

SPIRITUAL POVERTY

Jacqueline Hajjar
Associate Professor of Cultural Studies
Lebanese American University

With Nietzsche's affirmation that "God is dead", a new era was ushered in. From now on, any idea expressing a need for God would be considered infantile and backward. As time passed, more and more generations rejected any interaction with a Necessary Being, as Hayy the Son of Yaqzan^{*} called him. Furthermore, the increasing problems surrounding man's survival, have created a deep weariness in the individual.

Living in faith is considered strange. Nobody is willing to acknowledge that the human being possesses a deep need to communicate with the infinite. The current state of spiritual poverty is such that materialism and the occult have invaded our consciousness. The void left by this is a vacuum which has to be filled by something. Unfortunately, this "something" is often the wrong choice of new fads: wild music, drugs, esoteric knowledge, satanism ...

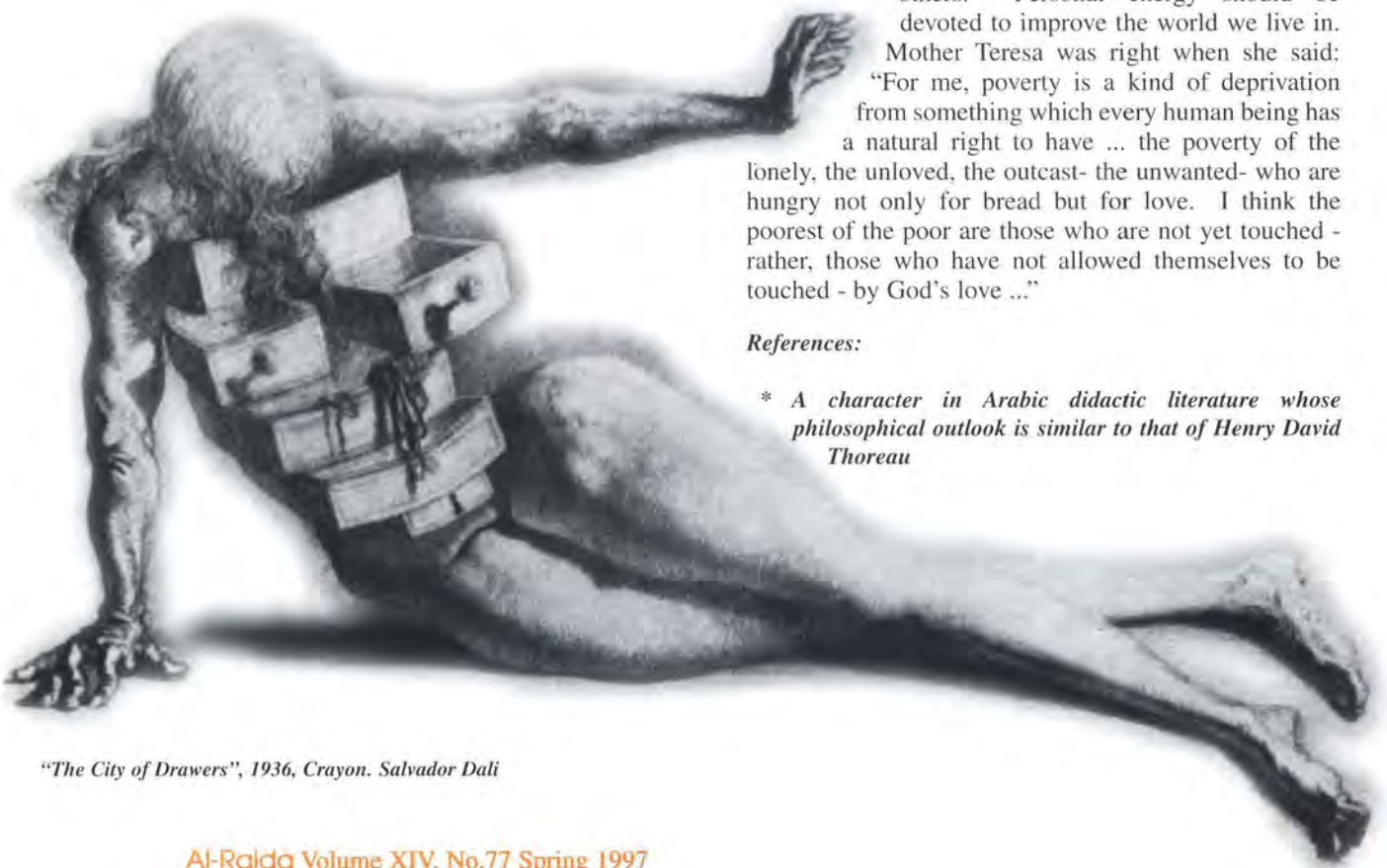
The unease of the twentieth century reflects a tremendous desire for a sound value system whereby the individual is considered important and of infinite worth. Human beings cannot, and will not, continue to live in uncertainty. There is a need for the revival of a personal relationship with God to fulfill people's longing for the absolute. The soul and spirit of the human being thirst for a spiritual knowledge that will satisfy all their hidden cravings.

I am reminded of my nephew Yves' experience during the civil war in Lebanon. He was walking down the road when shelling suddenly erupted. My brother held his hand as they hurried to find a safe place to hide. After they had reached safety, my brother turned to his son and asked: "Were you afraid as we ran together?" And Yves answered: "No Dad; I was holding your hand ...". This should be our attitude when we are with God.

The individual is tired of being in a world in which the happiness of the masses has become more important than the happiness of the individual. The selfish rush toward prosperity and power has blinded too many people who have lost the right perspective - the perspective that is acquired by a life of caring for others. Personal energy should be devoted to improve the world we live in. Mother Teresa was right when she said: "For me, poverty is a kind of deprivation from something which every human being has a natural right to have ... the poverty of the lonely, the unloved, the outcast- the unwanted- who are hungry not only for bread but for love. I think the poorest of the poor are those who are not yet touched - rather, those who have not allowed themselves to be touched - by God's love ..."

References:

- * *A character in Arabic didactic literature whose philosophical outlook is similar to that of Henry David Thoreau*



"The City of Drawers", 1936, Crayon. Salvador Dali