

## Hamlet's Metamorphosis from an Avenger to a Revolutionary: A Religious Perspective

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*Abstract: The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, is presumably the most written about literary work in English language. High frequency of research work on Hamlet is well substantiated by different literary theories in an effort to interpret the distress and dilemma of the protagonist Hamlet and his course of action throughout his journey from a mere 'avenger' to 'revolutionary'. This study seeks to interpret Hamlet, the play, in terms of religious principles and show that Hamlet's (the protagonist) metamorphosis is motivated, guided and precipitated by his religious awareness, knowledge and guidance stemming from the insightful discovery of the life hereafter and the eternal punishment in it.*

Keywords: Turn to Religion- the Bible- the Quran-Hamlet's Mission- Metamorphosis

### 1. Introduction

*Hamlet*, probably written in 1600 or 1601 and first performed in July 1602, is Shakespeare's longest play and one of the greatest contributions to the world drama. It has hypnotically captivated the audience for over four hundred years with its treasures of unfathomably intriguing plot. The simple story of a protagonist, Hamlet, who mourns over the murder of his father, Old Hamlet, by his uncle Claudius, and bitterly resents the incestuous marriage of his mother with the assassin without taking action, has turned into such a wonderfully mystifying drama because of the difficulty for the audience to understand, and for the critics to interpret Hamlet's inaction and procrastination. Hamlet's utterance 'to be or not to be' is often made synonymous with his character, which tends to make him a puppet at the hands of the chance. This study examines the prevalent interpretations of Hamlet in terms of the dominant religious issues in Islam and Christianity, and thus seeks to show that Hamlet's actions are well-orchestrated for his journey from an avenger to a missionary revolutionist.

### 2. Literature Review

#### 2.1. *Hamlet* Criticized

Hamlet's delayed action is often interpreted by many to be the result of psychological problem, Oedipus complex, his weak will, effect of superfluous activity of thought and so on.

A.C. Bradley (1905), for example, interprets Hamlet's delay of action to be pathologically

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## **Hamlet's Metamorphosis from an Avenger to a Revolutionary: A Religious Perspective**

melancholic and mentally deranged. In his words, 'The direct cause [of Hamlet's delay] was a state of mind quite abnormal and induced by special circumstances [‘the moral shock of sudden ghastly disclosure of his mother's true nature’ (p.64)] –a state of profound melancholy’ (p.59). Jones (1949) explains Hamlet's problem to be Oedipus complex meaning that his attitude towards Claudius is ambivalent; Hamlet is grateful to Claudius for removing his rival (Old Hamlet) for his mother's affections but Claudius' new role as the father-figure has again frustrated him because he again encounters a contender in the way of enjoying his mother's unshared love. The great German poet Goethe (1796) views Hamlet as weak-willed and as being unfit for the responsibilities laid upon him. In Goethe's words, the duty to avenge was 'laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it'. To him, Hamlet lacks 'the strength of nerve which forms a hero' and sinks beneath his burden. Coleridge (1811) attributes Hamlet's delay to 'effect of a superfluous activity of thought' and says, 'He is a man living in meditation, called upon to act by every motive human and divine, but great object of his life is defeated by continually resolving to do but doing nothing but resolve'. T.S. Eliot (1919) criticizes most of the Shakespearean critics, especially Goethe and Coleridge, because they 'often find in Hamlet a vicarious existence for their own artistic realization' and he terms the play 'most certainly an artistic failure', 'puzzling' and 'disquieting' with 'superfluous and inconsistent scenes'. He also castigates the 'inexplicable' delay of action and says that Hamlet, the hero, is driven by mother's guilt rather than revenge for father's death. Eliot blames Shakespeare for his failure to establish 'objective correlative'... 'a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be formula of that particular emotion, such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.'

### **2.2. Hamlet defended**

The play's seemingly irreconcilable crisis of meaning(s) as pointed out by the critics emanate from (what they call) Hamlet's dilemma, inaction and his failure to rise to occasion. His distressful anguish over the murder of his father, incestuous marriage of his mother with his uncle Claudius, the murderer, and his being dethroned are said to be leading to his aimlessness. He is given the role of just a 'talking parrot' in the self-made iron cage. But this study negates Hamlet's dilemma, abnormality, inaction, procrastination and aimlessness and attempts to show that Hamlet's life is quite normal, his actions, though supposedly delayed, are purposefully well-planned. The paper also shows that Hamlet, the play, is not 'an artistic failure', 'puzzling' or 'inexplicable' but it is rather characterized by the lucidity of thought and philosophy and by practicality of actions well-knit by the consistent scenes leading to a single thread of theme and meaning.

