



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.11.47>

CONTRIBUTION OF ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI TO ARABIC CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Abdus Sagir Ahmed

Research Scholar

Department of Arabic, Gauhati University

Guwahai, Assam, India

Abstract

Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi commonly known as Ali Miyan, is one of the famous literary figures of Indo-Arabic literature. He was an Islamic scholar too. He authored more than hundred books on different topic, particularly on Arabic literature. His contribution to Islamic studies and Arabic literature is acknowledged across the globe. People from different parts of the world know him and love his writings. He is equally famous among Indians and abroad. His writing took Arabic language and literature to a new height in India. Most importantly, he is an able writer who is famous and known for his contribution to the Arabic children's literature. He wrote and compiled important books in Arabic for children. This paper aims to discuss his contribution to the development of Arabic children's literature.

Keywords: Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Arabic Children's Literature, Arabic, Indo-Arabic Literature.

Introduction

Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi is one of the best Islamic scholars, thinkers, historians, writers and critics of the twentieth century. He was the Director General of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, President of All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Member of Muslim World League, Founding President of World Islamic Literature, and President of Shura at Darul Uloom Deoband Majlis, apart from being an academic councilor. He was also an advisor to a number of religious and social organizations. He was the first Indian scholar to be known more by Arabs than non-Arabs, and he was the first Indian scholar to be handed over the keys of Mecca during the Hajj in 1951 by the Saudi royal family and allowed to accompany anyone he wanted. He wrote so many important books. His works needs to be discussed in a broader sense. His writing on Arabic children's literature is very useful and beneficial for the children studying Arabic language and literature.

Life and works

Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi was an internationally renowned Islamic thinker, historian, writer and scholar of the twentieth century. He authored more than hundred books in different languages. He is also popularly known as Ali Miyan.

He was born on 5 December 1913 in Rae Bareli, India. His father's name was Abdul Hai and his mother's name was Khairunnesa. Both of his parents were descendants of Hasan, the grandson of Muhammad (peace be upon him). His father was a prominent historian, a renowned expert in hadith and a God-fearing scholar of Islam. He authored many books. Few of them are Nujha al-Khawatir, al-Thaqafah al-Islamia fil Hind (Islamic Culture in India), al-Hind fil Ahd al-Islami (India during Islamic period), Nujhah al-Khawatir that contains biographical accounts of more than four thousand Muslim scholars from India. He is known as Khallikan al-Hind (Khallikan of India) for his outstanding works on history (Hasani, 2014).

He lost his father in 1923 when he was less than nine years old. In this situation, his elder brother Maulana Abdul Ali al-Hasani and his mother Khairunnesa took charge of his education. As a child, Ali Miyan received his early education of the Qur'an, Arabic and Urdu language from his mother and some of his relatives. Ali Miyan started learning Arabic language from Khalil Ibn Mohammad Yameni and became proficient. In 1926, he was admitted to Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama in Lucknow. At this time, he became known to all because of his proficiency in Arabic. He was so proficient in Arabic that he was chosen as a guide to the guests come from Arab countries (Salman, 2002).

He was admitted to Lucknow University in 1928 and graduated from there with a degree in Urdu language and literature. From 1928 to 1930, he studied English which helped him gather information directly from English books written about Islam. In 1929, he rejoined the Nadwatul Ulama and studied there for few years.

In 1934 he joined Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama as a teacher and taught Tafsir, Hadith, Logic, Arabic Literature and History. He got married in 1934. In 1939, he started visiting various places in India. In the midst of this visit, he met Maulana Shaykh Abdul Qadir Raipuri and the eminent preacher of Islam, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi, and took them as his career advisors. From the first one he received advice on tazkiyah (self-purification), and from the second one he received advice on evangelism and social reform.



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.11.47>

Throughout his life, he continued to communicate with them. The countries he visited are Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey, America, England etc. (Zaheer, 2005).

In 1943, he founded an association for religious education called Anjuman-e-Talimate Deen. There he gave several lectures on the Qur'an and Hadith, which echoed in the modern society. In 1945, he was elected a member of the administrative council of Nadwatul Ulama. In 1951, at the request of Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi, the then director of the education department of Nadwatul Ulama, he became the deputy director of the education department and after the death of Sulaiman Nadwi in 1954, he was elected director of the education department. Later, after the death of his elder brother Abdul Ali al-Hasani in 1975, he was elected Secretary General of Nadwatul Ulama. In 1951, he started his famous movement Payame Insaniyat. In 1955, he was elected editor of the Arabic magazine al-Ba'as al-Islami and in 1959 Ar-Ra'id. In 1956, Ali Miyan was elected a member of the Arabic Language Institute in Damascus (al-Nadwi, 2001).

