

Autobiographical writing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during 20th century

كتابة السير الذاتية في المملكة العربية السعودية
في القرن العشرين

*Ketabato Al-se'ar Al-zatiyyah fil Mamlakah Al-Arabiah Al-Saudiah fil
Qarnil Ishreen*

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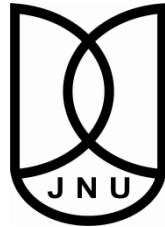
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material in this thesis entitled: “*Autobiographical writing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during 20th century*” submitted by me is my original research work and it has not been ever previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University / Institution.


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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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Introduction

Autobiography as a literary genre in its definitive sense emerged in modern Arabic literature in 1926 with the publication of first part of *Al-Ayyam* written by Taha Husain. It is commonly understood as story of a person's life written by the concerned person himself. It is one of the most popular genres in modern day across any literature. Apart from men of letters, other great and popular personalities from different fields, including sports, film, politics and corporate are writing their biographies. It should be noted that this genre has covered a great distance in its journey and has gone through different forms and phases before it made its presence felt in the field of literature and was eventually acknowledged as a new literary genre.

There are several subcategories of autobiography which are closely related to autobiography and are known as memoir, confessions and diary. However, marked differences exist between them which help distinguish an autobiography from its sister categories. Apart from these subcategories there were some other autobiographical texts in classical Arabic literature and were known as *sirah*, *tarjamah*, *fahrasah*, *barnamaj* and *manaquib*. These were initial glimpses of an autobiography that helped in its emergence in one way or other.

It is difficult to determine the exact period of the emergence of autobiographical writing in Arabic literature because even during the pre Islamic period, there were oral traces of autobiography known as *akhbar*. It was used by people to recite their genealogy and contained accounts of memorable incidents associated with certain personalities in the lineage. However, Islam gave a completely unique dimension

to this nascent genre because Muslims paid utmost attention to recording the events taking place in the life of the Prophet and his companions. This is reason why one finds first glimpse of autobiographical writing during the very first century of Hijrah when Salmaan Al-Farsi narrated about himself. It continued with so much vigour that till the Abbasid period a number of glimpses about autobiographical writings emerged. Al-Aghani written by Abul Faraj Al-Asfahani and oyoonul anbaa fi tabaqatil atibba written by Ibn Abu Osaiba are best examples of such writings. Similarly, Yaquoot Al-Hamawi threw some light on this as well in his book mojamul odaba. Later, glimpses of autobiography were found in the writing of Harith al-Muhasibi, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, Muhammad al-Ghazali, Usama ibn Munqidh, Ibn Khaldoon and Jurji Zaydan.

Coming back to the modern period, it is worth pointing out that the first part of Al-Ayyam, written by Taha Husain and published in 1926, is considered by most of the critics as the pioneering work of autobiography in modern Arabic literature. Popularity of Al-Ayyam inspired many writers to write about their lives, such as Ahmad Ameen who wrote Hayaati which is another most popular and well recived work of autobiography in the modern Arabic literature. However, both these writers belonged to the land of Egypt which is very fertile in terms of production of the literary works.

As far as Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is concerned, its name was hardly mentioned during a discussion regarding development of modern Arabic literature. Similarly, one can rarely find any work of literature written by a Saudi writer and prescribed in a curriculum of any Indian University. Thus, it can be concluded that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia didn't play much noticeable role in development of the modern Arabic literature and its genres. There are several

reasons for such conditions including prevailing conservative ideas, political unrest, lack of resources, life style and fear of losing spiritual life. These factors also led to late awakening in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia about every sphere of life but as soon as peace and tranquillity was restored after the Second World War, the Kingdom witnessed comprehensive change in all aspects of its society. Huge revenue from oil played an important role in the economic and cultural development of Saudi Arabia. The kingdom especially witnessed unprecedented cultural renaissance during sixties and seventies of twentieth century that led to massive changes in social, political, economic, cultural and educational fields.

Along with developments in each and every aspect of life, Arabic literature also kept pace with the modern styles and trends. During this period, large number of writers, poets, and scholars emerged who contributed in a big way to enrich and diversify the modern Arabic literature here. The prominent among them are Ahmad Al-Sebaee, Hamd Al-Jasir, Husain Sarhan, Abdul Aziz al Jawez, Abdul Quddoos Al-Ansari, Mohammad Hasan Awwad and Abdul Ghafur Al-Attar . They have contributed mainly in common literary genres such as poetry, essays, short stories and novels.

Autobiography in Saudi Arabia bloomed a little late in comparison to other Arab counties. First glimpse of this genre was found when Mohammad Soroor published his book *adabul hejaz*, in 1926. In this book, he wrote fifteen lines under the title of *tarjamti* (my biography) that contained his date of birth, his upbringing and name of his teachers. However, the first definitive autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was written by Ahmad Al-Sebaee known as *Abu Zamil* or *Ayyami* which was published in 1954. In the same year *46 youman fil mustashfa* of Umar Tawfique was also published.

The progress was very slow in next thirty five years as only three more autobiographies i.e. hazehi hayaati written by Hasan Kutbi (1956), mozakkerato talebin by Hasan Naseef (1956) and ashkhasun fi hayaati by Hasan Kutbi (1959) came out. Then there is again a gap of almost ten years when no work of autobiography was published in the Kingdom Saudi Arabia. Between 1960 and 1969 only four autobiographies were published in the Kingdom. These are ayyaami written by Ahmad Al-Sebaee which was published in 1960. tajrebati al-sheriyya of Hasan Al Qorashi, published in 1962, zikriyyato tiflin wadeein written by Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee and published in 1968 and Zikriyyatun written by Ahmad Ali and was published in 1969. However, this genre flourished well when large number of autobiographies were written and published during eighties and nineties of 20th century in the conservative Kingdom. Seventeen autobiographies were published during the nineties alone which indicates about its speedy development there.

Critics and research scholars in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia paid lot of attention to other literary genres as well like, poetry, short stories, article writing and novel. They studied emergence and different phases of development of these genres, presented theses and wrote books. Poetry received especial attention if compared with any other genres. Many research works have been produced on different styles and characteristics of Saudi poetry, right from the classical to the modern period.

The emergence and development of autobiographical writings in modern Arabic literature of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has not received much attention though from the literary critics and research scholars. Similarly, contribution of Saudi Arabia in the development of autobiography in modern Arabic literature has not been highlighted as much as it should have been, despite the fact that

Saudi Arabia has played an important role in enriching this genre in the Kingdom as well as in other Arab countries. Saudi writers dealt with all important subjects such as historical, socio-cultural, political and intellectual in their autobiographies. Their language and writing style are also as good as that of the writers from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon or any other Arab countries. They have used modern writing style and language in their autobiographies which have been mentioned in this thesis as well. Their contributions in the development of autobiography and its distinctive features need to be highlighted in the same way as it has been done with the writers of other Arab countries. Furthermore, autobiography is one of the important sources to know about socio-cultural changes in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The research at hand has tried to discover the Saudi society, its customs and tradition and social values prior to the discovery of oil and the changes that occurred after it.

Therefore, I chose this topic autobiographical writing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during twentieth century aiming at fulfilling this gap and highlighting the contribution of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the development of autobiographical literature in modern Arabic literature. `

Research on this new topic has not been easy. There is hardly any material available in libraries in India. Luckily, I got some friends in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who provided lot of materials. I also got in touch with some of the Saudi writers like Ahmad Ali Aal Morai, the chairman of the Nadi Abha, Dr. Abdullah bin Abdur Rahman Al-Haidary, and Hasan bin Ali Al-Batran. Some of them sent books and journals and some provided valuable suggestions. I also got a chance to visit United Arab Emirates and Qatar. I visited public libraries in Dubai and Doha and collected many materials from there.

I divided my thesis into five chapters in addition to introduction and conclusion. **The first chapter** is titled *Evolution of autobiography in Arabic literature* and contained four sub-headings. First sub-heading deals with definition and origin of autobiographical text. It started with explaining lexical definition of Arabic word *sirah* which, initially, was used for biography of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), and later it was used for biography of any prominent personality. Then it dealt with historical background of other terminologies which were used for biography like *tarjamah* (ترجمة), *barnamaġ* (برنامج), *fahrasa* (فهرسة), and *manaqib* (مناقب). Initially, autobiographical writing was known as *Tarjamatun Nafs* or *Tarjuma le Nafsehi* and mainly, it was written on the request of compilers of the biographical dictionaries. Best example of this type of autobiography is the autobiography of Ibn al-Adim. It was told to Yaqut al-Hamawi. Second sub-heading presents historical overview of evolution of autobiographical writing in Arabic literature from pre-Islamic time to modern day. It highlights glimpses of autobiographical texts in pre-Islamic and Islamic period and how they played an important role for the emergence and development of autobiography in modern sense. Third sub-heading talks about emergence and evolution of definitive autobiography in modern Arabic literature. It cites role of press and printing in the development of this genre. The fourth sub-heading talks about motives of autobiographical writing in Arabic literature in general. It highlights three major motives, religious, reconciling the past and materialistic motives. Then it mentions motives of Saudi Arabian autobiographers. They wrote their autobiographies for speaking about bounty of Allah, for self defense, for purely artistic reason, for educating researchers and students and for their wish to be remembered after he passes away.

The second chapter entitled *development of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. It consists of three sub-headings. First sub-heading deals with emergence of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It finds first glimpse of autobiographical writings in the book titled *adabul hejaz* written by Mohammad Soroor Al-Sibban and published in 1926, second such example appeared after twenty five years in Saudi literature when Abdul Salam Al-Sasi wrote about himself in few lines. Real beginning of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia took place in 1954 when Al-Sebaee published his autobiography *abu zamil*. Second sub-heading discusses emergence of different terminologies for autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia like *al-zikriyyat*, *al-mozakkerat* and *al-yaumiyyat* and gave example of *youmiyyato Mohammad Hasan Fiqqi*, *mozakkerato Abdul quddoos Al-Ansari* and *mozakkerato Mohammad Bin Abdullah bin Balihad* then it talked about what each of these book contained and what are the similarities and differences in use of these terminologies. Third sub-heading introduces prominent autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia like Abu Zamel or *ayyami* by Ahmed Al-Sebaee, *sitta wa arbaoon youman fil mustashfa* or *ayyamun fil mustashfa* by Mohammad Umar Tawfique, *hadhehi hayati* by Hassan Mohammed Kutbi, *mozakkerato talebin* by Hasan Naseef, *zikriyyato tiflin wadeein* by Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee, *seeratun she'riyyatun* by Ghazi Al-Qosaibi, *rehlatun salaseen aaman* by Zahir Al-Almaei, *zikriyyatul ohood al-salasa* by Mohammad Husain Zaidan, *tabareehut tabareeh* by Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri, *rehlatul umr* by Mohammad Abdul Hamid Mordad, *hayati ma'al jue wa-al-hubbe wa al-harbe* by Aziz Ziya, *mozakkerati khelala qarnim minal ahdaas* by Khalil Al-Rawwaf, *mozakkeratun wa zikriyyatun min hayati* by Abdul Karim Al-Jahiman, *abdullah balkhair yatazakkar* by Abdullah Umar Balkheir, *min sawanehi zikriyyat* by Hamad Al-Jasir.

The third chapter titled *issues discussed in the major autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. This chapter has three sub-headings. First sub-heading discusses socio-cultural issues mentioned by autobiographers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Socio-cultural issues are the most common issues dealt with in the autobiographies of Saudi Arabia because Saudi Arabia witnessed drastic changes in every walk of life in twentieth century and most of the Saudi writers experienced all those changes which occurred in the society. Therefore, they mentioned those changes that occurred in traditional practices like ways of celebrating a festival, occasion of circumcision, sending marriage proposals, norms of upbringing children, outlook of houses, arrangement inside houses by women, ways of spending leisure time by men and women, outlook of schools and methods of education. Some authors critically analyzed those changes and appreciated some of them and criticized some. Some of them mentioned the difference between new society and past one. Second sub-heading deals with historical issues dealt by autobiographers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Saudi autobiographers have mentioned most of the historical incidents that took place in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as well as in other Arab and Islamic countries. They talked about these incidents, its effect on the society, the changes brought by these incidents. They also mentioned their feelings and emotions towards these incidents. They discussed about decisive phases the Kingdom went through and the changes that took place in those phases. Abdullah Bulkheir, Khalil Al- Rawwaf and Aziz Zia also talked about international incidents particularly the two World Wars. Third sub-heading talks about political issues mentioned by autobiographers of the Kingdom. Mohammed Hussein Zaidan, Khalil Rawwaf, Zahir Al- Almaee, and Ghazi Al-Qosaibi are the most prominent of the writers who have touched political subjects in their autobiographies. The most important issue which is mentioned by most of the autobiographer is the issue of

Palestine, the illegal occupation of Israel and displacement of Palestinian people and financial and moral support of major countries of the world to the aggressor in an attempt to obliterate the Palestinian Arab identity. Second issue is the unity of entire Islamic and Arab world on one Kalemah to achieve common goals and mutual interests on the basis of friendship and respect. Some of the autobiographers also analyzed reasons for The Setback in 1967 in the The Six-Day War.

The fourth chapter entitled *language and writing style used in the autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* and contained two sub-headings. First heading deals with kind of language used by Saudi autobiographers. Hamd Al-Jasir, Mohammad Abdul Hameed Mordad, Mohammad Husain Zaidan and Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri preferred to use eloquent and traditional words. They avoided using weak and indecent words. Occasionally, they used lexical words which are uncommon in the contemporary writings. Mostly, they used words which are blend of typical classical language and language of modern Arab writers. Aziz Zia, Mohammad Umar Tawfique, Ghazi Al-Qosaibi and Abdul Kareem Al-Jahimaan intended to use familiar, tender, sweet and swift words combined with easy expression. They avoided use of strange words in their autobiographies. Hasan Naseef and Zahir Al-Alma'ai, Al-Siba'ai, and Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee preferred to use extremely easy words and focused more on meaning than words. Second sub-heading discusses writing style Saudi autobiographers. Mohammed Hussein Zaidan, Aziz Zia and Mohammad Umar Tawfique used present tense to express about the past in an attempt to bring forth it image before readers. Ahmad Al-Sebaee and Hasan Naseef who used verbs derived from كَس widely in their autobiographies. Hamd Jasir and Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri used diminutive pattern quite frequently in their autobiographies. Abdul Aziz and Ghazi

Al-Qosaibi used Question-answer method. In which they ask questions and then they themselves give answer to those questions. Hasan Kutbi Aziz Zia repeated one word in a sentence quite often. Abdul Aziz Rabee, Al-Mae. Al-Bawardi used alliterations quite frequently in his autobiography. Abdul Karim Al-Jahiman, Rawwaf, Mohammad Abdul Hamid Mordad, Zahir Al-Al Mae used parenthesis frequently in their autobiographies. Mohammad Husain Zaidan used Wao (و) in his autobiography. Apart from Hamd Al-Jasir almost every autobiographers of Saudi Arabia used first person in his autobiography. Most of the autobiographies in Saudi Arabia were written storytelling style. Autobiographers of Saudi Arabia, Aziz Zia and Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee in particular, dealt with adverb of time and place very well in their autobiographies.

The fifth chapter is titled *critical assessment of prominent autobiographies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. It also contained two sub-headings. First sub-heading assesses autobiographies of Saudi Arabia from point of issues dealt with by Saudi autobiographers and second sub-heading assesses Saudi autobiographies from point of writing style used in Saudi autobiographies by juxtaposing them against autobiographies of other Arab countries. Since autobiographers of Saudi Arabia were greatly influenced by prominent autobiographers of other Arab countries therefore, they dealt with almost similar issues which were dealt by those autobiographers and they followed their writing style as well.

Though my name appears alone on the cover page of this thesis there are many persons who contributed in this research and who deserve to be acknowledged and thanked. I am forever indebted to my supervisor, Professor Rizwanur Raham, for his guidance, encouragement, and continued support throughout this study. I would like to extend my great thanks to Dr. Mohammad Ziaullah who

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Chapter 1

Evolution of autobiography in Arabic literature

1.1 Definition and origins of autobiographical writing

1.2 Historical overview of autobiographical writing in Arabic Literature

1.3 Evolution of autobiography in modern Arabic literature

1.4 Motives of writing autobiography

Chapter 1

Evolution of autobiography in Arabic literature

1.1 Definition and origins of autobiography in Arabic literature

Definition

Autobiography is a new genre of literature in its modern sense. It is commonly known as an account of a person's life written by that person. Critics have provided different definitions of autobiography who tried to define autobiography. One group says that autobiography is a special kind of biography in which a writer himself writes about his life. Similar definition is given in the New Encyclopaedia of Britannica¹. Mohammad Abdul Hasan says that "in an autobiography, a writer writes his own history, he records his own stories and incidents that took place in his life. He narrates his works and achievements. He remembers his childhood, his youth and his old age and whatever happened in those days"².

Abdul Aziz Sharf says "autobiography means account of life of a person as seen by him"³. No doubt, autobiography is story of life of a person narrated by himself or herself but it doesn't mean that every talk narrated by a person about himself can be considered an autobiography. Autobiography is not about simply talking about self or writing about self achievements. Similarly, a collection of a number of scattered events, incidents and news about a person and without any logical and chronological order, can't be considered an autobiography. Autobiography is a kind of literary genre, therefore, it should have required artistic structure like other genres of

¹ -the biography of oneself narrated by oneself" The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, P. 1010

² -Mohammad Abdul Ghani Hasan: Al-Tarajim wal Sear, P. 23

³ -Abdul Aziz Sharf: Adabus Sirah Al-Zatiyyah, P. 27

literature. For that reason, Yahiya Ibrahim Abdud Dayem made artistic structure a must for autobiography⁴.

Second group defines autobiography through comparison with other genres of literature. Some of the critics from this group prefer autobiography to other genres in one way or other. Such as, Ali Shilq says "autobiography is a kind of literature which is more attached to human being than any other genre of literature"⁵. Similarly, Leon Adel considered "it the finest arts of the writing"⁶. But such type of claim can't help in defining autobiography because there are critics who claim other genres like novel to be closer to human being and finest than other genre. Other critics from this group tried to define autobiography through common characteristics between autobiography and other genres. Such as Anis Al-Moqaddesi says "it is kind of literature which combines historical information with interestingness of fiction"⁷. There are critics from this group who tried to define autobiography by indicating some differences which other genres of literature don't have and which are close to autobiography like diary and memoir. Jabbur Abdun noor says "autobiography is a book that narrates life of author and it is different from diary and memoir in content and style"⁸.

One can realize from these definitions that there is no definition which is comprehensive and deserved to be counted a final definition of autobiography. A work which combines historical information and interestingness of fiction can't be counted an autobiography because

⁴ - Yahiya Ibrahim Abdud Dayem: Al-tarjum al-Zatiyya fil adab al-arabi al-hadis, P. 10

⁵ -Ali-Al-Shilq: Al-nasr Al-Arabi, fi namazejehi wa tatawworehi, le asrai al-nahza wal hadis, P. 324

⁶ -Leon Adel, Fanus sirah al-adabiah, translated by Sidqui Hattab. p. 17,

⁷ - Anis Al-moqaddesi: Al-fonun al-Adabiyyah wa aalamoha fin nahza al-arabiah al-hadisah:P. 547

⁸ - Jabbur Abdun noor: Al-Mojam Al-Adabi, P. 143

sometime even a historian provides interestingness of fiction in his writing of history. Similarly, content of diary and memoir is not different from content of autobiography. It is helpful for an autobiographer to write his autobiography if he has written his diary. He can refer to it in order to recall any events and incidents that took place in his life. The most logical and appropriate definition of autobiography is the one which has been given by Tahani Abdul Fattah Shakir in his book *Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah fil adab Al-Arabi: Fadwa Touqan, wa Jabra Ibrahim Jabra wa Ehsan Abbas Namuzjan*. He says “autobiography is a narrative retrospective prose in a coherent chronological order carried out by the author about his own life in a realistic way and declared by him directly or indirectly that it was an autobiography”⁹.

Genres closely related to autobiography

There are genres which are closely related to autobiography and sometime scholars and readers are not able to understand the differences among them and they mix them with each other. Therefore, it is appropriate to understand differences of each other clearly. These genres are memoir, confession and diary.

Memoir

Memoir is considered a subcategory of the autobiography. The declarations made in the memoir are understood to be based on fact. It is usually told in the first person. It is been tough to differentiate it from autobiography logically. However, critics tried to differentiate it from autobiography by providing some minute differences between them. Such as, Nabil Raghieb says “memoirs focus on personalities and events and writer writes and explains what happen around him. He doesn’t narrate what he feels. Therefore, some

⁹ - Tahani Abdul Fattah Shakir, *Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah fil adab Al-Arabi: Fadwa Touqan, wa Jabra Ibrahim Jabra wa Ehsan Abbas Namuzjan*, first edition 2002, P. 16

memoirs look like a record of historical events and incidentally, it was witnessed by the writer". Whereas, an autobiography is only focuses on life of the author. Autobiography tells the story of writer's entire life, while a memoir often tells a story from a life, such as any major event or any turning points that occurred in author's life¹⁰. Number of memoirs has been written since eighteen century.

Confession

Confession is another subcategory of autobiography. In confession a writer acknowledges some personal fact that usually an autobiographer prefers to hide it¹¹. Confession is usually written with honesty because it contains information which one doesn't tell anyone including his close friend¹². This type of autobiography emerged and developed in the West because in the western society people would acknowledge their sins and mistake before priest for purification of their soul and conscience¹³. Most popular confession is the confession of St. Augustine of Hippo written in Latin between AD 397 and 400 and The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a Francophone Genevan philosopher, who wrote his confession in 1769, but it was first published in 1782, four years after his death¹⁴. Arab writes have read all those confessions containing good and bad things about writers but they hardly follow their suit in confessing their wrong doings in their autobiographies.

¹⁰ - Dr. Saleh bin Maez Al-Ghamdi, Al-Mumkin wal Mustahil fis Sirah al-Zatiyyah, Jaridatur Riyadh. No. 9103, 28 May 1993, P. 26, Dalilun Naquid Al-Adabi, P122

¹¹ -Nabil Raghieb, Dalilun naquidid Al-Adabi, Cairo, Dar Gharib lit teba'a, 1981, p, 121

¹² -dictionary of world literary term by Joseph Shipley, London, George, Allen, 1970, p. 62

¹³ -Al-Tarujuma Al-Zaitiyyah fil Adabil Arabi Al-hadis, p, 3,6 and 10

¹⁴ - Dr. Abdullah bin Abdur rahman Al-Haidary, al-sirah al-zatiyyah fil adab al-saudi, edition, 2, p, 70-71 and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confessions_\(Rousseau\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confessions_(Rousseau))

Therefore, apart from Mikhail Noaima and Taufiqul Hakim one doesn't find such type of autobiography in Arabic literature¹⁵.

Diary

Diary it is also referred to as journal is a record of writer's activities and experiences in his daily life. Sometime, a write also write his feelings, impressions and reflections about life. It was normally written not with purpose of being published. But now days many people publish their diaries, particularly when it contains writer's opinion about any important events or description of any events which has public interest¹⁶. Sometime, a diary become a great piece of literature of like *Youmiyaat Naeb fil Aryaf* the diary of Taufiqul Hakim which contains great analysis of rural life in Egypt¹⁷.

But one can find other important types of biographical writing in classical Arabic literature that contained complete account of life of a person in one way or other. These are Sirah, Tarjamah, Fahrasah, Barnamaj and Manaquib. These types of biographical writings are also considered initial glimpses of autobiography that led to emergence of autobiography in modern Arabic literature. It would be appropriate to put things in perspective and see historical development of these terms.

Sirah

The word *Sirah* (سيرَة), meaning biography, is derived from the Arabic verb sara (سار) meaning "to go" or "to travel". *Sirah* as the noun means a pathway

¹⁵ - Dr. Abdullah bin Abdur rahman Al-Haidary, al-sirah al-zatiyyah fil adab al-saudi, edition, 2, p, 72

¹⁶ - Ibid: P, 76

¹⁷ -Al-Sirah Tarikhun wa fannun, p, 262

or journey, or one's manner of leading his or her life. In a broader sense, it means "behavior or conduct of a person"¹⁸.

The *Sirah* is the oldest type of biographical forms. It was first used for the biographical work of Muḥammad ibn Ishaq ibn Yasar ibn Khiyar in the eighth century when he gathered oral information about the life of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Then he orally dictated this information to his pupils. This collection is now known as *Sirato Rasulil Lah*¹⁹. Later, Abu Muhammad Abd al-Malik bin Hesham known as Ibn Hesham edited biography of Ibn Ishaq in ninth century.

Gradually, the word *Sirah* was used for biography of any prominent individual, like such as biography of Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi titled *Al-Nawadir Al-Sultaniyyah Wal Mohasin Al-Yusofiyyah: Sirato Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi* written by Abul Mohasin Bahauddin Ibn Shaddad who is popularly known as Ibn Shaddad. Another popular *Sirah* is the *Sirah* of the Mamluk sultan al-Mo'ayyad written by Badruddinn Al-Ynis under the title *al-Sayf Al-muhannad fi Sirah al-malik al-Mu'ayyad* and others.

This sort of biography was composed to know real story of any prominent personality. It discovers his virtues, secret of geniuses in him by understanding surroundings conditions during his life and era. How did he face any challenge? What kind of example he had set for his generation and

¹⁸ -Al-Firoz Aabadi (Majduddin Mohammad bin Yaqoub, (D.817 AH), Al-Qamus Al-Mohit, p, 528

¹⁹ - Raven, Wim, *Sirah and the Quran – Ibn Ishaq and his editors*, Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an. Ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe. Vol. 5. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006. p29-51

generation to come? or “writing about any great personality to highlight his stature and reveal elements of greatness in him²⁰”.

In the eleventh century, Al-Mo'ayyad, Al-Mo'ayyad Al-Shirazi (died in 1077) used *Sirah* for his autobiographical writing. In this work he collected events of his own life. But it is not known that if he wrote himself used the title *Siratul Mo'ayyad* or it was used by a copyist later. From these examples it is clear that the word *Sirah* was used for both biographical and autobiographical work and these two genres were not distinguished from one another. Similarly, these genres, containing stories of a life of a person, were understood as a subgenre of history. Even the texts in these two forms were not different and it didn't make any difference between use of first person and third person in the texts as third person was used in some autobiographical texts, albeit, a writer would try to give an ornate and formal title to a *Sirah* (biographical work). Later it was used to be known as the *Sirah* of so and so in medieval indexes, bibliographies and cross-references in other works²¹. “The term *Sirah* also refers to at least two other concepts in early Arabic literature. The first is the legal sense of “the conduct of state” or “international law” as in the works titled *Kitab al-Seyar* by al-Shaybani (died in 805) and by al-Awzai (died in 770) preserved in the recension of al-Shafi (died in 820). The second is the sense of a “doctrinal position” or “stance,” a usage found from the early eighth century onward that is retained in the Omani Ibadi use of the term in reference to a *doctrinal treatise*²².

²⁰-Dr. Azduddin Ismail: *Al-Adab wa fonunohu*, p, 165

²¹ - Dwight F Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self - Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, University of California Press (July 2001), p, 38,39

²²²² - Quoted by Dwight F Reynolds in his book *Interpreting the Self - Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, p, 49 with reference to Patricia Crone and Friedrich W. Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim B. Dhakwān* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999].

Over the century, apart from its reference to the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the term *Sirah* disappeared for the use of independent biographical and autobiographical over the centuries. Writes of the fifteenth and sixteenth century writers like Jalaluddin Al-Soyuti, Ahmad ibn Tulun and Abdul Wahhab Al-Sha'rani didn't even mention it in their discussions of autobiography. There could be a reason for such disappearance that by this time the term *Sirah* started to refer to a genre of folk epic, such as the epics of the poet and warrior Antarah Ibn Shaddad known as *Sirah a'ntrah bin shddad* and *Sirat al-amira Dhat al-Himma Wa-Waladiha* and the *Sirah Bani Hilal* the Bedouin tribe²³. This additional use of the term may have emerged out of the idea of the prominent personality as it was already used to be referred for accounts of larger than life personalities and their endeavours. However, the term *Sirah* was resumed in the twentieth century to refer to both for biography and for autobiography which is commonly known in modern Arabic as *Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah*.

However, most Arabic biographical work from the early medieval to the modern period, were not written as independent works or as an individual *Sirah*. But they have been mentioned in a variety of forms of biographical collections and anthologies. Large numbers of biographical materials were preserved in *Tabaqat* (biographical dictionaries), *Tarwariikh* (annalistic histories and biographical notices), *Akbar* (anecdotal form) during the Islamic Middle Ages. Some of the larger biographical collections include over ten thousand biographical writings, and the number of collections themselves cross

²³ - Interpreting the Self - Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition, p, 49

thousands. Therefore, it can be concluded that biographical writing was for centuries one of the most widespread genres in Arabic literature²⁴.

Tarjama

The term *Tarjamah* is originally from Aramaic language and it simply means a biographical notice²⁵. But in modern Arabic, the term *Tarjamah* literally means a translation or an interpretation. It was also used in the same meaning in medieval Arabic. At the same time, it was also used to give a title or heading to a work or a section of work. One can see this example in the introduction to a work done the al-Qazi Ayaz bin Musa, a famous Andalusian judge when he titled his book as *Wa tarjamtuhu be Mazahibal hukkam fi nawazil al-ahkam*. In a broader sense one can say that the term may have been used to mean a work that was divided into sections with headings.

Most of the entries found in biographical compendiums belong to the genre *Tarjama*.

Thus term *Tarjama* were used for three fundamental and interconnected meaning. One is to explain and interpret, second is change into different medium and lastly it was used to clarify by dividing into sections and categories. The *Tarjama* in the biographical sense may be used to represent a person to distinguish him from the physical being. It is an approximate or carbon copy of life of a person. Just like a commentary or translation of book like Qur'an can't be represented by the original text. However, *Tarjama* can be

24 - ed. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt, *Islamic Biographical Literature*, in *Historians of the Middle East*, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, P 54–58 and ed. George N. Atiyeh, *The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1995, p, 93–122

25- Although not with 100 % surety, genre has been identified for the first time by Abd al-Dayem, al-Tarjama al-zatiyya, he attributed the earliest use of the term *Tarjama* in reference to a biographical notice to Yaqoot (d. 1229) in his *Mojamu l-odaba*

considered an important tool for the person to clarify or to explain his or her actions and achievements and make them understandable to generations and easy to get to the student.

To understand about any personality in a more direct way can only be attained by reading the original text written by himself or herself, or by being his or her student and being taught directly by him or her. Thus a biography may be seen as a commentary of an original personality but a very important way or key to understand any great personality of the past or present.

