

Name of the Scholar: Firdous Nazir
Name of the Supervisor: Prof. Rafi'el Imad Faynan
Name of the Department: Arabic, Faculty of Humanities and Languages, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.
Title of Thesis: " *The Contribution of Abu Mansur Al-Thaalibi to Criticism and Linguistics* " .

Abstract

- Al- Thaaliabi was one of the most prominent literary figures of the 4th (H) and 10th (C) century. He was born in Nishapur, Iran in (350/961) at the time when Abbasid Empire at Baghdad had collapsed and fragmented into a number of princely states and emirates. It witnessed the mass political, and gross social and economic disintegration due to the prevailing chaos and constant rift between these emerging territories, mainly for the reins of power and consolidation of their rule. It was however, bolt from the blue that despite all the vicissitudes, the cultural and intellectual life witnessed a widespread growth and advancement. There was a significant development in the field of Arabic language and literature especially in the dominion of Art, Biography, History, Philosophy, Linguistics, Criticism and all forms of Poetry and Prose writing. It was Al-Thaaliabi who lived in this dazzling era and took part in the cultural and intellectual fluorescence of this age by his extraordinary literary skill demonstrated in his numerous works which include anthologies, compilation of fine writings, anecdotes, discussions on grammar, Philology Criticism and so on.
- During the course of his life, Al- Thaaliabi traveled extensively within the Eastern part of the Islamic world including Ghaznavid, Samanid and Buwahid dynasties. The primary goal of this would always be to visit the centers of learning and meet the prominent figures of his time. These travels paved the way for Al-Thaaliabi to pursue and bring together the enormous literary wealth that he employed in his wide -ranging works numbering more than hundred , many of which are dedicated to the famous luminaries of his age.

- Al- Thaalibi was a prolific writer mostly known for his mono and multi thematic anthologies and collection of epigrams which are characterized by his fascinating art of writing and enjoy the wide circulation in Arabic Classical Literature.

He was equally a dynamic poet and a prose writer. Both his prose and poetry bear the mark of ornamentation and verbal elegance like many other writers of his age. His prose writing skill is chiefly envisaged in the precludes of his books and brochures.

- He has a significant contribution to the field of Literary Criticism represented in his famous multi - volume biographical anthology prominently know as 'Yatimat ud Dahr' which is classified according to the poets of various countries and geographical regions and contains peerless extracts from their works. The book is considered to be a comprehensive survey of the Arabic and Islamic intellectual world during the preceding epochs.

Al -Thaalibi's significant critical role in "Yatimat ud Dahr" may include his criticism to Abu Tayib Al - Mutanabbi, the most influential poet of his time, his study to the subject of plagiarism in poetry. Likewise, his concepts and views regarding various literary issues as, position of Time and Space in Criticism, impact of religious notions on literature and environmental influence on the poet and his artistic worth.

- He is also credited with his remarkable role in Philology, one of the essential branches of Linguistics dealing with the scientific study of words and their description and relationship to one another. His magnum opus "Fihul Lugah Wa Sirul Arabia" is highly recognized and acclaimed in this regard. The book is a unique lexicon. It organizes and classifies the glossary according to its verbal synonyms and classes and distinguishes between their subtle and minute implications .

It likewise, deals with various morphological and rhetorical subjects, methods and ways of expression in Arabic language and reveals their numerous characteristics and peculiarities.

It is noteworthy, that Al-Thaalibi was among the pioneers of Arabic Language to incorporate the concept of "Law of the Language" by this book which highly influenced later developments in Linguistics and became the source of inspiration for the Arab grammarians, Philologists and lexicographers like Ibn Manzoor (d.711 H) Jalaluddin Suyyuti (d. 911), Zabidi (d. 1205 H), Shahabuddin Khafaji (d.1069 H) and many more.