

A Scrap from the Life and Works of Ma'sumi

MD.RAYSUL HOQUE CHY

Dept. of Arabic, Assam University, Silchar , Assam, India

Abstract

Abu Mahfuz Al-Karim Ma'sumi (1913-2009) spent his entire life in the service of Arabic language and literature. He got basic education at his birth place Bihar, after that he travelled to Dhaka, Kolkata and other places seeking knowledge and got modern as well as traditional Islamic knowledge. His great scholarship in Arabic and Islamic literature quite clearly reflects in his writings: books, articles, research papers etc. Ma'sumi's voluminous book Buhuth Wa Tanbihat, is the collection of all his writings. The book has been published in Beirut in two volumes in 2001, under the supervision of Dr.Ajmal Ayyub Al-Islahi. The book under discussion deals with Arabic language, Literature, Islamic theology, researches, analysis and commentaries.

The life and works of Ma'sumi have, of late, emerged as an important subject for research. And, in fact a number of writers and researchers in India and abroad have published articles and research papers on the life and works of this great personality. But so far my knowledge is concerned; no one has done any research work for any degree in India. Hence, this proposed research will be first of its kind. During the next few years all possible attempts will be made to prepare a complete and comprehensive work on Ma'sumi's life and works. An attempt to undertake a research is required to bring out the contribution of Ma'sumi to Arabic literature. I think it will benefit the researchers in general and the researchers in Arabic language and literature in particular. This research work will also encourage other researchers to do their researches on some other aspect of Abu Mahfuz's prolific work Buhuth Wa Tanbihat.

Keywords: Abu Mahfuz, Al-Karim Ma'sumi, investigator, Ma'sum the small, researches and alerts, Aliah Madrassa, Buhuth Wa Tanbihat, Ajmal Ayyub Al-Islahi.

Article

In this Article the main concern of discussion Ma'sumi was a writer, brought in his writings much of different wonderful, mutual and divergent themes and topics, as he analyzed and interpreted Hadith, jurisprudence, philosophy and the arts of other existing and contemporary literary genres, the activities got him fame and reputed throughout the world.

Abu Mahfuz Al-Karim Ma'sumi, son of Amir Hassan, son of Ma'sum, famous as Al-Ma'sum the small, around whom the research here revolves around, was born in Bihar Shareef, Bihar, India in 31st July 1913, in a family of famous educated and gentle parents. He got his early education from his father and his elder brother, then from the great Scholars and renowned scholars in his native village. After that he moved for other studies to Kolkata, West Bengal and Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh accompanying his father, who was a great scholar, virtuous, brilliant and a great Islamic leader. And these various trips and learning brought Ma'sumi's exact technics, diverse subject-matters, disparate topics and mutual linguistic phenomenon, and

brought new views, literary activities and prolific works in Arabic literature. His contributions as well as the value of his life never exhaust to be ideal. He left for Arabic learners and researchers a golden legacy in the development of Arabic Language and Literature, for his investigation, value of research, creative writings and opinions of Arts, past and present. His life itself has become a role model for many writers from latecomers. He got experiences and numerous and accurate information from different studies and profitable and educational visits to different countries.¹

Ma'sumi was one of the geniuses in literary analysis and had the greatest reluctance in literary knowledge and studies. He tried to lead the writers and authors towards new spheres of Arabic language and literature. He preferred both ancient and modern sources to evaluate the Arabian and Islamic culture and heritage. He usually concerned the precious, authentic and modern references to undergo the researches. His insights and views on Holy Quran are important for Islamists. He collected historical assessment of anything, then arranged them and codified, here his deep notation in meaning and vocabulary helped him much. He had ample sophistication in Hadith and familiarity with history of ancient and modern Arabic literature. He had abundant knowledge in books, translations, literature, geography and others.²