The main characteristic of *Tarjama* is, it includes an account of the person's name and lineage, his date of birth and death if he was died, a list of his teachers like Mashayakh Ibn al-Jawzi²⁶, a bibliography of works written by the subject details of travel and pilgrimage like *Adab al-rihlat* written by Ahmad Abu Saad, and *al-Rihlat Funun al-adab al- arabi al-fann al-qasasi* written by Shawqi zaif ²⁷, and collections of enjoyable or enlightening anecdotes, like *Şaid ul-khatir*(the Mind Trap) written by Abd al-Rahman Ibn al-Jawzi²⁸". In addition, depending on the subject's profession, a *Tarjamah* might contain a collections of personal letters and formal epistles"²⁹, selections of poetry, accounts of visions and dreams, and accounts of minor miracles and virtues³⁰".

These parts of the *Tarjamah* were also written and published in particular circumstances as independent works which were entirely distinguished from any type of entry in a biographical collection. Both forms of *Tarjuma*, traditional section of a *Tarjamah* and as independent work, contain very

²⁶ - Edited by. M. Maḥfooz (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1980).

²⁷ - Aḥmad Abu Saad, *Adab al-Rihlat* (Cairo: 1961) and *Shawq Zaif al-Rihlat* (Fonun al-adab al-arabi: al-fann al-qaṣaṣi IV) (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1969).

²⁸ - Abd al-Raḥman Ibn al-Jawzi: *Şaid ul-khatir*, Maktabat Dar al-Fikr, 1987, Amman.

²⁹ - Anis al-Maqdisi: *Taṭawwur al-asalib al-nathriyya fi al-adab al-arabi*,

³⁰- *Interpreting the Self - Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, p, 50,

important information about society of Arabs in different time periods as well as it represent dimensions of an individual's life. It also contains an enormous amount of information about pre-modern Arab-Islamic society.

Unfortunately, there is very limited information available about historical development of these forms despite it being a primary source for us for gaining great amount of information pre-modern Arab-Islamic society. It is also astonishing to know that literary scholars paid very little attention to it because they considered it as the realm of historians and historians treated them as clear and smooth deeming the literary conventions either obvious or unexciting³¹ .

The *Tarjamah* in Arabic literature contains the most vital information about a personality in an intellectual way. Mainly, it highlights value of a personality in terms of a transmitter and contributor to knowledge and to academic and spiritual legacy. This information was presented in both categories. In the beginning it was an essential part of the *Tarjamah* itself and later when it was expanded, it presented as an independent literary genre that could move on its own³².

The opening narrative part of the *Tarjamah*, for which the least articulated terminology developed, provides the historical “life story” of a personality, and some sources, even, refer to this part of a *Tarjamah* as the *Sirah*.

However, in *Tarjamah* of Arabic literature in medieval period, the basic historical information was often combined directly with the biographer’s selection of the subjects, best poetry and letters. The life story and literary production of the person were often represented side by side and went

³¹ - R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*, rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991),p 187–208

³² - *Interpreting the Self - Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, p, 43

through time together as the *Tarjamah* was mentioned, referred, briefed and thus developed by biographers and compilers in later period³³.

On the other hand terms like *Barnamaj* and *Fahrasah* have been used in particular regions and periods. The term *Barnamaj*, to mean biography, was used mostly in Spain, particularly from eighth to fifteenth centuries when Muslims were the rulers of the country, and later, to some extent, it was used by writers in North Africa. Whereas the word *Fahrasa* or *fihrist* to mean biography was limited to North Africa and exclusively in the context of Sufi literature, but *Barnamaj* and *Fahrasah* were used for texts that are structurally almost similar to the *Tarjamah*, therefore, it has been addressed as regional types of that basic form³⁴.

The terms *Sirah* and *Tarjamah* in due course developed and were recognized as genres in which the author documented his own life rather than recording life of anyone else. Thus these two genres of early medieval Arabic literature bear close resemblance to the concept of autobiography in English or European literature³⁵.

However, the term *Manaqib* as biographical forms has scarcely seems to have been used for biographical purpose. It was, exclusively written to praise religious or political personalities, or for praising groups of people and sometimes cities, but particularly that of the religion of Islam. There are some other terms that were used for the biographies of religious personalities such as *Akhbar* (accounts), *Akhlaq* (morals), *faza'il* (superior qualities), *Khasa'is* (attributes), and *Ma'asir wa-mafakhir* (glorious deeds and gracious qualities). These terms, however, together with the *Manaqib*, continued to be exclusively

33 - Ibid, p, 50-51

34 -Abdul Hai al-Kattani *Fihris al-faharis wa-mu'jam al-ma'ajim wa-al-mashyakhat wa-al-musalsalat*, 3 vols. 2d ed., 1982–86, p. 743

35-Interpreting the Self - Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition, P. 38

biographical in nature and never developed parallel to biographical traditions like the terms *Tarjamah* and *Sirah* did.

Now, it would be appropriate to put things in perspective and see historical development of these two terms *Tarjamah* and *Sirah*. It would be helpful in this context in understanding the origin and development of autobiography in Arabic Literature.

With the passage of time, when the authors of a biographical writing reached certain stage where it became logical or desirable to write about himself or herself, initially, they started doing so in "either the first or third person, and such efforts were known as *Tarjamatum-nafs*, (self-Tarjamah) or it used to be said that author had written a *Tarjamah* of himself (*Tarjamato nafsehi* or *Tarjamah li-nafsihi*)³⁶". When, writing of a *self-Tarjamah* got even more widespread, someone else would edit self-Tarjamah so it could be included in a biographical collection. One can observe that compilers of the biographical dictionaries requested writes to write autobiographies, thus it was written at the direct request of them. One also can find many such texts included in collections of autobiographies. Whereas, these texts come under biographical writings and only a single line or phrase of autobiographical writings make it autobiographical texts. While it is mandatory that autobiographical text should appear in its complete form, or the compiler must present only selections from the autobiographical text, which should be interspersed with material from other sources supporting, contradicting, or supplementing the autobiographical passages. Otherwise, it becomes quite hard to distinguish the texts of biographer from the writings of the auto biographer.

³⁶ -Ibid: p, 45

A very good example of this type of autobiography is the autobiography of Ibn al-Adim (died in 1262) as told to Yaqut al-Hamawi (died in 1229) and produced at his request as well. Originally, it was an oral material collected from Ibn al-Adim in an interview with Yaqut about the written autobiography, as well as a variety of other sources, both written and oral and this includes passages which were distinguished from the autobiography written by Ibn al-Adim ³⁷. Yaqut al-Hamawi himself is the author of an autobiography and considered one of the major biographical compilers of his day. He meticulously reproduces all conversations he had with Ibn al-Adim in this text and in a number of similar other examples. These texts of Yaqut highlight his methodology in conducting interviews, gathering information and accumulating texts from primary sources, whether in oral form or in written. We can see through these texts glimpses of the autobiographical substrata of the mass of biographical writings that have reached us in anthologized form.

Thus one can say that biographical *Tarjamah* developed as an autobiographical sub-genre. Initially, these self-composed autobiographical texts were rarely distinguishable from their biographical siblings. This sub-genre continued to exist for centuries³⁸. Eventually, however, the self-*Tarjamah* played an important role in the development of independent autobiographies and started to take on distinguishing characteristics of their own.

Thus autobiography emerged primarily as a branch of historical writing and evolved as a separate genre in Arabic literature, mainly in the context of the Arabic biographical tradition. Autobiographical writing developed first

³⁷- Nuha N. N. Khory, The Autobiography of Ibn al-Adim as Told to Yaqoot al-Roomi, *Edebiyat: Special Issue—Arabic Autobiography*, N.S. 7, no. 2 (1997): p 289–311.

³⁸ - Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition, p 44, 45

within two primary forms, *Sirah* and *Tarjamah*. It had very limited exposure to pre-Islamic Greek and Persian models in Arabic translation and it had some influences on physicians and philosophers as the two classes of scholars were most directly involved with ancient Greek and Persian thought during tenth to twelfth centuries.

The two recognized forms of autobiographies in Arabic literature known as *Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah* and *Al-Tarjamah Al-Shakhsiyyah* have taken many social, historical and textual dimensions, however they continued to be recognized by late medieval and pre-modern writers as a single acceptable way of writing an account of one's life or portraying the self for generations to come irrespective of the formal differences in the final texts.

2.2 Historical overview of autobiographical writing in Arabic literature

It is more difficult to determine the origins of autobiographical writing and the historical time frame for the emergence of a general acknowledgement of the autobiographical work in Arabic literature.

One of the major problems to determine exact time of emergence of autobiography in Arabic literature so far has been the difference of opinion to view autobiographical texts as one of the oldest genre of literature by one group, to support their view they present pre-modern Arabic autobiographical texts, whereas, other group see it as one of the latest genre which emerged in the literature. They claim that there should be certain artistic structure in the autobiographical text to call it autobiography. Every prose in which a writer talks about himself can't be counted as autobiography. Abdul Aziz Sharf says "there is no doubt that autobiography is a kind of story, a story of life of a person narrated by himself. But that doesn't mean that every narration narrated by a person about himself is an autobiography, because autobiography is neither a simple narration of oneself nor a collection of deeds and feats"³⁹. Therefore, we see Yahiya Ibrahim Abdud dayem made artistic structure as a compulsory component of autobiography, when he says, an artistic autobiography is composed by its writer in interlinked way on the basis of unity and uniformity in the structure and spirit⁴⁰.

One can see glimpses of autobiographies among the Arabs of pre-Islamic times. They used to practice a kind of oral autobiography in the form of short narratives known as Akhbar. While reciting his genealogy a tribesman would add identifying remarks and accounts of memorable incidents associated with

³⁹ - Ehsaan Abbas: Fannus sirah, p, 98-99

⁴⁰ - Yahiya Ibrahim Abdud dayem: Al-tarjamah Al-zatayah fil Al-Adab Al-Arabi Al-Hadeeth, p, 10.

certain figures in the lineage. The Arabs of pre-Islamic time would feel pride by mentioning feasts of their ancestors, lineage and good days. And later with the advent of writing in the Arab world and the proliferation of literacy, it was primarily by the accumulation and combination of Akhbar that biographies were first constructed in the Arabic literature.

During early Islamic period, one can find a glimpse of autobiographies in the first century of Hijrah, when Salmaan Al-Farsi narrated about himself, which has been mentioned by Khateeb Al-Baghdadi in his book *Tareekho Baghdad*. Salmaan Al-Farsi talked about his genealogy, love of his father for him, reasons for leaving religion of Magianism and accepting Christianity and prophecy of Asqaf-Al Nasrani about a new prophet and characteristics of that prophet⁴¹.

After this, one can find a number of glimpses of autobiographies in Al-Aghani, a book written by Abul Faraj Al-Asfahani. Such as autobiography of Naseeb, a poet during the Omayyad dynasty mentioned his command over poetry and jealousy of other poets towards him and his relation with Abdul Aziz bin Marwan.⁴² Another good example of glimpses of autobiography in Al-Aghani is the biography of Ibrahim Al-Musali died in 804 AD. Examples are autobiography are scattered in this biography, one can't find it in a sequence. Al-Musali narrated some incidents of his life, like how he was sent to Jail by Khalifa Mehdi because of drinking alcohol and disobeying him when he asked him to come to his Majlis on time. Al-Musali didn't go there on time even after making promise to him⁴³. He wrote "Caliph Mehdi wanted me to work for him and leave drinking alcohol, but I declined and absconded

⁴¹ - Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdadi: *Tareekho Baghdad*, Vol, 1, P, 177

⁴² - Abul Faraj Al-Asfahani: *Al-Aghani*, Vol, 1, p, 259

⁴³ -Ibid: p, 162

for some time and later I came to him intoxicated. It made him angry. He beat me and put me behind the bar"⁴⁴.

Third example of autobiography one could find in biography of Ishaq bin Ibrahim Al-Musali in Al-Aghani. Ishaq mentioned how he learnt singing and music from his father and how wanted his personality to be different from his father. On some issues he dared to criticise his father. He mentioned events that took place, crisis he faced and stands he took in his life and how they made an impact on him⁴⁵.

Similarly, one can also find some glimpses of autobiography in *Oyoonul Anbaa fi Tabaqatil Atibba* written by Ibn Abu Osaiba. He mentioned biography of Honain ibne Ishaq. It was written in ninth century AD. One can find glimpses of autobiographies when Honain talks about jealousy of his contemporaries against him because of his vast knowledge and high stature he had enjoyed in the society.

Oyoonul Anbaa also contained biography of Ibnul Haisam. It was written in eleventh century AD. Ibnul Haisam wrote about himself in philosophical way⁴⁶.

Osaiba also mentioned some portions of autobiography of Ibn Sina, Abdul Latif Al-Baghdadi and Ali Bin Rizwan. Ali bin Rizwan talked about his hobbies and qualities and challenges he faced during his learning and studying period because of lack of wealth. He narrated how he learnt about medicine. Similarly, Abdul Latif Al-Baghdadi also talked about the difficulties he faced in his life. Ibn Sina narrated his autobiography through his student

⁴⁴ - Abul Faraj Al-Asfahani: Al-Aghani, Vol, 5, p, 109

⁴⁵ -Ibid: P, 164

⁴⁶ - Ibn Abu Osaiba, *Oyoonul Anbaa fi Tabaqatil Atibba*, p, 552

Abu Obaidah Al-Jurzani. In this text, Ibn Sina tried to highlight his mastery in different sciences like mathematics, logic and medicines, he also mentioned his two contradictory ways of gaining knowledge: One is through performing *Salah* so he could get near to Allah, second is through drinking glass of wine which would help him stay up throughout night and study and do research continuously. He said “whenever I got confused in any matter and didn’t get a middle path through guessing, I would go to Mosque regularly and perform prayers and asks help from the Creator of everything, until I would get the solution and I would return to my house I kept lamp in front of me, read and write. Whenever I feel sleepy or weakness I would drink a glass of wine and get my stamina and then would get back to study”⁴⁷.

Yaquoot Al-Hamawi provided some glimpses of autobiography in his book *Mojamul Odaba* particularly while presenting biography of Ali Bin Zaid Al-Baihaqui. He begins his biography by mentioning his birth, places where he lived along with his teachers. The books he read and the jobs he did and visits he paid. He ends his narration about himself by mentioning books written by himself⁴⁸.

Though these initial glimpses of autobiographies are not definitive autobiographies in true or modern sense, however, they played an important role for the emergence and development of art of autobiography in Arabic literature.

These glimpses scattered in some books are not the only examples of initial works of autobiography in Arabic literature. It is also found in letters and some particular books in which writers talked about themselves, such as

⁴⁷ - Ibne Abi Osaiba’aa, *Oyoonul Anbaa fi Tabaqatil Atibba’* p,438,

⁴⁸ - Shauqui Zaif: *Al-Tajumah Al-Shakhsiiyah*, , P, 43, 14, 15

letters of Mohammad Bin Zakaria Al-Razi. He wrote about his experiences, his life and his philosophical behaviour⁴⁹. Then we find signs of autobiography in *Al-Sadaqah wa Al-Sadeeqe*, letters of Abu Hayan Al-Tauhidi, who wrote these letters due to his emotions and sentiments. He led his life in acute psychological and financial crisis and didn't have anyone who could help him in any manner. He started preferring loneliness, keeping quiet and got pessimist about life. Therefore, he considered himself in strange situation and mentioned his feelings about living in alienation and loneliness among people of his society "it is strange, I wrote these words about what I felt of sorrow, burn, repentance and anger"⁵⁰.

There are some books in which one can find some glimpses of psychological aspects of their writers. Best example of such books is *Tauqul Hamamah fil Alfate wa Al-Aalaf* written by Ibne Hazm Al-Andalusi. Though Ibnes Hazm was a religious person he still didn't hide his love affairs with some women. His confession made this book one of the unique books of confession. Ehsan Abbas says "therefore one can see that Ibne Hazm was great in his confession in his book"⁵¹. Likewise, Shauqi Zaif also commented on this book saying "his confession made this book a book of witticism, however, this book can't be considered an autobiography, because he discussed only one aspect of his life"⁵². Similarly, Al-Moayyed presented only one aspect of his life in his autobiography, he talked about his relation with Al-Sultan Abi Kalijar in great details. It seems that he wrote his autobiography to highlight his relation with Sultan and supported views of Shiites and narrated only political struggles to establish the government of *Fatmiyyah* and defeat of Abbasids. He didn't

⁴⁹ - Al-Tarjuma Al-Shakhsiyya, p, 14, 15

⁵⁰- Abu Hayyan Al-Tauhidi, *Al-Sadaqah wa Al-Sadeeq*: p, 33,34.

⁵¹ - Ehsan Abbas: *Fannus sirah*, p 121,

⁵² -Shauqi Zaif: *Al-Tarjamah Al-Shakhsiyyah*, p, 43.

mention much about his personal life. Therefore, it is considered an incomplete autobiography⁵³. But from the content point of view this autobiography can be considered as political autobiography.

There is another autobiography which has political colour to it. It is known as *Al-Tibyan Anil Hadesa Al-Kaeina Be Daulate Bani Zeri fi Gharnatah* and it is written by Al-Amir Abdullah Bin Balquein, the last king of Banu Zeri in Gharnata during eleventh century⁵⁴. In this book, writer talked about his family and his political life to defend himself as he was accused of being a reason for decline of Gharnata. He also revealed different forms of conspiracies hatched by kings against each other. But he didn't go into detail, because, he only wanted to talk about his country, reasons for its decline and to describe the incidents which he had seen and heard⁵⁵. This book is characterized with glimpses of technical autobiography, particularly when he describes his internal feelings about being surrounded by crisis and problems⁵⁶.

Imam Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazali (died in 1111) wrote about his life in his book *Al-munqiz Minaz Zalal*. He described aspects of acute spiritual crisis. He suffered internal conflict continuously for six months, which led him to leave his teaching and asceticism in his life and follow the Sufism⁵⁷. Al-Ghazali also described his intellectual journey in order to expert of Otophone and philosophy. Though, he talked about himself, events of his life and whatever he got good or bad but he talked about subject matter more than himself. Ibn Arabi, another Sufi writer, also talked about his experiences about Sufism in most of his book

⁵³ - Mustafa Nabeel, *Siyar Zatiyyah min Ibne Sina to Ali Basha Mubarak*, p, 10.

⁵⁴ -Al-Seerah Al-Zatiyyah fil Al Adab Al-Arabi: p, 50

⁵⁵ - Abdullah bin Balqueen: *Mozakkeratul Ameer Abdullah*, p, 82.

⁵⁶ - Al-Seerah Al-Zatiyyah fil Abdabil Arabi: p, 51

⁵⁷ - Ibid: p. 52

Emarah Al-Yamani (died in 1132) talked about his political experiences in his book *Al-Nokat Al-Asriyyah fi Akhbaril Wozara Al-Misriyah*. From the title of this book one could think that it should have contained biographies of ministers of Egypt in general. But while reading this book one can realize that he mentioned about those ministers who had any relation with him because he talked about what happened between him and any minister. Or he talked about what happened between him and any of his relative. He says "I mentioned in brief about modern poverty which I realized on seeing condition of Egyptian ministers, I mentioned in this brief what I discussed with relatives of ministers big Emirs. I talked about only those whom I lived with"⁵⁸.

He also mentioned his genealogy, his family, he talked about his father, uncle, maternal uncle and poetry said for them in his book Then he talked about himself, his education, his experiences, success he achieved, and in the end his political life and his relations with ministers of Egypt⁵⁹. While narrating incidents, most of the time Emarah used his poetry or poetry of others⁶⁰.

When one goes further ahead, he finds Osama Bin Munquiz (died in 1188) writing his autobiography in his book *Al-Etebar* in which he talked about his life filled with experiences and adventures⁶¹. This book described life of Osama, his upbringing, his experiences with wars, his valour while fighting with human being and animals. It also consists of some study of psychology and nature of men and women among Muslims and crusaders⁶².

⁵⁸ -Emarah Al-Yamani, *Al-Nokat Al-Asriyyah fi Akhbaril Wozara Al-Misriyah*, p, 93

⁵⁹ - Ibid: p. 55

⁶⁰ - Ibid: p. 52

⁶¹ - Ibid: p. 56

⁶² - Ibid: p. 138

The most notable work of autobiography or may be the last one in early period is the autobiography of Ibn Khaldun, known as *Al-Tareef be Ibn Khaldun wa Rehlatohu Sharqan wa Gharban* . Ibn Khaldun started this autobiography by mentioning origin of his family, talked about stay of his family in *Ishbiliyyah*, then its migration to Tunisia, where he was born in 1332. He then talked about his upbringing, his teachers, his popularity in gathering of knowledge, his jobs. And subsequent expulsion from jobs, his trip from Tunisia to Spain and then, his return to Africa along with his trip to Alexandria, his stay at Cairo and many of his other trips⁶³.

There is another glimpse of autobiography one could find in an encounter that took place between Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane outside of Damascus in 1401. When Tamerlane sieged Damascus in 1401, Ibn Khaldun was also trapped inside the city. Tamerlane had heard about Ibn Khaldun presence and wished to meet him. Ibn Khaldun described this event in a dramatic scene in his autobiography being lowered over the city walls by rope in the middle of the night. Over a period of six weeks, the two met several times and discussed a variety of topics, including life of Ibn Khaldun, genealogy of Tamerlane and his place in history, kings of the ancient world, and the geography of the Maghreb. Tamerlane requested Ibn Khaldun to write history of Maghreb and he accepted his request and wrote description of Maghreb in a book in which he provided lots of information about it. Tamerlane released him and allowed him to return to Cairo⁶⁴

After this incident, Ibn Khaldun decided to expand his autobiography which he had written earlier and he included his encounter with Tamerlane and

⁶³ - Ibid: p. 58

⁶⁴ - Interpreting the Self - Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition, p, 55,

republished it in a separate volume. Previously it was a chapter inside a larger historical work⁶⁵. An autobiography of Tamerlane also appeared and was for centuries accepted as authentic, although in recent decades most modern scholars have come to agree that it was probably created a century or more after Tamerlane's death and was perhaps written by one of his descendants⁶⁶.

After Khaldoun, most notable autobiographical texts are associated with Ibne Hajar al-Asqalani (died in 1449) and his pupils. Ibn Hajar wrote several brief autobiographies and one of his pupil Al-Sakhawi (died in 1497) wrote a autobiography in thirty pages that he included in his celebrated biographical compendium of the ninth Islamic century as well as an independent autobiography that remains in manuscript and two of Al-Sakhawi students, Ibn Dayba' (died 1537) and Zarruq (died 1493), each wrote autobiographies. Another of Ibn Hajar's students, Al-Soyuti, wrote a substantial autobiography that was then emulated by Ibn Tulun al-Damashqi (died 1546) and al-Sharani (died 1565).

Book of Al-Sharani contained over seven hundred pages; it was the longest pre-modern Arabic autobiography one could come across. These texts were widely known and were cited by later auto-biographers⁶⁷.

Apart from these, there were other forms of writing about self but is considered less important because it contained only date of birth of writer, names of his teachers, names of book studied and written by him. It didn't contain events and incidents that had taken place in the life of an author. Such examples were found in books of Tarajim and Tabaqaat when, while

⁶⁵- F. Tyler Daniels, *The Middle Ages and Their Autobiographers*, New York, 1918, p,171–206 and p, 56,

⁶⁶ - *Interpreting the Self - Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, p 56

⁶⁷ - *Ibid*, p, 56

writing biographies of great personalities writer would write some details about him containing date and place of birth, place of study, name of his teachers and books. *Tarajemul Qarnain Al-Sadis wal Sabe* written by Abi Shama Al-Moqaddasi, can be considered a good example of this type of book. In this book author talked about his date of birth, his educational journey, number of his teachers, numbers of book he memorized. Another good example is the biography of Mohammad bin Mohammad Al-Jazari known mentioned in *Tabaqatul Qurra* and *Sirato Mohammad Bin Abdur Rahman Al-Sakhawi* mentioned in his book *Al-Zau Al-Lame Fi Aayan Al-Qarn Al-Tase*. This biography contained names of places writer went to for his education, names of his teachers⁶⁸.

Lesanuddin bin Al-Khatib mentioned his biography in his book of history titled *Al-Ehatah Fi Akhbare Gharnatah* . He mentioned about his upbringing, his teachers, books, letters and commentaries of books and poetry.

There are some very good examples of autobiographies in Arabic literature written by imprisoned West Africans which appeared in the early nineteenth century in the United States and the Caribbean. These were highlighted by the American popular press and it played very important roles in several political purposes. It seems that authors didn't know each other personally but they may very well have known of one other through their writings, because the political reason that motivated them to compose autobiographical texts certainly were the same. The most popular of those were written by Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, Abd al-Rahman, and Umar ibn Said⁶⁹.

⁶⁸ -Mohammad bin Abdur rahamn Al-Sakhawi, *Al-Zau Al-Lame Fi Aayan Al-Qarn Al-Tase*, vol, 4, p, 8,9

⁶⁹ - Interpreting the Self - Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition, p, 56,57,58

These historical collections of autobiographical texts and the numerous individual links among various authors and texts clearly indicate that Arabic autobiographical writing founded an often tightly knit literary tradition over many centuries. It is important to note, that in only a few of the cases autobiographies in these historical collections actually resemble one another as texts. While the biographical branches of the *Sirah* and *Tarjama* genres' often' remained in formal terms firmly conventional, their autobiographical counterparts extended and developed beyond the original conventions and purposes of their type.

Whereas biographers usually accepted the conventions of earlier examples in their own fields, auto-biographers found models but did not view them as binding formal models. As a result, the majority of Arabic autobiographies shows great formal variety and includes a number of highly distinctive texts. Perhaps this was possible specifically because the production of autobiographical texts remained limited in comparison to that of biographies. This degree of difference may also clarify why the emergence of different categories or kinds of Arabic autobiographies in the medieval and pre-modern periods has proved of such limited usefulness. Such divisions group together texts that have few formal similarities and at the same time vague precedents and influences that cut across the boundaries of these experiential types.

Whether auto-biographers met or got in touch with each other in any way like through reading another auto-biographer's text. What seems to have been interconnected is the autobiographical work as precedent, rather than specific formal features or a sense of what the style or content of an autobiography should be. To whatever degree these authors motivated, influenced, or inspired one another to write account of their lives in literary representations.

They did so in a way that left them free to mould their interpretations to their own individual needs and wishes. This story of formal innovation appears to be suggestive of a personal urge that is connected in a very significant way to self-portrayal in the tradition of Arabic literature.

Finally, it can be said that we can't expect to find autobiographies of pre-Islamic, Islamic or pre-modern period characterized with all technicalities and characteristics of modern autobiographies. While, literary genres are continuously evolving and developing, it can be safely said that autobiographical texts which are found in old tradition and heritage are the roots or seeds for the autobiographies but not the autobiographies in modern sense but these autobiographical writing played important roles in emergence of definitive autobiography in modern Arabic literature.

1.3 Evolution of autobiography in modern Arabic literature

Advent and proliferation of printing and press in the Middle East and North Africa in the nineteenth century helped emergence and development of new texts in Arabic literature in all over the Middle East and North Africa. Then people of the Arab World also got exposed to western civilization, its culture as well as literary trends. By this time, autobiography in modern sense, had already emerged in the West that also helped emergence of the autobiography in the Arab world. One can find first glimpses of autobiography, in the book *Tash'heezul Azhaan be siate Beladil Arab wa Al-Sudan* written by Mohammad Bin Omar Al-Tunasi in 1832. He narrated his story of learning Arabic, then talked about the jobs he did, his journey to Sudan, Darfur and Wadai⁷⁰. Then in the year 1834, Refa'a Al-Rafe Al-Tahtawi wrote his accounts of travels to Europe

70 - Mohammad Bin Omar Al-Tunasi, *Tash'heezul Azhaan be siate Beladil Arab wa Al-Sudan*, p, 1-2

which was published as *Takhliṣul ibriz ʿala talkhis Bariz*. This book contained information about his trip to France and his life there. This was written to provide information about the West to students who would travel there in future. Therefore, Al-Tahtawi paid less attention to talk about his own personality in this book. Abdul Mohsin Taha Badr counted it as “first educational novel in Arabic Literature⁷¹” because of the information it contained. Ehsan Abbas counted it as “first glimpse of Autobiography in Modern Arabic literature”⁷².

Another book which contained glimpses of autobiographical writing was written by Ahmad Faris Al-Shadyaq (1801-1887) with the title *Al-Saaqo Alas Saaq* and published in 1858. Though this book was written for linguistic reason and to talk about those who admire and those who blame women, the writer also talked about himself and his family⁷³ but he didn't write it in coherent and organized way therefore, it lacked some technicalities of autobiography. These books are experiments in autobiographical fiction which attracted good number of readerships.

Ali Mubarak published an account of his life in his huge geographic-biographical compendium of Egypt, *al-Khitat al-tawfiqiyya* (1888–89). He started his autobiography by mentioning his birth in the village of new Baranbal, and then he mentioned origin of his family which was known as family of scholars due to many judges born in his family⁷⁴. He talked about his educational phases in Egypt and France. He mentioned positions he held, but he paid lots of attention to mentioning dates about each phases of his

71 -Abdul Mohsin Taha Badr, *Tatauur Al-Rewayah Al-Arabia Al-Hadeesah fin Misr*, P, 45

72-Ehsan Abbas: *Fannus Sirah*, p, 141-142

73 -Ahmad Faris Al-Shadyaq, *Al-Saaqo Alas Saaq fama huwa Al-Fareyaq*, p 1-3

74 - *Al-Seerah Al-Zatiyyah fil Adabil Arabi*, p, 71

education and jobs such as says “I entered Madrasa Al-Qasr Al-Aini in 1251. At that time I was adolescent”⁷⁵. At another place, he mentioned “then in the month of Safar in 31, I became chief of engineering works”⁷⁶. So this autobiography is full of dates, numbers and talks about life style of village, irrigational and engineering work. This book lacks pleasantness in language, smoothness in writing style and description of internal conflict of writer that prompted Yahiya Ibrahim Abdul Dayem to say that “historical value of this book is more than its value of literary work”⁷⁷. Later, this trend imitated by Mohammad Kurd Ali in his six-volume geographic-biographical compendium of Syria, *Khitat al-Sham* (1925–28), which concludes with autobiography of Kurd Ali.

In 1898 the well-known poet Ahmad Shawqi prefaced his autobiography to his four-volume anthology of poetry *Al-Shawqiyyat*. It was warmly welcomed by readers and critics. Lots of reviews and commentaries were written in newspapers. At the same time, many political personalities have written their autobiographies such as Ibrahim Fawzi Pasha, who wrote a personal and highly controversial account of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan campaign sand. Similarly, Nubar Nubarian Pasha, an Armenian-Egyptian civil servant, Sa’d Zaghloul, Egyptian nationalist leader and Babakr Badri Sudanese nationalist leader all have written their biographies. One can also find a putative autobiography written by the leader of the Egyptian rebellion Ahmad Urabi during 1881–82.