In 1959, he established the Islamic Research and Publishing Company in Lucknow. In 1962, in the absence of the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Muhammad bin Ibrahim, in Makkah, Ali Miyan conducted the inaugural ceremony of World Muslim League. Saudi Arabia's ruler Saud bin Abdulaziz and Libya's Idris Senussi were present there. Secondly, since its inception in 1972, he has been a member of the Advisory Committee of the University of Medina. In 1986, the Saudi Minister of Education invited him to advice on the curriculum of the Department of Sharia at the University of Riyadh. He was elected president of Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (OCIS) (Salman, 2002).

In 1931, at the age of eighteen, Ali Miyan's published his first article in the Egyptian newspaper al-Manar, edited by Rashid Rida. The subject of the article was the work of Shaheed Ahmad bin Irfan. His first book, Seerat Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed, was published in Urdu in 1936. In 1940, he compiled the book Mukhtarat Min Adab al-Arab. Between 1942 and 1944, he wrote two books for children, Qassasun Nabiyyin and al-Qiraatur Rashidah. His famous book is Maza Khasira al-Alam be Inhitat al-Muslimeen (What did the world lose with the decline of Muslims?). Most of his books have been translated into English, Urdu, Bengali, Hindi etc. Few of his books are:

- al-Muslimuna fi al-Hind (Muslims in India)
- Rawa'i Iqbal (Glory of Iqbal)
- al-Murtaza
- al-Madkhal Ila al-Dirasah al-Hadith al-Nabawi
- Mohammad Ilyas Kandhlawi wa da'watuhi Ila Allah
- al-Madkhal Ila Dirasah al-Quran
- Madhhab wa Tamaddun
- al-Madkhal Ila Dirasah al-Quran
- Arkan al-Arba'a fi Dhau'e al-Kitab wa al-Sunnah

His Contribution to Arabic Children's Literature

Maulana Nadwi is a prolific writer. His unique style of writing history made him distinguished among his contemporaries. Basically, Maulana Nadwi wrote on history, literature and Islamic theology, biography etc. It is worth mentioning here that Maulana Nadwi took a keen interest in education of children. He was much aware of children's education. He penned several books on children's education and children's literature in Arabic. He is considered one among the most influencing writers who contributed immensely to the development of Arabic children's literature even though he was primarily an Islamic literary figure. His writings on Arabic children's literature opened a new door for Arabic children's literature and took it to a new height. Few of his books in Arabic for children are as follows:

Qasas al-Nabiyeen lil Atfal (Stories of the Prophets for the Children)

This is one of Maulana Nadwi's fantastic works. He decided to write this book while he came across a book written by some Egyptian writers for children. The Egyptian book was full of stories of animals. Even there were stories where pig was personified. Further, the book contained numerous pictures of animals. In fact, the book did not impress Maulana Nadwi, instead it demoralized him. He thought that the book was not suitable for children. Maulana Nadwi was of view that one of the most important duties of the scholars was to develop a rational, wise, educational curriculum that could educate the children more effectively than that of non-religious curriculum. This book was a part of this mission of Ali Miyan (Ali Nadwi , 2001).

al-Qira'ah al-Rashidah

This book is a collection of proses and poems. Ali Miyan compiled this book to acquaint the children with the standard Arabic language. In fact, he compiled this book in a way that may benefits the children of both primary and secondary level. The book comprises



three volumes and contains some eighty-five lessons including prose, poetries, biographies etc. Ali Miyan selected contents for the book from history of India, Indo-Islamic historical monuments, Arabic Islamic literature etc. While preparing the book he paid special attention to the Indian children. In fact, he prepared the book to help Indian children learn the Arabic language (Ali Nadwi , 2003).

Qasas Min al-Tarikh Islami lil Atfal (Stories from the Islamic History for the Children)

This is on Islamic history. History is the study of the past events. History encompasses culture, economy medicine society, politics, science, technology, religions, military developments and so on. History is most important in understanding human evolution. Similarly, it is important to know every aspect of the society. History helps us realize the importance of past events. It also assists us infer exemplary lessons and guide us to think about the present scenario.