Arabic language and literature was passion of Ma'sumi, which is since the dawn of his life, such as he said: "I was the youngest of all he-children of my dad and mum, and I could accompany my father in travels before the fifth years of my age. I read to him the Holy Quran from beginning to the end along with some books in Urdu and Persian that came with Arabic linguistic conjugations and orders, viz. 'Al-Shafiah' and 'Al-Kafiah' of Ibn Al-Hajib, and 'Al-Fawai'd Al-Ziayiah Sharh Al-Kafiah' of Sheikh Abdul Rahman Jami. His father let him memorize the book 'Nisaab Al-Sibyan' of Abu Nasr Al-farahi, a collection of Persian narrative poems in which the vocabulary of Arabic and Persian are integrated, fascinated with rhymes and prosody. Such and then my father defended me for studying different books, viz. 'Neil Al-Arb Fi Muthallathati Al-A'rab' of the linguistic Sheikh Hassan Quaidir Al-Khalili. My dad has been involved in teaching and instigating me towards proficiency in Arabic language, systems of prose and poetry. I read under the guidance of my elder brother, Dr. Mohammad Sagir Hassan Ma'sumi also, who received his doctorate from Oxford University and became a member of the Arabic Language Academy reporters in Damascus, 'Al-Laamiah Al-Mansubah Ila Al-Samawal bin A'dia', and some tidbits of 'Nafhat Al-Yaman Li Al-Shirwani' and others. The way of my father for Arabic learners was that a student of Arabic should be able to know and understand the meaning of the body-text of any Arabic book correctly before reading it, and that could be able by knowing the grammatical rules and regulations that control Arabic language. The teacher after explaining the theories and facts ordered him to re-paragraph the chronological order of the text then to go to solve the problems of language and statement that is the solution in detail. Statement restores demands and commitment of the arrangement of language and become correct, where the teacher listens to the student and gets it proper."³

If a research is done on the life of Ma'sumi- then it would certainly clear that he left his hometown Bihaar Sharif and went to West Bengal and then to Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh to get more knowledge on various arts and sciences. But he returned back to India in the last part of his life and kept living here. In India, he was selected as assistant teacher in 1949, at Aliah Madrassa (Aliah University) in Kolkata during the minister-ship of Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, and then appointed as the member of Teacher Association of Aliah Madrassa since the fourth day of the month of April 1949. Abu Mahfuz, in that year, for the last time, went to Dhaka and after returning, resumed his job in Aliah Madrassa in India. Few years later he was promoted to lecturer of Islamic history and civilization until 1968, then promoted to professor of Hadith and continued up to his retirement in 1991, and got pension. He has been granted a certificate of superiority from the Government of India at all India level for his prolific contributions to the Arabic language and literature in 1977. He was awarded Indian Presidential Award in later years.⁴

Ma'sumi did not have any published book except 'Buhuth Wa Tanbihat', published in Beirut in 2001, in two volumes with the coordination of Dr. Ajmal Ayoub Al-Islahi. This book is the collection of Ma'sumi's numerous Arabic articles, published in Indian

and Arabian journals. This huge number of articles of Ma'sumi contains the themes of Hadith, jurisprudence, interpretation, language, research, alerts, afterthoughts and others. These articles opposes traditional models, methods, laws and technic of Arabic language and literature, and that caused the wide spread of Ma'sumi's fame in the Arab world.⁵