Most of these autobiographies were influenced by inherited traditional trend of earlier autobiographies, as we see Mohammad Umar and Ahmad Faris use

⁷⁵ - Tatauur Al-Rewayah Al-Arabia Al-Hadeesah fin Misr, P, 52

⁷⁶ -Ali Mobarak, Hayati p, 12

⁷⁷ - Al-Tarjuma Al-Zatiyyah fil Adabil Arabi Al-Hadees, 52

inherited Arabic structure in their autobiographies. They were not able to get rid of the style of Maqamat. Similarly autobiographies of Tahtawi and Ali Mubarak didn't differ much in style with earlier autobiographies. As Ibrahi Abdul Dayem believes that there is nothing new in style in autobiographies written in nineteenth century. New things are found only in subjects, he says "new thing is found only in their subjects, as they mentioned new ideas and culture⁷⁸".

In the beginning of twentieth century, Arab world witnessed many incidents, chaos and colonial atrocities that brought self-awareness among Arabs and awakened the conscience of individualism among writers of Arab world which instigated them to write about themselves. Therefore, we see that lots of autobiographies were written across Arab world.

First autobiography in true and modern sense and technically correct in modern Arabic literature came into existence with the pen of Taha Husain, when he published *Al-Ayyam* in 1926 AD. Though Taha Husain didn't tell the reason for writing this autobiography, but different reasons have been given by the critics. Shukri Al-Mabkhout think that " most of the readers believe that Taha Husain wrote this autobiography in order to answer his opponents and settle his account with history⁷⁹" whereas, Abdul Mohsin Taha Badar says " *Al-Ayyam* is an expression of deprivation in his childhood and adolescent on one hand, and is a protest against the prevailing atmosphere of ignorance during this time" ⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ - Al-Tarjuma Al-Zatiyyah fil Adabil Arabi Al-Hadees, 52

⁷⁹ - Shukri Al-Mabkhout: Seeratul Ghayeb, Seeratul Aati, p, 105.

⁸⁰ - Tatawwr Al-Rewayah, Al-Arabia Al-Hadisah fi Misr (1870-1938), p, 303.

Ahmad Amin got very impressed with the popularity of this autobiography among common readers and literary circle. Since he also lived in Al-Azhar in similar environment and had good relation with Taha Husain. All this prompted him to write his autobiography, so his autobiography *Hayati* was published in 1950 AD. Ahmad Amin had similar upbringing in terms of studying in school, then in Al-Azhar, then working at the university, and he joined college of literature as a teacher on invitation of Taha Husain. He says “telephone bell rang, speaker was my friend Dr. Taha Husain, wanted me to meet him, and I went to meet him. There he offered me to join college of literature, I hesitated a little, then accepted the offer because of my interest in teaching”⁸¹. Though both grew up in Al-Azhar but apart from few things, Ahmad Amin described different picture of Al-Azhar⁸². Also his artistic structure is different from Taha Husain, Taha Husain used narrative style while describing internal and external tussles, whereas Ahmad Amin used reporting and informative style. He described the fact as it was. He didn’t add anything from his side.

Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad wrote two autobiographies *Ana* and *Hayato Qalamin*, his style of writing his autobiography is quite different from Taha Husain and Ahmad Amin, as he used style of annalistic and interpretative which he was used to while writing his articles⁸³.

One could realise that artistic structure and style of Taha Huasin, Ahmad Amin and Al-Aqqad are different from each other. And these three forms which they have used are commonly used by writers in modern Arabic

⁸¹ -Ahmad Amin: *Hayati*, p, 218, 219.

⁸² - Fannus sirah, p, 146.

⁸³ - Ibid: p, 80.

literature while writing autobiographies and these three forms are novelistic style, descriptive style and analytic interpretive.

Novelistic style: in this a writer uses some artistic elements for narrative style, such as depiction or portrayal, personification, narrating internal and external conflict⁸⁴. This form is used by Taha Husain in *Al-Ayyam* and Mohammad Shukri in his autobiography. *Al-Khubz Al-Hafi*, and Najib Mahfouz in his autobiography known as *Asdaus Sirah Al-Zatiyyah* published in 1994, and Faisal Al-Hurani in *Al-Watan Fiz zakerah* and Mohammad Al-Quisi in *Ketabul Ibn* and *Thulasiato Hamda*".

Descriptive Narration: In this, "a writer narrates the incident as it is, he doesn't add anything in it from his side, and this style is used by Ahmad Amin"⁸⁵ in *Hayati*, and by Hesham Sharabi in his autobiography named as *Al-Jumur wa Al Remad* published in 1987, and in *Suarul Mazi* published in 1993.

Analytic interpretive: In this, the writer analyses the incident and interprets it in logical way. This style was used by Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad in *Ana*⁸⁶ and by Lutfi Al-Sayyad in *Qissato Hayati* and by Khari Mansour in his autobiography *Sabiul Asrar*.

⁸⁴ -Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah fil Adb Al-Arabi: p. 82.

⁸⁵ - Ibid: p. 82

⁸⁶ - Ibid: p. 82

1.4 Motives of writing autobiography

Mostly, people don't like to share their personal life publicly and they prefer to preserve secrets of their lives, or at least they don't want to share their feelings, emotions, thoughts and experiences to each and every person. But auto-biographers are different. They dare to share secrets of their lives with common people for variety of reasons. Some time they want to educate or inspire their and next generations by sharing stories of their lives. Some of them have written their autobiographies to defend themselves. Some others did so to criticize any social elements or practices. While some of them have written it to gain other benefits like gaining popularity, to be remembered among generations to come, to apologise, to correct any mistake and some have written only on request of his friends or students. In recent times, most common purpose for writing autobiographies is to depict an important challenge or event in the author's life. Auto biographers hope their story helps readers understand their lives, the environment they lived in and lives of others who come from different backgrounds.

But when one read early biographies, he doesn't see early auto biographers really being concerned about how the reader will interpret the fact that the author is writing of himself, like Hunayn ibn Ishaq and al-Razi wrote their autobiographies to defend themselves against their critics. Al-Muhasib wrote his autobiographical passage in order to guide his followers to spiritual path. Imam Tirmizi has written his autobiography to establish his own spiritual position. He did not provide any introduction or dedication for his text. Ibn Hawshab, Jafar Al-Hajib and al-Moayyad al-Shirazi all have written their autobiographies for religious and political reasons and it contained information of religious and political activities of the tenth and

eleventh centuries. Ibn al-Haisam, al-Dani, and Ibn Rizwan wrote events of their lives without mentioning their aims⁸⁷. In the various medieval biographical texts it appears that compilers prefaced the text in a way that reveals how it was received.

Al-Quifti mentioned Ibn Sina's text in his biographical compilation of scientists and physicians. *Tarikul Hukkam*, which could have been source of Ibn Osaiba and he prefaced the text with the statement "one of his pupils asked him about his past, and so he dictated what has been recorded from him to his pupil"⁸⁸.

The claim made by Ibn Osaiba that Ibn Sina composed story of his life because he didn't want others to do so is the same concern a number of later writers have. For them, the issue was not to write an autobiographical text so that such a text would exist but rather to write an account of their lives before others would do so. Thus they had control over content and presentation of the material and prevented entry of any factual error. For example, Ibn Ajiba (died in 1809), mentioned that he came to know that his colleagues and students were collecting biographical notes about him and therefore, "fearing that they might allow some addition or omission to slip into their work, I decided to report, with God's assistance, what I have seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears, for that which is transmitted is not that which was actually seen."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ - Interpreting the Self - Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition, p 60

⁸⁸ - Ibid: p. 7.

⁸⁹ - Aḥmad Ibn Ajiba, L'autobiographie (Fahrasa) du Soufi Marocain Ahmad ibn Agiba (1747–1809), Reprinted from Arabica 15–16: 1968–69; Engl. trans. of cited passage by D. F. Reynolds Quoted by Robin Ostle, Stefan Wild in Writing the Self: Autobiographical Writing in Modern Arabic Literature, eds. (London: Saqi Books, 1998).

Writing autobiographical text in response to a request from someone else is somewhat a common trend can be seen in some other genres of literature in the Islamic Middle Ages. This trend was started by auto-biographers and then reused and transmitted by later compilers of biographical texts as well. Like Al-Sakhawi, said, "he wrote his autobiography in response to those who asked him concerning it"⁹⁰.

Abdul lah Ibn Buluggin (died after 1094) wrote his autobiography for opposite reason, he gave a self-conscious justification for writing his autobiography. He said in his introduction "intention in this enterprise of mine is not to narrate some entertaining tale or some strange anecdote or an edifying or profitable notion"⁹¹. He further said, "I believe that a continuous narrative is better in both form and composition than one which is cut into pieces. I would like, therefore, to write this work in a manner that flows from topic to topic"⁹². There are other motives for writing his autobiography, one of them is to mention the blessings of God and to thank Him as is His due, as God has urged in addressing His Prophet: 'And as for the bounty of your Lord, speak!' ⁹³.

As we have noticed, by the eleventh and twelfth centuries, writers had started writing account of their lives for different purposes, and these varieties of purposes led to the development of a number of innovative forms of autobiographies, for example, Ibn Buluggin, Ibn Hawshab, al-Hajib Jafar wrote political autobiographies, Umara al-Yamani, Usama ibn Munqidh wrote belletristic autobiographies, then we see conversion autobiographies

⁹⁰ - Al-Sakhawi in Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*, p, 606;

⁹¹ - Ibn Buluggin, *The Tabyan: Memoirs of Abd Allah b. Bulluggin, Last Zirid Amir of Granada*, trans. Amin Tibi (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1986), 33.

⁹² - *Ibid.* p, 34.

⁹³ -Al-Qura'n, 93:11

written by the Jewish convert Samaw'al al-Maghribi and his counterpart Abd Allah al-Turjumaan a Christian convert.

By the late fifteenth century, traditional elements of the autobiographical writing have been drastically expanded and influenced one another in a way that different motivations are difficult to distinguish. Though, Jalaluddin Al-Soyuti wrote his autobiography as doing his spiritual duty. It is counted as a scholarly and intellectual achievement of him. Then there are three more scholarly autobiographies written by al-Farisi, Ibn Hajar and Aboo Shama and two political autobiographies written by al-Isfahani, Ibn al-Khatib and one belletrist autobiography *Umara*.

Then we come across shaykh al-Sharani, he wrote his autobiography mostly dealing with spiritual subjects, he also mentioned his reasons for writing an autobiography. He mentioned each and every blessings of God upon him in a separate list for each.

Auto-biographers from fifteenth to the nineteenth century, including Al-Sakhawi, al-Soyuti, al-Aydarus, Ali ibn, al-Sharani, Mohmmad Al-Amilli and Ibn Ajiba and Ibn Tulun al-Dimashqi, all demonstrated their awareness with the Arabic autobiographical tradition in many ways, such as including "lists of previous auto-biographers in the introductions to their works, by incorporating earlier autobiographies into their own historical or *Tabaqat* works, or by borrowing justifications for writing an autobiography from the prefaces of earlier texts"⁹⁴. Thus, we can see with the passage of time, Arabic auto-biographers become more and more concerned with the careful framing of their texts, the articulation of their motivations, and defending themselves from potential charges of egotism, falsification, and modernization.

⁹⁴ - Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition, p, 66.

Major motives for writing autobiography in Arabic literature can be divided into three broad categories:

- Religious motive, particularly to mention blessings of God.
- Reconcile the past,
- Materialistic reason, like gaining popularity, correcting mistakes, loving to be memorized.

Motives of Saudi writers

Auto-biographers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are no different. They have written autobiographies for all the reasons, for which autobiographies were written in Arabic or in world literature. Following examples will help us to understand the motives of Saudi Arabian authors for writing their autobiographies.

Speaking about bounty of Allah

This motive is traditional. It has also played an important role in the emergence of lots of autobiographies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, because it is mentioned in the Qur'an that "And as for the bounty of Your Lord, speak!"⁹⁵ Therefore, it is not only allowed to speak about blessings of Allah but it is compulsory to speak about it. Thus we see many of Saudi writes speaking highly about blessings of Allah. For example Abdul Hameed Mardad says in *Rehlatul Umr* "I started my journey since I was born when Allah brought me out from stomach of my mother- Allah bless her- I don't understand anything, I don't know anything about this wide world....he further says" I ask Allah to help me thank him for what he bestowed upon me blessings of listing, seeing and mind"⁹⁶.

⁹⁵ - Qur'an 93:11,

⁹⁶ - *Rehlatul Umr*: p, 6.

Writers of Saudi Arabia didn't limit themselves to speak about blessings of Allah individually but they went further and spoke about blessings of Allah and thanked Him collectively Abdullah Balkhair says "it is compulsory for us to speak about blessings of Allah" ⁹⁷.

Zahir Al-Almaei says that of his motive to write his autobiography is to speak about blessings of Allah on what he has bestowed upon the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of "peace, stability, material prosperity and most importantly blessings of Islam, blessings of pure faith free of associating any partner with Allah, heresy and myths"⁹⁸.

Self Defence

This is second most important motive for auto-biographers of Saudi Arabia. Hardly they mentioned about this motive, but readers could easily get to know while reading through incidents they had narrated. For example, when we read Hamd Jasir, we realize that at many places he tried to defend his decision at one place and favour of others for him at other place. He denies an accusation that Mohammad Bahjah Al-Baitaar nominated him for membership of *المجمع العلمي العربي*-Damascus, by saying " Al-Baitaar knew very late that I joined Al-Majma"⁹⁹. At another place, he reacted when a known personality recommended him for a job as doing a favour to him, and he says " this is not correct, especially in regards to my appointment in Al-Zahran as a consultant, I remained unemployed".¹⁰⁰

Similarly, when Abu Abdul Rahman Ibn Aqil Al-Zahiri was asked, whether he wanted to defend himself at some places in his autobiography *Al-Tabarih*

⁹⁷ - Zikriat Abdullah Balkhair, p, 276.

⁹⁸ -Rehlatus Salasina Aaman: p, 10,11

⁹⁹ - Al-Majallah Al-rabia, No.156, Al-Moharram, 1411, AH, p, 23.

¹⁰⁰ - Ibid, No, 197p, 23

he replied saying “yes like I wrote about lack of commitment in love for the Sheikhul Islam and following him¹⁰¹”.

We find Mohammad Husain Zaidan defending himself against a rumour that he possessed five million that urged bowers to borrow from him when he was himself in need of money and was borrowing¹⁰².

Artistic reason

There are writers who wrote their autobiographies only for artistic reason. Like Mohammad Umar Tawfique who felt that he should write his autobiography when he got hospitalized for treatment of his right arm. He says “ I had never wished to hold a pen and write as much as I wished in the hospital....i used to feel that my head is full of talk” but he was unable to write and decided to write after he would get discharged from the hospital. On this situation, he says “ my muscles were boiling, I was living with the incident in the past, in the present and in the future. I didn’t try to forget the past as much as I tried to forget it after I got discharged from the hospital. But this past remained alive in my muscles and I preferred that it should live on the pages instead of dying inside my muscles¹⁰³”.

Another reason for writing his biography was the boredom due to narrating details and reasons of his disease repeatedly. Umar Taufique says “especially when visits were increased. I had to narrate same story, probably with same content and words again and again which pushed me to write the story. Though people don’t prefer to read what is written rather they prefer listening to reading generally”.

101 -Abu Abdul Rahman Ibn Aqil: (Mohatafaat Lil Fikr wal wijdan (Al-Aselah Al-Haidariyyah) Jaridatul Jazirah , No, 8063, 1415 AH, p, 20.

102 -Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasa. P. 174, 244, 246.

103 - Mohammad Umar Taufique: Ayyamun fil mustashfa, p, 13.

Ahmad Al-Sebai writes in dedication of his autobiography "Ayyami" which reveals his artistic motive. He says "I dedicate this book to those who don't know effects of high quality upbringing in preparing the generation, to those who found success in its severe forms".

Educating researchers and students

Ghazi Al-Ghusaibi indicates in the introduction of his autobiography that he wanted to educate researchers who face any type of hurdles in ways of writing their poetries, and guide readers of normal poetry in process of his journey towards their collections of poetry.

He also indicated that Salah Abdul Sabbur and Nezar Qibbani put great efforts to educate researchers and critics by writing books about their experiences with poetry¹⁰⁴.

He says "this book is my poetic biography. It doesn't go beyond this. That means that this book talks about myself as a poet only. It doesn't talk about as a student, as teacher, as a member of parliament, as ambassador, as a husband and as a son. In each of these experiences and many others a book can be written, and that can be considered a complete autobiography"¹⁰⁵.

A wish to be remembered

Hasan Kutbi believed that "every human being wants his name to be remained and he would be remembered always"¹⁰⁶. In the end of his autobiography he accepts "I didn't write this book to get charity, or to gain enmities, neither gain praise nor hatreds. But there is a reason and that is

¹⁰⁴ -Ibid: p, 10.

¹⁰⁵ - Ibid: p, 9.

¹⁰⁶ - Hasan Kutbi: Hazehi Hayati: p, 256,

more precious than all mentioned ones. And that is desire to be remembered"¹⁰⁷.

Apart from all these motives there are some more reasons, due to which some authors of autobiographies in Saudi Arabia have written their autobiographies such as "constant request of friends and colleagues and their encouragement to write and publish it"¹⁰⁸.

Abu Abdul Rahman Ibne Aqueel wrote his biography *Tabarehut tabareeh* with inspiration from his favourite auto-biographer Ibne Hazam¹⁰⁹.

Abdul Aziz mentions in introduction of his autobiography that one of his teachers advised him to get a register and write my daily memories in it. So that this register with the passage of time can be a source for a writer, and when he refers to it, he would find images of his past and present and images for the situations he is living in and surrounded by¹¹⁰.

In modern world, writers write their autobiographies on request of newspapers and magazines or publishing houses as well. This trend is getting quiet common, but autobiographies which have been written due to internal motive always holds more importance in any literature of the world and Arabic literature in Saudi Arabia cant beg to differ from this reality.

¹⁰⁷ - Ibid: p, 256,

¹⁰⁸ - Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-salasa, p, 17 and Hayati Ma'al Joee wal hubbe wal harbe, p, 192.

¹⁰⁹ - Anu Abdul Rahman Ibne Aqueel, *Tabarehut tabareeh* p, 9,10.

¹¹⁰ - Zikriyyato tiflin wadien: p. 17.

Chapter 2

Development of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

2.1 Emergence of autobiographies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

2.2 Emergence of different terminologies for “autobiography”

2.3 Introduction to prominent autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Chapter 2

Development of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

2.1 Emergence of autobiographies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

In the beginning of literary renaissance in the Arabian Peninsula, writers would write poetry, speeches and letters only. Article writing started at the outset of twentieth century with the advent of printing presses and the proliferation of newspapers. Story writing started sporadically after the article writing and by the end of twentieth century, story writing got popularity¹.

As far as autobiography is concerned, it needed certain circumstances to start. Therefore, it emerged late not only in the literature of Saudi Arabia but also in the literature of other Arab countries.

First part of *Al-Ayyam* of Taha Hussein which is considered the most famous autobiography in Arabic literature got published in 1926 AD. The second most popular autobiography *Hayati* of Ahmed Amin was published only in 1950 AD. Therefore, one doesn't find Arab writers dealing with this genre until the appearance of *Al-Ayyam and Hayati*².

It is a fact that any literary genre or art goes through some flaws and weaknesses in the beginning. It also lacks many technical principles of genre. Beginning period of autobiography in Arabic Literature can be confined from

¹-Al-Adab Al-Hejazi Al-Hadis bainat taqleed wat tahdeed, first edition, Cairo, Maktabatul Khanji lit teba'a wan nashr, 1981, vol,2, p. 577.

²- Dr. Abdullah bin Abdur rahman Al-Haidary, al-sirah al-zatiyyah fil adab al-saudi, edition, 2, p, 127

1926 to 1953. During these years, one doesn't find many autobiographies written in Arabic literature. However, one can see some features of autobiography in some books.

One can find first glimpse of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the book *Adabul Hejaz* written by Mohammad Soroor Al Sibban. It was published in 1925. In this book Al- Sibban has written biographies of writers of Saudi Arabia and in the end of this book he wrote about himself in fifteen lines under title *Tarjumati*. In these lines Al- Sibban wrote date of his birth, about his upbringing and about his teachers in brief. These lines are considered very important turning point for the beginning of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It seems worth mentioning these lines here. He writes:

" أنا محمد سرور الصبان، ولدت في أواخر سنة 1316 هجرية في إحدى مدن الحجاز - وليس في مكة بالطبع -، وتعلمت القراءة والكتابة والتجويد والحساب - فقط لا غير - في جدة ومكة - في المدارس التي كانت موجودة في ذلك الحين وتركها إلى الحياة العملية من غير أن أتم دروسي، ولم أكن في حياتي سعيداً قط، بل على العكس كنت معذباً ولا أزال متألماً، ولا أدري هل كتب لي في صحيفة القدر أن أتم ما بقي من عمري كما أمضيت الشطر الأول منه، أو أن هناك حياة سعيدة تنتظرني من وراء حجب الغيب؟ على أي في كلتا الحالتين لا أشعر إلا بالألم، ولا أعيش إلا به، وليس للأمال عندي مجال ولا مطمع؛

وقد قال المعري:

تعب كلها الحياة فما أعجب إلا من راغب في ازدياد:

وإذا كان لي من رجاء في هذه الحياة فليس إلا التضرع إلى الله تعالى بأن يمد في عمري حتى أرى أقوامي العرب في

بحبوحة من السعادة يرفرف عليهم لواء الاستقلال التام في جميع أقسام الجزيرة، وما ذلك على الله بعزيز³

³- Mohammad Soroor Al-Sibban, *Adabul Hejaz*, Egypt, Al-Matba'aa Al-Arabia, 126, P. 79-80

(I am Mohammed Suroor Sabban, was born in late 1316 AH in one of the cities of the Hijaz, certainly not in Makkah -, and I learned how to read, write, modulation and mathematics only, nothing else, in Jeddah and Makkah in schools that existed at that time. I left schools to start practical life without completing my education. I had never been happy in my life. On the contrary I was tormented and still in pain. I do not know, if I am destined to complete rest of my life as I lead the first part of it or if there is a happy life waiting for me behind the curtain of unseen? In both situations I feel only pain and lead my life with it. I don't have place for hopes and ambition.

Al Ma,arri had said:

Tired in all life don't like anything except increase in it.

If I have any hope in this life that would only be praying to God to extend my life until I see my Arab nation in affluence of happiness, flag of complete independence hovering over them in all parts of the island, and this is not difficult for Allah).

Though, Al Sibban is considered pioneer of first generation of writers of modern literature in Saudi Arabia, he himself didn't write anything about himself after those lines in the *Adabul Hejaz*. We had to wait for 25 years to see another glimpse of similar lines by any other writers of Saudi Arabia, when Abdul Salam Al-Sasi wrote about himself after his friends persuaded him for it⁴. He writes:

⁴- Dr. Abdullah bin Abdur rahman Al-Haidary, al-sirah al-zatiyyah fil adab al-saudi, edition, 2, p,131

⁵ -Abdus salam tahir Al-saasi, Shoaraul Hejaz fil asr al-hadis, vol, 2, al-nadi al-adabi, al-tayef, 1982, p, 347.

"ولدت في المدينة المنورة في أوائل سنة 1336 هـ وتعلمت القراءة والكتابة في كتاب.. الشيخ محمد بن سالم، وفي عام 1346 هـ صحبني أخي.. عبدالله الساسي إلى مكة المكرمة فأدخلني مدرسة الفلاح فحفظت القرآن الكريم وجوّدته إلى أن حزت الشهادة الخاصة بحفظ القرآن⁵."

(I was born in Madina in the beginning of 1336 H, learnt reading and writing in the school of Al-Shaikh Mohammad Bin Salim. In 1346 AH, my brother Abdullah Al-Sasi took me to Mekkah and made me enrolled in "Madrasatul Falah" where, I memorized Al-Quran Al-Karim and excelled in it to a level that I awarded with a special certificate for memorizing the Quran)

It is notable that autobiography of Al-Sibban and Al-Sasi are very much similar in style and subject matter. Both have written main features of their lives. They didn't give any details, and their friends have persuaded them to write about themselves.

Real beginning of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia took place in 1953 when Al-Sebaee published his autobiography *Abu Zamil*⁶. Prior to publication of this book "we find some other books in which writers mentioned about them but those were written in a way that can't be considered autobiography as per the modern definition of Autobiography⁷".

We can divide beginning stages of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia into three following categories:

Brief autobiography: (الترجمة الذاتية الموجزة): It is written by a writer about himself, like Al-Sibban and Abdus salam Sassi did.

⁶ - Dr. Abdullah bin Abdur rahman Al-Haidary, al-sirah al-zatiyyah fil adab al-saudi, edition, 2, Ibid:p, 127

⁷ - Ibid: P, 128

Self or personal-articles (المقالات الذاتية, أو الشخصية) : In this. writer makes himself centre of the talk, expresses his special personal experiences and reflections of life. "It is a kind of personal talk and nice confabulation, characterized with humour and mockery which reveals tendency of the writers and colours or his personality"⁸.

Lengthy Memoirs: (ذكريات مطولة) Attempts to compose lengthy memoirs have been made only recently in the beginning of the fifteen century. We find such examples in the book *Bainas Sijne wal Manfa* Written by Ahmad Abdul Ghafoor Attar.

⁸ - Al-Maqal Fil Adab Al-Moaasr, , Darul Ma,aarif, Egypt. 1982, p, 74

2.2 Emergence of different terminologies for autobiography

In the beginning period writers would use different terminologies like *Al-Zikriyyat*, *Al-Mozakkerat* and *Al-Yaumiyyat* for autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We find Youmiyyato Mohammad Hasan Fiqqi, Mozakkerato Abdul Quddoos Al-Ansari and Mozakkerato Mohammad Bin Abdullah bin Balihad. Whereas, it is fact that, “there is a huge difference in the concept of autobiography at that time and now”⁹.

After identifying these categories which form the beginning phase of autobiography, let us understand each category in detail. “Autobiography of Al- Sibban under title Tarjumati in his book *Adabul Hejaz* is considered an early attempt in Saudi Arabia. The publication period of this book is the same when the King Abdul Aziz united whole Hejaz including its goal and aspirations. When political situation got stabilized, people started experiencing unity, security, peace and stability. Writers started expressing their feelings and emotions. Thus Arabian Peninsula started building its own culture and ideology. Later we could see its effects in the post beginning phase.

One can find in the seventh century Arab writers would write about themselves in brief while writing autobiographies of others. In particular, we see in the book of *Tabaqat*. This autobiography of Al-Sibban reminds us of literary autobiographies we have seen in abundance in the seventh century H and afterwards. Therefore, we see “biographies and autobiographies spread together, even when Al-Sibban himself tried to write biographies of a number of writers in brief. He also wrote about himself in the end of same book. This

⁹ - Dr. Abdullah bin Abdur rahman Al-Haidary, *al-sirah al-zatiyyah fil adab al-saudi*, edition, 2, p, 128

also revives the traditional approach of biographical writing which were known to Arabs for centuries"¹⁰.

It is notable that autobiography of Al-Sibban and Al-Sasi are very much similar in style and subject matter. "Both have written main feature of their lives, they didn't give any details, and their friends have persuaded them to write about themselves"¹¹.

As soon as stability and peace prevailed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the King Abdul Aziz paid lot of attention to education. He built directorate of Knowledge, ordered the issuance of the newspaper Umm al-Qura in 1925 AD which is the first newspaper published in Saudi Arabia, followed by other newspapers and magazines, such as *Sautul Hejaz*, started in 1931 AD, and *Majallatul Manhal* started in 1936 and *Jareedatul Madeena* in 1937 AD and others¹².

The proliferation of press in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia played an important role in helping literature to blossom. It also helped personal articles to grow. We find many writers who wrote about themselves and their experiences between 1925 and 1958 AD. For example, Mohammad Saeed Abdul Maqsood wrote "about his early period of writing and how he had chosen the name *Al Ghirbal*¹³. We see another personal article of him with title *Min Zikriyyatil Mazi wa Amaniyyil Hazir*¹⁴. We find a very good personal article

¹⁰ - Adabus sirah al-zatiyyah, p55

¹¹ - Mohammad Soroor Al-Sibban, Adabul Hejaz, p 79

¹² -Dr. Abdullah Abdur rahman Al-Haidari, Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah, fil Adab Al-Saudi, 2nd edition, p132

¹³ - Mogharbal Jadid, article published in Magazine Ummul Qura, No, 377, 04/03/1932, p, 42, 44

¹⁴ Ibid: No, 590, 28/03/1936, p 42, 44

written by Husain Sarhan titled " Al-Tayef fi zikriyyati " in the year 1941 AD¹⁵. Sarhan is considered one of the most popular writers of personal articles. He has written few articles in newspapers talking about his memories, his upbringing and his studies. In 1947, *Al-Manhal* newspaper had published an article of him with the title *Sehrul Badiya*. In this article, Sarhan has mentioned interesting anecdotes of nomadic life that he lived in his childhood in a very simple way¹⁶.

He says" I am divided by two natures, nomadic and urban, albeit nomadic nature has more effect on me and I am more inclined towards it, I tend to, and I am attached to it¹⁷!

We see Sarhan influencing readers by choosing interesting words in the beginning of the essay then discussed more about environment, customs, traditions and satire. This is very common in Sarhan's writing. We find glimpse of it in this talk too. Sarhan made himself centre of the talk in his writing. Therefore, we could get some details of his childhood and youth.

After Sarhan, we find another article written by Mohammad Umar Arab titled *Ehtemamati Al-Adabiyah fi sad'ris shabab* in this article we see another colour of memoirs different from Sarhan, as Mohammad Umar confined himself only to state about his way to educate himself, he says:

"My first interest reflects in reading literary books and poetry in the year 1917 H, language of writing at that time was flimsy and weak more closer to the colloquial than of standard¹⁸".

He further says:

¹⁵- Article published in *Al-Manhal*, July-August, p 42-44 1941

¹⁶ - Ibid: No, 28/03/1947, p 208

¹⁷ - Ibid: No, 28/03/1947, p 208

¹⁸ - Mohammad Umar, *Ehtemamati Al-Adabiyah fi sad'ris shabab*, Sep-Oct 1947, p, 503

"I recall that one of my teacher saw me reading a magazine I do not recall whether it was "Al-Helal or Al-Muqtatif"? - He took it from me violently and scolded me, he said: your age and your information don't allow you to waste your time in these stuffs and it's better for you to take care of your lessons which will benefit you¹⁹".

