom."⁵¹ Rihani's society was meant to be a democratic just society even though ruled by an individual. Unlike several Arab nationalists who adopted the Western concept of the state, and proposed a system modeled on Euro-American institutions (e.g. Edmond Rabbath and Constantine Zurayq),⁵² Rihani's system was not a copy of the West, but a system of values drawn from the Arab reality, and shaped authentically for the Arab society. Considering his experience of life in the West, this stance of his is remarkable.

Rihani aimed at building a modern Arab society in harmony with the world society. He was optimistic that, with the modern sentiment of Arabism, modern democratic forms of government and modern sciences, and with self-confidence in its inherent moral values, the Arab nation would reach the "patriotic national" and the "universal human" summits.⁵³

In a world sliding towards division and misunderstanding, with a West in conflict with its moral values, and an Arab world in turmoil, searching for freedom and justice where does Rihani's vision fit nowadays? As he always did, he would look optimistically to "a day ... when all nationalities disappear or become incorporated in one nationality: the nationality of Humanity, the nationality of the World."⁵⁴ He would nevertheless realize that "no matter how much we let ourselves go in the absolute love of Humanity, we can not forget ... the love of our own country." It is in this light that we can understand his declaration with which I have started this presentation: "I am a Lebanese, volunteering in the service of the Arab homeland, and we all belong to it. I am an Arab volunteering in the service of humanity, and we all belong to it." In this respect, Rihani's dream was not to bring the West to the East, but above all, to bridge West and East in order to realize his "humanist" vision.

¹ Ameen Rihani, *al-Tatarruf wal-Islah, al-A'mal al-'Arabiyya al-Kamila (AAK)*, vol. 8, Beirut, al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiyya lil-Dirasat wal-Nashr, 1st ed., 1983, p. 477. (Hereafter, when referring to Rihani, only the titles of his works are cited).

² On this see John McCumber, "Dialectical Identity in a "Post-Critical" Era: A Hegelian Reading", in V. Y. Mudimbe (ed.), *Nations, Identities, Cultures*, Durham & London, Duke University Press, 1997, pp. 165-180.

³ *Muluk al-'Arab, AAK*, vol. 1, 2nd ed., 1986, p. 130.

⁴ This is especially reflected in his semi-autobiographical novel, *The Book of Khalid* (1911), edited by Albert Rihani, Beirut, The Rihani House, 1973, pp. 54, 56, 62, and passim.

⁵ On this conflict see his *al-Maghrib al-Aqsa, AAK*, vol. 2, 1st ed., 1980, p. 8; also 'Isa al-Na'uri, *Adab al-Mahjar*, Cairo, Dar al-Ma'arif, 1977, p. 335. For his early contributions in Arabic, especially to the newspaper *al-Huda*, then published in Philadelphia, see his *Shadharat Min 'Ahd al-Siba, AAK*, vol. 6, 1st ed., 1981, pp. 250-264.

⁶ See in particular his speech "al-Tasahul al-Dini" (1900), in *al-Rihaniyyat, AAK*, vol. 7, 1st ed., 1982, pp. 55-63. Some of his lectures on these issues were later published in *al-Qawmiyyat, AAK*, vol. 8, 1st ed., 1983. See also his two novellas *al-Muhalafa al-Thulathiyya fi al-Mamlaka al-Hayawaniyya* (1903), and *al-Mukari wal-Kahin* (1904), Beirut, Dar al-Jil, 4th ed., 1989.

⁷ Many of his essays in Arabic, which reflect this national-universal commitment, were later published in the first volume of *al-Rihaniyyat* in 1910. For some of these articles, see *al-Rihaniyyat, AAK*, vol. 7, pp. 115-121, 201-207 and passim; *al-Qawmiyyat, AAK*, vol. 8, pp. 9-15, 27-30 and passim.

⁸ See in particular Ameen Albert Rihani, *Faylasuf al-Freike: Sahib al-Madina al-'Uzma*, Beirut, Dar al-Jil, 1987.

⁹ *Muluk al-'Arab, AAK*, vol. 1, p. 3.

¹⁰ Geoffrey P. Nash describes *The Quatrains* as Rihani's "first extended exercise in cross-cultural disclosure." See G. P. Nash, *The Arab Writer in English: Arab Themes in a Metropolitan Language, 1908-1958*, Brighton, Sussex Academic Press, 1998, p. 21.

¹¹ See the comments of Helen Johnson Keyes (1912) on the paper cover of *The Book of Khalid*, Beirut, The Rihani House, 1973.

¹² *Muluk al-'Arab, AAK*, vol. 1, p. 6.