### **3. Turn to Religion**

#### **3.1. Circle of Interpretations**

Hamlet, the play, is not only the most performed, studied and researched literary text; it is also the most theorized one. The play's philosophical ambiguity has been interpreted through a plethora of literary theories (e.g. Marxism, Psychoanalysis, New Criticism, Deconstruction, Feminism, Modernism, Post-



modernism, New Historicism, Cultural Materialism and so on). But one interpretation through a particular theory has immediately led to another new criticism resulting in the new kind of 'ambiguity' and a number of new 'unanswerable' questions. This 'circle' of new ambiguity and irreconcilability has led to the recent 'turn to religion' in search of compatible, consistent and reconcilable meanings in Hamlet.

### 3.2. Turn to the Bible

The 'religion' the Shakespearean critics have recently turned to is understandably the religion of the Bible. They have started decoding the biblical materials, references and allusion in Shakespearean dramas.

Charles Wordsworth (1864) is the first to discuss Shakespeare's biblical root in the introduction of his book, *Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible*. Dr Thomas Carter (1905) asserts Shakespeare's copious assimilation and reproduction of 'the words of Scripture'. Then comes Richmond Noble (1935) with the classification of the Shakespearean holy citation into 'certain', 'probable' and 'possible' categories. Peter Milward (1987), a Jesuit priest and Dr Naseeb Shaheen (1999), an American born Palestinian, both discuss the biblical materials and references found in the tragedies of Shakespeare, especially in *Hamlet*. Shaheen (1999) enumerated seventy-six biblical references in the play *Hamlet*. The scholars from Bishop Wordsworth to Naseeb Shaheen have all tried to find out the biblical materials, references and allusions. But Jackson and Marotti (2004) attempts to readdress the topic of religion and the dramatist's relationship to the religious cultures of his time and thus 'interpret the place of religion and religious issues in Shakespearean drama. Lupton (2006) comes up with universality of the interpretation of Hamlet through 'religion': "religion names one strand of those forms of human interaction that resist localization and identification with a specific time, place, nation, or language'. Thus, Hamlet's ambiguity and conflict of meanings get resolved through the 'turn' of the scholars and critics to 'religion' of the Holy Bible.

### 3.3. Quranic Glimpses

The Glorious Quran is the revealed book: 'The book is, without a doubt, a revelation from the Lord of the universe' (Al-Quran 32:2). The Holy Bible is the words of God: 'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit' ( The Bible II Peter 1:20-21). As the revealed religions, both Christianity and Islam share some of principles and philosophy and attitude towards human life. The Glorious Quran calls the followers of the revealed religions to accept these common principles and philosophy among the religions: 'Say, O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you' (Al-Quran 3:64). This paper, therefore, examines Hamlet's (the protagonist) life in the light of the Holy Bible, the Glorious Quran and the Hadeeths to show that he is guided by divine impulse to execute justice 'in defense of his nation and his people' ( Caruso 2007)

## **Hamlet's Metamorphosis from an Avenger to a Revolutionary: A Religious Perspective**

through his well-orchestrated and resolute fight against the evil agent Claudius. The study also shows that much of Hamlet's (the protagonist) contemplations, actions, reactions and philosophy reflect Quranic and Islamic spirit rather than the Biblical and the Christian one, which leads to Hamlet's metamorphosis to a missionary revolutionist from an avenger.