Similarly in an article titled as *Fil Jamarik* Tahir Zamakhshari says:

"When I started my work at the *Secretariat*, my mind and pocket both didn't have any information about customs, therefore, I entered the Diwan, walking on four with shy, piles of papers were accumulated around me, and it was speaking a language I didn't understand so I would lower down my gage. When any sentence containing such words (الشتري، أو الشمندرة أو المينافيستو) comes up or when I would ask meaning of the invoice and the menu, everyone around me, instead of giving an answer, would start laughing loudly- as you know I am from wanderers of Al- Okaz market, and in Al- Okaz, stuffs like spices and Obazir are sold on a scale of *Mustafalun fe'alun !!*"²⁰.

When one ponders upon these kinds of personal articles, he could see all of them have been characterized with unity in one subject and in a wider sense of autobiography they are close to it. Or one can say that they are closer to memoirs. Another book written by Ahmad Abdul Ghafoor Al- Attar with a title *Bain al-sijne wa al manfa* is considered one of the important books of memoirs in beginning period in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, writer himself said that "he started writing this book in the beginning of 1937 AD and

¹⁹ - Ibid, p 505

²⁰ -Tahir Zamakhshari, fil Jamarik, Al-Manhal, No, 437, July, 1985, p, 129

completed by end of the same year, but it has been published in 1981 AD²¹.

Al-Attar said, he didn't delete or add anything as he says:

I see it as a literary integrity to leave the book as I authored it. I am young and integrity demanded me to not make any changes in it by deleting or adding and I leave it as it was authored"

He further says:

This book is written by a young writer Ahmed Abdul Ghafoor Attar, it is not correct to intervene Al- Sheikh Al-Haram, a patient Ahmad Abdul Ghafoor Attar"!

He also said in preface of the book:

"This book is a book of memories. It depicts a period of my life I lived behind solid closed doors. That was hardly opened. And behind the wall of a firewall dams, therefore, autobiography was remained without any deletion, addition or decoration" ²².

There is another personal article published in 1985 AD. It is written by Mohammad Jamal. It is very much similar to the book of Al-Attar, as Jamal says "he has written this book in 1942. I found this autobiography in my old pages, it was dated 1942 AD ²³".

In the beginning of this article Ahmad Jamal says:

"He was unaware that there is an industry in the world called literature, and its advocates and enthusiasts are called men of literature, that time he was not more than fourteen years of his age. He used to seek help from his brother in

²¹ - Ahmad Abdul Ghafoor Al-Attar, Binas sijne wal manfa, 1st edition, Makkah, 1981, p, 11

²²- Ibid, p, 13

²³ - Ahmad Mohammad Jamal, Bedayato Adib, Al-manhal, No, 437, July, 1985 . 129

writing of some topics which were given in school and present them to his teacher as a production of his thought. His teacher would like it because of good quality.... but though he liked the false praise, he would feel pain due to not finding himself in his imagination becoming a man of literature in future"²⁴.

Thus, these two books are very important as these were written in the end of first half of the 20th century but both were published four decades later. Work of Al-Attar represents early period of autobiography, whereas, in the article of Jamal we see usage of third person while talking about himself. This is the same style we find in "Al-Ayyam" the autobiography of Taha Husain, the pioneer and most popular work of Autobiography so far in the Arabic literature.

This trend of personal article has paved the way for the emergence and development of the autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

²⁴- Ibid: 126

2.3 The emergence of the term “Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah” in the Kingdom

The term *Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah* appeared very late in literature of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Even we don't find writers using terms close to *Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah* like *Al-Ei'tarafat*, *Al-Zikriyyat*, *Al-Mozakkerat* and *Al-Yaumiyyat*. The word *Yaumiyyat* is used for the first time in the newspaper *Sawtul Hejaz* when the newspaper wrote a preface for Mohammad Hassan Fiqqi, while publishing his *Youmiyyat*. It says:

The newspaper had promised to its reader long ago that it would publish “*Youmiyyat* of Al-Sayyad Mohammad Hasan Fiqqi when it would publish its preface. But situations become unfavourable. Now, the author has accepted our request. We shall start its publishing regularly without its historical sequence”²⁵.

This *Yaumiyyat* was published in the same number on 17 November 1934. In the preface Fiqqi said that there is a gap of around a year or half of a year between writing of this *Yaumiyyat* and its publishing date²⁶.

But when one reads following numbers of the same magazine we don't find any other writers writing about anything in favour or against this *Yaumiyyat* as we are used to this trend in modern journalism. However, there has been a special column for Mohammad Hasan Fiqqi in the magazine in the following months.

By eighteenth century, the term *Yaumiyyat* was known to writers, though use of this term was mainly attached to long personal article containing number of paragraphs.

There is another form which is close to Autobiography and known as *Mozakkerat* and that has been published in journals in the same era.

²⁵ - Sautul Hjaz, No, 204, 28/03/1936, p, 1

²⁶ - Ibid, No, 204, 28/03/1936, p, 2

Abdul Quddos Al-Ansari published an article titled as *Al-Aasar be sharqai al madina rehlatur el al Homa* and he named it *Mozakkerat*. He mentioned that This *Mozakkerat* was written by Editor of this magazine *Al-Manhal* after his trip to Al-Homa in the year 1936 AD. This *Mozakkerat* paid special attention on describing scenes of this trip and emotions of its writer. It follows the historical monuments wherever he went to any historical places that were filled with unknown and forgotten historical monuments. Therefore, "I realized that it should be published in *Al-Manhal* for the benefit of our esteemed readers"²⁷.

It is clear from this description of Al- Ansari that there is an overlap in the uses of the term *Mozakkerat* which deals more with history and focuses on the characters and events, and *Mofakkerah* or *Youmiyyaat* are same and synonym to each other.

Sahi hul Akhbar a very popular book written by Mohammad bin Abdullah bin Balihad contained his *Mozakkerat*. It was published in 1952 AD. Abdullah bin Balihad had also written three more *Mozakkerat* in thirty five pages. In the first *Mozakkerah* "he talked about stories from lives of the Bedouins then, he adorned his story with his blind uncle and in the end he narrated the story of his uncle. In his second *Mozakkerah* he mentioned his story about selling of date, then followed with a story about wolves which he had heard from a person, and his third *Mozakkerah* is known as *Al-Homairiyyah* ²⁸.

In these *Mozakkerat* Balihad used both standard Arabic as well as colloquial. But it doesn't mean that he was not capable of writing in good standard Arabic language. His other books are witness to it. He has written these *Mozakkerat* in this style with purpose. He mentioned his purpose before

²⁷ - Abdul Quddus Al-Ansari, *Al-Aasar Be Sharqae al-Madinah, Rehlah Elal Humma*, *Al-Manhal*, 30 October, 1938, p, 9

²⁸ - Dr. Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman Al-Haidari, *Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah fil Adab Al-Saudi* 2nd edition, p, 141

writing his *Mozakkerat* that “he has written these *Mozakkerat* in “natural language of Najd”²⁹.

When we critically read this *Mozakkerat* of Balihad, we reach to a conclusion without any hesitation that these *Mozakkerat* can't be termed as *Mozakkerat* in contemporary sense of *Mozakkerat* rather these are closer to *Zikriyyat* or folk tales. A very important point to be noted here that Balihad used to believe that “politics shouldn't be mentioned in *Mozakkerat*”³⁰, and this is completely contrary to the concept of critics of autobiography who consider *Mozakkerat* as closest form of autobiography because “it records the historical and political events that is witnessed by the author”³¹.

Whereas the *Zikriyyat* is very wide as writers recall the incidents of yesterday and talk about it. We find writers using this term particularly in later period of beginning phase. Some of the popular *Zikriyyat* are:

- *Min Zikriyyatil Madhi wa Amaniyyel Hazir* written by Mohammad Saeed Abdul Maqsood, published in 1936.
- *Attayef fi Zikriyyati* of Husain Sarhaan, published in 1941.
- *Baaz Zikriyyati min nisf Qarn* by Mohammad Naseef, published in 1950.
- “*Min Zikriyyatil Ams*” by Mohammad Soroor Al Sibban, published in 1956 AD.

The term *confessions* started in nineties of the twentieth century when Ali Al-Omair uses it for the first time³².

²⁹ - Mohammad bin Abdullah bin Balihad, *Sahihul Akhbaar Amma fi beladil Arab menal Aasaar*, 2nd edition, 1972, vol, 5, p,271 (*Mozakkerat* are mentioned in this book from p 272-308

³⁰ - *Ibid*, 308/5

³¹ - *Dalilun Naqid Al-Adabi*, p, 122

³² - Ali Mohammad Al-Umair, *Adab wal Odabaa*, 2nd edition, Jeddah, Darul Umair lis saqafah wan nashr, 1985, p, 41

2.3 Prominent autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abu Zamel or Ayyami by Ahmed Al-Sebaee

Ahmad bin Mohammad Al-Sebaee was born in Mekkah in 1905 AD. Initially he studied in Madrasah and memorized Qur'an. Then he joined Hashmi School and later he got admission in Al-Madrasah Al-Raquiyyah. After passing out from this school, he started teaching. He entered journalism with writing for newspaper *Sautul Hejaz*. When Arabic Printing and Publishing Company was established he was assigned to oversee department of *Sautul Hejaz*. Later he became head of the Printing and Publishing Company and director and editor in chief of the newspaper. For some time, he worked with finance ministry but soon he took honorary retirement in 1951 AD. So that he could dedicate his time to literature, culture and writing. He established *Matb'atul Haram* which was later known as *Matbato'ato Quraish*. He started *Jaridatun Nadwah* in 1958 AD, but later he left it to join *Jaridato Hera*, he also started *Majallato Quraish* in 1961, he was awarded the title of *Shaikhus Sahafah Al-Saudiah* and national literary award for the first time in 1983, from the Custodian of the tow Holy Masque King Fahad bin Abdul Aziz in a special ceremony organized for him. He died in 1984³³.

Al-Sebaee wrote many books on different topics including on history and social topics analysing crimes and its motives, holy places, short stories and autobiography, his popular books are:

- Tareekho Makkah (تاريخ مكة)
- Sullamul Qera'a al-Arabia (سلم القراءة العربية)

³³ - Al-Mujaz fi Tareekhil Adab Al-Arabi Al-Saudi, p, 99 and Mojamul Kuttah wal Moallefin fil Mamlakah Al-Arabiah Al-Saudaih, p, 71.

- Fikrohu (فكره)
- Yaumiyyato Majnoun (يوميات مجنون)
- Abu Zamil (أبو زامل)
- Daouna Namshi (دعونا نمشي)
- Ayyami (أيامى)
- Khalati Ka darjaan (خالتي كدرجان)

The first edition of this book was published in 1954 AD. It was published by Dar E Misr for Printing in one hundred and fourteen pages of small size. It was re-published in 1959 by Press of Dare Quraish at Makkah in one hundred and thirty six pages of small size. This edition has provided some illustrative pictures together with explanations and comments that help readers understand the subject.

Al-Sebaee described this work as the story of past generation. He talked about education in this autobiography comprehensively. He also gave a general opinion about life.

Al-Sebaee has dedicated this book to whom who ignore impact of higher education in preparing the generation, to whom who think that success lies only in the harsh methods". Sebaee was fifty one year old when he brought this book for the first time. He was sixty seven year old when this book was published for third time in 1970. This time he published this book with a new name *Ayyami*. In this edition Al-Sebaee explained to readers that the story is about himself only and not of *Abu Zamil*.

He says: "It's *my days* I produced the second edition under the name Abu Zamil. I wanted some chapter of this book would represent aspect of my life

as well as it would represent symbolically aspect of the generation I lived with. But I realize today that I should elaborate more about my life along with attributes of the generation known already in the new edition. It helps me forget *Abu Zamel* and I present story of my days to the readers”³⁴.

As a result of this expansion in this new edition, pages of the book got increased and reached to two hundred and thirty-one of below average size. It was published by Quraish Press which was founded by Sebaee himself in 1959. The book did not carry any index of the topics. In 1982, the Tohama press published this book *Ayyami* in one hundred and seventeen pages of medium size. It also claimed that it was first edition whereas it was second one.

Al-Sebaee had to make some difficult changes in some pages of the book due to change in the name. Like in the preface of the previous edition, *Abu Zamil* says “my mother named me beautiful, and people called me *Abu Zamil* as custUmarily they call every one beautiful when they give a title. While in the first two editions of *Ayyami* notable changes had to be made to the previous lines and later it became, “my father named me Abu Ahmad, and my mother was calling me Ahmed Hamadeh”³⁵ .

There were fourteen headings in the first edition of the book and they were:

(the school, the lucky ones in the school, Abjad, Hawwaz, my aunt Husaina, schools and teachers, with memorizers of the Qur’an, Satan of the class room Abbas, good memorization, , City, carelessness, opposite luck , literature and science, a turning point, letters and dots).

In the second edition in 1959, he added one more title to *Abjad Hawwaz* and that is *Israfaah aw Iqlabah*. Now it has fifteen titles.

³⁴ -Ahmad Al-Sebaee, *Ayyami*, Vol. 1, p, 3

³⁵ - Ahmad Al-Sebaee, *Ayyami*, Makkah Al-Mokarramah, Matabe Quraish, 1970, p, 3, 45.

Later four more titles have been added to the book when he changed name of the book. Those titles are:

- *Fil Madrasa Al-Raqiyyah* (In the Al-Raqiyyah school)
- *Kursiyyul Ustaziyyah* (chair of the teacher)
- *Bainas Sahafah wal Adab* (Between journalism and literature)
- *Fi Sahifate soutil Hejaz* (in the Saoutul Hejaz newspater)

It is important to know that until 1970, this book *Abu Zamil* of Al-Sebaee had not been considered an autobiography. It was classified under books of story. In the year 1970, Al-Sebaee made it clear that these were his days and it was his biography.

***Sitta wa Arbaoon Youman fil Mustashfa or Ayyamun Fil Mustashfa by
Mohammad Umar Tawfique***

Mohammad Umar Tawfique was born in Madina in 1914 AD. At the age of seven, his father Umar Tawfique, who was a teacher at Madrasatul *Oloom Al-Shariyah* admitted him in the same school in the department of *Huffazil Quran Al-Karim*. He memorized the Quran from there and from the department of *Oloom Al-Arabiah* he completed his primary education. Thereafter, he was transferred to Department of *Al-Oloom Al-Aaliyyah* to get his Aaliyah degree. He declined his father's wish to join the *Madrasatul Oloom Al-Shariyah* as teacher like him. He went to Makkah and joined *Diwanun Neyabah* as an editor. Later he was appointed as *Amin* of the *Diwan*. He resigned from this position at *Diwan* to try his luck at business and started cooperative associations of foods and canned goods.

At the same time, he was writing articles under the title *Fikratun* aiming at necessary reforms. Due to criticizing the King Saud, he had to flee away to

Jeddah and then Cairo. But when Amir Faisal established Ministries in Saudi Arabia, he was appointed as Minister of transportation in 1963. For a brief period, he was also appointed as Interim Minister for Hajj, later he left ministry and spent a private life³⁶.

His books are:

- Al-Zawjato was Sadiqo (الزوجة والصدیق)
- Min Zikriyyate Mosaferin (من ذكريات مسافر)
- Taha Husain wa Al-Shaikhan (طه حسين و الشيخان)

In his autobiography, *Sitta wa Arbaoon Youman fil Mustashfa* he narrated his thoughts and emotions. He met with an accident in 1954 and he spent forty six days at the hospital of the American University in Beirut for his treatment. At that time he was thirty-six years old or was nearing thirty seventh year of his age.

The first edition of the book contained eighty-six pages of below average size. This book had been published by *Dar-e-Egypt* for printing without specifying the date of publication. However, the author pointed out in the introduction to the book that it appeared a book - or a booklet in fact, entitled *Sitta wa Arbaoon Youman fil Mustashfa* and this book was published around mid of 1953. It was published in a very short time. The writer has dictated from his memory, and this is the reason for any mistake or disarrangement in the book if there are any³⁷.

Tawfiq also expected that stylistic weakness in this book should be ignored as he pledged to edit this book when he would give it again for publishing. When he published it again after thirty-six years, he changed the name and

³⁶ -Al mujaz fil Tarikhil Adab Al Arabi Al-Saudi, p153

³⁷ -Ayyamun fil Mustashafa, Mohammad Umar Taufique, p, 9

published it under the name *Ayyamun Fil Mustashfa*. Apart from the name, he also made lots of changes in the content. He indicated that what he had written in the first edition was not adequate and he improvised the thoughts which he had at the time.

I mention here some changes he had made in the titles of the subject. In first edition titles were:

- Min Aina Abda'o? (From where I start)
- Al-Umm Al-Hanoon (Kind-Hearted mother)
- Nisfun Kabirun aw Insanun (Big half or a Human)
- Ahzano Lebanon (Lap of Lebanon)
- Al-Duniya Al-Jadidah (The new world)
- Al-Lailah Al-Oula (The first night)
- Al-Youm Al-Awwal (The first day)
- Al-Darajah Al-Oulah (First class)
- Al-Usboo Al-Qaadim (Next week)
- Baina Al-Lail wa Al-Na'har (Between night and day)
- Fil Intezar (In waiting)
- Aqarebus sa'a (clockwise or dial of the watch)
- Eza Intasara Al-Qalqo (when worry wins)
- Ya, Allah (O Allah!)
- Al-Amaliyyah Al-Oula (First surgery)
- *Ba'da Al-Amaliyyah* (After the surgery)

- *Al-Amaliyyah Al-Saniyyah* (The second surgery)
- *Kharajto minal mustashfa* (I discharged from the hospital)

He added some new titles in the second edition and those are:

- *Al-Tabib Al-barei* (The expert Doctor)
- *Fi Jawwi Al-nehaya* (in condition of the end)
- *Kheyalun Aabara Al-Qaarrat* (Thought crossed peninsulas)
- *Al'a Hameshil Juei* (1,2) (On the verge of hunger (1,2)
- *Lil Elaaj Baina Qarraat* (1,2), (for the treatment in peninsulas (1,2))
- *Min Suesra ela Al-Mustashfa Al-Takhasso si* (From Switzerland to the specialized hospital)

In addition to the modification in some of the titles, Tawfiq also added about forty-five pages to the previously existed content which he had written after his disease in 1985. It was published earlier in the journal *Iqra* and in the newspaper *Okaz*. Tawfiq explained the reason for adding these pages saying they are very relevant to what he had written in the booklet *Sitta wa Arbaon Youman fil Mustashfa*³⁸.

Mozakkerato Talebin by Hasan Naseef

Hasan Naseef was born in Jeddah in 1922. He studied at *Madrasatul Falah*. Thereafter, he joined *Madrasato Tahziril Be'saat at Makkah*. After passing out from this school he worked as teacher at *Madrasatul Falah* for few months. He joined medical college at the University of Cairo. Later, he took admission in medical department at the University of London.

³⁸ -Ayyamun fil Mustashfa, p 9

Hassan Naseef worked as a doctor at health ministry of Saudi Arabia. Later, he became Director of Health in Makkah. After that, he joined Health Ministry as the General Manager. Finally he became Minister of Health and retired from this post in 1380 H. He is considered a pioneer of poetry of humour in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia³⁹.

His books are: *Tabibul Aaeilah* (طبيب العائلة) , *Tasali* (تسالي) a collection of poetry of people , *Al-Basmaat* (البسمات) , a collection of poetry.

As far as his autobiography is concerned, first edition of it was published under the name *Mozakkerato Talibin Sabeqin*. Prior to the first edition, chapters of this autobiography were published in the newspaper *Jareedatul Belad* under a pseudonym *Ibn Sina*. Later the author realized that he should bring these chapters in a book and reveal his name and he did it in 1959. This book was published under literary series which was brought by *Jareedatul Azwa* at Jeddah. Abdel Fattah Abu Madeen wrote preface for this book. However, this preface is not seen in later editions.

There is an introduction in the book written by Ahmad Qindeel in 1956. However, this book was published in 1958 for unknown reason. Ahmad Qindeel gave some suggestions in this introduction. He suggested that title needs to be shortened to make it *Mozakkerati* or *Mozakkerato Talebin* instead of *Mozakkerato Talebin Sabeqin*. He also suggested that the book should contain some pictures and cartoons. In later edition, the writer accepted suggestions of Qindeel. He inserted some pictures and shortens the name and made it *Mozakkerato Talebin*. This edition was published by Daurul Fikr, Riyadh,

³⁹ - Mojamul Kuttub wal Moallefin fil Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah, 2nd edition, p, 144 and Mojamul Matbuaat Al-Arabia- Al-Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah, Beirut, Vol, 1, p, 347

without giving any publication date. In 1983 it was published by Darul Ilm Letteba'a wa Al Nashr, Jeedah in 109 pages of small size.

In the introduction, author says about the book and its subject "I produce this book on request of many friends and colleagues. I collected funny and serious incidents which happened in our school days. I hope this may give each of them the opportunity to record their memories of apprenticeship"⁴⁰.

Due to different names for first and subsequent editions, a researcher may think that those are two different books. To clarify such doubt author says "I hope you know the relation between *Mozakkerato Talebin* and *Mozakkerato Talebin Sabeqin*. These are one book but two different editions"⁴¹.

These are headings in the book:

- *Awwalo Ittesal bis sahafah* (first interaction with journalism)
- *Awwalo Darsin Injiliziyin* (First English lesson)
- *Maqamatus Sasi* (Shrines of Sasi)
- *Youmul Belad Al-Saudiah* (Saudi national day)
- *Ma'at tullah* (with the student)
- *Qissato zawajin* (story of a wedding)
- *Hadesun Julalun maqalebun khafifatun* (grave incidents and light dumps)

Hazehi Hayati by Hassan Mohammed Kutbi

Hassan Mohammed Kutbi was born in Tayes. He received his primary education in *Madrasatul Falah* at Makkah. He worked in high rank

⁴⁰ - Mozakkerato Talebin by Hasan Naseef: 4rth edition, p, 7, 3.

⁴¹ - Ibid, p,3

government jobs such as in the Ministry of Hajj and Auqaaf. He was also appointed as Editor in Chief of the magazine *Sautul Hejaz*.⁴² He wrote following books:

- Al-Adab Al-Fanni
- Seyasatona wa Ahdafona
- Daurona fi Zahmatil Ahdas
- Nazaraat wa Mawaquif

The idea of writing the autobiography named *Hazehi Hayati* came to his mind after listening to a speech delivered by Umar Abdullah Bulkheir, the Director General of Radio, Press and Publication. In this speech he requested him to write in few words about history of his life and his schools ... etc. in response to this request, Hassan Mohammed wrote to Bulkheir but not in few words, he made it so lengthy that it became a book.

In order to publish this autobiography, Hassan Mohammed travelled to Cairo in 1956 AD. There, he requested his friend Ali Ahmed Bakathir to write few words for this book. Bakathir accepted request of his friend and wrote in length under the title *Zikriyyato Sadeeqin* (Memories of a friend). Hassan Mohammed has kept this at the end of the first edition of the book, but later in the second edition, he kept it in preface and before introduction.

This book contained one hundred and ten pages and was published by Darul Qahera for printing.

⁴² - Ali Jawad Tahir, *Mojamul Matbuaat Al-Arabia- Al-Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah*, Beirut, Vol, 1, p, 341 and *Mojamul Kuttub wal Moallefin fil Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah*, 2nd edition, Riyadh, Al-Dayera Lil Elam Al-Mahdudah, 1993 p, 128

After reading this autobiography, it seems that writer didn't want to reveal everything about his life in this book. Therefore, he brought another book entitled *Ashkhasun fi Hayati* (people in my life) , it was published by Dar Memphis for printing in Cairo in 1960. It contained two hundred and twenty six pages of below average size.

It appears from the title of this autobiography *Hazehi Hayati* that he had written this book in his old age. Whereas, it is mentioned in the same book that he was born in 1911 and this book had been published in 1956 for the first time that means at that time he was forty seven years old.

Hassan Mohammed published *Ashkhasun fi Hayati* approximately after twenty four years in 1960 when he was fifty years old and. This time he decided to bring these two books in a new colour and brought these two books *Hazehi Hayati and Ashkhasun Fi Hayati* under one name *Hazehi Hayati*. It was published by Darush shorooq, Jeddah in 1982. Now these two books together contained two hundred and sixty four pages of small size. This edition didn't contain any dedicating message which was there in *Ashkhasun min Hayati*. In this new edition, the forward which was written by Bakthir had been put in the beginning of the book instead of in the end of the book. An extensive analysis of both books containing twenty-five pages and written by Muhammad Abu Bakr Hameed has been added to this edition⁴³.

Seeratun She'riyyatun by Ghazi Al-Qosaibi

Ghazi Abdul Rahman Al-Qosaibi was born on March 3 in 1940. He is considered as one of the prominent liberal politician, diplomat, poet, and novelist in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He was considered among Saudi Arabia's topmost technocrats since the mid-1970s. The Majalla called him the

⁴³ - Hasan Mohammad Kutbi, *Hazehi Hayat*, Darush shorooq, Jeddah, 1982, 2nd edition, p 42, 53,

Father of Innovation ⁴⁴ while a journalist from Saudi Arabia Osman Al Omeir said that he was the only great man in Saudi Arabia⁴⁵.

He received his primary and secondary education in Bahrain which was a British protectorate during that time⁴⁶. He got admission in the University of Cairo and received a degree in law in 1961. Later, he moved to the United States and graduated from the University of Southern California with a degree in international relations in 1964. He later earned his PhD in law from the University College London in 1970. His PhD thesis was about the Yemen crisis which took place during 1962 to 1967⁴⁷.

Al-Qosaibi held various positions at King Saud University, including, lecturer, associate professor, dean of the faculty of commerce and head of the department of political science. He also worked as the Director General of Saudi Railways Organization in 1970, Chairman of Jubail Petrochemical Company (Sadaf) and Yanbu Petrochemical Company (Yanpet), member of Public Investment Fund, Supreme Manpower Council, and Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu.

Al-Qosaibi was minister at several ministries including ministry of industry and electricity from 1976 to 1983, health ministry from 1983 to 1984, ministry of water and electricity (2002-2004), ministry of Labour from 2002 until his death in 2010.

Al-Qosaibi served as the ambassador to Bahrain (1984-1992), the United Kingdom and Ireland. He was fired by King Fahad on writing a poem entitled "A Pen Bought and Sold" and published in Al Jazirah. In this poem, he

⁴⁴ - The Godfather of Renovation Dies". The Majalla. 17 August 2010.

⁴⁵ - The Murdoch of the Middle East". The Majalla. 21 May 2010

⁴⁶ - Al Jifri, Mohammed Ali (16 August 2010). "Ghazi Al Gosaibi". Saudi Gazette

⁴⁷ - Mostyn, Trevor (24 August 2010). "Ghazi Al Gosaibi obituary". The Guardian

indirectly accused Prince Sultan, the then minister of defence, of corruption and the ruling elites⁴⁸.

Al-Qosaibi was also removed from his post of ambassador to the United Kingdom and Ireland in 2002 due to his poem. A short verse that was entitled *You Are the Martyr*, published in Al Hayat in mid-April, praising a Palestinian female suicide bomber. He dedicated this poem to a Palestinian teenager, Ayat Akhras who blew herself up on 29 March 2002 in the *Kiryat HaYovel* supermarket in Jerusalem, resulting in death of two Israelis. He called her as the *bride of the heavens* who stood up in front of the criminal and kisses death with a smile. He also faced censure from the British government because of the aforementioned poem⁴⁹.

Al-Qosaibi was an apparent critic of the Saudi conservative society. He was known for his liberal religious views. He was against terrorism and extremism and called for democratic reform in the Kingdom. He supported the idea that Saudi women should be offered more job opportunities⁵⁰.

Al-Qosaibi was one of the best-selling writers in the Arab world. He was also a significant diplomat-poet. He has over 40 publications to his credits. Most of them are collections of his poems. It depicts images of a simpler, desert culture. He mentioned and criticised corruption in his novels. He also talked about Arab alienation, love, taboos and the condition of the Arab states in his novel.

Al-Qosaibi also wrote non-fiction books including an autobiography and essays. He mainly focused on the relations between the Arab and western

⁴⁸ - Saudi reformer courted the king's attention with a poem". Brisbane Times. 30 August 2010

⁴⁹ -Diplomat censured over bomb poem". BBC. 18 April 2002

⁵⁰ - El Deeb, Sarah (16 August 2010). "Ghazi Al-qosaibi, 70, dies; poet, author and Saudi Arabian cabinet member". The Washington Post

world in these books. We also find him criticising the ruling regimes in his writings. Therefore, some of his books were banned in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

His novels are:

- *Al-Usfuriyah* (العصفورية)
- *Huma* (هما)
- *Danasku* (دنسكو)
- *Rajul Ja'a wa-Dhahab* (رجل جاء وذهب)
- *Salma* (سلمى)
- *Sab'ah* (سبعة)
- *Hikayat Hub* (حكاية حب)
- *Abu Shallakh al-Barmai* (أبو شلاخ البرمائي)
- *Al-Jinniyah*, (الجنية)
- *Alzahaymar* (الزهايمر)

Al-Qosaibi wrote this autobiography *Seeratun Sheriyatun* at the age of forty one in 1979 AD. It was published by *Darul Faisal Al-Saqafiyyah* in one hundred and forty one pages and contained nine following chapters:

- *Al-Bedayah* (The Start)
- *Al-Moassaraat Al-Oula* (Initial effects)
- *Ash'aar min Jazaeril Lulu* (verses of Perl Island)
- *Qataraatun min Zama'in* (drops of thirst)

- *Ma'arekatun Bila Rayatin* (war without a flag)
- *Abyaato Ghazalin* (*Abyaato Ghazalin*)
- *Anta Al-Reyaz*
- *Wa Yas'aloona Anish sheir* (and they ask you about the verse)
- *Qasayed* (Poems)

Al-Qosaibi mainly discussed about his poetry in his autobiography. He mentioned how he had begun his poetry. How were the initial responses from readers and critics? He mentioned about his collections of poetry and answered the questions put to him about his poetry.

In 1988, Al-Qosaibi published second edition of his poetic autobiography in three volumes in more than three hundred pages, he added new chapters in it⁵¹.

Titles of these chapters are:

First: *Seeratun Sheriyyatun*, it contained ten headings, seven of it are mentioned in the first edition.

Second:

Wa Yasaloona Anish sheir, it contained eight headings, they are:

Ana, wa Al-Sheir, wa Al-Hayat, Wa Al-tajreba, Wa Al-hubb, Wa Al-huzn, Wa Al Naqd, Wa Homumz zamanir radie.