Ma'sumi paid great importance to investigate and analyze the writings of his formers and contemporaries. This way he analyzed one book of Ibne Anbari, named 'Sharh Al-Alifaat', 'Mas'alatu Sifat Al-Zakirin Wa Al-Mutafakkirin' of Al-Sullami, 'Al-Qaulu Al-Masmu' Fi Al-Farq Bayna Al-Ku' Wa Al-Karsu' of Murtada al-Zubaidi, and many others. Among his analysis published in the issues of various magazines are as 'Al-Dirasaat Al-Islamiah' Islamabad, 'Al-rastumiyat', in five rare poems of Abu Said Muhammad Ibne Muhammad Al-rastumi Al-Asbahani, Poet Laureate of Al-Buehi, and Abu Ali Al-Hajari and his rare works, and rare masterpieces from the poetry of Jamil Buthainah, and 'Wa Nadratun A'la Shu'warai Al-Arabbiyati Fi Al-Hind', published in 'Thaqafat Al-Hind' (New Delhi) - Volume / 1 (1966) - p / 90-114, 'Mas'alatu Sifat Al-Zakirin Wa Al-Mutafakkirin', analyzed by Abu Mahfuz Al- Karim Ma'sumi, p/441-456, a copy of the magazine edition of 'Al-Majma' Al-Ilmi Al-Hindi', Volume IX, September 1404.⁶

The Afterthoughts of Ma'sumi, Like his views on the book 'Al-Muhaddis Al-Fasil Byna Al-Rawi Wa Al-Wa'yi Li Al-Ramharmaji', 'Ala Tarari Siyari A'lam Al-Nubalaa' of Zahabi, 'Tarari Al-lali Wa Simtuha Al-Gali', 'Hawla Hamid bin Thawr Al-Hilali', 'Qasidatu Al-A'rus Li Khaled bin Safwan', 'Nazratun Fi Qasidati Al-A'rus, Wa Akhawatiha', 'Nafadhah Al-Jarrab Hawla Dewane Ibne Al-Damina Bi Tahqiqe Ahmad Ratib Al-Naffakh', 'Rawai' Nadiratun Min Sh'ar jamil Buthayna, Malhuzatun A'la Dewanihi Bi Tahqiqe Al-Daktur Hussain Nisar', 'Dewane Bishr Ibne Kazem Al-Asadi Tahqiqe Al-Daktur Izzat Hassan', 'Kitabu Al-Ashbahi Wa Al-Nazayir Fi Al-Nahwi' of Suiuti, published by 'Majma'u Al-Luga Al-Arabiyah' in Damascus, 'Dewane Ibne Muqbil Tahqiqe Izzat Hassan' and many others. Then appeared one more Afterthoughts on this Dewan, written by Abu Mahfuz Al-Karim in the Journal 'Thaqafat Al-Hind', Volume 11, Issue 2, April 1960, between the pages -107-129, entitled, 'Taqyeed Al-Faai't Min Sh'ar Hamid Ibne Thaor Al-Hilali', the total Afterthoughts in it becomes 60. Then the Correction made by Fu'ad Sezkin in writing the history of the Arab heritage, Volume 2, Page No. 42, and the total Afterthoughts here becomes 140, and the book 'Al-Sahabi Al-Shai'r Hamid Ibne Thaur Al-Hilali Hayatuhu Wa Sha'ruhu' of Ridwan Mohammad Hussain Al-Najjar, and the total Afterthoughts 38, and another Correction made by Hamd Al-Jassir - Allah's mercy - in the magazine 'Majma'u Al-Lughah Al-Arabiyah' in Damascus, Volume 65, Part 2, page -241, entitled 'Hamid Ibne Thaour Al-Hilali, Nadratun Fi Nasabihi Wa Sh'rihi'. And the Afterthoughts verses contained in an article of Ma'sumi where everyone depended on 'Ala Kitab Al-Hajari-Al-T'aliqaat Wa Al-Nawadir' as because Ma'sumi was master in Afterthoughts.⁷