Ali Miyan found it necessary to write a book on the Islamic prophets' biography using modern methodology where information was taken from authentic modern and classical sources. There were lot of books on prophet's biography but most of them were not suitable for children; they were either full with many inauthentic information or lacked the quality to be enjoyable by the children. Hence, Maulana Nadwi decided to produce a book on prophet's biography that could be useful for children's studies. He wrote this book depending upon the book on prophetic biography written by Ibn Hisham. The book of Ibn Hisham is believed to be one of the oldest and authentic. Rather the fact is that he summarized Ibn Hisham's book in such a way that is suitable for children. The book plays an important role in the sphere of child education in case of Islamic studies (Ali Nadwi , 2005).

Seerah Khatim al-Nabyeen (Biography of the last Prophet)

He wrote this book on the Islamic prophet's biography using modern methodology where he took information from authentic modern and classical sources. Maulana Nadwi compiled the book in a way beneficial for children mostly. Maulana Nadwi wrote this book depending upon the book on prophetic biography written by Ibn Hisham. The book of Ibn Hisham is believed to be one of the oldest and authentic. Rather the fact is that he summarized Ibn Hisham's book in such a way that is suitable for children. The primary objective of the book is to acquaint the children with the biography of the Islamic prophet. However, the adults who, for the first time, want to read about the prophet can enjoy the book. The book is translated into many languages like English, Bengali, Urdu etc. if one reads the book, he will clearly and completely know the facts such as his birth, childhood, characters, life style, way of preaching Islam and so on. He explained the incidents of the prophet's life chronologically and gave each incident a title like the pre-Islamic period, old religions, Arabian Peninsula etc. He began the book with the discussion on pre-Islamic era, old religions, Arabian Peninsula in chronological order (Ali Nadwi, 1985).

Mukhtarat Min Adab al-Arab (An Anthology of Arabic Literature)

This is one of the best books of Maulana Nadwi on literature for children. The book was, for the first time, published in 1971 in Lucknow, India. It contained all kinds of literary genres from early Islamic period to the modern period. The book is a part of curriculum in many universities, colleges and Islamic seminaries in and outside India. Few lessons of the book are:

1. Şifah Umar Ibn al-Khattab (Character of Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb)
2. Khutbah al-Hajjaj (Speech of al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf)
3. Waşf al-Sayyed (Description of Hunting)
4. Bakheelun Hakimun (A Miser Ruler)
5. Kitab Yanubu an Kataib (A Book that Represents Battalions)
6. Ara fi al-Taleem (Opinions about Education)
7. al-Madinah al-Ajamiah inda Bi'tha al-Rasul (The Persian City to the Delegation of the Prophet)
8. al-Kaukhu wa al-Qaşru (The Hut and the Palace)

The book is surely one of the best books of its type. One can get a comprehensive idea of entire Arabic literature if he reads, as the book comprises contents of numerous writers from all periods of Arabic literature (Ali Nadwi, 1999).

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be opined that the Maulana Nadwi is one of the leading literary figures of Indo-Arab literature who contributed immensely to the development of Arabic literature in general and to Arabic children's literature in particular. Maulana Nadwi did not write only on literature but he also wrote on the subject like history, biographies, theology etc. His writings truly took Indian version of Arabic literature to a new height.



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.11.47>

References

- Ali Nadwi, A. H. (2001). Qasas al-Nabyyen Lil-Atfal [Stories of the Prophet for the Children]. Beirut, Lebanon : Resala Publishers.
- Ali Nadwi, A. H. (2003). al-Qira'h al-Rashida. Leicester, United Kingdom: UK Islamic Academy.
- Ali Nadwi, A. H. (2005). Qasas min al-Tarikh al-Islam lil-Atfal [Stories from Islamic History for Children]. (I. A. Azami , Trans.) Leicester, United Kingdom: UK Islamic Academy.
- Ali Nadwi, A. H. (1985). Sirah Khatim al-Nabiyyen [Biography of the Last Prophet] (Eighth ed.). Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasah al-Risalah.
- Ali Nadwi, A. H. (1999). Mukhtarat min Adab al-Arab [An Anthology of Arabic Literature] (1st ed., Vol. 1st). Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Ibn Kathir.
- al-Nadwi, M. I. (2001). Abu al-Hasan Ali al-Hasani al-Nadwi al-Da'yah al-Hakim wal Murabbi al-Zalil. Damascus, Lebanon: Dar al-Qalam.
- Hasani, B. A. (2014). Sawanih Mufakkir Islam [Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi] (3rd Ed ed.). Rae Bareli, India: Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed Academy.
- Salman, M. M. (2002). Allama Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi: Jibon o Kormo [Allama Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi: Life and Activities]. Dhaka, Bangladesh : al-Irfan Publication
- Zaheer, S. I. (2005). Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi: A Man of Hope Through a . Bangalore: Iqra Welfare Trust, India .