Third: *Qasaeid*, it contained fourteen poems from his previous collection of poetry. Four of those poems were not present in the first edition.

⁵¹ - Dalilul Katib Al-Saudi, p 206, Mojamul Matbuaat Al-Arabia, Vol, 2, p, 166. Al-Mujaz fi tarikhil Adab Al-Saudi, p, 271, Mojamul Kuttub wal Moallefin, 126, Al-Sirah Al-Zatiy. '206 Ah, fil adb al-Saudi, p,102

He also added four new poems in it. In 1996, Al-Qosaibi published second volume of this autobiography in one hundred and fifty four pages of small size.

This volume has following chapters:

Wurood Ala Zafaeir Sana, Aqdun Minal Hejarah, Marisiyyato faresin sabeqin, Wal launo Anil Awrad, An, Mudun Al-Sheir Al-Qadimah wal Jadidah, Aselatush sheir la tantahi, Qasaaed.

It seems, first four are names of collection of his poetry. In the fifth and sixth chapters he answered questions he received through newspapers. In the last chapter, he presented selective poems of his collection *Wal launo Anil Awrad*.

Zikriyyato Tiflin Wadein by Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee

Abdul Aziz Bin Mohammad Ali Al-Rabee was born in Madinah in 1926. He got his primary education in Madinah and memorized Quran. Then he completed his secondary education from Makkah in 1942. He went to Egypt to pursue his higher education and earned his degree of graduation from college of *Darul Oloom* at Cairo University in 1951.

On his return from Egypt, he was appointed as Inspector of schools in Madina. Later he became Director of Education for Madinah region. In recognition of his enormous efforts in the field of education and particularly for Madinah region, secondary school was named after him

Al-Rabee was a founding member of *Nadi Al-Madinah Al-Munauwwarah Al-Adabi*. He remained head of this literary club until he died in 1981 AD.

Apart from Education, he played very important roles in developing cultural, scientific and sport atmosphere in Madina and participated in a number of social and charity projects.

He received gold medal from University of King Abdul Aziz, Jeddah for his great efforts in the field of education and culture⁵².

Al-Rabee left many publications in different fields. His books are:

- *Zikriyyato Tiflin wadeein*
- *Re'aayatus shabab fil Islam*
- *Al-khulqul Fazil fi sadril Islam*
- *Qasaedun fi hayatehi*
- *Al-Tarbiyyah Endal Arab Qablal Islam*
- *Kutubun wa mowallafoon*
- *Sowarun wa malamehun*
- *Shawqiyyatun wa shawqiyyatun*
- *Diwano sherin*
- *Al-madinah Al-Monawwarah, derasatun wasfiyyatun mukhtaseratun*
- *Monaqashatun wa monawwashatun*
- *Al-fonoon al-tabiriyyah*
- *Nassun lam yaktamil-Mohammad Al-Balhashi*
- *Maqalaat wa taliqaat*
- *Nazaraatun tarabawiyyatun*

He also participated in the following conferences:

⁵² - Mojamul Matbuaat Al-Arabia- Al-Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah, Beirut, Vol, 1, p, 588 and Mojamul Kuttub wal Moallefin fil Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah, 2nd edition, p, 61and Al-Mujaz fi Tarikhil Adab Al-Saudi, 226

- Conference for Arab teachers, Alexandria
- Conference for Arab Ministers for education and planning, Libya
- UNICCO conference, Paris
- Twelfth conference for Arab sensor, Tunisia
- First conference for Saudi writers, Jeddah

It is interesting to know that his Autobiography was the first book written by Abdul Aziz. It was also the first book published by *Nadi Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah Al-Aldabi*. It was printed by *Maktabul Ahrahm Litteba'a at Zagazig*, Egypt. It contained two hundred and eighty three pages of small size. The printing quality of this book was very bad as indicated by Abdul Fattah Abu Madeen in one of his articles. He said "how much I wished, if printing of this book were a little better. It is like a manual collection"⁵³.

First edition of this autobiography contained fifty one headings. Writer dedicated this book to his son Ayman without mentioning his name. He says "dear son, you are the most deserving person, I dedicate this book to you. You are leading a similar life to that meek child, who is writer of this autobiography"⁵⁴.

He wrote this book when he was fifty one year old. This autobiography received good appreciations by readers and critics alike. Many appreciations and criticism have been published in newspapers and magazines. First edition of this book was sold very quickly. It got huge demand from individuals and institutions. Therefore, Al-Nadi Al-Adabi of Al-Madinah wished to publish it again and asked the author to revise this book and write an introduction for

⁵³ -Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee, *Zikriyyato Tiflin Wadein*, 1st edition, Al-Madinah Al-Monwwarah, Al-Nadi Al-Adabi 1977. P, 2.

⁵⁴ -Ibid, p, 4

second edition. Several months passed and officials at the club kept chasing the author until they succeeded in getting what they wanted⁵⁵.

The book was printed for the second time in two hundred and eighty eight pages of small size in early 1981. In the same year, writer died. There are typographical and linguistic errors in the second edition. Therefore, it seems that author didn't get chance, perhaps because of his illness, to revise this edition.

In the second edition, author added an introduction containing six pages. He added one more chapter in the book containing three pages and made some corrections and put it at the margins.

Rehlatuṣ Salaseen Aaman by Zahir Al-Al-Almaee

Zahir Bin Awaz Al-Al-Almaee was born 1935 in Rejalo Alm'a, a province of Asir in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He studied for a short while in a school there. Then he went to city of Jazan and joined Ma'ahad Shaqra Al-Ilmi in 1951. He passed out from there in 1954. He received his bachelor degree from college of Shari'a at Riyadh in 1959. He received his Master and PhD in *Tafsir* and Qur'anic sciences from Al-Azhar University in 1966.

Al-Al-Almaee worked as Director at Ma'had Najran Al-Ilmi for six years. He also worked as a teacher at college of Shari'ah at Riyadh. Later, he was appointed as Director for library affairs at Imam Mohammad Bin Saud Islamic University at Riyadh and worked in this position for six years. Thereafter, he worked as a teacher at Kulliao Osulud din at Jamiatul Imam. Afterward, he became Head for college of Shari'ah and Osulud din at Abha. He was a member of supreme council for four years. His last job was with Human Right Commission until 2006.

⁵⁵ -Ibid, p, 9

Al-Al-Almaee is the first Saudi who received Doctorate degree from Al-Azhar University. He has seven publications and five collections of his poetry. He attended several conferences and seminars and symposium in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and abroad⁵⁶. To name few of them here:

- First conference of Saudi writers in 1974 AD
- Islamic Fiqh conference in 1976
- Council of Union of Arab Universities, Al-Sulaimaniyyah University, Iraq in 1976
- Seminar on curriculum in Arab universities, San'a
- Saudi cultural week in Morocco
- Muslim Youth Conference
- Seminar on Islamic literature, Darul Oloom, Lucknow, India
- Sixth Arab youth festival, Riyadh
- Meeting with Saudi students in Canadap,
- Seminar on communication between west and east Arab (Morocco) on the side-lines of Saudi cultural week.

He gave interviews and lectures on television and radio.

His publications are:

- *Manahijul Jadal Fil Qur'an Al-Karim* (مناهج الجدل في القرآن الكريم)
- *Derasaatun fit tafsir al-Mauzuei* (دراسات في التفسير الموضوعي)

⁵⁶ - Mojamul Kuttab wal Moallefin fil Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah, 2nd edition, p, 10 and Dalilul Kuttab wal Katebaat, p, 43

- *Derasatun fi Olumul Qur'an* (دراسات في علوم القرآن)
- *Rehalatun salasin aaman* (رحلة الثلاثين عاماً)
- Collections of his poetry are:
- *Al-Dawawin Al-Sheriyyah* (الدواوين الشعرية).
- *Ala Darbil Jihad* (علي درب الجهاد).
- *Min Nafahatis Saba* (من نفحات الصبا)
- *Asmarul Watan* (أسمار الوطن)
- *Nazifush Shohada* (نزيف الشهداء)
- *Al-Al Maeiyyat* (الألمعيات)
- *Marashiul Al-Maei* (مراثي الامعي)

His autobiography *Rehalatun Salaseena Aaman* covers thirty years of his life that spans from 1951 to 1980. He has written this autobiography in two hundred and fifty eight pages of small size. It is published by Farazdaq publication in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia but date of publication is not mentioned in the first edition. However, we can take a clue for date of publication from a line in the book that says "I named this autobiography as journey of thirty years beginning from 1951 until this year 1980"⁵⁷.

Apart from introduction and conclusion, this autobiography contains sixty four chapters. In the beginning, writer has talked about his birth place and described the environment in which he had grown up. Then he mentioned date of his joining of the army and when he resigned from the same. Then Al-

⁵⁷ - Zahir bin Awaz Al-Almae:Rehalatun Salaseena Aaman, p, 15

Al-Almaee discussed all phases of his education in details from his school days to Jamia Azhar from where he earned his Master and PhD degree.

As per this book, writer was born in 1935, so he was forty seven year old when he had written this autobiography. However, he indicated in the end that he would like to write a complete autobiography if he gets a long life ⁵⁸.

***Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasih* by Mohammad Husain Zaidan**

Mohammad Husain Zaidan was a great poet, orator, philosopher, and anthropologist. He is known as Zorba of Hejaz because of his expertise in history, particularly in Islamic history. He was born in 1909 AD. in Al-Madina Al-Munawwarah. He received his primary education from different school in Al-Madinah including Al-Madrasah Al-Nezamiyyah, Al-Madrasah Al-Abdaliyyah and passed out from *Al-Madrasah Al-Raqiyyah* in 1925. Thereafter, he attended lectures in Al-Masjid Al-Nabawai.

On request of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Shibli, Zaidan joined him as his assistant at his school *Al-Madrasah Al-Jauhariyyah*. Later he was appointed as a teacher at *Darul Aitam in Madina*. After some time, he was transferred to another branch of the same school in Makkah.

Zaidan moved into government job in 1939. He held several positions including secretary for financial councils at the Ministry of Finance, Head of the Account Department, Assistant General Manager for Department of Hajj in Makkah, the Finance Manager for Makkah, General Manager for affairs of Riyadh and General Inspector for Hajj. After this job, he decided to leave government jobs and work in journalism. He worked as Editor in chief for several magazines like *Jaridatul Bilad*, *Jaridatun Nadwa*, *Majallatud Darah*.

⁵⁸ - Ibid, p, 15, 255

When Muslim World League was formed, he worked as assistant to General Secretary to the League. He was nominated a board member of Daratul Malik Abdul Aziz, Riyadh at its inception.

He participated in a number of local and international literary conferences and seminars⁵⁹.

He has written eighteen books, they are:

- *Ashyakh wa Maqalat* (أشياخ ومقالات)
- *Banu Hilal* (بنو هلال)
- *Mohazarat fis saqafah* (محاضرات في الثقافة)
- *Sowar* (صور)
- *Kalematun wa nisfun* (كلمة ونصف)
- *Khwatir Mojannaha* (خواطر مجنحة)
- *Qazaya wa maqalaat* (قضايا ومقالات في الشرق الأوسط)
- *Zikriyyat* (ذكريات)
- *Fawateh majallatud darah* (فواتح مجلة الدارة)
- *Ma'al Ayyam* (مع الأيام)
- *Zikriyatul Ohood al-salasa* (ذكريات العهود الثلاثة)
- *Sirato batil* (سيرة بطل)

⁵⁹ - Mojamul Kuttab wal Moallefin fil Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah, 2nd edition p, 68, and Al-Mujaz fi Tarikhil Adab Al-Saudi, p, 130

- *Rehlatul Orubbiyeen Ila Najd wa shibhul jazirah* (رحلات الأوروبيين إلى نجد وشبه الجزيرة العربية)
- *Mohazaraat wa nadwaat fit tarikh wa al-saqafah al-arabiah* (محاضرات وندوات في التاريخ والثقافة العربية)
- *Al-Manhaj al-misali le ketabate terikhena* (المنهج المثالي لكتابة تاريخنا)
- *Al-mutamar al-islami huwa al-badil al-misali lil khelafah al-islamiyyah* (المؤتمر الإسلامي هو البديل المثالي للخلافة الإسلامية)
- *Kalematun wa nisfun* (كلمة ونصف)
- *Ahadis wa qazaya haula al-sharq al-awsat-derasaat* (أحاديث وقضايا حول الشرق الأوسط - دراسات)
- *Khwatir mojannaha* (خواطر مجنحة)
- *Abdul aziz wal kiyyan al-kabir* (عبد العزيز والكيان الكبير)
- *Al-arab baina irhaas wal mojaza* (العرب بين الارهاص والمعجزة)
- *Tamarun wa jamarun* (تمر وجمر)
- *Samarato qalamin* (ثمرات قلم)
- *Al-mikhlat* (المخلاة)

Zaidan is considered one of the most important writer and pioneer of Arabic literary moment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. About his diversity of knowledge Abdullah Al-Jifri said “this is an encyclopaedia walks on two legs⁶⁰”

⁶⁰ -Abdullah Al-Jifri, Al-Zaidan Zorba Al-Qarn Al-Ishrin, Jeddah, Mossasato Okaz Lis sahafa wan nashr, 1993, p, 6

This autobiography deals with three eras in which author had lived. This autobiography is also little different from normal autobiographies as it has more historical element than that of an autobiography. Writer himself is considered as one of the great historian in Saudi Arabia that reflects a lot in this autobiography. Zaidan also witnessed the entry of Medina in the reign of King Abdulaziz and documented what he saw at that stage and dealt at length about the city of the Prophet and the customs and traditions of Saudi society and the community in general⁶¹.

Zaidan was asked during a discussion that everyone has a project or dream to achieve and as a writer is there any project he thought about but he didn't achieved yet? ". He replied:" It's my autobiography ... autobiography that I haven't completed because I don't find anyone who can transcribe for me"⁶².

It is indicated in the end of the book that later he found Abdul Qadir who helped him in transcribing the book.

Initially this autobiography was published in a newspaper called " *Jareedato Okaz*" in forty four episode under a title *Teebato Rehlatin fiz zamane wal makan* ("طيبة رحلة في الزمان والمكان") starting from beginning of 1986 . It was published in book shape in 1988 by Matabe Al-Farazadaq in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. It contained two hundred and ninety five pages under title *Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasaah* (ذكريات العهود الثلاثة). It was reprinted in 1990 by Matabe Al-Shorooq, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia⁶³.

⁶¹ - Mohammad Husain Zaidan, *Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasaah*, 1st edition, Riyadh, Matabeul Farazdaq Al-Tejaria, 1988, p, 12-16

⁶² -Ibid, p, 331

⁶³ -Ibid, 319

***Rehlatul Umr* by Mohammad Abdul Hameed Mordad**

Mohammad Abdul Hameed Mordad was born in Makkah in 1914. He spent his childhood in suburb of Makkah and received his primary education from a school there. Later, he joined *Madrastul Khayyat* and then *Madrasatul Fallah* in 1931.

Al- Mordad spent most of his professional time in the field of education. He started his professional life as a teacher in *Madrasatul Fallah*. Then he joined *Madrasah Al-Fakhriyyah* as a teacher and taught there for two years. Thereafter, he was appointed as Director at *Madrasato Bazira Al-Khairiyyah in Adan*. Later, he was appointed as a Director at *Al-Madrasah Al-Saudiyah* in Makkah. He was also a private teacher for his highnesses the Emir Mansour bin Abdul Aziz. He took early retirement and started his business.

Al-Mordad was fond of travelling. He travelled across the Saudi Arabia and around the world as well⁶⁴. His books are:

- *Madaein Saleh* (مدائن صالح)
- *Azhaar wa akalil fi tahsin alfazil aamah wa maarfatid dakhil* (أزهار وأكاليل في تحسين ألفاظ العامة ومعرفة الدخيل)
- *Ithaful Muslemin fi tashil Ekhtesar Reyazis salehin* (إتحاف المسلمين في تسهيل اختصار رياض الصالحين)
- *Ashi'atul Kaukab fi Hayatil Khalifah ibn Al-Zubair wa Ahuho Al-Mus'ab* (أشعة الكوكب في حياة الخليفة ابن الزبير وأخوه المصعب)
- *Rehlatul Umar: Al-Rehla Al-Uula* (رحلة العمر: الرحلة الأولى)

⁶⁴ - Mojamul Kuttab wal Moallefin fil Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiyah, 2nd edition, p 135, and Mausuatul Odaba wal Kuttab Al-Saudieen, vol, 3, p, 113

His autobiography *Rehlatul Umar* was published by Nadi Makkah Al-Saqafi Al-Adabi in 1992 in five hundred and sixty nine pages. His autobiography is mainly an account of his life and his trips around the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Al-Mordad narrated in this autobiography event of his life and journeys starting from his birth in 1914 until 1933. This period is one third of his life. In the end of this book he promised to write about his second third of his life in a separate volume. He says "here I finish the first phase of life from childhood, adolescence, youthfulness and middle age and I hope I will be able to publish second volume about second phase as one third of my life has passed, and second one third will contain wonders of the universe as I completed twenty years of my life when I boarded the ship and till now number of my trips from my birth to boarding the ship reached to 112 trips and most of them happened with his wet nurse, aunt and late uncle Al-Shaikh Bakr Kamal"⁶⁵.

But writer was unable to write or publish the next volume of this biography in his life. Since he promised about writing or publishing the next volume of this autobiography in first volume, lately there have been questions asked in literary seminars and forums by many writers and intellectuals. Due to such questions and demands, family of the writer was trying to publish second volume of the book. The magazine *Al-Manhal* has already published details of few of his trips to Denmark and China.

It seems from this autobiography that writer was also fond of giving headings. As there are 477 headings in first volume of his autobiography but the most astonishing part of this autobiography is that it doesn't have content page.

⁶⁵- Mohammad Abdul Hameed Mordad, *Rehlatul Umr*, Makkah Al-Mokarramah, Matbuaat Nadi Makkah Al-Saqaafi Al-Adabi, p 569

Hayati Ma'al Jue wal Hubbe wal Harbe by Aziz Ziya

Abdul Aziz Ziauddin Zahid, popularly known with his literary name Aziz Zia, was born in 1914 in *Madinah Al-Monawwarah*. He received his primary education in schools in Madinah. Then he joined *Al-Madrasah Al-Raqiyyah Al-Hashmiyyah*. After that, he studied in Madrasah Aleha. He got admission in Madrasatul Khadiwi Ismaeil in Cairo for a brief period of time. He shuffled between American University in Beirut and Criminal investigation department in faculty of law at University of Egypt. In the wake of World War II he had to come to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He had expertise in translation and was well versed in English, French and Turkish. He translated many literary works from English into Arabic. He is also considered one of the great experts of politics in the field of journalism both print and electronic.

Aziz Zia has served in many government and military jobs. He started his professional life with a job in public health department in Makkah. Then he joined an office of public security. After that he moved to police department. He also worked as the Director at Saudi Air Lines, Director at Foreign control, Commissioner at Public Security Investigation and passports and Citizenships. He also worked in Arabia Radio in Mumbai in India for two years.

Aziz Zia has also worked in press and newspapers. He is considered as pioneer of political article writing in Saudi Arabia. He was Editor- in -chief for *Sahifatul Belad*, *Sahifatul Madinah* and *Sahifato Okaz*. He wrote political articles for Saudi Radio for 15 years. He wrote series of articles answering critics of Egyptian media on Saudi Arabia. His articles were published in *Okaz*, *Al-Madinah*, *Al-Riyadh*, *Al-Belad*, *Al-Nadwah*, *Al-Yamamah* and *Al-Hars Al-Watani wal Jil*.

Aziz was also founding member of supreme council for culture, arts and Saudi literature during mid of seventies. Together with Mohammad Hasan Awwad he established Jeddah Literary Club and was later elected as vice chairman of the Club. He delivered number of lectures on cultural, social and media subjects⁶⁶.

Aziz Zia had great expertise in translation particularly in literary translation, he translated over 30 novels and dramas of great writers of the world including Tagore (طاغور), Bernard Shaw (برنارد شو), George Orwell (جورج أرويل) Tolstoy (تولستوي) (Oscar wild) أوسكار وايلد , summer set mom (سومرست موم). His other books are:

- *Josur ilal qimmah* (جسور إلى القمة)
- *Al-Najm Al-Farid* (النجم الفريد)
- *Mama Zubaidah* (ماما زبيدة)
- *Hamza Shahatah Qimmah Orefat wa lam taktashif* (حمزة شحاتة قمة عرفت لم تكتشف)
- *Ahdus saba fil badiyyah* (عهد الصبا في البادية)
- *Sa'adat La Taref al-sa'ah* (سعادة لا تعرف الساعة)
- *Anaqidul Hiqd* (عناقيد الحقد)

Due to blockade and fear of hunger large number of citizens of Madinah Al-Munawwarah migrated to Syria and other regions which were not under control of the Ottoman Empire. Family of Aziz Ziya was one of them, like other families, his family also suffered lot of pain and hardship including hunger, cold and diseases that were sniffing away lives of people in large

⁶⁶ - Al-Mujaz fi Tarikhil Adab Al-Saudi, p, 133. Mojamul Matbuaat Al-Arabia, Vol, P,128/2

number, even dead bodies had to be buried collectively. By the end of the First World War, apart from his mother none of his family member was left alive. Then his mother decided to return to Madina and upon her return she found her home empty. All the goods had been robbed. There she suffered another phase of hardship and it ended only with the end of World War II with ending of rule of Sharief Husain.

Aziz Zia narrated his biography which also can be termed as biography of Madinah, in beautiful and simple language. He presented a phase of history as lived by a child with his generation.

This is a biography of hunger, war, love, dreams and hopes, associated with biography of the struggle waged by young Aziz. Through this autobiography, one can know about living style of that time which was full of events, incidents and changes that resulted in establishment of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. One can also get to know customs, traditions, lifestyle, food and social relationship in multi culture society as Arabs were living with Turkish, Indians, Qazafi and Bukhari. Moreover, it is story of openness to life amid ruins and rubbles, just like an orphan flower blooming amid deserted field.

Initially this autobiography was published in twenty one episodes in a weekly magazine *Iqra*. It was issuing from Jeddah. After twenty one episodes, writer had given an apology to readers and chief editor of the magazine that he wouldn't be able to complete second and third part of his autobiography. He wrote to Editor:

"I find myself inclined to apologize for not writing the second part as well as the third and I hope that readers and chief editor of this magazine would do a favour with me and relieve me from writing rest of the chapters"⁶⁷

⁶⁷ -Mjallato Iqra, no, 65555, 17/01/1986 p, 31

The magazine had to accept the apology but it said that now it is time to take rest and collect dispersed memories then resume the writing and on behalf of readers and ourselves we don't accept request of stopping from writing second volume of the autobiography for an indefinite period. Because this is not his right only, this is demand of readers who followed column of first volume and expressed their happiness by reading those columns⁶⁸.

Reader's desire had been fulfilled but not that of the magazine as Aziz Zia resumed publishing second and third volume of his autobiography after four years of stoppage in another weekly magazine Al-Yamamah from 30 November 1989.

When Abdullah Manna became Editor in Chief of *Iqra*, he urged to publish columns of *Iqra* magazine as first volume of this autobiography.

Initially, this autobiography was published in two volumes containing five hundred and eighty pages of medium size in 1994. But date and month of publication were not mentioned in the book.

Aziz Zia was seventy three years old when he started writing columns of his autobiography in *Iqra* and he crossed eighty when it got published in a book form. In 1985 third volume of *Hayati Ma'al Jue wal Hubbe wal Harbe* was published by Moasasatu Al-Sharq Al-Awsat lil Elane wa Al-Saqafate wa Al-Nashre in one hundred and eighty two pages of medium size. This volume contained thirteen chapters and a long article with a title *in the coffee shop*. Prior to publication of this volume, material of this volume had been published in *Al-Madinah* Magazine under title *Min Hayati...Hayati Ma'a al Jooe wa Al-Hubbe wa Al-Harbe* in 1994.

⁶⁸ -Ibid, p, 31

***Tabareehut Tabareeh* by Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri**

Abu Abdur rahman Mohammad bin Umar bin Abdur rahman bin Aqueel known as Abu Abdur rahman ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri, was born in the city of Shaqra, province of Al-Washm in Najd in 1938. He has expertise in Qur'an and its commentary, Hadis, Ilmu Kalam, Philosophy and literature. He was titled as Al-Zaheri because of his association with Al-Zaheriyah school of thought.

After receiving his primary education from schools in his city, Shaqra, he took admission in college of Shariyyah in Riyadh and passed out from there. Thereafter, he received his Degree of Master from Al-Mahad Al-Aali Lil Qaza, Riyadh.

Al-Zaheri worked in several government offices including Emirate of Eastern Region of Damman, Diwan of common employees, Diwan of civil services, and as Director of General Presidency for girl education, Legal Advisor and Director of Legal Department in the Ministry of Rural and Urban Affairs, Chairman of Literary Club at Riyadh. He was also Editor in Chief for two magazines *Majallatut tubad* and *Majallatut darieyyah*.⁶⁹

He has over forty publications under his name, some of them are :

- *Al-Nnaghm Allazi Ahabbatho* (collections of poetry) (النغم الذي احببته)
- *Min Ahkamittdayanah* (من أحكام الديانة)
- *Al-Qasidah Al-Hadisah wa Aabaut tajauz* (القصيدة الحديثة و أعباء التصاعد)
- *Al-Iltezam wa Al-Shart Al-Jamali* (الإلتزام و الشرط الجمالي)
- *Lan Tulhid* (لن تلحد)

⁶⁹ - Mojamul Kuttab wal Moallefin fil Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah, 2nd edition, p, 94, Mausuatul Odaba wal Kuttab Al-Saudieen, vol, 2, p, 223,

- *Shaiun Minat tabarikh* (شيء من التباريح)
- *Tabarikhut tabarikh* (تباريح التباريح)
- *Homumun Arabiah* (هموم عربية)
- *Kaifa Yamuto Oshshaq* (كيف يموت العشاق)
- *Nazariyyatul Marefah* (نظرية المعرفة)
- *Abqariyyato Ibn Hazm* (عبقرية ابن حزم)
- *Anabish Torasiyyah* (أنابيش تراثية)

Al-Zaheri wrote his autobiography *Tabareehut Tabareeh* when he was fifty five years old. It was published by Darus Sahwa Linnshre wat Tauzee, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1412 H. This autobiography contains one hundred and thirty six pages of medium size. There are few secondary names or titles given to this autobiography which are written on title page. They are *Siratun Zatiyyatun*, *Mozakkeratun* and *Hojairiyyun*. There are thirteen chapters in this autobiography and these are:

Tabarikhut tomooh Al-Ilmi (تباريح الطموح العلمي)

Tabarikhul Qera'a wat tibbe wat tal'if (تباريح القراءة والطلب والتأليف)

Tabarikhul Ilme wal Amale (تباريح العلم والعمل)

Tabarikhul Ilme wal Kutube (تباريح العلم والكتب)

Tabarikhut torasil Aalami (تباريح التراث العالمي)

Tabariho Shaqra'a (تباريح شقراء)

Tabarikhut tatallo Ela Khareje Shaqra (تباريح التطلع إلى خارج شقراء)

Al-Tabarih fi Qatarit tabarih fi Al-Riyadh (التباريح في قطر التباريح في الرياض)

Tabarihul Kohulah (تباريح الكهولة)

Wa Zikriyyatun Nash'aa (وذكريات النشأة)

Tabaiho Jilin 1952 AD (تباريح جيل 1952م)

Tabarihul Hawiyyah (تباريح الهوية)

Husnul Khatemah (حسن الخاتمة)

Al-Zaheri wrote articles under these titles in his column in *Al-Majallah Al-Arabia*. Later he was asked to leave the magazine because he was unable to write for the magazine regularly due to his personal problems and crisis. In those articles, he mentioned his experiences and incidents of his life. Later he published those articles in one book. In this autobiography, he mentioned some of his hardship, bitter and humorous incidents of his life. He criticized a young poet of his era. He mentioned about his relationship with *Al-Majallah Al-Arabia* and criticized its decision to discharge him. He also discussed some social and cultural affairs in this autobiography⁷⁰.

Mozakkerati Khelala Qarnim Minal Ahdaas by Khalil Al-Rawwaf

Khalil bin Ibrahim Al-Rawwaf was born in Damascus in 1894 AD. His mother was a Syrian and father was a Saudi. He studied in Madrasatut Tawfique in Damascus for five years. He had a great interest in poetry and memorised verses of poetry of pre-Islamic and modern period, especially verses of Badwi Khalil's poetry.

⁷⁰ - Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aquil Al-Zaheri, *Tabareehut Tabareeh*, 1st edition, Darus Sahwa Lin Nashr wat tauze, 1992, p, 5, 75 and 123

Al-Rawwaf worked in camel trading until he met with Francis Ellison' an American girl, in a hotel in Baghdad. She wanted to learn Arab culture, thus a friendship developed among them. He left his business and went to America with her and soon their friendship turned into love. She returned to Syria and accepted Islam. Both got married and returned back to America. She took him to most part of the America. Unfortunately, their marriage didn't last long due to huge cultural differences. Therefore, they decided to get separated. After the divorce, he wrote books on how to teach Arabic language. He also established a school for the same purpose.

Al-Rawwaf met with another American girl' Constance Wellman, who had come to learn Arabic language in his school. She came to know during her visit to Europe that Arabic civilization is the base of western civilization and in quest of learning the Arabic civilization she wanted to learn the Arabic Language. Soon both got married and were blessed with a son. They name him Nuwaf.

Again this marriage didn't last long. They got separated but mother took the son with her to America. Later, Al-Rawwaf got married to another girl and blessed with two girls but he couldn't forget his son. He went to United States to get his son back with the prince Talal bin Abdul Aziz. Both of them tried to convince mother to return the son to him but she refused to do so. Again, he went to America twice in 1962 and third time in 1987 to get his son back but he didn't find them.

In the meantime, Constance Wellman got married to another popular Arabic poet Ahmad Zaki Abu Shadi, one of the founders of *Jamat Apollo*. Abu Shadi adopted his son Nuwaf and changed his name to Kalaef Abu Shadi.

Here, Al-Rawwaf didn't lose his hope and was persistent with his search of his son. At the age of 95, he asked his nephew who went to America to pursue

his studies to get help of investigator in finding his son. He nephew did so and succeeded in finding the son. Thus, father and son met with each other after a gap of 45 years⁷¹.

His books are:

- *Qawaedul Islam Al-Khams*
- *Kaifa ta'ta'allam Al-Lugha Al-Arabia,*
- *Mozakkerati Khelal Qarnin minal ahdas*

His autobiography is known as *Mozakkerati Khelal Qarnin minal ahdas* but complete title of the book is *Safhatun Matwiyyatun min tarikhena Al-Arabi Al-hadis: Mozakkerati Khelal Qarnim minal Ahdas*. Subtitle of the book is written before its main title because content of the book is not purely history rather it is composition of historical events as witnessed by author mixed with his autobiography during a century.