Likewise there could be found prominent works of Ma'sumi in the art of poetry, which represent the heritage of the Arabic language and literature, such as: 'Ma'a Khosru Fi Hadaiqi Sh'arihi-Tafariequn Mu'rabatun Wa Maujunatun Min Sh'arihi Al-Farisi', 'Muqtatifatun Min Sh'ar Galib', 'A'gani Al-Sha'r Al-Kashmiri', 'Zikra Al-Allama Abdul Aziz Al Maimani Al-Rajkoti' in 158 verses of the poem, 'Kolkata Abra Thalathami'yah Sanatah', 'Ratha Al-Kashgori', 'Ratha Al-Ustad Sayeed Ahmad Al-Akbar Abadi', 'Rathau' Faqih Al-Ummah Al-Islamiah Fadilat Al-Imam Al-Hamm Al-Sayeed Abi Al-Hasan Ali Al-Hasani Al-Nadawi', 'Zikra Khuda Bakhsh Khan', 'Agani Al-Tahani A'la Kitab Shu'wara Al-Rasul Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam Li Al-Daktur Sayeed A'jami', 'Adab Al-Hadith Al-Nabawi', '25 Baitan Fi Mustahili Muqaddimati Rawa'u Al-A'laq-Sharhu Tahzib Al-Akhlaq'. Other than these there are many other features that can be seen in the Arabic writings of Ma'sumi.

It is worth mentioning here that the efforts of Ma'sumi in research in the English language have also been well, such as what he researched about Al-Bayruni, Khiyam, Ibne Sina, and S'aadi. His criticism on 'Bazam Timorea' Al-Sayeed Sabah Al-Din Abd Al-Rahman, all of which published in the magazine 'Indo Iranica' issued by the Iranian Association of Kolkata city, West Bengal.

Ma'sumi did not retard in writing Urdu literary Arts, and thus his fame flew as a result of his vigorous writings in this language as well. The writings of this kind mostly published in 'Mazallah Fasliyah Li Al-Madrassah Al-Aliyah' in Kolkata, 'Mazallatu M'arif' in A'jamgarh, 'Burhan' in Delhi, 'Mazallat Al-Dirasah Al-Islamiah' in Islamabad, 'Mazallat Ulum Al-Quran' in Aligarh, and a quarterly magazine in Urdu 'Ruhe Adab' in Kolkata, etc. from newspapers and magazines published in Urdu in India and Abroad.⁸

There have been many contemporaries of Ma'sumi from Indian and non-Indian Scholars, living and dead, including Abdul- Aziz Ibne Marzouk Tarifi (Born-1976), who cried a lot when he heard about the death of Sheikh Ma'sumi, Abdul Aziz Al Maimani (1888-1978), the owner of ' Abu Al-A'la Wama Ilaihi', who told him after he read an article which has been commented by Ma'sumi in his immature stage; and Ma'sumi when reached twenty or more, Maimuni said: I was amazed from his commitment to research and explore, and to consider and scrutiny that zipper pen benefits in the significant scientific research that cannot be overlooked, Abul Hasan Ali Al-Hassani Al-Nadawi (1914-1999) the author who wrote as important as the 'Rijal Al-Fiqre Wa Al-D'awa', 'Ma Za Khasira Al-Alamu Bi-Inhitat Al-Muslimin', Mas'oud Alam Al-Nadawi (1910-1954 AD), the founder of the magazines and the author of many useful books, Mohammed Yusuf Al-Banwari (1908-1977), who has a prominent place in the Indian Arabic language and literature, Wahid Al-Jaman Al-kiranawi (1929-1996), owner of enormous contributions in the development of Arabic language, Mohammad Al-Rabi' Al- Hasani Al-Nadawi (born in 1929), who is a pillar of Arabic language and literature in India and was elected as the president of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Al-Hasani (1935-1979) who has been serving the Arabic language and literature by writing literary, scientific and wonderful articles in different subjects throughout his life, Mohammed Wajih Rashid Al-Nadawi (Born in 1935) who wrote many books in the Arabic language and literature, and their history,⁹ Sheikh Salman Al-Husseini Nadawi, Professor at Jamia of Nadwatul Ulama Luknow, and Abu Sahban Ruhul Al-Quds, currently Professor at the University of Nadwat Al-Ulama, and many others.¹⁰

