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Literary Texts 3.5

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HELLO EVERYONE!

I want you to translate *Ben Jonson's A Song to Celia* at home. Take your time with it because it is not easy to be translated into Arabic.

Unfortunately for you but fortunately for me, today I'll be talking a little bit about history.

In the past few weeks, we talked about the 16th century. I will talk a little bit about the 16th century then I'll talk about the 17th century.

The 16th Century

We spent the past weeks with William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson; both of them are 16th century poets.

Actually, when we talk about the 16th century, then we're talking about the *Renaissance* (عصر النهضة). The word "Renaissance" comes from French and it means "*rebirth*". The 16th century was a time of major changes. **There were three events that shaped the history of the Renaissance:**

1. Renaissance humanism.

2. Reformation.

3. The scientific revolution.

1- Renaissance humanism:

- It is related to giving priority to human affairs and putting religion aside. For the first time, people started to think from outside the box.

- The main religion at that time in Europe was *Catholicism* and the Catholic Church was the head of everything; it was even involved with politics. For the first time, thinkers started to think out of the box; they started to think for themselves and they thought that they needed to focus on this world instead of focusing on the hereafter or what comes after death.

- It was the very beginning of *secularism*. People were interested in humanity.

- Thinkers brought to attention human affairs, human problems, the challenges that we face, etc.

- Religion was still part of people's lives but they drew to their

attention human affairs and interactions.

- Renaissance humanism is particularly a movement of arts and translation. Translators and linguists at that time wanted to translate ancient texts that were written in Hebrew, texts taken from classic antiquity which means they were written in ancient Rome and Greece. They took texts from the ancient civilization and began to translate them into vernacular languages such as English, French, Spanish, Italian, etc. That was a major movement that was called Renaissance humanism.

- Artists and thinkers began to translate those ancient texts into accessible languages which allowed ordinary people who didn't know Latin or Greek to read the ancient texts in their own languages.

2- Reformation:

- It means to change and in Arabic it means (الإصلاح).

- In England, the change that took place was in terms of *politics, government and education.*

- Whereas in Germany, the reformation was a *religious change.* Someone called Martin Luther was a monk and a professor of theology. He knew Latin which was the language of the church that ordinary people could not speak. Actually, Latin was the language of rich people and clergymen. The Bible was not translated yet so it was in the control of the Catholic Church. Back to Martin Luther. This man was a thinker. He read the Bible in Latin and thought to himself that not everything the church is preaching comes from the Bible. He wrote 95 theses in his own hands in German and put them on a poster. He stuck that poster on the door of a famous church in Wittenberg in Germany. Everybody read that poster and it was the beginning of a massive change in the history of Europe. It was the beginning of a bloody change unfortunately. Of course, Martin Luther was not seeking bloodshed; he was not seeking after a revolution. He was seeking a theological discussion or an academic discussion. Unfortunately, due to what he wrote, the Catholic Church was divided into two different churches; Catholicism and Protestantism. The bloodshed started; Catholics began killing Protestants and Protestants started killing Catholics. This went on for hundreds of years.

3- The scientific revolution:

- It was the third major event that took place during the Renaissance.

The scientific revolution was led by people like Christopher Columbus, Galileo Galilei, Machiavelli, Da Vinci, Michelangelo, etc.

- As long the Renaissance is concerned, the king in England was Henry the 8th. He got married six times; every time he was not happy with one wife so he divorced her for another. He wanted a baby boy to take the throne after his death. However, his first wife gave him a girl whose name was Elizabeth. His second wife gave him another girl whose name was Mary. The third wife gave him a baby boy whose name was Edward. We know that divorce was not okay at that time; according to Catholicism, you cannot divorce your wife just because you want a baby boy. Henry the 8th threatened the Catholic Church and as a result the Catholic Church found itself forced to obey his orders. He declared himself the supreme head of the Church of England. He wanted to do what he liked. King Henry the 8th was originally *catholic* but he rebelled against the Catholic Church so he was excommunicated from the Catholic Church. After that, he became an *Anglican Protestant*.

- After King Henry the 8th died, his two daughters came to the throne: the bloody Mary was a catholic and she well-known for killing Protestants. The other daughter was Queen Elizabeth who was known as the virgin queen because she never got married; she chose to dedicate her life to England and to live a life of politics and responsibilities.

- Elizabeth was a very powerful queen; during her reign it was a time of stability, security, peace and order. This is a very brief overview of the 16th century.

The 17th Century

- Queen Elizabeth, or the Virgin Queen, died in 1603.

- After her death, James of Scotland succeeded her as King James the 1st in 1625.

- King James the 1st and his son Charles the 1st engaged with

constant confrontations with the parliament. There were also a lot of confrontations with their subjects as well as the parliament over taxes, religion, parliamentary rights, etc.

- Like Henry the 8th, King James the 1st believed in *the divine right of kings* or what we call *the absolute monarchy*. The divine right of kings meant that the kings couldn't be questioned even if they were wrong. So, King James the 1st believed that nobody had supreme power to the king; the king has control over his people.

- Two major events took place during the 17th century: *the gunpowder plot* and *King James Bible*.

