destruction. Following the thought of the philosopher and writer J.J. Rousseau, Gibran tried to save man from this destructive influence. He also foresaw the evil following him, social apathy and isolation of man in the anonymous crowd of others. He called in his works for a return to nature, for life in harmony with it, for peace and quiet.

To conclude I would like to present the words of the American critic Claud Bragdon on Gibran:

'The appearance of the word 'Gibranism' gives the nature and depth of his influence on the entire Arab world. But equally English-speaking readers will not have difficulty in predicting what the word means: mystical vision, charm, simplicity, a fresh approach to the problems of life, exceptional dramatic force, deep erudition, stunning intuition, a total passion for life, mastery, finally Beauty which in a perfect way infuses everything he touches. (...) His force comes from some great spiritual reservoir, otherwise it would not be so universal and versatile, but the majesty and beauty of his words, in which he adorns it - are his very own.' [9]

[9] Barbara Young, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

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LOOKING AT THE PROBLEM OF IRAQI AGGRESSION ON KUWAIT ON THE BASIS OF "MUḌAKKIRĀT ĞUNDĪ IRĀQĪ"

What sort of phenomenon was the war in the eyes of the other side - in the eyes of the aggressor? Few Kuwaiti short stories pay attention to, remark upon or cite behaviour which would articulate the attitude of the Arab community or the demoralising uneasiness of both sides. In point of fact I have been able to find only one short story which conjures up a certain positive image of the occupier. The most human description is to be found in Laylā Al'Uṯmān's story 'Ḥawāğiz muḫtalifa al-wuğūh' (Control Points with Various Faces). This is a collection of nine meetings of the occupier with Kuwaiti citizens at check points. At check point 5 the person checking does not identify himself as an Iraqi but as a Kurd. The conversation that evolves shows the similarity of attitudes:

'- I'm a Kurd.
- You mean an Iraqi!
- I don't belong to the Baath party.
- What's the difference?
- There is a difference! Just like you, we've drunk poison.
- Do you take pity on us?
- I take pity on myself and my children.
- How many children do you have?
- Seven.
- You left you're children to come here and kill us?
- If We don't do it they'll kill our children and family!' [1]

Further on in the conversation are expressed a desire to see Kuwait liberated, the cessation of hostilities and all threats to peace.

[1] Laylā Al'Uṯmān - short story 'Ḥawāğiz muḫtalifa al-wuğūh' from the collection *Al-ḥawāğiz al-sawdā'*, pp. 108-109.

Another image, this time of a hungry Iraqi can be found in 'Alī Al-Mas'ūdī's story 'Akwām al-qamāma' (The Piles of Rubbish). The hero of the story is not able to refuse a man bread although to the end he is not convinced of his good will: 'He hears an Iraqi voice: - Give me bread...

- Here's three slices...
- Thank you. God be...
- He didn't want to hear it for he knew what he would say. He tells me he's with me, and them, with them.' [2]

An opposite image in which Iraqis indiscriminately take bread from the inhabitants of Kuwait is presented in the story 'Al-ṭābūr' (The Queue) by Ṯurayyā Al-Baqṣamī.

The short story 'Al-'atī ... min al-šimāl' (The Comers from the North) by Munā Al-Šāfa'ī presents a description of an Iraqi gaol in which the guards are equally killed and certain prisoners consider the gaol to be their home: 'Realise that I know all the nooks and crannies of this prison and many who work here are good friends of mine. I can get whatever I want easily, for example books. They reach me here quicker than when I was a professor at the university.' [3] Difficult though it is to believe some prefer to remain there than freedom: 'Freedom?! There are many the other side of these walls who'd envy what we've got.' [4] This is the only Kuwaiti war short story which conveys Iraqi prisons in such a positive way. Usually we are presented with descriptions of inhuman conditions where prisoners of war experienced great suffering e.g. Ṯurayyā Al-Baqṣamī's stories "Aṭaš bu Ṣaḫīr' (The Thirst of Abu Sakhir), 'Dā'ira al-basāṭīr' (The Marks of Military Boots) or 'Ašǧār Ba'qūba' (The Ba'qub Trees). In the first of these is presented testimony in which a prisoner succeeds in securing his right to water. In the second the tortured woman incites a thread of sympathy in the guard who one day brings her a blanket to partially cover her nakedness.

In the majority of stories where an image of the occupier is presented it is an image decisively negative: plundering as in Ṯurayyā Al-Baqṣamī's story 'Abwāb muǧannaḥa' (The Winged Doors), raping in Laylā Al- 'Uṯmān's

[2] 'Alī Al-Mas'ūdī - short story 'Akwām al-qamāma' from the collection *Mamlaka al-šams*, p. 76.

[3] Munā Al-Šāfa'ī - short story 'Al-'atī ... min al-šimāl' from the collection *Drāmā al-ḥawās*, p. 80.