This autobiography contains five hundred and twenty two pages of medium size. It was published by *Matbu'aatush sha'rekah Al-Saudiah Lil Abhas wa Al-Nashre* in 1994.

This autobiography has been divided into three parts in one volume.

Part I: in the Levant and the Peninsula and Iraq that includes eight chapters.

Part II: Immigration to the United States, it includes seven chapters.

Part III: Long parting and then meeting, it contains two chapters: the return to the homeland, the apple of my eyes Nuwaf after a long parting.

⁷¹ -Dr. Al-Haidari, *Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah fil Adab Al-Saudi*, p, 111

This Autobiography is characterized with rich information with sequencing as author narrated incidents of almost a century from beginning of twentieth century to early nineties of twentieth century.

Writer seems to be very careful while writing the incidents as incidents are complex and overlapping, yet he was able to write it, to a great extent, in a smooth and logical context. He started writing his autobiography at very early age of his life and after sixty five years of his age he tried to be free as much as possible for writing this autobiography.

When he finished composing his autobiography he sought help of Dr. Suhail Zaka, head of history department at University of Damascus to revise it and organize it in a book format⁷².

He didn't stop here, but he gave a draft of this autobiography to his nephew, Dr. Osman Yassin Rawwaf, a Professor of political science at King Saud University and a member of the Advisory Council took his suggestions for this autobiography. This autobiography covered hundred years of incidents of his life which were full of incidents and changes⁷³.

The author gave a glimpse of his life in the introduction of his autobiography that he roamed throughout the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Damascus, Egypt, Jordan and Palestine while he was a boy. Desert has scrubbed him with its intensity and grinded me with its originality and adventure pushed him to cross Atlantic Ocean and stormed into mysterious and terrible America. Period of his stay in America was not less important than that he lived in the east in terms of my services to my country. He stayed in the United States

⁷² - Khalil Al-Rawwaf, Safhatun Matwiyyatun min Tarekhena Al-Arabi Al-Hadis, Mozakkerati Khelal Qarnim minal Ahdas, 1st edition, Jeddah, Al-Sharekah Al-Saudiah Lil Abhas wan nashr,1994, 413

⁷³ -Ibid, p, 8,9

nearly fourteen years, moved around forty-two states, and was married to two American women. He had a variety of activities in the Islamic Dawa. His business flourished a lot in his business in New York City, but nostalgia to the desert always used to push him to get back to Najd⁷⁴.

This autobiography includes a translated article of Dr. Taha Hussein titled *literary life in the Arabian Peninsula*, it also includes personal portraits and photographs of documents in thirty-eight pages depicting author's life in its various stages.

***Mozakkeratun wa Zikriyyatun min Hayati* by Abdul Karim Al-Jahiman**

Abdul Karim bin Abdul Aziz Al-Jahiman is a popular critic, poet, journalist and man of literature. He was born in Ghaslah in province of Najd in 1912 AH. He received his primary education and memorized Qur'an in the school of his village. Then he went to Riyadh and learnt theology and Arabic language from some scholars. Thereafter, he went to Makkah and passed out from Al-Ma'had Al-Ilmi Al-Saudi, which is specialized for religious education. After that, he was appointed to establish first model school in Al-Kharj area in 1930. Later, he was asked by the King Al-Saud to teach his children. He also set up *Akhbaruz zahran* the first newspaper issued from eastern part of Arabian peninsula. He was a big advocate of girl education in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and wrote articles in newspapers and magazines advocating his views on this issue. For this reason he had been put behind the bar few times and his newspaper was banned too.

⁷⁴ - Ibid, p, 7-9

During sixties and seventies, he travelled around the world and wrote few books about his experiences during the trip, like *Rehlato M'ash shams* and *Zikriyyato Baris* ⁷⁵.

Al-Jahiman died at age of 100 on 1st December, 2011 AD.

He compiled over ten books, some of them are mentioned below:

- *Dokhanun wa lahabun* (دخان ولهيب)
- *Mausooatul Asatirul Al-Shabiyyah fi Shibhil Jazirah Al-Arabia*, five volumes (موسوعة الأساطير الشعبية في شبه الجزيرة العربية)
- *Mausooatul amsaal al-shabiyyah, ten parts* (موسوعة الأمثال الشعبية)
- *Ainat tariq* (أين الطريق)
- *Daurato M'ash shams* (دورة مع الشمس)
- *Diwano Khapqate Qalbin* (ديوان خفقات قلب)
- *Zikriyyato Baris* (ذكريات باريس)
- *Rasaelun Laha Tarikhu* (رسائل لها تاريخ)

As far as his autobiography is concerned, Al-Jahiman has used two popular terminologies *Mozakkerat* and *Zikriyyat* together while giving a title to his autobiography. Whereas, critics and writers of history of literature say that there are differences between these two terminologies. They describe autobiography as a new literary genre. When we read this autobiography we don't find that it has any relation with *Mozakkerat*. It is an autobiography only. In a *Mozakkerat*, a writer mainly writes about historical events that he

⁷⁵ - Al-Mujaz fi Tarikhil Adab Al-Saudi, p,142. Mojamul Kuttah wal Moallefin fil Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah, P, 32 and Mojamul Matbuaat Al-Arabia, p 18/2

happened to witness. He pays more attention to portraying historical incidents instead of portraying his personal events.

It is more interesting to know that author kept the term *Mozakkerat* before the term *Zikriyyat* in the title, while he cancelled word *Zikriyyat* in the book. However, as per the established definitions of all terminologies in modern time, this book can be classified under the category of *Mozakkerat* only.

This mix or confusion between autobiography and its definition is not limited to Al-Jahiman alone. It is a common phenomenon among writers who have dealt with this genre.

Initially, this autobiography was published containing only articles written by the author from time to time about his life and published in different newspapers and magazines. Then writer re-published them in his book *Ahadees wa Ahdaas* which had been published in 1987. But these articles about self were scattered in the book without any chronological order of events. Therefore, it lost the sequence and logic in narration of event⁷⁶.

In fact, this autobiography has been written by author due to desire, consistent follow up and pressure of Nasir Bin Mohammad Al-Hameedi, as writer says "a cultured young boy asked me to write my biography in brief about my educational, professional life and writings so he can make a book from those pages"⁷⁷.

Later he didn't stop at this point and was not convinced with brief notes in few pages but he requested him to write a complete autobiography and encouraged him to complete what he had written before. When writer got convinced to

⁷⁶ -Abdul Karim Al-Jahima, *Ahadis wa Ahdas*, 1st edition, Matabeul Farazdaq Al-Tejariyya, 1987, p 15,21, 187, 193, 332,340

⁷⁷ -Rehlato Abi Suhail, 1st edition, Riyadh, Darul Jisr,1992, p, 11

write his autobiography from beginning again, Al-Hameedi didn't not only motivate him to complete the work consistently, he also kept following up with him. He used to ask him to brief him about what he had written, thus he made sure that writer completed the work. Both writer and Al-Hameedi also used to revise and clean it from any repetition and prolongation⁷⁸.

Finally, this book got published under the title *Mozakkerat wa Zikriyyat min Hayati* in three hundred and twenty pages of medium size by *Darul Al-Shibl Lin Nashre wa Al-Tauzee wal Tebate*, at Riyadh in 1995. At this time, writer was ninety years old.

Min Sawanehi Zikriyyat by Hamad Al-Jasir

Hamad Al-Jasir was born in the village of Al Burood in 1907. He learned reading and writing at the school of his village. In 1920, his father sent him to Riyadh. There he memorised the Quran, and learned about the lives of the Sheikhs in line with normal educational practice in the country at the time. After that, he went to Makkah and passed out from Al-Ma'had Al-Ilmi Al-Saudi.

Al-Jasir started his professional life as a teacher and taught across Saudi Arabia. He also served as a judge in Northern Hejaz. He established the first magazine, Al Yamamah in 1952 in Riyadh and involved in journalism.

Al-Jasir wrote many books about geography and history of Arabian Peninsula. His famous genealogical work *جمهرة أنساب الأسر المتحضرة في نجد* is popularly known as *Kitab Al Ansab* (The Book of Roots). It contains information of almost all Saudi families along with a brief history of the family.

He also established and supervised another magazine, Al Arab, and a publishing house Dar Al Yamama for Research, Publishing and Distribution.

⁷⁸ -Ibid, p, 22

Al-Jasir was awarded with the King Faisal International Award in literature and Sultan Al-Awais Award for his contribution in culture in 1995⁷⁹ .

He has written over 30 books, and the most known works of him are as follows:

- *Madinatur Riyadh Abra Atwarit tarikh* ((مدينة الرياض عبر أطوار التاريخ))
- *Al-Mojam Al-Jughrafi Lil Belad Al-Arabia Al-Saudia* (المعجم الجغرافي للبلاد العربية (السعودية))
- *Ma'ash Shoaraa* (مع الشعراء)
- *Rehlaato Hamd Al-jasir lil bahs Anit toras* (رحلات حمد الجاسر للبحث عن التراث)
- *Fil watan Al-Arabi* (في الوطن العربي)
- *Al Durar Al Munadhama fi Akhbar Al Hajj* (الدرر المنظمة في أخبار الحج)
- *Abu Ali Al Hajari* (أبو علي الحجري)
- *Al Barq Al Yamani Fiu Al Fat'h Al Othmani* (البرق اليمني في الفتح العثماني)
- *Bilad Al Arab-Al Hassan Al Asfahani* (بلاد العرب-الحسان الأصفهاني)
- *Jamharat Ansab Al Osar fi Najd* (جمهرات أنساب الأسر في نجد)

Initially, his autobiography was published in *Al-Majjallah Al-Arabiah* from 1986 to 1996 under the title *Min Sawanehi zikriyyat*. During this period it got stopped twice, first in 1994 for a year and later for a brief period in 1996. Its final episode has been published in the Arabic month November in 1996. It contains 350 pages.

⁷⁹- Al-Mujaz fi Tarikhil Adab Al-Saudi, p, 181. Mojamul Kuttab wal Moallefin fil Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah, p, 26. Mojamul Matbuaat Al-Arabia, Vol, 1, p, 372

Abdullah Bulkheir Yatazakkar by Abdullah Umar Bulkheir

Abdullah bin Umar Bulkheir is a poet, a well-known media person and politician of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He is considered pioneer of Media in the Kingdom. He was also a secretary of the King Saud. He was born in Hazarmaut in 1912. He received his primary education from there. At the age of 12, his family migrated to Makkah, where he passed out from Madrasatul falah. Bulkheir had been selected for a scholarship to study in the American University in Beirut. After completing his education from there, he joined finance ministry. It was his first job. Thereafter, he worked in several government departments. King Abdul Aziz would take Bulkheir along with him during his trips to foreign countries due to his excellent efficiency in English language. He was translator for the King during his historical meet after World War II with American President Roosevelt and Prime minister of Britain Churchill.

Bulkheir was also Chairman of Diwan of the King Saud bin Abdul Aziz. He was the pioneer of Media in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He set up Directorate of Radio, Press and Publishing and was appointed as the General Manager of the Directorate for several years. He was the first Minister of information as well. He played huge role in the development of Radio and information in the Kingdom. During his tenure, radio programs were set up, different newspapers and magazines Iza'ato Sautil Islam, Majallatul Iza'aa had been started. When a new Directorate for press and publishing had been set up in Jeddah, he was appointed as the In-charge of the same.

Bulkheir visited India with the King Saud bin Abdul Aziz and addressed the media several times on behalf of the King.

For some unknown reasons he pulled out himself from the political spectrum and left the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and migrated to Beirut. He lived there around 20 years and died there at his age of 90 in 2002⁸⁰.

He participated in compiling *Wah'ius sahra* (وحي الصحراء), introducing modern literature of Saudi Arabia.

Khalid Batarfi, on behalf of *As sharq Al Awsat* newspaper, had taken a very long interview of Abdullah Bulkheir In 1991, which was published in sixty two episodes in the newspaper from 2/9/1995 to 11/11/1996.

These episodes was published in a book form in 1998 under the title *Abdullah Bulkheir Yatazakkar* by publication of Abdullah Mohammad Saeed Khaujah at Jeddah with an introduction from the publisher and with a lengthy study by Mahmood Raddawi containing one hundred and fifty pages. Thus the book contains seven hundred and twenty pages. This turned to be his autobiography.

This autobiography is full of distinctive events. In this the writer also talked about some stands taken by him. Bulkheir lived during establishment period of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He witnessed movements of national independence and awareness and all the events that shook the region after the First World War. He followed those movements at the beginning of his youth from Beirut, Baghdad, Cairo and Damascus. He knew its secrets, got to know all hidden aspect. Therefore, this autobiography has got importance of a political dialogue with its literary characteristics.

In the beginning, writer narrates the story of the history of the schools and education in Saudi Arabia, starting with *Al-Ahlia School* in Makkah then, *Al-Fakhriyyah* and *Al-Sawltiyyah* Al-Falah in Jeddah and *Madrasatu Sehra* in the

⁸⁰ - Al-Mujaz fi Tarikhil Adab Al-Saudi, p, 195. Mojamul Kuttab wal Moallefin fil Mamlakah Al-Arabia Al-Saudiah, 19

desert of Hijaz. He also narrated how cultural renaissance developed during thirties and forties with the development of the reform movement encouraged by the late King Abdul Aziz.

Bulkheir believed that the education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia saw the light with seeking education in the two holy Mosques: the Grand Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. This is a system inherited through ages known by Zitouna University in Tunisia, Qaraween University in Fez, Morocco, and the Al-Azhar University in Cairo.

Conversations of Bulkheir also dealt with national boiling situation, which began before World War II. He also talked about how its heat reached to various countries in the region. It was easy to monitor this situation from Beirut, the capital, where he arrived in 1935 to join the American University.

From the famous Faisal restaurant where political theories and partisan beliefs used to be discussed, Bulkheir peered at various movements that erupted in the Arab world including Arab Nationalist Movement, the rise of Arab Socialism, Social National Syrian Party, in addition to the growth of other local parties. Thus he recorded through dialogue with Khaled Batarfi many facts, and exciting events, that can be considered very important historical material for the most serious period of this century.

Through this great contemporary literary work Abdullah Bulkheir made readers travel with him in his historic journey, through men, places, occasions, incidents, events and news. He brought royal, official, political and intellectual, Islamic and international personalities of Saudi Arabia and Arabs near to us. With him we visited Arab countries and places in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq and paid historic visit to other countries. His writings constitute a work of art close to literature of biography and the novel.

Chapter 3

Issues discussed in the major autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

1.1 Socio-cultural issues

1.2 Historical issues

1.3 Political Issues

Chapter 3

Issues discussed in the prominent autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

1.1 Socio-cultural issues

Literature, in its totality, is a socio-cultural and historical phenomenon besides being an integral part of the civilization and society. Therefore, it plays an important role in understanding any culture, civilization and society. Thus this bond helps understand any literary work and its effect on the society. "Studying social aspect of any issue also helps in understanding the hidden aspect of cultural and social process of changes"¹.

A read of the autobiographies written by the authors of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, can easily realize that socio-cultural issues are the most common issues dealt with by them in their autobiographies. There are certain reasons which prompted most of the writers to deal with this issue. Some of those reasons are following.

- During twentieth century, drastic changes took place in every walk of life in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Most of the Saudi writers witnessed and experienced all those changes which occurred in the society, behaviour, culture, tradition, economy, politics and education. Even in the way of thinking and mannerism. These changes led to the emergence of new traditions and disappearance of some other traditional practices.
- These writers have witnessed and experienced huge difference between traditional society in which they spent their childhood and transitional and modern society in which they spent later part of their lives.

¹ - Tahlil Al-Ijtemae lil Adab' Cairo, Maktabato Anglo Egypt, 1970, p, 119

- Before unification of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, there were huge differences in behaviour and tradition in every region. But proliferation of modern ways of communication, good roads and transportation systems, emergence of media and advancement in the level and standard of education played an important role in homogenization of social practices. Therefore, now a day's one can see striking similarity in tradition and behaviour. Autobiographical writers have mentioned those differences and similarities extensively.
- General transition and emergence of modern society led to major transformation in social ethos. Writers went through all these transformations and talked about it in their autobiographies.
- New society which was quite different from the past one changed the traditional practices completely. This phenomenon prompted writers to ponder upon the past and talk about the previous tradition in which they spent greater part of their lives. Hence, we find them quite often becoming nostalgic about their past. They mentioned its purity and simplicity. But at the same time, they talked about prevalence of poverty, fear, hardship and insecurity.

Most of the authors of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia described socio-cultural aspects and analyzed them in their autobiographies. They mentioned new things that had entered the society and things that had disappeared from the arena, and talked about things that had evolved and developed, described features of the houses in the past. They mentioned its shape, arrangement, cleanliness and things that used to be present in a house hold. Furthermore, they also talked about dresses of men and women. How men and women used to spend their leisure time when there was no means of entertainment.

Discussion over the prevalent norms of upbringing, nurturing and educating children by their parents in those days that were mostly characterized with strict and harsh rules, are equally mentioned.

Some of the writers have criticized number of traditional things that were prevalent in those days. They expressed their aversion to it. But at the same time, they expressed their satisfaction with some of it.

Analyzing the situation of the past, some went on to say that prevalence of poverty, hunger and starvation had an effect on their behavior and tradition. That is the reason why effects of stands of such society are visible in their works.

It would be appropriate to put things in perspective and give some examples, where writers have talked about such socio-cultural issues in their autobiographies.

Talks of Traditions in Mecca and Madinah in Autobiographies

Ahmad Al-Sebaee mentioned traditions of Mecca through several personalities. He talked about their behavior and beliefs through dialogue and description. He also mentioned focus of women on keeping their houses neat and clear. He mentioned his teacher Husaina who was a poor lady but she used to take care of cleanliness of her simple house and arrangement of furniture so well that he remembers it until the time of writing his autobiography. But it was not strange in the case of aunt Husaina. Most of the houses of that time used to be like this. Housewives used to compete with each other in cleanliness of what they dress, furnish and eat. Their houses were used as proverb for cleanliness, and good arrangement².

Al-Sebaee described how women were thinking. He talked about their behavior, customs and their point of views about life and way of upbringing their children and dealing with them.

He also talked about how his father who used to pay lot of attention to his traditional dress and would teach the same to his children. Commenting on

² - Ayyami, p, 30

his father and his following of customs in dressing, he says “My father has some principles in his life. He never compromised with it. There was a fixed time for doing homework. Tying turban in traditional way, way of fastening belt and wearing footwear and Kaffieh all these should go according to the common tradition³”.

Al-Sebaee further mentioned that all children of the village would spend their day with him in the school and as soon as Call for Asar prayer was given, all would go out and play games. But he would take additional private classes from aunt Husaina because his father wanted him to do so⁴.

Al-Sebaee mentioned a custom that people used to practice in order to cast out devil and protect themselves from envious eyes. According to this custom women used to chant loudly through a particular closed ventilator. Voice would go from one ventilator to another. Salt used to be sprinkled from top of the ventilator to increase the voice. This was done to cast out devils and to protect from envious eyes⁵.

Al-Sebaee mentioned some superstitious believed in by his grandmother. When a visitor would leave her house, she would stop sweeping it because it would stop his return. She would advise to pour water immediately after a visitor got out of the door because water is protection. Similarly, she would never wash clothes on Monday because one of the companions of the Prophet lost his son when he washed his clothes on Monday⁶.

Mohammad Abdul Hameed Mirdad mentioned many customs and traditions that were in practice in Makkah where he was born and brought up. He talked about the customs of those days saying that “old age people

³ - Ibid: P, 57

⁴ - Ibid: P, 31

⁵ -Ibid:P, 35

⁶ - Ibid: P, 61

and sick persons would get their hair cut at dawn in their homes by hairdresser⁷”.

Mirdad mentioned another custom related to reception given to a traveler on his return from a journey. As per this custom travelers used to be given a reception at the time of their return from their journey in the house and in the cafe of the teacher and in Umme Daood⁸. He talked about harsh restriction for children particularly on any occasions. Children were not allowed to intervene or comment on anything. He went to the Cafe of the teacher to receive his father on his return from a journey. There were some other travelers who returned from their journeys, he wanted to know about them. He couldn't ask the reason due to fear and because children were not allowed to intervene in the customs of the country and he was beaten up many times due to these traditions. In those days people would punish their sons or daughters even after they grew up⁹.

He mentioned another interesting custom related to welcoming new Hijri year by drinking milk behaving well. People in Makkah used to drink milk in the morning of the new Hijri year and eventually it would cause the price of milk go up on that particular day. Every one, be it poor or rich, would try to buy milk even before the sun rises, some would even go and spend whole night at milkman's place. People would try to spend this day in the best possible way. They would wear new clothes, speak very politely and restore relationships and friendships believing that whole year would go likewise¹⁰.

Giving some more glimpses of tradition in Makkah the same author says that people would visit each other on the day of Aashurah. Some would practice

⁷ - Rehlatul Umr: p, 135

⁸ - Ibid: P, 177

⁹ - Ibid: P, 178

¹⁰ - Ibid: P, 202

fasting while some other would make Aashuriyyah, a dish made of milk, sugar, almond, pistachio and raisin. People would also gift dry fruits to each other¹¹. He mentioned one very interesting thing that “many people in Makkah wouldn’t have dinner¹² .

He also mentioned about tradition of engagement in that society. When a person wants to propose any girl for marriage he would send his mother or sister to any known or known family in Makkah. When mother or sister would reach the particular house, she would clap at the doorstep. A female member from the girl house would get out and greet her. After the hospitality, female from the boy’s family would put forward her proposal. If family member of the girl finds it suitable, she would ask the girl to come in front of her. The girl would come in best possible dress and make-up. If the female from boy side get satisfied with the look of the girl, she would say: I want her for my son or brother¹³.

Another Saudi autobiographer Mohammad Husain Zaidan narrated other interesting customs which were in practice in the city of Medina those days. He particularly described the custom of celebration on the occasion of naming of a child on seventh day of his birth. He also informed his readers about how people used to celebrate circumcision of a child. Besides mentioning the custom of taking child to the Mosque of the Prophet (PBUH) on fortieth day of his birth mother would take her child with any of her sisters or grandmother to the Mosque of the Prophet (PBUH) and make the child enter the room of the Prophet (PBUH)¹⁴.

¹¹ -Rehlatul Umr: p, 202

¹² - Ibid: P, 303

¹³ - Ibid: P, 251-250

¹⁴ - Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasah: p,135

Aziz Zia also talked about celebration on the occasion of circumcision. He said that “day of circumcision used to be celebrated like a wedding night. A bed was decorated magnificently before the circumcision and the whole house, including the street in which house was located, used to be cleaned very well to celebrate this occasion¹⁵”. He mentioned about his own experience of going through the process of circumcision and the celebration on the occasion. Since his father was a high ranked officer in the army, therefore, he called a team of army musicians to participate in the celebration of his circumcision. They played the music in the morning and then they resumed it after the prayer of the Asr and it continued until the prayer of the Esha. He was frightened when he heard the army music on the day of his circumcision. His fear got increased when he saw the midwife coming to him gasping and informed that they had come. Soon he saw his uncle in his military uniform entering and before him there was a tall man with wide chest. Right behind them there was another man who was carrying a white mask. All of them were trying to smile, perhaps to relieve and tranquilize him. But the person that frightened him the most was the one who carried small cotton and a syringe¹⁶. He says then “They put me upside back. I couldn’t cry loudly. In fact, I lost my voice completely. My face was towards the pillow. Then I don’t know what they did after that”¹⁷. But this kind of grand celebration at the time of circumcision was not a norm in every family. Families living in remote villages wouldn’t do any preparations and wouldn’t celebrate this occasion. Hamd Al-Jasir who belonged to a family of poor farmers, he also mentioned occasion of his circumcision says “there were no decoration and no celebration when he was circumcised together with his brother, a carpenter known as Daheem Al-Sane circumcised him and his brother. We were crying in pain. Our sister took us to our mother who was

¹⁵ - Hayati Ma’al Joee, wal Hubbe wa Al-Harbe: p,216 vol: 2

¹⁶ - Ibid: p,238 vol: 2

¹⁷ - Ibid: P, 238, Vol:2

baking bread on the furnace. She gave us bread and we started eating it and became silent''¹⁸.

Mohammad Abdul Hameed Mirdad was born in Makkah and was sent to Taif to a wet nurse. Therefore one can find both rural and urban traditions at the time of his circumcision. His family went to Taif from Makkah with a hairdresser who would normally perform the circumcision. Al-Mirdad narrated the occasion in his autobiography. His father came from Makkah to celebrate this occasion. He gave him sweets and cash and told him that you shouldn't leave the place and children, won't think that we came to take you back. We came to celebrate the circumcision. His aunts came with his father too. They brought Elmira and foods with them. They erected tents and people of the village gathered to welcome the guests. They brought their drums and tabors. Songs were sung, animals slaughtered and drums were beaten and children of the village danced¹⁹.

In the early days, people in Madina would avoid building anything in the north of the Prophet's Mosque because of a story that was told to them that valley of Mish'aat is infected²⁰ . Similarly, People of Madina would eat only meat of sheep and would avoid milking sheep. They were doing so thinking that sheep would increase in numbers²¹ .

Craftsmanship like carpentry, tailoring and cotton making in Madina made them independent. Carpenters would do the major work in construction. They would make windows, ventilators, roofs, sabots, boxes and containers. All of these things were made by carpenters and they wouldn't import them. Those ventilators, doors and windows used to be very beautiful and long lasting²².

¹⁸ - Al-Majallah Al-Arabia, No. 110, Rabiul Askhar, 1407 Ah, p,6

¹⁹ - Rehlatul Umr: p, 92-94

²⁰ - Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasa: p, 76,77

²¹ - Ibid: P, 156

²² - Ibid: P, 175

Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee mentioned that use of bicycle was considered disgraceful in Madina because people in Madina would look down upon the paddlers of the bicycle. They considered them degraded, badly educated and ethically bad²³.

Mohammad Husain Zaidan mentioned the reason for this kind of thinking. He said that “their parents stopped them from paddling the bicycle because it was considered horse of Satan Iblis²⁴”.

Autobiography of Al-Rabee is considered very important source to know socio-cultural aspect of Madina particularly during thirties and forties of the ninetieth century when Al-Rabee was a child and he talked about his childhood. He gets nostalgic when he talks about differences in the life style and custom of the people during thirties and forties and post nineties. He mentioned urban life style as well and talked about forms of market, folk medicines, parks and clubs. At the same time, he talked about common pattern of houses in Madina. He described his own house which was situated at the end of a small street and had five rooms. Some of its windows used to open towards a small garden. He says “our house was built according to old style. That unique style was being practiced by generations. It contained a hall and a well. These two things were most important for every resident of the house. Every house of the Madina was similar to our house”²⁵.

He mentioned an interesting practice among youth of the Madina during forties of the ninetieth century. There were three or four callers of the Azan in the Prophet’s Mosque. All of them were characterized with loud and resounding voice. Each of them had his own style. There were similar numbers of groups of youth. Every group was fan of one caller and critical of

²³ - Zikriyyato Tiflin Wadein: P, 152

²⁴ - Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salalah: p, 208

²⁵- Zikriyyato Tiflin Wadein: p 282

another. During their free time in the school or out of the school they would hold competition for best voice and every team would try to copy and follow his favorite leader of Azan caller²⁶.

Apart from this interesting competition, Al-Rabee mentioned effect of Mosque of the Prophet (PBUH) on youth of his time. He says “this holy Mosque was the only place for gathering of the students because of its location, width and lighting and also because culture wouldn’t permit students to sit in cafes²⁷”.

Al-Rabee stated some more wonderful traditions that were in practice in Madina. For example residents of Madina were very cooperative and compassionate towards one another. He mentioned that people used to help a widow or a woman who didn’t have a son. Any women who wouldn’t have husband or son, would knead flour and keep it on a wooden plate, cover it and put required amount on the plate for baking the bread. Then she would keep the plate in front of her home. If any man, irrespective of his status, would pass by, he would take the plate and would go to bakery or furnace and get the bread baked and return it to the concerned home and put the plate back to its place. The woman would open the door of her house and take the bread in²⁸.

Al-Rabee mentioned that food was prepared only in home. There was no culture of getting cooked food from outside or go on outing and have food there. He says “all kinds of food were cooked in home only. Help of cooks was taken only on occasions like wedding. Apart from big occasions, house wife was responsible for cooking food for her friends as well as for friends of

²⁶ - Ibid: p, 54

²⁷ - Ibid: P, 66

²⁸ - Ibid: P, 187

her husband. When there was any big gathering, she would take help of her neighbors, friends or relatives ²⁹.

Aziz Zia also discussed many socio-cultural issues in his autobiography. He mentioned about many beliefs and values. He described markets, homes, kinds of dresses worn by men and women that were popular in that period of time. Zia spent more time with his mother than his father as his father went on a journey when he was nine months old and he didn't return. Therefore, he had to live most of the time with his mother. He used to accompany his mother day in and day out. He had got direct chance to spend his childhood among women. Therefore, he presented pictures about the gatherings women had during that time. He described nature of their talks, their ways of spending leisure times and how they would keep their homes neat and clean. He mentioned women would enjoy water pipe (hookah) as well. He says "I still laugh when I remember when my mother sat near Aunt Fatimah in the Diwan, she was holding a water pipe³⁰".

Furthermore, he mentioned that women used to play lute. He says "I knew what lute was at that time, I saw my Aunt Azizah Usmaniyyah keeping lute in her lap and playing it and singing in her melodious voice³¹".

Together with mentioning all these interesting cultural and social activities, he also talked about his grief and suffocation which he used to feel when he would walk with her mother while all other children would accompany with their fathers. He was a victim of a condition. It was not an illusion but it was a violent and clamorous emotion came over him. It was anger or it could have been jealousy towards children of his age whom he used to see holding hand of their fathers when they would go for prayer in the Holy Mosque while he

²⁹ - Ibid:P, 186

³⁰ - Hayati Ma'al Joee, wal Hubbe wa Al-Harbe: p,264 vol: 2

³¹ - Ibid: p, 62, vol: 2

was holding hand of his mother. He says “I was the only child holding hand of my mother. My Mother would walk with me to the Mosque while all other children were going with their fathers³²”. Because of this situation, he was feeling uncomfortable although he was leading a very lavish life in home of his step farther.