### **4. Hamlet's Stages of Metamorphosis**

#### **4.1. Hamlet's Mission**

Dr Samuel Lee (2008), the founder of the University Bible Fellowship (UBF) equates 'man' with 'mission' through his (in)famous catchphrase 'Man=Mission and Mission = Man' supported by the Scripture: 'God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground. (Genesis 1:28)'. The Glorious Quran specifies the mission a 'man' is entrusted with by the Almighty: 'You are the best nation set forth [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong' (Al-Quran 3:110). Hamlet's mission is guided by the Quranic verses rather than the Biblical ones. His mission is very clearly set in the beginning of the play at the very sight of the spirit of his dead father: 'My fate cries out/ And makes each petty attire in this body' (Act I, Scene II, lines 82-83). The responsibility of 'forbidding what is wrong' is entrusted upon him in the first Act: 'Let not the royal bed of Denmark be/ A couch of luxury and damned incest' (Act I, scene V, lines 82-83) and then he realizes his duty of fighting for 'what is right' and establishing a peaceful and livable Denmark: 'The time is out of joint: O cursed Spite, / That ever I was born to set it right!' (Act I, Scene V, lines 196-197). And because Hamlet comes to know his mission in life, he is now able to chalk out issues to be dealt with and decide the right course of action shaking off the melancholic dilemma.

#### **4.2. Hamlet's Mother's Hasty Marriage**

Mourning for the dead is a natural passion encouraged by the Bible and also not discouraged by Islam. The Bible says, 'Blessed are those who mourn' (Matthew 5:4). Islam does not discourage the mourning for the dead in a decent and restrained manner with befitting and carefully chosen use of words. The Prophet (PBUH) shed tears at the death of his son Ibrahim and said, 'O Ibrahim, our eyes shed tears and our hearts are filled with grief... we are grieved for you' (Sahih Muslim 30:5733). Hamlet follows this natural way of mourning for his dead father which is discouraged by his mother and step father calling it 'impious stubbornness', 'unmanly grief', 'unschooled' understanding. But this discouragement proves ill-motivated aimed at diverting the attention of the people from 'the overhasty' marriage of the widowed queen Gertrude with Claudius. Though the Bible is silent on the 'delay period' regarding the marriage of the widow, it was social custom in the Elizabethan society to delay marriage for some months. Here The Glorious Quran specifies the 'delay period' or 'Iddah' for the widow to be four months and ten days if the widow is not pregnant and if pregnant till the delivery of the issue: 'And those of you who die and leave wives behind them, they (the wives) shall wait (as regards their



marriage) for four months and ten days,' (Al-Quran 2: 234) and 'And for those who are pregnant, their term is until they give birth' (Al-Quran 65:4). So, Hamlet shows the Quranic spirit and reflections in his grievance at the 'overhasty' marriage of his widowed mother: 'But two months dead- nay, not so much, not two' (Act I, Scene II, Line 138)... 'A little month (Act I, Scene II, Line 147) ... 'within a month' (Act I, Scene II, Line 153)... 'O most wicked speed' (Act I, Scene II, Line 156). His agonizing utterances against the haste confirm not only the discretion of the Quranic jurisprudence but also the humanizing universality of its application. His mother, queen Gertrude, herself understands the wrong in the haste of her marriage:

'I doubt it is no other than the main  
His father's death and our o'r'hasty marriage' ( Act II, Scene II, Lines  
56-57)

Gertrude's overhasty marriage works as an eye opener for Hamlet. It contributes to his realization that 'carnal' desire can reduce a human to a beast. His mother indulges in the hasty carnal desire which 'a beast that wants discourse of reason' (Act I, Scene II, Line 150) wouldn't have done. In response to his mother's query 'what have I done?' (Act III, Scene IV, Line 28), Hamlet terms her haste to be a deed scoffing at the very basic principle of religion: 'Oh such a deed/ As ... sweet religion makes/ A rhapsody of words' (Act III, Scene IV, Lines 45-48). Hamlet, therefore, must rise to the occasion to defend his religion and the attempt to defend his religion has contributed to the reshaping of his philosophy and to the making of a new Hamlet with a clear vision of a holy mission.

#### 4.3. Hamlet's Suicidal Thought

Hamlet's 'suicidal thought' is a widely discussed and much debated issue to the literary critics. Hamlet is interpreted to be wishing to commit suicide because of his mother's 'overhasty' and 'incestuous' marriage. The first (Act I, Scene II, Lines 128-158) and the fourth (Act III, Scene I, Lines 56-89) soliloquies are often cited out of context for the purpose. But historical reality and religious implications together with the contextualized reading of the text negate the idea of Hamlet's suicidal thought. Elizabethan society and the church frowned upon suicide. The Scripture that shapes the ways of Hamlet's life disapproves of suicide: 'Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time?' (Ecclesiastes 7:17). The Glorious Quran declares: 'and make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction' ( Al-Quran 2:195) and 'And do not kill yourselves' ( Al-Quran 4:29) and the Prophet (PBUH) is more specific: 'Whoever kills himself with a weapon made of iron will keep on hurting himself in hell with the same weapon. And whoever kills himself with poison will keep on drinking poison in hell. And whoever commits suicide by falling from mountain will keep on falling in the fire of hell forever over and over again' (Sahih Muslim 1:199).