Ma'sumi died in the morning of Tuesday, 23 Jamadi Al-Thani 1430 A.H, corresponding to June 17, 2009, after spending a lifetime of authorship, researcher, analysis and investigator, and got respect and appreciation from Indian and foreign Scholars, scientists, and researchers who of course dealt with Arabic language and literature.¹¹

Findings

(1) I have explained Ma'sumi in this article as one of those few Indian Scholars who have run the literary investigations, alerts, and Afterthoughts. (2) Ma'sumi promoted scientific and literary skills and genres in Arabic, Urdu, Persian and English. (3) Ma'sumi has made translations of the Persian poetry, such as the poetry of Khosru, and the wonder is that the prosody and rhymes in Persian did not miss after the conversion of Ma'sumi. These translations confuse the readers of any text to determine which is original and which is converted. (4) Ma'sumi was able to continue speaking in the conferences in smooth Arabic for hours without despair. (5) Ma'sumi had not had many writings of his own creation; rather he focused on investigations, Afterthoughts, analysis and alerts on the writings of former Scholars. Other than these we find other good and new information from the life and works of Ma'sumi.

Suggestions

(1) I could not find much of the Arabic poetry of Ma'sumi for limited time and sources, therefore I advise my readers and researchers to try to penetrate in his Arabic poems and discover valuable facts. (2) I made my efforts to find rare manuscripts of Ma'sumi in English and Urdu as well as in Persian, but could not find even one of it up to the preparation of this article; I hope that readers and researchers would stress much more to get the Urdu and English scripts of Ma'sumi.

References

1. Mulla Isharat Ali, 'Al-Ustad Al-Allama Abu Mahfuz Al-Karim Ma'sumi', 'Al-B'ath Al-Islami:Min Tarikhe Ulamae Al-Hind' Issue/3, Volume/55, Zu Al-Qa'da 1430AH.
2. Al-Nadawi Abu Sahban Ruh Al-Qudus. 'Turathu Ma'sumi Al-Ilmi'. Al-Ra'id[Loknow], 16 August 2009/23 Sha'ban 1430AH, Volume/51, Issue/3-4.
3. Ma'sumi Abu Mahfuz, Buhuth Wa Tanbihat, Beirut, 2001, Volume/1, P/16-18.
4. Ma'sumi, Abu Mahfuz, Buhuth Wa Tanbihat, Beirut 2001, V/1, P/12-15.
5. Muhajir, Khalid Ibne. 'A'jala Ufatu Al-Sheikh Ma'sumi Allamah Al-Hind' Multaqae Ahlil Hadith, 2009. hdeeth.com/vb/showthread.php?p=1061667.
6. Article of Ma'sumi published in the journal, 'Al-Dirasaat Al-Islamiah', Islam Abad, Issue/3,1969, p/97-117, Issue/2, 1969, p/93-106, Issue/1, 1965-1966, p/67-82.
7. Ma'sumi Abu Mahfuz, Buhuth Wa Tanbihat, Beirut2001, p/446-448.
8. Al-Batshan, Ibrahim Ibne Muhammad. 'Wa Raahala Akharu Al-Kibari Abu Mahfuz Al-Karim Ma'sumi 'Al-Jazeera:Al-Majallah Al-Thaqafiyah', 25/06/2009, Issue/289, Rajab 1430AH, <<http://www.al-jazirah.com.sa/culture/2009/25062009/zakarah47.htm> <Copyright :Al-Jazirah Corporation.,
9. Ahmad Ashfaq, 'Musahamat Al-Hind Fi Al-Nathr Al-Arabi Khilala Al-Qarn Al-I'shrin, New Delhi2003, p/308-332.
10. Al-Qaasimi, Manjur Alam. Personal Interview at 'Library of Aliah University' 20July 2010.
11. Choudhury Siddique Ullah, 'Personal Interview' at his residence at Madani Nagar, Kolkata, July 2010.