Due to this kind of life that didn’t provide him any freedom which he would realize while playing with other children, he wanted to run away. And one day he went out with his friend Yahya to ride donkey in the suburb of the city for enjoyment. He says “I implemented the plan as I chalked it out. I went out and my heart was beating up with joy as my dream was coming true, the dream that I had been living with in those days and nights which I spent on my cozy bed. I reached Manakha where I saw donkeys and carts”³³ .

He talked about the prevalent mannerism in sitting places of seniors and children in the gathering. He was always confused where he should sit. Slowly slowly, he learnt all the principles and knew where he should sit and where he shouldn’t. He also learnt that he should sit far away from Al-Sadr that was a sitting place for seniors and guests. Children were allowed to sit near the door only³⁴.

Aziz Zia also mentioned that people would care about teaching some particular mannerism to their children. Stories of obedience were narrated to children so that they obey their seniors. He was also taught to obey his seniors and stories of obeying seniors were rooted in him deeply. He says “my mother would get angry when she would see any senior asking anything and I ignore him or her”³⁵.

³² - Ibid: p, 235, Vol,2

³³ - Ibid: p, 253, vol, 2

³⁴ - Ibid: p, 22, Vol, 2

³⁵ - Ibid: p, 35, vol, 1

Aziz Zia also talked about effect of First World War which resulted in spread of hunger across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Due to hunger people had become structures of bones. Bone was coming out from the bodies of the people. Their eyes had gone inside. Their faces had become yellow. Their necks were looking longer as it was falling down under skull³⁶. Aziz Zia also suffered from hunger. Describing his condition he says "I was not defeated by shells and explosions. We were living with it. We were bearing its fear. No catastrophe or suffering could have been serious than hunger." he further said "I still say hunger is the most dangerous thing among all kinds of catastrophes a human being could suffer from"³⁷.

He described kinds of food and drink which he saw during his childhood. He mentioned a kind of food called *T'ateemiyyah* which women used to eat usually when they would get together and celebrate any occasion at night. It was made of cheese, olive, Al-Murabba. This dish used to be served along with plates full of grapes, pomegranates and dates, during evening parties in place of normal dinner³⁸.

Like Aziz Zia, Hamd Al-Jasir also mentioned many traditional things that were practiced by people in the city of Najd. He talked about social changes among present and past generations. Particularly, he mentioned the changes that occurred in values, dresses, interest, customs and hobbies. He mentioned some traditional things that used to be in practice in the past but it vanished in his time. For example he says "men used to keep on their shoulder around one inch wide steak that was made of silver and hanging until leg³⁹". Similarly, men wouldn't mind drinking the leftover water by another person

³⁶ - Ibid: p, 116, vol, 1

³⁷ - Ibid: p,115- 116, vol, 1

³⁸ - Ibid: p, 31, vol, 2

³⁹ -Al-Majallah Al-Arabiah, No, 108, Al-Moharram, 1407, p, 13.

from the same pot"⁴⁰. Also people used to have lunch in the early morning and dinner immediately after Asr prayer⁴¹.

During one of his visits to a region in Saudi Arabia, he saw women eating together with men without wearing veil. He was shocked to see men and women eating together and women of that part of the Kingdom wouldn't practice the veil⁴². But he clarifies immediately and says "This was condition in few urban areas and it was the case in few rural areas as well. Women in rural society used to go out of home quite often without covering their faces and they wouldn't avoid men or talking to them"⁴³.

Al-Jasir mentioned that during thirties and forties of ninetieth century people were afraid of getting education and establishing schools. Even some time, they would try to keep their children away from school area. People of Yanboo wouldn't want to send their children to school. They were afraid that it would bring some dangerous consequences which they were unable to see at that time "They were thinking that government had some hidden agenda behind it"⁴⁴. Al-Jasir also mentioned the efforts made by him and his friend convincing people about the importance of education and its good effect on their lives. People had doubts towards books of geography because it said that earth is round. Therefore, when people of one village in the Kingdom knew that a teacher had written a book titled *talks on methods of teaching* and this book also contained method of teaching geography, they opposed this effort in strongest possible way and tried to spread aversion against that school. Consequently, many students dropped out of the school⁴⁵. Now when

⁴⁰ - Abid: No, 109, Safar, 1407 AH, p, 8

⁴¹- Abid: No, 108, Al-moharram, 1407 AH, p, 13

⁴² - Abid : No, 159, Rabiul Aakhar, 1411 AH, p, 46

⁴³- Abid: No, 111, Rabiul Aakhar, 1407 AH, P, 8.

⁴⁴ -Abid: No, 178, Zul Qadah, 1412 AH, p, 23

⁴⁵ - Abid: No, 185, Jamadil Aakhar, 1413, p, 20

Al-Jasir sees that people are trying to put every effort and use all means to open and run schools, he remembers hurdles of education during thirties of the previous century and how people used to hate education and school. Particularly, they would hate two subjects, geography and engineering and how one influential cleric rejected teaching of these two subjects in schools⁴⁶. Whereas, now a days one can see how many articles are written in Arabic newspapers and magazines on the importance of including subjects like science, engineering and geography in school curriculum in the Kingdom in order to meet the demand of the country for the specialist in applied sciences like engineering, medicine and science.

Al-Jasir mentioned that few food stuffs weren't known to the people in Najd. "They didn't know the tomato until they got in touch with Hejaz in 1924"⁴⁷. Similarly, "farmers of Najd got to know about rice only in 1940s"⁴⁸. "Sugar was rarely used in making drinks during occasions and the sweet dish known as Al-Shahi started in villages only during forties of the ninetieth century"⁴⁹.

Hamd Al-Jasir talked about conditions of people suffering from poverty, starvation and hardship in their daily lives in the Arabian Peninsula before discovery of oil. He says "we spent many nights without having anything"⁵⁰.

He also tried to analyze effect of starvation on human nature and came to a conclusion that people who suffered from starvation most of the time they don't have any place for mercy and feeling of sympathy even towards nearest

⁴⁶ - Abid: No, 185, Jamadil Aakherah, 1413 AH, p 20

⁴⁷ -Abid: No, 105, Shawwal, 1406, p 8

⁴⁸ - Abid: No, 106, Zul Qadah, 1406 AH, P, 8

⁴⁹ -Abid: No, 109, Safar, 1407 AH, p, 9

⁵⁰ - Abid: No, 119, Zul Hijjah, 1407, p, 8

one. And Bedouin life was a mine of starvation and a place for every kind of hardship that could change a good human nature into bad one⁵¹.

Zahir Al-Almaee mentioned trend of good hospitality and cooperation among villagers in southern part of Saudi Arabia. He couldn't continue his higher education after he decided to continue his further education from Al-Azhar University and earn a master degree together with his job as Director of scientific institute in Najran. He chalked out his plan to manage both his education and job. But situation of the work and social condition of people didn't allow him to work according to his plan. Most of the time when he would bring any book to read or to refer, his door would be knocked and any of his friend would be there interested in having chat with him. Sometimes, the guest would happen to be any of his dear one who had come from far away villages and didn't have any one with whom he could stay. Therefore, he had to welcome him. The guest used to stay with him more than one day or night ⁵². He couldn't leave the guest alone without talking to him or making him feel comfortable. It was against prevalent moral values about treating the guest.

Similarly, Al-Almaee talked about quality of cooperation among people of tribes. They consider cooperation a tribal tradition and beneficial for all. He says "they would cooperate with each other in building homes, constructing dams in valleys to stop flood water from destroying harvest, reviving agricultural land, digging well and carrying goods and luggage"⁵³.

Al-Almaee also mentioned his surprise when he saw people ignoring all these values in chasing materialism. He says "condition of people in materialistic

⁵¹ - Abid: No, 130, Zul Qadah 1408 AH, p,8

⁵² - Rehlatus salasina Aaman: P, 162.

⁵³ - Abid: p, 22

society affected the cooperative atmosphere which was considered to be of prime value in small societies or village”⁵⁴.

Abu Abdur rahman ibne Aqueel Al-Zaheri mentioned about customs and traditions of a village known as *Shaqraa*. He talked about how men and women used to listen to a paragraph from any book of preaching after the prayer of Asr. Men would sit in the mosque after the prayer and women would come out to the thresholds of their homes or street sides and no one could hear anything from their side except twang or cry. When preacher would say God knows the best, women would get up from their sitting places and go inside their homes. Men who came for prayer wouldn't leave the mosque until they were told that there was no woman on the street⁵⁵. He also mentioned that love and affection were prevailing in the society although the population was huge still one would know if anyone was missing and ask others why he didn't come or if anything had happened to him⁵⁶.

Comparing present socio cultural condition with the past one, Ibne Aqueel says “now a day people don't attend ceremonies due to their busy schedule and if they attend, they attend only to avoid anger of host, whereas, situation was completely different in the past. People used to get happier when they were invited to attend a wedding ceremony twice in a month. They were always keen to hear such news, and became angry if they were not invited⁵⁷”.

Al-Zaheri also mentioned an interesting thing regarding visiting hour in the past that people would visit their friends and relatives just after Fajr prayer or sun rise. However, one can't expect any guest at this time these days⁵⁸.

⁵⁴ - Abid: P, 26

⁵⁵ - Tabareehut tabareeh: P, 47

⁵⁶ - Abid: P, 47

⁵⁷ - Abid: P, 50

⁵⁸ - Abid: P, 47

On dressing patten he mentioned that “there were people who used to wear transparent cotton fabric during summer and kept wearing the same during winter and it would get thick due to dirt”⁵⁹.

Al-Zaheri talked about another interesting practice among men who were very eager to sit in the front rows in the mosque before Friday prayer. When they didn’t find time to get to mosque early, they would send their children to book a place for them. He used to be sent by his father as well. He says “I was a child and was fond of reciting some particular chapters of the Quran before Friday prayer, but my father would send me early morning with the holder of his Quran or a hand fan in order to book a place for him in front row in the mosque”⁶⁰.

Mohammad Umar Taufique mentioned affections of his friends and relatives towards him when he was hospitalized and it helped him recover fast. He was equally, very happy and grateful to his friends who kept visiting him in the hospital regularly and felt that their affections were noble and free from any show off. He says: “visits of my friends didn’t stop in these days, right from day one when I was hospitalized. I was feeling that their hearts were with me and this made me happy and gave me comfort. I got filled with confidence and faith with such great favor and ethics”⁶¹. Similarly, he was very happy with the visits paid by those whom he didn’t know. He says “visits of those whom I didn’t know made me happy and my heart was filled with a silent gratitude. I was filled with sense of gratefulness to see feeling of brotherhood which exhorts human being to console one another”⁶². At the same time he was critical about custom of presenting bouquet of flowers to patient in the hospital. He was presented large number of bouquet and he had

⁵⁹ - Abid: P, 45

⁶⁰ - Abid: P, 116

⁶¹ - Ayyamun fil mustashfa: P, 31 30

⁶² - Abid: P, 31 30

to keep it in the corridor of the hospital or throw it. He felt it was better to get rid of such Western practices and present something which costs less and could be more useful for the patient like a packet of sweets or a bottle of perfume or a book or handkerchief or something like these. Furthermore, he gave a beautiful suggestion that if the purpose of present is to benefit the patient then why any kind of alms is not given in the way of Allah for the recovery of the patient⁶³.

Umar Taufique also criticized opportunism and sense of pride and superiority in behavior of the people. He gave example about it that when he came to Beirut for the treatment. He saw a man whom he had met with at the airport. Due to his simplicity he thought that the man came to receive him and he was about to open his bag to give him a book sent by a great personality for him. But Umar stopped and didn't give the book to him after shaking hand with him. He returned back after uttering a dead greeting and there was a kind of revulsion on his face⁶⁴. After some time same person came to see him in the hospital and he was apologetic. Umar recalled the book he was about to give it to him at the airport and said to himself "he must have heard about the book, therefore, he came to see me⁶⁵".

Talk about impact of divorce on the psyche of the children

Abdul Karim Al-Jahiman is considered to be one of the best writers on socio-cultural issues in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He didn't only talk about socio-cultural issues rather he also analyzed them and provided both its positive and negative aspects. He mentioned in his autobiography *Mozakkeratun wa Zikriyyatun min Hayati* so many customs that were present during his childhood. He talked about women and how they used to spend

⁶³ - Abid, p, 92

⁶⁴ - Ibid: p, 19, 20

⁶⁵ -Ibid: p, 31

their leisure time. How people used to celebrate when their children passed out from school. He mentioned games of children which they used to play after their school and how and why children used to fight with each other? Analyzing fights of children, he says “whenever I ponder upon fights among children and try to analyze it. I get confused, whether it is naturally engrossed in children from their childhood or it is due to imitation of elders?”⁶⁶. He touched on a very important social issue to analyze this aspect that is the issue of divorce in his autobiography. He analyzed how it affects the children. He presented his own example and told us how it had affected him after his father had divorced his mother when he was only a child. Due to this situation, he was mostly filled with anger and suffocation. He neither enjoyed complete affection of his mother nor that of his father. His father used to travel a lot and hardly stayed in one place. His mother got married with another man and left him to settle in a neighboring village. Whenever, he asked about his mother, he was told she got married and moved to the home of her new husband⁶⁷. As he didn’t receive any care, affection and love from his mother, negative and aggressive thought occupied his space of mind against the man who had snatched his mother from him and made him see his mother rarely.

His anger and hostility was not limited to the husband of his mother alone. He even slowly started hating his mother as well. His hatred towards his mother increased so much so that he decided to throw stone at her to hurt her. The thought of hurting his mother didn’t remain merely an idea. He tried to actually hurt her when one day he went to a higher place at the entrance of the village and waited for his mother. When she was returning to the house of

⁶⁶ - Mozakkeratun wa zikriyyatun min hayati: p, 56

⁶⁷ - Ibid: p, 27

her husband he started throwing stones at her. She kept walking without even realizing that those stones were actually being thrown at her⁶⁸.

Jahiman criticized his parents in strongest and bitter term on their decision of divorce. He says “they didn’t consult me, because had they taken my opinion I wouldn’t have allowed them to get separated. I was the victim of this separation”⁶⁹.

Customs of Najd and Tayef

Dr. Mohammad bin Saad Bin Husain mentioned some customs in his autobiography which were in practice in the thirties of the ninetieth century in Najd and Tayef but it got disappeared in modern day.

For example, Dr. Husain mentioned that he and some of his blind friends went to Tayef to join Darut Tauheed. They were very hungry but they were hesitant to enter any restaurant not because they didn’t have money but because they were shy. It was considered a matter of shame for people like them to eat in a restaurant. After coming over their hesitation they entered a restaurant but they were feeling as if they were thieves. They were very hungry, smell of different kind of foods were coming out from restaurants here and there. They were not entering any restaurant because they lived in Riyadh. There, it was shameful for people like them to eat in a restaurant then how they could enter in any of these restaurants without anyone seeing them. They were not able to see, but how they would know that they were not being seen. It was impossible for them because of their blindness, therefore, they were hesitant. Finally when they took a risk and entered a restaurant they were feeling like they were thieves or they were being chased and were trying to hide themselves. When a waiter greeted and welcomed them that increased

⁶⁸ - Ibid: p, 29

⁶⁹ -Ibid: P, 27

their problems even further and they said together that they needed a place in a corner. Waiter took them to a corner. They were hidden or not they didn't know but for sure they were shy⁷⁰.

Ahmad Ali mentioned similar kind of story in his autobiography *Zikriyyat*. He mentioned there was hardly any cafe in Riyadh. Sitting in a cafe was not considered suitable for a respected person. There was no restaurant in Riyadh. It was responsibility of those who came to Riyadh to manage their food or become a guest of the government or a guest of any of his friend⁷¹.

Commenting on this aspect of the society of that era, Dr. Abdullah Bin Abdur Rahman Al-Haidari said that "hospitality was most important characteristic of that society. It was considered shameful that a stranger would enter a restaurant or hotel. It was mandatory for a stranger to go to any house to get whatever he required. In those days, people were living in small villages and towns. Therefore, it was easier to recognize a stranger. Thus, people would compete with each other in greeting and hosting a stranger"⁷².

Similarly, Ibn Husain mentioned an interesting trend that was in practice during thirties of previous century. It is related to male head of the family who used to make Ghahwa (coffee) with his own hand while sitting in front of his guest. "He would bake it, grind it, boil it and then filter it while guests were watching him"⁷³.

Furthermore, Ibn Husain stated a tradition of Najd that whenever, any traveler would return from his journey, it was mandatory for him to enter each and every house of the village, sip coffee and tea and perhaps even have

⁷⁰ - Ibid: 37

⁷¹ - Zikriyyat: P, 104, 105

⁷² - Al-Sirah Al-Zatyyah fil Adab Al-Saudi: P, 302

⁷³ - Min Hayati: p, 13

food in house of his relatives⁷⁴. These two traditions of past in Saudi Arabian society, host making coffee for his guests with his own hands and people giving such reception and respect to one who comes back from his journey, indicates about fabulous custom of hospitality among Arabs. However, now a days, none of these practices are seen in the society.

Besides talking about all these good practices among the Arabs, Dr. Mohammad Bin Saad mentioned about conservative culture prevailed in the society particularly in Riyadh. Normal people would pronounce things haram (forbidden) quite easily or say this is fornication and that is fornication without having any authentic support from Sharia law. Those days singing, listening to music or any inclination towards it was blasphemy. Even some book of literature, collection of poetry, research or stories like books of Abul Alaa Al-Ma'arri and Taha Husain or their likes were fornication or atheism⁷⁵.

Ibn Husain mentioned that one couldn't dare to go against any tradition and had to follow it even if one didn't like it. He narrated stories related to his marriage and how he couldn't dare to object to his family he it wanted him to him to send proposal of marriage to three girls, one after another and he had to obey them although he didn't have any feeling for any of them. He was not able to object to it or give his opinion in this matter because it was shameful to express such feelings to ones father all because of subjugating tradition. Fortunately, after some inquiry, it was found that all of the three girls happened to be his foster sisters. Thus, he was able to choose his life partner and lived a happy life with her⁷⁶. Now a day situation has become much better and boys and girls both are allowed to choose their own life partners. "Such custom was practiced until fifties of previous century. Now it is alive

⁷⁴ - Ibid: P, 15

⁷⁵ - Min Hayati: P, 30

⁷⁶ - Ibid:70

only in memories. These days, most of the time, families prefer to ensure agreement of both boys and girls before marrying each other. A boy himself chooses a girl whom he finds suitable for himself. Likewise, a girl has right to accept or reject a proposal without any compulsion. Now, parents are limited to give advices only ⁷⁷.

⁷⁷ - Al-Sirah Al-Zatyyah fil Adab Al-Saudi: P, 302

3.2 Historical Issues

A number of autobiographers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have dealt with historical topics. They discussed most of the historical events that took place in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as well as in other Arab and Islamic countries. They didn't discuss historical events merely from a historical point of view or only in a narrative way, instead, they talked about these events, their effect on the society and the changes brought by these events. They expressed their feelings and emotions towards these incidents and discussed about decisive phases the Kingdom went through and the changes that took place in those phases.

Writers of autobiographical works in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia didn't keep themselves away from the happenings of the world around them and talked about international events such as those one can see in the autobiographies of Abdullah Balkheir, Khalil Al- Rawwaf and Aziz Zia with special emphasis on the events that took place during the two world wars.

Most of the autobiographers in the Kingdom can be considered as pioneers. At the same time, they were writers of encyclopedia of the Kingdom as well. Therefore, they paid more attention towards historical narrations particularly when they talked about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They tried to correct some of the illusions that were spread in their time and along with that they stated reasons for those corrections. More often than not, they tried to study the history to know the past and learn lessons from it.

Ahmad Al-Sebaee narrated in his autobiography *Abu Zamil or Ayyami* many historical myths related to Makkah particularly to the one related to Haram Al-Sharif. For example, he quoted his grandmother who used to narrate the fowling story that Minaret of Babulweda was located at Babus Salam during the period of the Prophet (PBUH). When the Prophet (PBUH) entered from

Babus Salam for farewell Tawaf (circulation), this minaret followed him, and when the Prophet (PBUH) got out Babul Wedaee, it was still following him. Then he (PBUH) turned towards it and asked where to go? It responded, "I am going where you are going," but the Prophet (PBUH) stopped it. Thus, it stopped there and started weeping, and it kept weeping until now. Due to its weeping, its inscriptions were wiped out. Apart from this minaret, other minarets are engraved but it remained without inscriptions⁷⁸.

He quoted another myth from his grandmother related to Zamzam water. Commenting on this he says, "These are the tragedy of Muslims in many ages of history"⁷⁹.

Similarly, Al-Rawwaf discussed historical issues to a great extent in his autobiography. He said that his autobiography contained pages of our modern Arab history. He dedicated this autobiography to the King Abdul Aziz who united Arab peninsula and unified Muslims of the region. From dedication page of the autobiography to the conclusion Al-Rawwaf is unable to detach from history. Most of the time, his personality disappears in the huge quantity of historical information which he brings in this autobiography.

Al-Rawwaf doesn't present historical information or compares and analyzes it like any academic historian, instead he narrates incidents as witnessed by him. He says "verily, what I record in these pages and narrate about the contemporary Arab history are incidents that happened to me and in the Arab world. And I promise that I would narrate what I have seen from my eyes and touched with my hands without any addition or omission⁸⁰". Therefore, critics termed this recording of history "as it is witnessed" because it is special

⁷⁸ -Ayyami: P. 60

⁷⁹ - Ibid: P. 64

⁸⁰ -Ibid:

narration about incidents and their surroundings and also because it has been taken from those persons who lived in the area.

Al-Rawwaf has mentioned some very important events related to the modern Arab world and he was an eye witness to it. Therefore, his autobiography can be considered a good academic material for history teachers and Arab historians. He gave lots of space to late King Abdul Aziz. He mentioned his early days, his efforts in uniting Arabian Peninsula, his struggles for complete freedom under one flag and one government so that no foreign power could exert its influence over the region. Al-Rawwaf mentioned how King established peace and prosperity, not only in the Kingdom but in the whole Arabian Peninsula. He also talked about how Allah has helped him achieve his goals. After mentioning his achievements he says: "Arabian Peninsula witnessed stability which hadn't been witnessed before⁸¹". Before him, Arab nations were scattered in the peninsula. There was no common connection among them which could unite them. They used to fight with each other all over the peninsula and their powers were dispersed. In this situation Abdul Aziz came and put an end to their disputes. He united them under one flag. Therefore, Al-Rawwaf admired the King a lot. He appreciated the huge efforts made by the King Abdul Aziz in the Arabia Peninsula and showed lot of respect to him because efforts of the King played an important role in establishment of peace and security in Arabian Peninsula. It also helped in uniting its people and unifying their voices and putting an end to their disputes⁸².

Al-Rawwaf witnessed both World Wars and talked about them in his autobiography in detail. Mostly, he is seen lamenting on disaster left by the wars. He also mentioned how Turkish army forced youths of Saudi Arabia to join Turkish army during the First World War and they would raid their

81 - Safhatun Matwiyyatun Min Tarikhena Al-Arabi Al-Hadis P. 21

82 - Ibid: P. 125.

houses to find any youth who is reluctant to join the army. His house was also raided by them but they were unable to find any youth because all of them got hidden⁸³.

He mentioned some preparations of Turkish army to face the British, and how the Turkish commander took help of some Damascene traders to secure three thousand camels in order to give them to the army that was ready to be sent for marching towards Suez Canal⁸⁴.

Al-Rawwaf was out of his country at the time of outbreak of Second World War. Those days he was staying in the United States which helped him follow up the incidents directly and immediately. He participated in broadcasting of some programs over American Radio. He was also recruited in American Army. Al-Rawwaf described feelings of people in America during those days when the Nazi soldiers were marching ahead with victory after victory and the German army was occupying European countries one after another and almost the whole of Europe was about to surrender to Hitler. Commenting on this situation Al-Rawwaf says: "All these had happened in such a short time that it unnerved the citizen citizens of the United States and shaken the very foundation of the country ⁸⁵".

Americans were not the only people who felt the pain and suffered the agony and distress. Most of the nations on the face of the earth had felt the same kind of pain. Describing this situation he writes "World War II was still going on. It didn't seem to stop. Its sparks were flying everywhere and it was burning everything. All the nations on the earth had started asking each

83 - Ibid: P.29

84 - Ibid: P. Ibid.31

85 - Ibid: P. 361

other, when this war would end and how the days of misery and suffering would come to an end⁸⁶”.

All these comments on historical events indicate that Autobiography of Al-Rawwaf includes information about historical events that took place in the last century in the Arabian Peninsula as well as in the World.

Similarly, Mohammed Hussein Zaidan discussed historical issues with justice and honesty. Zaidan is considered among encyclopedic writer or an encyclopedia that walks on two legs⁸⁷. He wrote on many issues but mainly he focused on literature, politics and history in his writings. When he writes about history, he becomes emotional and writes in photographic style with color. Zaidan believed that “history must be written by historian in an emotional manner⁸⁸”.

He kept his words as one can find him from the first page of his autobiography *Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasa* talking about history of Medina, where he was born and brought up. He believed that it is right of this city that history shouldn't forget those who have abused it and were prejudiced toward it to such extent that they had removed the respect that was inside them for the land of respect. He says: “I hope that everything related to Medina and its people is being written in different chapters with the faithfulness it deserves”⁸⁹.

When Zaidan talks about Medina, he doesn't go long back in the history. He talks about the three eras in sequence: The Ottoman period, the Al-Ashraf and then the most prosperous time in which Medina saw the largest expansion in

86 - Ibid:P. 368

87 - Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasa: P. 316.

88 - Ibid: P. 314

89 -Ibid:P. 16-17

the history of its Mosque on the hands of King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

The main characteristic of his autobiography is his honesty in describing the historical events and presenting them to the current and future generations. Abdul Kareem Al-Khateeb, one of his critic said "Perhaps we see in this history something new which has not been touched upon by any of our writers. We see the beauty and honesty in the historic trusteeship and true memories. It has complete and permanent impact on historical era of the Medina⁹⁰". Therefore, one finds him becoming very serious and holding Ottomans accountable for their mistakes. He also criticized Fakhri Pasha the magistrate of Medina for his foolish decision to keep arms and ammunitions in the Haram Al-Sharif. Pasha stored ammunitions in northern portion of Al-Masjid Al-Nabwi (the Prophet's Mosque) in fear of the British planes and the allies of the Arabs that they would drop bombs on the fort.

Pasha called his councilor, after the war was ended with victory achieved by the Britain and its allies and announced what was going through in his mind since the war was ended that he decided not to let these Bedouins occupy Medina and would carry the ammunition and put it in the Haram al-Sharif and make it his residence and headquarter of his leadership. If they were defeated by Bedouins he would blow this ammunition⁹¹. Pasha claimed that he disclosed his plan to them because he has lots of value for them and trust them. Therefore, he wanted to save their lives. He further instructed them that they should leave the city at the first signal he would give to them and tell to the people what he has done for the sake of Islam and for the honor of the Ottoman army⁹². Taking a conclusion from this

90 -Ibid: P. 304

91 - Safhatun Matwiyyatun Min Tarekhena Al-Arabi Al-Hadis: P. 75

92 - Ibid:P.75

talk of Fakhri with his councilor, Zaidan says “ the main reason that made Fakhri Pasha take this reckless stand was that he was defeated by his fear that he would be accused of betraying Ottoman army and surrendering everything to that were entrusted to him easily⁹³”. But it was a foolish step to make Al-Masjid Al- Nabwi a storeroom. Because he didn’t realize that if captain of English army wanted to destroy the ammunition he wouldn’t have cared for the Mosque.

Zaidan also believes that the reason for the fall of the Ottoman Empire was Turkification that had been practiced in schools and it was no longer tolerable. Ottomans also kept themselves away from the Arabs, therefore, the Arabs stayed away from them⁹⁴. At the same time Zaidan doesn’t deny all the good things done by Ottomans. He appreciates them when they stood in front of Tamerlane and blocked the ways of Crusaders so that they wouldn’t be able to go back. They also weakened the spread of Shiism in the Arab tribes⁹⁵.

There is an apparent tendency of justice and truth in the historic narration given by Zaidan. He mentions mistakes but doesn’t forget to talk about the good things as well.

The second characteristic of Zaidan while dealing with historic issues is that most of the times he seems correcting those historical myths and fantasies which were wide-spread among the people. Such as, he doesn’t believe that British and French colonialists have divided land of Sham (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon). He is even surprised to hear from his people who believed in this false blame. He believed this division took place during reign of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, he doesn’t accept opinion of the historian

93 - Ibid. P 76

94 -Ibid:P. 79-83-89

95 -Ibid:P.

that *The Battle of al-Harrah*⁹⁶ led by Syrian Army under the leadership of wife of Yazid ibn Ma'awiyya, it led to the destruction of Medina. He says "no one from Syria destroyed the Medina during The Battle of al-Harrah. They were from this country under the leadership of Uqba bin Muslim Al-Mar'ei who destroyed it. We can't hold people of Syria accountable for what has been done by ourselves⁹⁷".

At the same time, Zaidan praises the justice of King Abdul Aziz done to Al-Ashraf since he announced inclusion of Hejaz to his Kingdom. He neither seized any property of king of Al-Ashraf nor did he harm anyone of them. Instead, he let them go with their wealth peacefully. The king did the same with the tribe of Aun. Similarly, he didn't confiscate any inch of land of the Ghalib tribe and did great justice to them as he asked them to return to Makkah and gave them what they had been possessing so that they can live in their country with pride.

Mohammad Husain Zaidan didn't only narrate all these historical incidents or recall and retrieve them but he tried to connect the past with the present through presenting lessons from incidents witnessed by him. He says "in one of the nights while we were studying, three bombs passed over the School one after another. All were launched by Castle to the south of the city. We said, in no time, a bomb would be dropped on us, but-God be praised- it did not fall on us⁹⁸".

Aziz Zia also analyzed historical events in his autobiography. He mentioned stand of Fakhri Pasha who had decided not to surrender Al-Madina Al-

96 - A battle fought at al-Harrah on 26 Dhu al-Hijjah 63 H./26 August 683, This battle was fought against the armies of Yazid ibn Muawiyah by Abdullah ibn Zubayr and his allies, the people of Medina and several notable Sahabas, many of whom were killed in the battle(Anecdotes for Reflection: Part 2 By Sayyed Ali Akbar Sadequat, World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities, Published by World Federation of the KSIMC, 2005

97 -Ibid: P. 64

98 - Ibid: P. 65

Munawwarh even when Caliphate would fall down. He asked his forces to resist and continue fighting. He also refused to surrender to Arab forces that had been besieging the city since the beginning of the uprising against the Turks in Mecca. He transferred his weapon to the Prophet's Mosque.