The (mis)conception of Hamlet's 'wish for suicide' starts from the lines of his first soliloquy: 'Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd/ His canon 'gainst self-slaughter, O God! O God!' (Hamlet, Act I, scene II, lines 131-132). But Hamlet's first encounter with his newly married mother beside her new husband gives

## **Hamlet's Metamorphosis from an Avenger to a Revolutionary: A Religious Perspective**

insight into the meaning of the lines. The lines only show the anguishing gush of shock of a man who comes to attend his father's funeral but, sees his mother's 'overhasty' and 'incestuous' marriage with his uncle which was shamefully unacceptable in the Elizabethan society. At the peak of shock, he imagines how any other common man would have reacted wishing for the suicide for him at this critical juncture of life. Hamlet, being the Prince of Denmark and highly educated person, cannot let his anguishing emotions burst out in public let alone think of suicide. Hamlet's widely quoted soliloquy 'To be or not to be, that's the question' (Act III, Scene III, Line 57) further negates his suicidal thought because suicide will lead to his eternal punishment in the life hereafter:

'But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscovered country from whose bourn  
No traveler returns, puzzles the will  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?' ( Act III, Scene I, Line 78-82)

The dreadful consequence of the suicidal thought is sharply exemplified in the graveyard scene. The gravediggers reveal that the suicidal dead are denied Christian burial in a churchyard. Here only King's interference and Ophelia's high social status have allowed her to be buried in the consecrated ground but she is still denied full rites of Christian burial as the Priest says in response to Leartes' demand for full burial rites:

'...Her death was doubtful,  
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,  
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged  
Till the last trumpet. For charitable prayers  
Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.' ( Act V, Scene I, Line 220-24)

So, Hamlet, the Prince, with full knowledge of the Scripture and social attitude towards suicide, can never think of committing self-slaughter. Rather, his contemplation of the commoner's suicide at the critical point of life and its grave consequences in the life hereafter has infused more religious awareness and insight in him, which has lent more steadfastness in his plan and expedited future course of action of eliminating Claudius regime.

### **4.4. Revolution against Claudius Regime**

Hamlet is a tragedy about revenge- a revenge that eventually turns into an act of 'holy mission' of a revolution assigned by the divinity. This revolution in its earliest revenge form starts at his very sight of the spirit of his father who tells

him to avenge the death of Old Hamlet: 'Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder' (Act I, scene V, line 25). But Christian orthodoxy posits a world ordered by Divine Providence, in which revenge is a sin and a blasphemy, endangering the soul of the avenger. The Bible says, 'Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord" (Romans 12:19). Islam also discourages personal revenge: 'Allah's Apostle never took revenge over anybody for his own sake' (Sahih Bukhari, Book 73, No 147). But for the religious purpose and the greater interest of the nation, the revolutionary action (Jihad) is mandatory in Islam: 'Why do you not fight for the cause of God or save the helpless men, women, and children who cry out, 'Lord, set us free from this town of wrong doers and send us a guardian and a helper?' (Al-Quran 4:75). Interestingly enough, Hamlet, with the progress of the drama, transforms and matures from a mere avenger into a great religious revolutionary 'guardian' because from his encounter with the spirit of his dead father, he has come to know that there is the 'most horrible' (Act I, Scene V, Line 80) punishment in the Purgatory for any 'foul crime done' (Act I, Scene V, Line 12) in this life. With this knowledge about the life hereafter, he can't choose any wrong course of action. So he carefully chalks out his courses of actions and starts implementing them gradually with caution, patience and wisdom. Firstly he makes sure that Claudius is the murderer of his father, secondly he protects his mother from the 'incestuous' sin, thirdly he gives up his personal emotion for Ophelia for the greater purpose and finally he eliminates Claudius and his regime.