¹³ For example, Ibn Sa'ud considered him a Najdi, and King Husayn treated him as a Hijazi and called him *al-'aziz* (dear). The latter granted him a piece of the curtain of the *Ka'ba*, which is seldom presented to a

- Christian. See *Muluk al-'Arab*, AAK, vol. 1, pp. 43, 559; *Around the Coasts of Arabia (ACA)*, London, Constable and Co., 1930, p. 31.
- ¹⁴ See for example his criticism of the fanatic Zaidis, the Sufis and the *Ikhwan*; his criticism of the poverty, which surrounded the capital of Ibn Sa'ud; also his criticism of the Ghat (Qat) consumption in the Yemen, in *Muluk al-'Arab*, AAK, vol. 1, pp. 180-188, 304-306, 569-576, 584; *Arabian Peak and Desert: Travels in al-Yaman (APD)*, London, Constable and Co., 1930, pp. 30-42.
- ¹⁵ See his letters in *Rasa'il Amin al-Rihani: 1896-1940 (Rasa'il)*, edited by Albert Rihani, Beirut, Dar Rihani, 1959, pp. 189-194, 201-203, 226-228, 253-254.
- ¹⁶ See in particular "al-Thawra al-Khuluqiyya" (c.1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK, vol. 8, p. 65.
- ¹⁷ Sami al-Kayyali, *Amin al-Rihani: Nash'atuhu, Dirasatuhu, Malamih Min Hayatihi wa Kutubih*, Jami'at al-Duwal al-'Arabiyya, al-Dirasat al-'Arabiyya al-'Aliya, 1960, p. 34.
- ¹⁸ *The Fate of Palestine*, edited by Albert Rihani, Beirut, The Rihani House, 1967, p. 30. This book was published posthumously and contains some of his lectures in America between 1929 and 1939.
- ¹⁹ See "al-Thawra al-Khuluqiyya" (c.1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK, vol. 8, p. 65. See also Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years, 1875-1914*, London, Johns Hopkins Press, 1970, pp. 118-119.
- ²⁰ In his discussion of the modern Arabic thought, Albert Hourani ignored Rihani. See A. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939*, London, Oxford University Press, 1967; idem, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, London, Faber & Faber, 1991. Halim Barakat considers the nationalist trend in Rihani's thought as "an expression of his nationalist feelings rather than a methodological theory, for he did not evolve a concept of a nation", see H. Barakat, *al-Mujtama' al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir: Bahth Isti'la'i Ijtima'i*, Beirut, Markaz Dirasat al-Wahda al-'Arabiyya (MDWA), 3rd ed., 1986, p. 424. Cf. Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West*.
- ²¹ "Pan-Arab Nationalism: Is it a Myth?", in *Asia*, August, 1939, p. 453.
- ²² See *Muluk al-'Arab*, AAK, vol. 1, p. 912; *al-Maghrib al-Aqsa*, AAK, vol. 2, pp. 7ff; his poem on Egypt "Ibnat Fir'awn" (1922), in *Hutaf al-Awdiya*, AAK, vol. 9, 1st ed., 1986, pp. 106-111. In the recent English translation of *Hutaf al-Awdiya*, the poem entitled "The Daughter of Pharaoh" is incomplete. See *Hymns of the Valleys*, translated by Naji B. Oueijan, New Jersey, Gorgias Press, 2002, pp. 61-62.
- ²³ On Egyptian and Arab nationalism, see Sati' al-Husri, *Abhath Mukhtara fi al-Qawmiyya al-'Arabiyya: 1923-1963*, Cairo, Dar al-Ma'arif, 1964, pp. 199ff; al-Husri, *al-'Uruba Awwalan*, Beirut, MDWA, 1985; Ernest Dawn, "The Formation of Pan-Arab Ideology in the Interwar Years", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES)*, 20 (1988), p. 69; Taha Hussein, *The Future of Culture in Egypt*, English trans. S. Glazer, New York, Octagon, 1975; Ralph Coury, "Who 'Invented' Egyptian Arab Nationalism", in *IJMES*, 14 (1982), pp. 249-281; 459-479.
- ²⁴ See in particular *al-Nakabat*, AAK, vol. 6, 1st ed., 1981. See also Nijmeh Hajjar, *Political and Social Thought of Ameen Rihani*, Ph.D. Thesis, Sydney University, 1991, pp. 52ff; idem, "Immigrant Arabic Poets and Writers and the Modern Arab Renaissance", in *Voices*, Canberra, National Library of Australia, Winter 1993, pp. 47ff.
- ²⁵ For Rihani's idea of progress, see Nijmeh Hajjar, "Ameen Rihani's Discourse on Progress, Justice and Democracy: Dynamics of Theory and Practice", in N. Oueijan, A. Eid, C. Kfoury, & D. Salameh (eds.), *Kahlil Gibran & Ameen Rihani: Prophets of Lebanese-American Literature*, Beirut, Notre Dame University Press, 1999, 133-173; idem, *Political and Social Thought of Ameen Rihani*, pp. 78-94.
- ²⁶ "Risalat al-Mughtaribin" (1927); "Ruh al-'Uruba" (1928); "Lana Amir" (1934), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK, vol. 8, pp. 242, 260, 336.
- ²⁷ See *al-Nakabat*, AAK, vol. 6, p. 176.
- ²⁸ See "al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya" (1938), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK, vol. 8, p. 421. On the relation between Arab nationalism and Islam, see M. A. Khalafalla and Others, *al-Qawmiyya al-'Arabiyya wal-Islam*, Beirut, MDWA, 1982.
- ²⁹ For a discussion of Rihani's secular ideas, see Nijmeh Hajjar, "Ameen Rihani's Discourse on Progress, Justice and Democracy"; idem, *Political and Social Thought of Ameen Rihani*, pp. 94ff.
- ³⁰ "Ruh al-'Uruba" (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK, vol. 8, pp. 260-261; *Muluk al-'Arab*, AAK, vol. 1, p. 268.
- ³¹ *Muluk al-'Arab*, AAK, vol. 1, p. 578; *Ibn Sa'oud of Arabia: His People and His Land (ISA)*, London, Constable and Co., 1928, p. 228.
- ³² "Pan-Arab Nationalism: Is it a Myth?", in *Asia*, 1939, p. 453.

