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ABSTRACT

Muhammad Hasan Faqi is one of the most prominent Saudi poets who have pioneered the Arabic poetry in Saudi Arabia. Born in *Makkah al-Mukarramah*, he orphaned in his infancy as his mother died when he was just seven months old. Thus, he was deprived of mother's love, care and affection. The life had more deprivation in store for him as he had to suffer at the hands of paid caregivers. Then, his father, a religious teacher, left for Indonesia seeking livelihood, and shifted Faqi from his home city, *Makkah al-Mukarramah*, to Jeddah, where he continued his studies at the famous Al-Falaah School. Faqi, yet again, had to face another painful incident as his father died even as he was preparing to celebrate his passing out from the school.

These painful incidents that he experienced in the early years had the greatest impact on Faqi that lasted throughout his life, and it's reflected in his poetry.

Still in his teenage, the destiny forced Faqi to act as the sole bread earner for his family (his sisters and himself). Fortunately, the lady luck smiled on him as his alma mater he had very recently graduated from decided to engage him as a teacher - thanks to his excellence in studies. From then on, he kept climbing up the ladders of career. Having put a couple of years into teaching, he joined a newspaper where he became its youngest Editor-in-Chief at the age of 19. Then, he held several high-ranking positions in the government before dedicating himself full time to writing poetry.

Among the most painful incidents in Faqi's life was the death of two of his youthful children – the diplomat son Abdulaziz who died in a road accident in New York, and the daughter Fawzia, a sociology graduate, who battled some disease for long but couldn't survive – in a single year, making the poet live a life of loneliness, alienation and isolation.

Faqi started penning poems when he was still a school student. His poems were appreciated by well-known literary figures of the time. His works of poetry, spread over ten big

volumes, are true reflection of his troubled life, his thoughts and beliefs, and his stances on and approaches towards different issues and topics.

Faqi has dealt with many topics and issues in his poetry. His Islamic poetry encompasses wide array of themes such as life after death, love for prophet (Peace be upon him), the holy month of Ramadan, and poems about *Makkah al-Mukarramah* and *Madinah al-Munawwarah* – the two Islamic holy places Faqi used to visit quite often and pen poems spontaneously seeking inspiration from them. These poems show Faqi's strong belief in the teachings of Islam.

The other important topic Faqi has dealt with in his poems is the nationalistic poetry. He has written several poems in which he has praised the achievements of different personalities in his country. However, in his nationalistic poems Faqi has, at the same time, urged the youth to work hard and have criticized those who sit idle and don't make efforts to contribute towards nation-building. In the wider sense of nationalism, Faqi, in his poems, has discussed several issues concerning the Arabs and Muslims. He has criticized the Arab leadership in a number of poems and has urged them to follow the teachings of Islam. The significant aspect of his nationalist and patriotic poems is that he has never deviated from the principles of Islam when writing on nationalistic issues.

Faqi, one of the pioneers of the romantic poetry in Saudi Arabia, has composed many poems that carry the stamp of modern Arab literary schools of thought, such as *al-Mahjar*, and *al-Dewan*. He has composed poems about love, meditation, and the nature, and has sought solace through different phenomena of the nature.

Faqi has, also, composed several elegies on some prominent personalities; his friends, colleagues, and most notably two of his young children who died as indicated above. In these elegies, Faqi has highlighted the unique qualities that have set these personalities apart from others. Faqi has, however, never forgotten Allah when bewailing the near and dear ones who departed this world. He has always surrendered himself to the will of Allah and shown his strong belief in destiny.

Artistically, Faqi has used simple and easy-to-understand language in his poetry, for he has concentrated more on the content than on the form and the language. However, he, at the same time, has always employed the literary tools and means to add the linguistic and literary beauty to his poems. To him, language is more like a tool than a goal.