#### 4.4.1. The Mouse Caught

Through the staging of 'mousetrap' drama, he makes sure that Claudius is the murderer: 'The play's the thing/ Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King' (Act II, Scene II, lines 600-601). After the confirmation of Claudius' guilt in Act III, Scene II, Line 263 (King: Give me some light, away.), Hamlet gets resolute to take action and he gets the opportunity to kill him: 'Now I'll do't' (Act III, Scene III, Line 73) but Hamlet refrains from killing because Claudius was in prayer. Hamlet wants not only to kill him but also to damn him, so Hamlet will kill him when Claudius will be found in the act of sin:

'When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,  
Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed,  
At game a-swearing, or about some act  
That has no relish of salvation in 't—  
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,  
And that his soul may be as damned and black  
As hell, whereto it goes.' (Act III, Scene III, lines 90-96)

#### 4.4.2. Hamlet's Mother Saved

Parents are to be treated with the greatest respect and honor in all the religions. The Bible says, 'Honor your father and mother,' (Ephesians 6: 2). Islam gives more importance to their honor with special reference to the honor of mother: 'And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother



## Hamlet's Metamorphosis from an Avenger to a Revolutionary: A Religious Perspective

bears him with hardship and she brings him forth with hardship' (Al-Quran 46:15). An authentic Hadeeth prioritizes mother's honor and right: 'A man came to the Prophet –peace be upon him- and asked, 'Messenger of Allah, who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?' The Prophet said, 'Your mother.' The man said, 'Who is next?' The Prophet said, 'Your mother.' The man further said, 'Who is next?' The Prophet said, 'Your mother.' The man asked for the fourth time, 'Who is next?' The Prophet said, 'Your father.' (Sahih Bukhari, 5971)' Despite Gertrude's sinful crime, Hamlet receives his father's guidance to behave well with his mother leaving her to the stings of conscience for her sins:

'Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge  
To prick and sting her.' (Act I, Scene V, Lines 85-88)

While going to meet his mother in the closet scene, he resolves to 'speak daggers' but with a heart full of love and respect for his mother: 'I will speak daggers to her but use none/ My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites' (Act III, Scene II, Lines 357-58). Talking to her in rude words is also part of his well-planned mission to rouse her conscience and Gertrude realizes her guilt and confesses:

'O Hamlet, speak no more,  
Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul,  
And there I see such black and grained spots  
As will not leave their tinct.' (Act III, Scene IV, lines 89-92)

Hamlet has divine mission, so rousing only conscience in his mother does not satisfy him. He therefore guides her to 'confess to heaven' in order to save her from the eternal punishment through ensuring his mother's divine forgiveness: 'Confess yourself to heaven,/ Repent what's past, avoid what is to come' (Act III, Scene IV, Lines 150-51). Noticeable is the change in Gertrude after the meeting with Hamlet. She asks guidance from Hamlet: 'what shall I do?' (Act III, Scene IV, Line 182) and assures Hamlet of following his advice and plan: 'Be thou assured' (Act III, Scene IV, Line 198). And in the next scene we see Gertrude trying to save Hamlet by giving wrong information to Claudius that Hamlet was sorry for unknowingly killing Polonium and he wept for it: 'a weeps for what is done' (Act III, Scene IV, Line 27) and for the first time, Gertrude disregards Claudius by not obeying his 'come away' three times.

### 4.4.3. Personal Emotion Shunned

Inspired by religious cause, Hamlet confirms his evolution into a revolutionist with a mission through shunning his personal feelings of love for Ophelia for the greater interest of nation. Earlier, in the Act I, Scene III, Ophelia is seen revealing Hamlet's deep love for her in response to her father's query of Hamlet's recent 'private' visit to her. Ophelia admits the visit and discloses that



Hamlet 'hath ...of late/ made many tenders of his affection to me' (Act I, Scene III, Lines 99-100), 'he hath importuned me with love/ In honourable fashion' (Act I, Scene III, Lines 110-11) and 'And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord/ With almost all the holy vows of heaven' (Act III, Scene I, Lines 113-14). Hamlet's encounter with Ophelia in the Act III, Scene I and their subsequent conversation also show their previous emotional relationship. Ophelia has some 'remembrances' (Act III, Scene I, Line 93) of Hamlet which she now wants to return because the gifts weigh no value when Hamlet show no kindness to Ophelia: 'rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind' ( Act III, Scene I, Line 101). Hamlet blatantly denies his love for Ophelia : ' I loved you not ( Act III, Scene I, Line 117) and advises her to 'Get thee to a nunnery' ( Act III, Scene, Line 119) because 'the ideal woman for Hamlet now appears to be one in nunnery' (Alsaif 2012).