[4] *ibid.*, p. 76.

"Waǧh al-ḏi'b' (The Wolf's Face), humiliating Kuwaitis in another of Laylā Al- 'Uṯmān's stories 'Al-biṭāqa' (The Identity Card), killing in Ṯurayyā Al-Baqṣamī's ' 'Amū Ḫalīfa' (Amū Ḫalīfa) or running away in Walīd Al-Ruǧayyib's 'Ṭalaqa 8' (Shot 8).

A valuable addition for the entire overview is the found 'Muḏakkirāt ǧundī 'irāqī' (A Diary of an Iraqi Soldier) which contains notes covering the entire war period i.e. from 17th January 1991 to 26th February 1991. The author of the diary does not disclose his name maybe for fear of reprisals. The only names mentioned are the brothers Ḥussayn and Abbās. He recalls also his home in Baghdad. The diary was found in Amghara to the north of Kuwait and is a transcribed testimony to human tragedy. In it is brought to light the general view and state of a sensitive observer, participant and somebody who identifies with faithfulness in the face of indications of faith. For the true drama of faith and belief does not lie on the side of those attacked where its task is known: to defend, not to break, not to deny one's identity, not to allow oneself to psychologically sink so that life may continue, not to revile what is the most sacred. From the not too distant past we have the example of Hitler. The slogan on military equipment 'Gott mit uns' (God is with us) raises no doubts as to the clear motivation of the war in which God was called upon as witness. This war is of a similar nature. The effort of logical coincidence was influenced by the heroic state of defence of Kuwaiti identity, solidarity and the help of other countries, as well as the flaming testimonies of personal belief on the opposite side. Iraq's forces were not as strong as was proclaimed. The majority recognised the fact of the active plunder of Kuwait and the attack on alien land.

'Muḏakkirāt ǧundī 'irāqī' (Diary of an Iraqi Soldier) is especially interesting as a study of spiritual attitudes in the face of war. The introduction to the diary, written by Dr Yūsuf 'Abd Al-Mu'aṭī, emphasises the unusual sincerity of the diary which describes without impediment the events of the war. 'It is obvious that he resorted to writing as a release from severe suffering and internal conflict, a suffering characterised by despair, bitterness and self-defeat. He wrote at moments when his very fate was at stake.' [5] The soldier from the very beginning represents the view that the war and its start are defeats and that it was unleashed against people 'peaceful by nature.' [6] There

[5] *Muḏakkirāt ǧundī 'irāqī*, Kuwait 1992, p. 9.

[6] *ibid.*, p. 9.

is no doubt that the war was an assault against another state, a defilement of its rights, the honour of its inhabitants as well as a plunder of riches. The soldier emphasises the war as one in which everybody feels 'remorse' [7], a war which has no solution and in which everybody is out of place. Even martyrdom does not exist, only uncertainty. He directs many reservations against information, maintaining that 'the truth is lost because the information given to the Iraqi soldiers is hallucinations and lies.' [8] In all the impressions on the subject of individual states there is absent an aim and sense in this war. Further on he writes that he is dead, not deserving of life. That each and everyone is desperate because the world is against them and this war will end in disaster, and what I consider to be the most important is the fact that via participation in this war not worthy of God's grace. [9] He goes as far as to write to his mother asking her not to pray for him for God will not forgive him his mistakes for 'God has no mercy for the arrogant.' [10] The soldier time and again expresses his desperation, sense of isolation, guilt and devastation. Together with other soldiers he shares the dissonance between what he feels and what propaganda compels them to believe; to believe in a Unified Arab Nation of immortal message, a mission to be fulfilled by the Iraqi people.[11] The consciousness of the dissonance between this and the daily aggressive destruction sows its own devastation. The soldier is equally disappointed by the disproportion between the proclaimed size of the army and the hard struggle when the enemy forces pierce the sky, freely bombing and meeting with no sizeable opposition. During the course of the diary doubt in the Iraqi army's capabilities of victory over the allied forces increases. One should mention his feeling over 'the robbing of the Arab mind.'[12] The problem concerns brain washing typical for regimes as equally war situations. These regimes never had regard for human thought and human rights to truth and information. They were interested in steering the masses through the help of slogans demanding one to live in an atmosphere of arrogance, incited emotions, in situations devoid of logic and the participation in problem solving. In connection with the Iraqi slogan 'Death to the West and All Cowards' [13] the soldier elucidates his situation as a child who

[7] *ibid.*, p. 19.
[8] *ibid.*, p. 10.
[9] *ibid.*, p. 10.
[10] *ibid.*, p. 10.
[11] *ibid.*, p. 10.
[12] *ibid.*, p. 12.
[13] *ibid.*, p. 13.

grew up among such conditions. As Dr Yūsuf 'Abd Al-Mu'aṭī writes in the conclusion, we are confronted with the questions that arise from the pages of the diary: 'What has Iraq, the Arab Nation and their cause, the Islamic Nation and the world at large gained? What model has Iraq offered the world through such a barbaric destruction of 'beautiful Kuwait and its peaceful people'?' [14]

We often come across in the diary invocations to God and religious reflections concerning all the matters the day brings. The soldier describes Kuwaitis as peaceful, praying at the same time that God will protect them and their property.