The gunpowder plot in 1605:

- It was a conspiracy by extremist Catholics who wanted to kill King James the 1st.

- They arranged barrels of gunpowder and they took them to the parliament and tried to blow up the parliament.

- The leader of those men who tried to blow up the parliament and kill King James the 1st was *Guy Fawkes*; this man wore the famous mask that was used in "V for Vendetta" movie.

- Eventually, they failed and they were arrested.

- Today, Protestants still celebrate this occasion in England on the 5th of November. They celebrate this day because they were able to save the Protestant King from the catholic conspiracy. The Protestants celebrate this occasion by having a bonfire in a park. They dance around the fire; they also have fireworks and eat special candy. Sometimes, they throw an effigy in fire. "An effigy" is like a doll made to look like Guy Fawkes who was the leader of the gunpowder plot. Of course, the Catholics don't feel happy about this. Actually, there is still religious tension between Catholics and Protestants in England.

There is a famous song that they sing on the 5th of November to celebrate this event:

Remember, remember!

The fifth of November,

The Gunpowder treason and plot;

I know of no reason
Why the Gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot!
Guy Fawkes and his companions
Did the scheme contrive,
To blow the King and Parliament
All up alive.
Threescore barrels, laid below,
To prove old England's overthrow.
But, by God's providence, him they catch,
With a dark lantern, lighting a match!
Holler boys, holler boys, let the bells ring
Holler boys, holler boys
God save the King!

- Those extremist Catholics tried to blow up the parliament and the king using three barrels of gunpowder. But they were caught trying to light a match and burn the parliament.

- King James the 1st was saved from conspiracy and from assassination. - During the reign of King James, the Catholics were persecuted just for being Catholics.

King James Bible in 1611:

- This is a very major event in the 17th century because thanks to King James, it was the first time the Bible - the New Testament- was translated into English.

- After the death of King James the 1st, his son King Charles the 1st became the new king.

- Like his father, he preached one thing while in reality he practiced another thing. He preached democracy and belief in the power of the people to rule but in reality he was the one who had full control. Whenever he didn't get what he wanted, he would put the parliament on hold.

- The confrontations between the parliament and King Charles the

1st led to a *civil war* between supporters of the king who were known as the *royalists* and the supporters of the parliament who were known as the *puritans* or the *parliamentarians*.

- This Civil War was a series of civil wars; a lot of bloodshed took place and it ended up with the execution of the king himself who was arrested and taken to trial (تمت محاكمته) and he was executed. For the first time in the history of England, the king was executed by the people.

- With the death of the king Charles the 1st, it was the end of the monarchy (الملكية) and it was the birth of the commonwealth which united England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

- The leader of the commonwealth was called *Oliver Cromwell*. He was a puritan. Puritanism is a strict religious group which was anti-Catholic.

- Puritans wanted to reform the Church of England from within. They adhered in a very narrow minded-way to the Bible. For them, Sunday is a sacred day on which you cannot play a game or have fun. For Puritans, On Sunday you only worship God. You don't even work or do anything else.

- Fortunately, the puritans did not reign for very long. Their power came to an end and they were themselves persecuted by the Catholics and they had to run away to the USA where they established their community.

- By the end of puritanism, the monarchy was restored and the king who ruled England was King Charles the 2nd. This is what we call the *Restoration* (استعادة الملكية). This took place at the end of the 17th century.

Now, let's move to talk about one of my favorite poets who is George Herbert (1593 - 1633).

George Herbert

- George Herbert is well-known for his *devotional poetry*.

- He was a *priest* and a *poet*.

- He was Walsh which means he was from Wales.
- He was born in 1593 and died in 1633. He lived during two reigns: the reign of King James the 1st and the reign of King Charles the 1st.
- He was educated; he went to university.
- In 1620, he was appointed as a public orator (a public speaker). It means he became the official spokesman and correspondence for the university.
- In 1624, he was elected to be a member of the parliament.
- In 1630, he was ordained (رُئِم كاهناً) which means he became officially a priest.
- He is well-known for his religious poetry.
- He is remembered today for his single volume of religious poetry "The Temple". The poems in this volume reflect Herbert's struggle to define his relationship with God which is inseparable from the tensions of his own society. He says describing this collection:

"A picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my master".

- His single volume of religious poetry The Temple depicts a picture of the spiritual conflicts that he had in his relationship with God.
- His primary focus is on the "soul's inner architecture". This means that he is interested in spirituality and the relationships between the individuals and God.
- He wrote shape poems such as Easter Wings and The Altar. A shape poem has a specific shape that has a relationship with the content of the poem itself. For example: the poem Easter Wings has the shape of two wings. Also, his poem The Altar has the shape of an altar that is placed in the church.
- George Herbert is one of the metaphysical poets together with John Donne, Andrew Marvell and many others.

Metaphysical poetry (الشعر الميتافيزيقي):

- This kind of poetry goes beyond the physical and looks at the relationship between the physical and the spiritual.

- It looks beyond the physical at space, our relationship with God, existential matters, the universe and our roles as human beings in the universe.