#### 4.4.4. The Mission Completed

Now, Hamlet's mission is to eliminate Claudius, which he promised in his first meeting with the spirit of his father. Claudius sins against whatever is 'natural', indulges in the sin of adultery, violence, passes rash judgment precipitating the random and cunning killings in the state of Denmark. Horatio summarizes it to Fortinbras:

'So shall you hear  
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,  
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,  
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,' ( Act V, Scene II, Lines 359-62)

The tyrannical regime of Claudius as summarized by Horatio calls for immediate action from the representative of the people, who turns out to be their 'protector' and 'helper' as stated in the Glorious Quran : 'And what is [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah and [for] the oppressed among men, women, and children who say, 'Our Lord, take us out of this city of oppressive people and appoint for us from Yourself a protector and appoint for us from Yourself a helper?' (Al-Quran 4:75). The 'protector' and 'helper' is assigned with the mission of fighting till there remains no trace of oppression and persecution: 'And fight them, till there is no persecution' (Al-Quran 2:193).

Hamlet in the play *Hamlet* is the divine 'protector' and 'helper' of the people of Denmark. Hamlet, in his talks with his mother in the closet scene about the killing of Polonius, terms himself as the 'punisher' and 'agent' of God: 'That I must be their scourge and minister' (Act III, Scene IV, line 176). He, therefore, comes forward to their rescue as their true Prince and true representative. With full knowledge of 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends (Act V, Scene II, Lines 10), he overcomes all the fear of death and annihilates Claudius regime in a second: 'Then, venom, to thy work' (Act V, Scene II, Line 301) because he now rather fears 'further' aggravation of the evil leading to his divine damnation if Claudius is spared:

## Hamlet's Metamorphosis from an Avenger to a Revolutionary: A Religious Perspective

'is 't not perfect conscience  
To quit him with this arm? And is 't not to be damned  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil?' (Act V, Scene II, Lines 67-70)

### 4.4.5. Mission to Be Continued

After completing Hamlet's 'holy mission' of eliminating Claudius regime, he does not forget his pre-death duty even during the dying moments. He entrusts those present there with the duty of propagating the message of his holy mission among the oppressed, suppressed and the deprived:

'Horatio, I'm dead  
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright  
To the unsatisfied.' (Act V, Scene II, Lines 317-19)

Hamlet prevents Horatio's suicidal intention so that Horatio relentlessly continues this mission of holy preaching of his fight for right and against wrong:

'Absent thee from felicity awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain  
To tell my story' (Act V, Scene II, Lines 326-28)

His mission is echoed in the Bible: 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature' (Mark 16:15) and in the Glorious Quran: 'Invite [mankind] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction' (Al-Quran 16:125).

## 5. Conclusion

Claudius is apprehensive of 'Hamlet's transformation ... from the understanding of himself' (Act II, Scene II, Lines 5-9) but what Claudius does not comprehend is the working of divine light in Hamlet's transformation. Indeed, Hamlet is a unique figure in the world literature with a clear self-understanding contributed to by his religious awareness and enlightenment, which leads to his metamorphosis from an avenger to a revolutionary.

The metamorphosis in Hamlet starts taking place after his encounter with his father's ghost when he has come to know about the divine punishment in the life hereafter for the wrongs done in this life. His initial personal thirst for vengeance upon Claudius transforms into a well-orchestrated holy struggle against the whole corrupted state machinery. His mission starts with shunning whatever is personal because a revolutionary 'has no personal interests, no business affairs, no emotions, no attachments, no property, and no name' (Nechayev, 1869). His impersonalizing utterance 'I loved you not' (Act III, Scene I, Line 117) to Ophelia initiates the revolutionary mission. He, then, successfully does away with accomplices of the Claudius regime- Polonius, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz. Before he sacrifices his life, he implements his main action of toppling the oppressive regime by killing Claudius and proclaiming Fortinbras as the next King for Denmark.



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