In the course of the next extracts he complains about the incorrect information when he receives at the same time contradictory news concerning the state of destruction: 'You don't know who to believe and who is lying. All news is an hallucination. They are all lying. The truth is lost.' [15] For seventeen days the diary's author is left without news about his family's fate. He describes the Iraqi attacks on Al-Ḫafǧī in Saudi Arabia and the bombing of where he is. He admits that he has taken the wrong path but does not want to kill anyone. He prays for God to fill his heart with peace for he is the guardian of those in danger. In the notes for the twenty fourth day of the war [16] he writes that with difficulty he eats meals collectively. Even the sea frightens him transforming itself into a symbol of fear and death. Admittedly he has not lost any riches but he is afraid to be separated from his mother, father and brothers. On the twenty seventh day [17] he records his fear over the bombing of the district where his family lives. He can't sleep. He swears revenge on those who shed blood. The oaths are woven in with appeals to God for mercy and grace. On the thirty second day [18] he doubts whether he will be able to continue a normal life after the ending of hostilities. In the section 'Yawm ġayr ma'rūf fī ḥayā al-ǧundī' (An Unknown Day in the Life of a Soldier) he writes about the heavy attacks on Iraq. He mourns over the destruction brought about by all the possible types of planes, tanks and artillery that are amassed in the entire world. The diary ends with the arrival of

[14] *ibid.*, p. 13.
[15] *ibid.*, p. 16.
[16] *ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
[17] *ibid.*, pp. 21-22.
[18] *ibid.*, p. 22.
[19] *ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

the allied forces on the border of Kuwait to liberate the country. The last line reads: 'God is Greater than the aggressor.' [20] The entire set of recollections is closed with the note 'Risāla ilā 'ummī' (A Letter to Mother) [21] It is written by a man who desires to express everything - maybe just in case he dies in the last days. Expressions of love and hope intertwine with despair and requests that she won't pray for him for God knows no mercy for the arrogant. The diary ends on 26th February 1991 - the day Kuwait is liberated. We do not know what happened to the author. We have, however, a valuable document of experience in which the author often condemns himself along with those who forced him to take part in the conflict. He considers that not only is his life in danger but also closer interaction with God, hence in various words he condemns himself because he is aware of non-righteousness of the state in which he remains the only one of those who attacked.

The Iraqi soldier's diary is all the more valuable because it answers many questions raised in the face of the invasion, in the face of the Arab question of unity, allegiance and behaviour of adherents. We have become acquainted thanks to it with the main answer - God has no mercy for the arrogant. Man waits until God speaks to him but at the same time he himself knows what has happened and is happening.

The diary constitutes an addition to the problem undertaken by the Kuwaiti side which execrated because nobody was able to identify with the wrong experienced, the assault and threat.

[20] *ibid.*, p. 24.
[21] *ibid.*, p. 25-26.

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THE MYSTICAL DIMENSION OF ṢALĀḤ 'ABD AṢ-ṢABŪR'S POETRY

Mysticism is the common core of all religious traditions. Mysticism is a belief in direct contact with the absolute. The Greek word "mystiká" denotes 'secret rites'. Mysticism feeds on mystery, on something that cannot be attained by intellectual effort. Man can hope to touch the mystery only through the wisdom of the heart, i.e. through gnosis and spiritual exercises.

The origins of Sufism, i.e. Muslim mysticism, date back to the 8th century. The Sufis' activities began in Kufa and Basra in the 10th century. The word "Sufism" itself is probably derived from the name of a woollen garment (*ṣūf*) which was worn, following the example of the Nestorians, by Muslim ascetics and then mystics. Sufism, which was built on an Islamic foundation, owes its form among others to Neoplatonist philosophy, in particular the philosophy of Plotinus. Other major influences came from the Christian, Iranian and Buddhist religions. The main doctrinal differences between Sufism and orthodox Islam concern a few basic truths:
- for the Sufis, God is immanent, while orthodox Islam proclaims his transcendence;
- the mystics oppose free will to the orthodox faith, which appears to favour predestination;
- the Sufis reject Islamic ritual practices, viewing them as a hindrance to contact with God;
- the Sufis, unlike orthodox Muslims, recognize the need for spiritual growth;
- according to the mystics, the reward/grace from God is closely connected with man's own work and effort, and does not depend solely on God's plan and His will;
- with the Sufis, the mystery of salvation bears clear marks of salvation through one's own effort.