- Metaphysical poets question the role of God and the existence of God.

- Metaphysical poets look at the relationship between reality and perception. By perception I mean the way we perceive reality. They ask questions like this:

Is the way we perceive reality is what reality about? Or is this only our perception?

- It is challenging to read Metaphysical poems because poetry for Metaphysical poets is not just poetry; they were interested in geographical explorations, science, architecture, religion, etc.

- Metaphysical poets use very interesting figures of speech such as:

Irony (تهكم - سخرية): the expression of a meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite.

Paradox (المفارقة): a situation, person, or thing that combines contradictory features or qualities.

Conceit: a very strange and unusual simile or metaphor.

Pun (التورية أو التلاعب اللفظي): a play on words or using different possible meanings of a word.

Hyperbole: a kind of exaggeration.

Let's now continue translating the poem by Khalil Gibran that we started with last week.

هل جلست العصر مثلي بين جفنت العنب

والعناقيد تدلت كثريرات الذهب

هل فرشت العشب ليلاً وتلحفت الفضا

زاهداً في ما سيأتي ناسياً ما قد مضى

هل جالست العصر مثلي

Have you, as I did, sat in the afternoon

بين جفقات العنب

Between the vines

والعناقيد تدلت

With the clusters hanging

كثيريات الذهب

Like golden chandeliers

هل فرشت العشب ليلاً

Have you slept on grass at night

وتلحفت الفضاء

And used the sky as your blanket

زاهداً في ما سيأتي

Abstaining from all that will come

ناسياً ما قد مضى

Forgetful of all that has passed

Now, let's translate this very easy poem by Mahmoud Darwish.

فَكَرَّ بِغَيْرِكَ

محمود درويش

وَأَنْتَ تُعِدُّ فِطُورَكَ، فَكَرَّ بِغَيْرِكَ

لَا تَنْسُ قُوَّةَ الْحَمَامِ

وَأَنْتَ تَخْوِضُ حُرُوبَكَ، فَكَرَّ بِغَيْرِكَ

لَا تَنْسُ مَنْ يَطْلُبُونَ السَّلَامَ

وَأَنْتَ تَسُدُّ فَاتُورَةَ الْمَاءِ، فَكَرَّ بِغَيْرِكَ

مَنْ يَرْضَعُونَ الْغَمَامَ

وَأَنْتِ تَعُودُ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ، بَيْتِكَ، فَكَّرِي بِغَيْرِكَ
لَا تَنْسِي شُعْبَ الْخِيَامِ
وَأَنْتِ تَنَامُ وَتُحْصِي الْكَوَاكِبَ، فَكَّرِي بِغَيْرِكَ
ثَمَّةٌ مَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ حَيْزًا لِلْمَنَامِ
وَأَنْتِ تَحْزَرُ نَفْسَكَ بِالْأَسْتَعَارَاتِ، فَكَّرِي بِغَيْرِكَ
مَنْ فَقَدُوا حَقَّهُمْ فِي الْكَلَامِ
وَأَنْتِ تَفَكِّرِ بِالْآخِرِينَ الْبَعِيدِينَ، فَكَّرِي بِنَفْسِكَ
قُلْ: لِيَتْنِي شَمْعَةٌ فِي الظُّلَامِ.

وَأَنْتِ تُجِدُّ فُطُورَكَ، فَكَّرِي بِغَيْرِكَ

While preparing your breakfast, think of others

لَا تَنْسِي قُوْتَ الْحَمَامِ

Do not forget feeding the doves.

وَأَنْتِ تَخُوضُ حُرُوبَكَ، فَكَّرِي بِغَيْرِكَ

And while you're going to war, think of others
Or (As you wage your wars, think of others)

لَا تَنْسِي مَنْ يَطْلُبُونَ السَّلَامَ

Do not forget those who seek peace

وَأَنْتِ تَسُدُّ فَاتُورَةَ الْمَاءِ، فَكَّرِي بِغَيْرِكَ

While paying your water bill, think of others

مَنْ يَرْضَعُونَ الْغَمَامَ

Those who are nursed by clouds
Or (Those who are waiting for the clouds to rain)

وَأَنْتِ تَعُودُ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ، بَيْتِكَ، فَكَّرِي بِغَيْرِكَ

While returning home, your home, think of others

لَا تَنْسِي شُعْبَ الْخِيَامِ

Do not forget the people of the tents

وأنت تنام وتُحصي الكواكب، فكّر بغيرك

As you sleep and count the stars, think of others

ثمة من لم يجد حيزاً للنم

Those who don't have a space to sleep

وأنت تحرّر نفسك بالاستعارات، فكّر بغيرك

As you liberate yourself with metaphors, think of others

من فقدوا حُفهم في الكلام

Those who have lost their right to speak

وأنت تفكر بالآخرين البعيدين، فكّر بنفسك

As you think of others far away, think of yourself

Or (While thinking of others far away, think of yourself)

قُل: ليتني شمعة في الظلام

Say: "If only I were a candle in the dark"

Or (Say: "I wish I were a candle in the dark")

Don't forget to translate Ben Jonson's A Song to Celia at home.

Thank You

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