

Ali Ahmad Bakathir - his life and works

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Ali bin Ahmed bin Mohammed bakathir, well known as Ali Ahmed Bakathir, was born on 21st December 1910 and became famous as an Egyptian Arabic poet, playwright and novelist. He was a prominent playwright and his "Malhamath Umar"(Epic of Omer)was well known."Wa Islam(Oh,Islam) is the famous historical novel written by Ali Ahmad Bakthir. He was born in Surabaya at Indonesia.His parents were from Hadarmouth and they were Arabs. They came to Indonesia for trade.

When he was 10 years old his father sent him back to Hadarmouth in order to absorb more Islamic education and to study Arabic language. He arrived in the city of sayyoun and grew up in Hadarmouth in an Arab Islamic environment with his siblings.He was educated there at Annahda scientific School(Madrasath annahdathil Ilmiyah). He studied there, under the supervision of highly respected Sheikhs and studied Arabic language and "sharia"(Islamic Law). His uncle Muhammed bin Muhammed bakathir taught him. His uncle was a poet and a Judge.He acquired many talents and began to compose poetry. Under the age of 20 he became a teacher and an administrator at annahda scientific School.

He married in his teenage, But while he was travelling to "Hijaz" his wife died after giving birth to their first baby. The death of his wife was a great shock to him. This painful incident deeply affected him. He wrote several poems as an elegy of her death and decided to emigrate somewhere else. He travelled to Aden, then to Somalia and Ethiopia. At last he decided to settle in Hijaz for some time. In Hijaz he wrote his first drama "Humam fi balad al Ahqaf", which he printed after arriving at Egypt.

In 1934 he travelled to Egypt and graduated in English from Cairo University in 1939. Amidst of his staying at Egypt he translated "Romeo and Juliet" in poetical style in Arabic. He wrote more than 70 literary works in prose and poetry, which deals with social, historical and religious issues of the Arabs. He wrote his second play "Ikhnatun and Nefrititi" in 1938. His third play"Khasrul Haudaj" was published in in 1944.His play "Aseema' shadiyath al Islam" is a historical, religious play.In this play a mixed poetry with prose and presented the life of the prophet in a new manner and style.

In 1954 he travelled to France with a scholarship and returned to Egypt. In this time he married a widow from Egypt. He also met there the famous Novelist Naguib Mahfuz,writer Taha Hussain and pioneer of Arabic drama Thoufeek al Hakkim and many other prominent personalities of modern Arabic literature.

Literary works of Bakathir

Bakathir wrote a wide variety of literary works. The most important Work was “wah, Islam” (Oh, Islam). It is a novel. The Second important work is “Atha’seer al Ahmer” (red revolution). His book “Sirru Shaharзад” (The secret of Shaharзад) was translated to French language, and “Ma’sath odieb” (the tragedy of Oedipus) was the translation work of bakhtiar. Likewise he published a lot of one act plays in the reputed newspapers and Journals. Likewise he published poems and lyrics in leading newspapers and magazines. He never published his poetry collections. His important other works are as follows.

His Plays are ”the Night of the River” (Laylat al-nahr), ”the Chain and Forgiveness” (al-Silsilah wa-al-Ghufran), ”the Lost Bible” (at-Tawrāh al-dā’i’ah), ”Empire for Auction” (Imbiraturiyya fi al-Mazad), ”the Return of Paradise” (‘Awdat al-firdaws) ”Zainab's Tragedy” (Ma’sāt Zaynab), ”the Drama of Politics” (Masrah al-Siyasa), “From Seven Heavens Above” (Min fawq Sab‘i Samāwāt), “the Chaotic World’ (al-Dunyā Fawdā)” “Cats and Mice” (Qitat wa Fi’ran), “Lady Gulfadan” (Gulfadan Hanim), “the Lord of Israel” (Ilah Isra’il)

The Secret of al-Hakim bi Amrilla (Sirr al-Hakim bi Amrilla), “Juha's Nail” (Mismār Juḥā), ”the House of the Son of Luqman” (Dar Ibn Luqman), ”Basus War” (Ḥarb al-basūs), “A Lover from Hadramaut” (‘Āshiq min Ḥadramawt), “the Promised Pharoah” (al-Fir’awn al-Maw’ud), Osiris (Uziris) “Dr. Hazim” (al-Duktur Hazim) and ”the New Sherlock” (Shayluk al-Jadid) are his plays.

His famous Novels are “the Biography of the Brave” (Sīrat shujā‘), “the Handsome Warrior” (al-faris al-jamīl) and “the Night of the River” (Laylat al-nahr)

Bakathir was awarded many medals. He got the State Prize of Egypt for his play "Harot and Marot". He also got in 1963 the Medal of Science and Art from the late Egyptian president Jamal Abdunlasir. Bakathir died in Cairo in November, 10th, 1969.

Reference:

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