- ³³ See “Filastin” (1937); “al-Nahda al-‘Arabiyya” (1938), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, pp. 408, 421; *Muluk al-‘Arab*, *AAK*, vol. 1, p. 339.
- ³⁴ See “al-Sharak al-Jamil” (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, p. 258.
- ³⁵ “Pan-Arab Nationalism: Is it a Myth?”, in *Asia*, August, 1939, p. 454; see also “Lubnan wal-Nahda al-‘Arabiyya” (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, pp. 356-358.
- ³⁶ Compare his views, for example, with al-Husri’s *Abhath Mukhtara*, p. 53.
- ³⁷ “Pan-Arab Nationalism: Is it a Myth?”, in *Asia*, August, 1939, pp. 454-455.
- ³⁸ See also Hajjar, “Ameen Rihani’s Discourse on Progress, Justice and Democracy”, cited above.
- ³⁹ See “al-Nahda al-‘Arabiyya” (1938), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, pp. 420-421.
- ⁴⁰ See “al-‘Arab wal-‘Alaqt al-Dawliyya” (1937); “al-Watan al-Wahid” (1939), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, pp. 405, 424.
- ⁴¹ See for example ‘Abd al-Karim Gharaybah, *Suriyya fi al-Qarn al-Tasi ‘Ashar: 1840-1876*, Jami‘at al-Duwal al-‘Arabiyya, Ma‘had al-Buhuth wal-Dirasat al-‘Arabiyya, 1962, pp. 16-17; Albert Hourani, *Minorities in the Arab World*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1947, pp. 1-14, and passim.
- ⁴² See “al-Nahda al-‘Arabiyya” (1938), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, p. 422.
- ⁴³ *Muluk al-‘Arab*, *AAK*, vol. 1, p. 149; “Hayya ‘Ala al-‘Ilm” (1922); “Ghayati wa Thawrati” (1922), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, pp. 213-214, 215-217.
- ⁴⁴ See in particular his articles “al-Thawra al-Khuluqiyya” (c. 1909); “al-Haqq wal-Quwwa” (1917); “al-Haya wal-Hurriyya wal-Sayf” (c. 1917), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, pp. 65, 144, 145-154.
- ⁴⁵ “Risalat al-‘Iraq” (1932), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, pp. 304-305.
- ⁴⁶ See “al-‘Arab wal-‘Alaqt al-Dawliyya” (1937), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, p. 404. Rihani declined the invitation to the Bludan Congress because of “personal reasons”. See a letter to the President and members of the Congress, 9 September 1937, in *Rasa’il*, p. 521.
- ⁴⁷ See *Wasyyati*, *AAK*, vol. 8, 1st ed., 1983, p. 498.
- ⁴⁸ See in particular articles 1-6 in *Wasyyati*, *AAK*, vol. 8, pp. 499-500.
- ⁴⁹ See “al-‘Arab wal-‘Alaqt al-Dawliyya” (1937), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, pp. 405-406.
- ⁵⁰ For German nationalism described as xenophobic, see Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: A Critical Enquiry*, Translated by M. F. Sluglett & P. Sluglett, London, The Macmillan Press, 1981, pp. 10, 99-112.
- ⁵¹ Cited in Charles Rizk, *Entre l’Islam et l’arabisme: les Arabes jusqu’en 1945*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1983, p. 300.
- ⁵² On the ideas of Rabbath and Zurayq, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, p. 311; H. Nur al-Din, “Maḥmūd al-Sulṭā al-Siyāsiyya”, in Ma‘n Ziyadah (ed.), *Buhuth fi al-Fikr al-Qawmi al-‘Arabi: Ishkaliyyat Nazariyya*, Beirut, al-Inma’ al-‘Arabi, 1985, pp. 180-181.
- ⁵³ “Risalat al-‘Iraq” (1932), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, p. 304.
- ⁵⁴ See “al-Sharak al-Jamil” (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK*, vol. 8, p. 257.