



Understanding Asha's *WHAT WAR?* lyric

Asha wrote the lyrics for her *What War?* composition when she was 15. It is a poem of protest about what has been happening in the Middle East and in Syria particularly, where ordinary people including many innocent children have been hurt by the war and through bombing.

She used some direct quotes from holy books of the three main religions of the Middle East, Islam (The Quran), Judaism (The Talmud) and Christianity (The Bible). She also used images inspired by words from these books and a style of language to match.

Looking carefully in these books and elsewhere, Asha realized that all three religions really teach peace (and not war) as one the most important things.

Here are some questions about some of the words you sing. There may be lots of good answers to most of these questions. (It's not a test!)

1. The very first words (*'This death without a cause/ shall be held up in shame'*) are actually modeled on words from the Quran. Why do you think she chose these words?
2. *'Strange tears fall from the sky above...'* Asha says she was thinking of acid rain from poisoned gas clouds that have been used in the wars, especially in Syria . Why do you think she called these things 'tears'?
3. *'Sun comforts her/ with rainbows...'* Can you guess why Asha mentioned rainbows after the 'tears'?
4. Do you think that is connected with *'just one drop/just one flood'*

5. *'We're one humanity...'* Asha is quoting both the Christian Saint Paul who lived about two thousand years ago and also a very famous Sufi poet called Jalaludin Rumi who lived in the 13th Century. Quite a lot of people now believe that 'one humanity' is an important idea in the 21st Century too. Why do think that could be?

6. *'The more charity, the more peace...'* This line is from the Talmud. The lines that follow echo it. They suggest that one good thing you have in your heart could lead on to another good thing. So the more you have peace the more you have mercy for example. You could put that in other words - 'the more you feel calm the more you can be kind'. Are things really different if you feel more peaceful and does it help you to feel other things?

7. *'Let old feuds fade and new life flow.'* What do the last words of the lyric mean to you?

8. What is your favourite line in *What War?* What do you like about it?

Asha would really like to know what you think of the words and the music you have been singing. Please feel free to e-mail anything you would like to say to her about it to

beyonddivisions@gmail.com or send your thoughts by post to

Beyond Divisions, c/o 27 London Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 3AB