Like many other writers in Saudi Arabia, Aziz Zia also talked about the stand taken by Fakhri Pasha when he decided not to surrender even when truce was announced and collapse of the caliphate was imminent. Aziz Zia commented on his stand saying that "Pasha did so because of his self pride and his stubbornness. He also thought that if he was protecting the city of Medina where there was grave of the Prophet (PBUH) and His Mosque, then the Islamic world would think that caliphate was alive and fulfilling its duty of defending the two Holy Mosques"⁹⁹.

A major portion of his biography covers this point and First World War which bore very dangerous result not only in Saudi Arabia but all over the world.

It is obvious from title of his biography that the First World War is the main subject of his autobiography. He made most of his chapters around this subject. In spite of the tragedy that appears even in the title of his autobiography, he doesn't leave the optimism as he kept the word "love" between hunger and war. He wanted to say that had there been no love he wouldn't have been able to overcome the pang of hunger neither he would have been able to bear the pain of war.

Aziz Zia has specifically discussed about the effect of war on his psyche when he was a child. In the foreword of his autobiography, he says "I opened my eyes and spent my childhood during tragic time of the First World War. I knew a lot that will not be made available for one to know unless one lived

99 - Hayati Ma'al Joee Wal Hubbe Wal Harbe. Vol.1. 181-188

during that period of human history. I experienced the horror that didn't only fill the heart, but it also filled the dreams¹⁰⁰".

War and its terrible tragedies which he experienced in his childhood did not snatch quality of an artist in his biography. He wrote this autobiography under the shadow of these incidents. He didn't present those incidents like a historian. Instead he portrayed honestly its horrible repercussion on his childhood. Particularly, he portrayed his journey from Medina to Syria and coming back again to Medina in style of a real author filled with passion.

He quoted few things which people used to whisper during the war and their expectations towards the incidents. Like he mentioned explanations of his grandfather, who was saying the soldiers of Sultan had defeated the British. Perhaps he was optimistic. He was saying to my mother that they would recapture Syria soon. Moreover, he added, he had heard that Fakhri Pasha the Turkish military commander in Medina, who sent his family to Syria, is still defending Syria. He would soon get victory over British and drive them out. Then he said smilingly, we shall return to Medina soon if God wills¹⁰¹.

After reading autobiography of Aziz Zia one can easily realize that he talked about First World War extensively. Whereas, when one reads autobiography of Abdullah Bulkhair he finds him talking about Second World War. He discussed about this Second World War accurately and exclusively. Because he was appointed by the King Abdul Aziz to follow up news of this World War over radio and inform him immediately about any development. Therefore, he was able to mention all the incidents accurately.

Bulkhair mentioned that he was fortunate that without any effort or thought from his side, destiny had brought him to the Office of His Majesty. he was

100 - Ibid: Vol. 1. P.13

101 -Ibid:Vol. 1. P. 175

appointed there to record, to observe and to follow up news of World War II across the world through wireless capture devices and over radio. Then keep the King updated personally about news and any minor or major details of every small and big incident that was happening around the world¹⁰². Therefore, one can say that Bulkhair was fully aware of incidents of this War. Sometimes, we find him trying to explain some of the global incidents that took place during that period. Then he tries to relate one incident with another.

The limitations of the media in that era are well known. Illiteracy was also prevalent in the Arab world at that time. In such a scenario Bulkhair was one of the few who had the opportunity to follow the war news on a daily basis. Therefore, it can be easily claimed that his talk about World War II in his autobiography has a great importance. At the same time, it can also be considered a unique historical and informative document about the Second World War

His autobiography contains lots of ancient and modern historical events. While, talking about current situation of Arabs and Muslims he remembers history of the past and mourns the conditions of the present generations, their ignorance about history of their own country, nation, forefathers and glories of their past.

Bulkhair believes that the onslaught is being faced by the Arabic language at this time from its enemies and others. It is a fruit of what had been harvested and planted for a century of inherited traditional negligence in the history of the Arabs and Muslims¹⁰³.

Abdullah Boulkhair didn't limit himself to be mere a narrator of the history and talked about events of the history, provided different types of

102 -Mahmood Radawi:Abdullah Bulkhair Yatazakkaro. Vol.1. P. 471.

103 -Ibid.P 610

information and issues, analyzed stands and explained behavior of his characters. "He went even further and criticized the behavior of compatriots and their attitudes. Because he wanted to see them develop their attitudes, ideas and level of their thinking to a greater height and to take them to highest levels of urbanization and civilization¹⁰⁴".

Bulkhair talked about colonialism and the positions of Arab countries after the "Sykes-Picot Agreement. He believed that after this agreement Arab countries got under Western colonialism and whatever happened in the Arab world it was as per the design of the western countries. Similarly, Balfour Declaration"¹⁰⁵ was a premeditated scheme though it was announced later. The Arab came to know that their fight against the Ottoman influence to get rid of them was a fraud and instead they have fallen in the clutches of the new Western colonialism¹⁰⁶.

It can be said that that the historical vision of Abdullah comes from what he had witnessed and experienced. Then he retrieves from it the ancient Arab civilization and historical Arabs and Muslims and crystallizes ideas and meanings in his imagination. Then he presents historical information far from the material effect.

This becomes obvious when he talks about Makkah Al- Mokaramah where he grew up and studied, and also about Beirut, where he continued his studies, and about other cities which he had visited during his tour to most parts of the world.

104 -Madkhal Ela Zikriyyat Abdullah Boulkhair by Mahmood Raddawi. Evening, No. 3485 on 1/2/1414 H. P. 11

105 - The Balfour Declaration, dated 2 November 1917, was a letter from the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild, a leader of the British Jewish community, for transmission to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. (wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration)

106 - Abdullah Bulkhair Tatazakkaro: p. 285

Hamad Al-Jasser is known for his Encyclopedia and his interest in history and geography of the Arabian Peninsula and choosing it as subjects of his talks. He had particular interest in genealogy. Therefore, we can see glimpses of all of these issues in his autobiography. He talked about current historical events in his autobiography *Sawanehuz Zikriyyat*. He describes them as an eyewitness to them or as a direct observer of the era. He also talks about pioneers of the Renaissance and the literature.

Initially, he didn't pay much attention to history otherwise he would have preserved more important material related to those incidents when he was responsible for writing official letter for (Jahjah). He says "I was assigned to writing letters for (Jahjah) and reading letters which he used to receive. Had I expected that I would have got even more interested in historical events and consequently could have preserved more from those letters and books than what I have in my memories which sometimes appear clearly in his memory and sometimes get blurred"¹⁰⁷.

Sometimes, he mentions statements of some of the historians about some of the places he visited and then corrects their information. He refuted the historical fantasies in which they fell. For as an example, at one place he cited the words of Al-Nabulsi in his book *Al-Haqeeqat wal Majaz* (truth and metaphor). In this he praised work of Sharif Saad bin Zaid who ordered burning of houses and cutting palm trees in Yunboo, when its residents revolted against him in the beginning of 12th century of Hijri. In his support he cited a verse that indicates handiwork of Sharif. After mentioning this, Al-Jasser said "this is talk of Nabulsi who was not just and fair. He was mistaken in case of this Emir and prejudiced against Muslims and supported Jews who

107 - Min Sawanehiz zikriyyat: P. Al-Majallah Al-Arabia. No. 147. Rabiul Aakhar 1410 H. P. 22

fought against Allah and His Messenger and they refused to accept guidance¹⁰⁸.”

Al-Jasser had vast experience in identifying places. Therefore he is always vigilant and never gets confused about two places due to similarity in their names. He says “that similarity in names of places and big personalities confuses historical incidents¹⁰⁹”.

Generally, documents are considered very important in proving historical facts, or historical, cultural and social aspects. Hamad Al-Jasser brings number of documents and their contents and mentions their date in his autobiography. So that he can be a living witness to the accuracy of the information which he brings.

Hamad Al-Jasser allocated big part of his autobiography to genealogy and its importance from historical perspective. He cited words of past scholars who wrote about genealogy. He cited them due to his interest in genealogy. He has been accused of racism as well. Sometimes he gave reference of some modern historical to prove the point about what he was talking about in relation to the historical and contemporary issues. For example he refers to the book *Shibhul Jazirah Fi Ahdil Malik Abdul Aziz* to highlight this aspect of his style.

Mohammad Abdul Hameed Mirdad didn't deal with historical subjects in his autobiographies as much as it has been dealt by his contemporary writers in their autobiographies. He, mainly, discussed linguistic issues and talked about customs and traditions. Therefore, one can see only a glimpse of history in his biography. For example, he described entry of King Abdulaziz into Hejaz when he took Hejaz under his kingdom. He mentioned the terrific scene honestly as witnessed by him when he was a student at Madrasatul

108 - Ibid. No. 165. Shawwal 1411 H. P. 23

109 - Ibid. No. 171. Rabiul Aakhar 1412 H. P. 22

Falah. He mentioned in first ten days of month of Safar in the year 1925. King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Faisal Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia entered Mecca. People used to call him Sultan or Sultan of Najd and Hejaz or its suburbs. When Emirate of Asir had been included to the Emirate of Hejaz and most part of the Saudi Arabia have come under his possession, we started calling him the king of Saudi Arabia. On the day of his entry, most of the students didn't come to the school, because their parents were afraid of uproar and mob. We had gathered at vestibule of the school. Since most of the students and teacher didn't come to school, principle called us and told us to go back today would be a holiday, classes would be tomorrow-if God wills-. A few days later King Abdulaziz himself visited Madrasatul Falah. It was a memorable day. Mirdad described this day saying: "After conquering Jeddah and establishing security and stability, King Abdul Aziz visited us in Al-Falah School. He shook hands with all the students of the school and said to them "God bless you. Then preachers delivered speeches, followed by an Anthem. We student made queues, and chanted this slogan long live Sultan Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Faisal Al-Saud, three times. Then he came out of the school after announcing generous financial reward for the school¹¹⁰".

This beautiful scene narrated by an eyewitness about a wise iconic leader like King Abdulaziz confirms his qualities. It also confirms that he was humble. He loved education and those who pursued it and encouraged them. He also loved his people and spent money in order to make them happy.

110 - Ibid.P. 387

3.3 Political issues

A reader of the autobiographies written by Saudi Arabian writers can easily realize that Saudi autobiographers dealt with political issues quite often in their autobiographies. However, most of their discussion focuses on political those issues which are related to Arab nations only. They talk about issue of Palestine, Islam and Arab unity. They criticize conditions of the Arabs who are divided into factions. Therefore, they are dispersed. Similarly, they mentioned other critical issues related to politics.

There are two major important issues which captured the interest of most of the Saudi writers, though they have dealt with these two issues in different styles. First and most important of these issues is the issue of Palestine, the illegal occupation by Israel and displacement of Palestinian people and financial and moral support of major countries of the world to the aggressor in an attempt to obliterate the Palestinian Arab identity.

The second one is the issue of unity of the entire Islamic and Arab world on one Kalemah to achieve common goals and mutual interests on the basis of friendship and respect.

In this context, some of the autobiographers analyzed reasons for “The Setback” in 1967 in the “Six-Day War¹¹¹. They pointed out the need for paying attention to the principle and the purpose for which the Arab fought against Jews. At the same time, they talked about importance of the Islamic goal which is nowhere else than in upholding the word of God.

Some of them pointed out that there is need to pay more attention to eradicating backwardness in all its forms. Be it social, cultural, educational,

111 - Also known as the June War, or 1967 Arab–Israeli War, or Third Arab–Israeli War. It was fought between June 5 and 10 in 1967 by Israel and the neighboring states of Egypt which was known at the time as the United Arab Republic), Jordan, and Syria. (wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-Day_War)

financial or political backwardness. All needs to be addressed and eradicated as soon as possible. Some writers indicated towards negative points in Arab politics and interpreted its reasons, whereas others highlighted some bright aspects achieved by some Arab leaders. They mentioned the grand unity accomplished by the King Abdulaziz in the Arabian Peninsula as well as emergence of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which was set up to unite different parts of the Arabian Peninsula under one umbrella and achieve the desired objectives. Some of the important objectives were achieving social security, joint cooperation, installing the bonds of love and intimacy among all.

Mohammed Hussein Zaidan, Khalil Rawwaf, Zahir Al- Almaee, and Ghazi Al-Qosaibi are the most prominent of the writers who have touched upon political subjects in their autobiographies.

Mohammed Hussein Zaidan wrote about political issues a lot in his articles published in local newspapers and magazines. He was so occupied with political issues that he was not able to keep his autobiography *Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasih* free from mentioning it. But sometime he mixes political issues with history in his autobiography. Therefore, we can say it is a mix of political and historical issues.

Dr. Mustafa Ibrim Husain says that his discussion “connects present Arab conditions with what had happened over Arab land in the past¹¹²” We also find Zaidan criticizing weaknesses of the governments in his time but at the same time he gave reason for his criticism. He didn’t consider himself as if he was that he is exaggerating when he said that “The era of Al-Tawaef after the fall of the Abbasid was better than the reign of the Arab nation now, it was even better than the era of the Islamic nation now. They established

¹¹² - Odabao Saudiyyun: P. 428.

themselves and stood up but none of them surrendered to the tyrant force or to the force that was considered to be their support base"¹¹³.

Zaidan praised the unity which was obtained in the Arabian Peninsula by its Sovereign King Abdulaziz. He also paid tribute to the experience of the Gulf Cooperation Council as a model for comprehensive Arab unity. He considered the unity of the peninsula which is now known as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council a beacon on which heads can be held high. He says about this unity "they gathered to bring all together. They brought together so that they don't get dispersed. This is a good situation and there is no need to get afraid of it. Because when men are faithful, they are able to get rid of the "ego" for the sake of the Hereafter that can be achieved with Grace of Allah and his power"¹¹⁴.

Zaidan also addressed the global political issues together with the issues of the Arab world. He dealt with the global issues from the perspective of an Arab intellectual and linked global issues with what was happening across the Arab world¹¹⁵. He mentioned that former US President John Kennedy believed that his two statements "No to Jews" and "United States couldn't do and now it can do whatever it wants even if the Jews don't want it to do, could lead to his assassination"¹¹⁶.

He also criticized double standard of Turkey. On one hand it said that they disagree with Jewish settlement in Palestine and on the other hand they welcomed its ambassador in their country. He mentioned his conversation with a Turkish official who told him that they kept their promise towards Islam as they didn't agree with the establishment of Jewish nation in

¹¹³ - Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasih: P. 100-101

¹¹⁴ - Ibid:P.101

¹¹⁵ - Odabao Saudiyyun: P. 428

¹¹⁶ - Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasih: P. 265

Palestine. Zaidan was surprised on hearing this and asked him "Why do you have Ambassador of Israel in your country?¹¹⁷". Similarly, other autobiographers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia discussed crucial issues of the Arab world and Islamic nation in their autobiographies.

Ghazi Al-Qosaibi mentioned in his autobiography *Siratun Sheriyyatun* that during his early days of youth he was very enthusiastic about the Arab nationalist movement, which had appeared in the form of Nasiriyah but at the same time he admits that he had lost his confidence in political slogans after June and started to get negative feelings and contempt¹¹⁸.

He pointed out that his father was incapable of understanding the new movement advocated by Abdul Nasser¹¹⁹ in the fifties of the previous century. It was not clear from his opinion that he respected President Abdul Nasser or admired him¹²⁰.

Similarly, Abu Abdul Rhaman Ibn Aqueel believed that political slogans deceived him and his generation at that time and it left negative political effects on Islamic nation. He and his peers experienced sense of flabbiness, dullness and failure in doing thier duty. It was all in the period which his believed Allah didn't bless in this period. It was a long painful period for them in 1952. Describing this situation he says "we came to the capital preserving purity, piety and innocence of the rural life. We were prepared that our lives would be interesting and virtuous. However, the alarms of 1952 took advantage of our Arabic weakness and deceived us with slogans and filled us with the enthusiasm of openness. We thought that we were the

117 - Ibid: P. 294

118 - *Siratun Sheriyyatun*: P. 83

119 - Referring to Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein, an Egyptian army officer stepped forward to lead the drive for Arab unity in 1952.

120 - *Siratun Sheriyyatun*: P. 56

largest superpower in the Middle East. Slogans like conservatism, development and backwardness ate our hearts"¹²¹. But Abu Ibn Aqeel was able to realize it and got rid of the negative aspects of that period. He says" it was a period of apostasy, it has affected our behavior, but it was not able to weaken our faith with Grace of Allah and His blessings. Allah be praised that a clean and solid faith came out from putrefied secular period of 1952¹²²".

Experience of setback was very painful for Ibn Aqeel, Al-Qosaibi and young generation of their time. Their dreams and aspirations about which they were singing in their prayers in schools and competing with time to achieve them were snatched.

Therefore, Ghazi Al-Qosaibi thinks that defeat of Arabs led to their backwardness and it will leave long lasting impact on them. He believed that his country was too deviated to take a step against real enemy and that deviation caused its backwardness. Overcoming this is like overcoming Zionism which is its biggest enemy. The Setback has left grave effect on his conscience and his thinking. This enemy has embodied his eyes and it is one enemy though it got numerous names, faces and forms. He believed that the first enemy is not Israel. Power of Israel is simply a reflection of Arabs weakness. Similarly international colonialism is not our enemy. Colonial world colonizes only those who are ready to be colonized¹²³. He further added saying "since that time first enemy in my opinion is the backwardness¹²⁴". Therefore, he wanted to fight against all forms of backwardness first and said "every step that we would take to get rid of any form of backwardness, be it financial backwardness or intellectual, social or political backwardness it

121 - Tabarihat Tabarih: P. 117

122 - Tabarihat Tabarih: P. 118

123 - Siratun Sheriyyatun: P. 118

124 - Siratun Sheriyyatun: P. 118

would be a step towards overcoming defeat and marching towards victory"¹²⁵. He described tragedy of six-day war that penetrated every Arab mind. Furthermore, he considered this tragedy a turning point in his own life in true sense because it exposed torn apart, impotent and humiliated of the Arab world right in front of his naked eyes"¹²⁶.

Al-Qosaibi experienced the "Setback" or six-day war which took place in June. He becomes very pessimistic when he talks about this tragedy. He termed this June as *Black June*, because Arabs collapsed comprehensively in this deadly. This tragedy was such a scion stab in the heart of the Arab nation that it hasn't been healed yet. Therefore, he says: "I expect that it would be healed only after a long period of bitterness"¹²⁷.

While talking about his poetry in his autobiography, Al-Qosaibi shows very strong cohesion between political incidents, particularly what Arab nation was going through and his poetry. The horrifying Arab war got reflected in the collections of his poetry on nationalism which he published in his Diwan "Al-Audah Elal Amakin Al-Qadeemah" (Return to the old places). One of his poems titled *a river of blood* described Arab massacre. Another poem titled *our poetry our death* is not only pathos of the poet but it is a cry over weakness of the Arabs¹²⁸. Al-Qosaibi completely refuses the idea that poetry is written to serve a specific political cause. He says "I never wrote poetry to serve a particular political cause neither ever I wrote it to attack any particular political line"¹²⁹.

Zahir Al-Almaee is very realistic thinker. He criticized many political principles which were present in international politics. He believed that

125 - Ibid: P. 119

126 - Ibid: P.. 82

127 - Ibid: P. 77

128 - Ibid: P. 134

129 -Ibid.P. 134

politics is all about gaining power. Political parties and leaders struggle for power only. Therefore, he finds similarity between an assault of wild animals on his sheep and an assault of powerful communities on weaker communities anywhere in the world. He says “there is huge similarity between incidents of international communities and in law of the jungle, although human society has reached to a greater height of materialism. More often than not, people are occupied and nations are perished. Honors are breached. But we hardly hear few voices of condemnation and that are so weak and cold. To prove his point, he cited example of “what was being done in Palestine and Lebanon and in many countries of Asia and Africa by brute Zionist¹³⁰”.

However, he was not a mere silent spectator of bad conditions of the Arabs during troublesome times. When Arab world was going through a very tough political crisis he came forward, diagnosed the disease and prescribed medicine to ameliorate the Arab world. He thought if it were not corrected it could get even worse in the years to come. He finds a way out for this situation in Islam. He says “the Nation should go back to the straight and clear method, and that is the method of Islam and without Islam it will have to either abide by the East or the West”¹³¹.

At the same time, Al-Almaee praised noble Islamic awakening at the level of leaders and people and wrote a poem *Wahdatul Arab* (Arab Unity) for the same purpose. In this poem, he tried to explain the foundations on which unity of the Arabs could be based and it would be the cornerstone of the overall Islamic unity¹³².

Al-Almaee explained that differences among Islamic nations are main reason for their weakness because it doesn't allow them to get united. Whereas,

130 - Rehlatu Salasin Aaman:P. 21

131 - Ibid:P. 114

132 - Ibid:P. 114

enemies of Islam or Muslim nations are getting united, although, they differ with each other on many issues. He says that “groupism, differences and prejudice are preventing unity of the Islamic nation, whereas, enemies of Islam are getting together against Muslims. They coordinate with each other while taking any political and military stands, even though there are differences among them on some issues or trends”¹³³.

But he is very optimistic that Muslim nations would be united. Therefore, time and again he says “but with all these we see that the future- if God wills- will be for Islam and the Islamic awakening will result in a huge Islamic Unity”¹³⁴.

During the “Six-Day War” or “Setback” period, he was working as a director at the Scientific Institute of Najran. Therefore, he talked a lot about the Setback that hit the Arab nation very badly. He pointed out some mistakes that were committed by the Arab leaders. Then he tried to explain the reasons for the defeat with logic. He says “some Arabs didn’t fight for the sake of Islam and upholding the word of Allah in the land .. Allah promised victory only for those who help His religion and establish His laws on the face of the earth, whereas, Arab armies did not have a united leadership. There was no coordination before the beginning of the war. Any front didn’t have any idea about what was going on the other front. Particularly, they didn’t have any idea about the sudden attack by Israeli.

Al-Almaee also gave another reason for the defeat of Arabs. He believed that the “Arabs were defeated because America also stood with Israel and participated in the war with his opinion, weapons and support”¹³⁵.

133 - Ibid:P. 129

134 - Ibid:P. 129

135 -Ibid: P. 133-136

After going through the analysis of Al-Almaee one can easily say that he analyzed deep political issues with a clear vision, logic and realism. At the same time he looked very optimistic and believed that Islam is the future.

Mohammad Umar Taufeeque also talked about political issues in his autobiography "Ayyamun fil Mustashfa". He mentioned US-Israel coalition at many places and commented on it. He described Israel as subservient or an open ally to America despite the distance between the master and subservient is of more than thousands of kilometers¹³⁶.

He mentioned the reason of a tight grip of Americans over Islands, Honolulu or Hawaii which was the first line of defense in front of the American continent in World War II. He says "America wanted a tightened grip on Israel because it needed an attacking line in the heart of the Middle East!"¹³⁷.

Umar Taufeeque mentioned about tragedies caused by British colonialism in the Arab world, which was still suffering from the painful wounds of the past.

He mentioned British nurse to explain how a British even in a small position was behaving in a dominating way. She reminded him tragedies that were left by the British imperialism. When he saw the behavior of the nurse in the hospital of American University of Beirut where he was receiving his treatment he did not need to think a little to determine her nationality. He knew her nationality immediately that she was a British, because of rudeness of British colonialists on her face. He says "it was enough for her to stand on the door to indicate those who were present in the room that they should get out of the room. Features of any British miscreant colonialist were obvious on her face"¹³⁸.

136 - Ayyamun fil Mustashfa: P. 105

137 -Ibid:P.105

138 - Ibid: P. 44

We also find Khalil Rawwaf talking about politics quite often in his autobiographies *Safhatun Matwiyyatun min tarekhena Al-Arabi Al-Hadis: Mozakkerati Khelal Qarnim minal Ahdas*. He talked about the situation of the Arab world before independence as well as the current situation. He mentioned issue of Palestine and criticized countries that helped and supported Israel.

He got a chance to see the miserable conditions of red Indians during his long stay in the United States of America and how they were thrown out of their land despite being the right owners of the Land. He found obvious resemblance between the situation of the Palestinians with the Jews and Indians with the Americans. He commented on this saying "I consider the plight of the Palestinians in their own land as the plight of red Indians in their homeland of America. Palestinians and the red Indians both were displaced from their homelands and made vulnerable"¹³⁹. Then he called Arab nations to stand against American policies. He says" to this shameful act, it is imperative for him and Arab nation to stand against policies of America and use every power to influence American policies which supported the enemy of the Arab nations¹⁴⁰".

He criticized United States of American in strongest possible word because it helped Israel. Then he warned America of bad consequences as well. He says "It is the United States of America that provides billions of dollars to these Zionists," and then asked "do these nations think that the Zionists will obey their orders and achieve their desires?"¹⁴¹.

Rawwaf also tried to find out the reasons for the decline and dispersion of the Abbasid state into many small states. He also talked about current situation of

139 -Ibid:P. 373

140 -Ibid:P. 373

141 -Ibid:P. 373

Arab nations and reasons for their disunion. He mentioned that Arab nations are not united on one Kalema and they don't have a common goal. Describing this situation he says "then the conditions of the Arab nation got changed and its unity was dispersed. It got itself divided. Enemies overpowered them and tore them into pieces and divided them into over twenty mini-states"¹⁴².

Then he finds out the reason for this deteriorated conditions and real danger and that is differences and disunion on one Kalema. He says "that the real danger doesn't lie outside. It is within us. And that is being the differences among the Arab Nations and their disunity about one Kalemah. He further says "and tomorrow, there will be separate leaders for each mini-state. They will fight against each other. Everyone will throw stones on other, thinking that it would be more lethal and more harmful than the stones of baked clay on them"¹⁴³.

Then he asked himself with a sigh and pain "so why this division, O! Arabs? And how long this malicious and heated talk will be exchanged? What do they expect from this shameful act?" Then he answered himself "I see only loss and betrayal for all of you and loss of your country"¹⁴⁴.

While dealing with political issues, Rawwaf criticized leaders of Arab nations. He pointed out the reasons of decline and deteriorating conditions of the Arab Nation. At the same time, he also tried to play his role to improve conditions of the Arab world. Therefore, he tried his best to unite them as he believed that unity was the only solution to the problems of the divided Arab nation. He also provoked magnanimity of Arabs by reminding them about their ancestors. He asked the Arabs "where is the wisdom of Marwan and his

142 -Ibid: P. 216

143 -Ibid: P. 216-217

144 -Ibid:P. 217

tactics? Where is indulgence of Abbasids and their nobleness? Where is gallantry and heroism of the ancestors?"¹⁴⁵.

Bulkhair dealt with political issues in a different way. It becomes after going through their works that almost all the writers talked about concerns of the Arabs and the Muslims, their sorrow, pain and suffering. However, one finds hopes when one reads "Zikriyyato Abdullah Bulkhair". He showed some bright aspects which he had seen while working in the political division of Diwan of King Abdulaziz. There, he got a chance to spend his time with political decision makers. He pointed out good things in the policy of Saudi Arabia for the benefit of the whole world including the Arab and Islamic world. This policy called for good neighborhood, peaceful resolution of disputes and preservation of peace and security in the Arab and Islamic world and respect for international conventions. Praising the policy of Saudi Arabia, he says "from the day of its inception, Saudi policy is characterized with true and peaceful leadership. It is far from beating the war drums. It focuses on doing good works for the interest of Arabs and Muslims. It calls for strengthening its relations with other countries of the world in order to achieve peace and prosperity. It stresses on avoiding any kind of secret or open controversy"¹⁴⁶.

Bulkhair accompanied King Faisal on his visit to Washington. He mentioned many of his diplomatic and political achievements and his stand for the benefits of the Arab world in international forums. He praised his achievement for his homeland which he achieved by establishing principled relations between America and Saudi Arabia"¹⁴⁷.

145 -Ibid:P. 217

146 - Ibid: P.275

147 - Mohmood Raddawi: Madkhal Ela Zikriyyat Abdullah Bulkhair" Al-Masaiyyah, No. 3461. 2/1/2014 H. P. 10

Similarly, Abdul Karim Al-Jahiman highlighted one great achievement of King Abdul Aziz and that is establishment of one school of thought in Haram Al-Sharif. Prior to him “there were many schools of Islamic jurisprudence in Makkah before the establishment of Saudi Arabia. It caused dispersal of Muslims and divided them into different sects and parties¹⁴⁸”. But King Abdul Aziz solved this issue beautifully when he got settled in Hejaz. He says “when situation got normalized in Hejaz, King Abdul Aziz realized that prayer of one time was being performed four times under four different Imams. There was an Imam for Shafa’e. Hanbalis had their own Imam. Malakis followed another Imam and Hanafi had separate Imam. King Abdulaziz tried to unite them on one imam. It was possible to make only one special Imam for all of them. But there were few repulsive titles that were given to Salafi school of thought at that time. Therefore, King Abdulaziz decided to bring one Imam for Haram from any other Islamic country”¹⁴⁹. Thus he managed to solve this issue peacefully. Until now, all are experiencing grace of this unification across Saudi Arabia.

148 -Mozakkeratun wa Zikriyyatun min Hayati. P. 126.

149 - Ibid. P. 126

Chapter 4

Linguistic features in autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

4.1 Language

4.2 Writing style

Chapter 4

Linguistic features in autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

4.1 Language

Language is “a system of communication consisting of sounds, words, and grammar”¹. As per the oxford dictionaries definition of language is “the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way”². The word *literature* refers to one of the creative arts and language is essential element of literature because literature is the art of language, just as music is the art of sound and dance is the art of motion.

Language of literature is unique. “Essentially it embodies imagination and brings out emotions. It gives literature shape and opens ways for interest to apprehend reality of artistic expression”³.

On the basis of language and writing style autobiographers of Saudi Arabia can be classified into four categories:

First group of autobiographers preferred eloquent and traditional words. They avoided using weak and indecent words. Occasionally, they used lexical words which were uncommon in contemporary writings.

¹ -<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/language>

² - <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/language>

³ -Dr. Ahmad Kamal Zaki. *Al-Naqd Al-Adabi Al-Hadis: Osulohu wa ittejahatohu*. Cairo: Moad,ssasato Kilobatra 1982: P 141

This group was represented by Hamd Al-Jasir, Mohammad Abdul Hameed Mordad, Mohammad Husain Zaidan and Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri. These writers used words which are blend of typical classical language and language of modern Arab writers. But Zaidan seems to be distinguished among them because he paid more attention on ornamented words and art of rhetoric.

The second group tried to use familiar, tender, sweet and swift words combined with easy expression. This group avoided usage of strange words in their autobiographies. This group was represented by Aziz Zia, Mohammad Umar Taufeeq, Ghazi Al-Qosaibi and Abdul Kareem Al-Jahimaan.

The third group preferred to use extremely easy words and focused more on meaning than words. They did not care about ornamented words. They inclined towards easy and spontaneous expression. One can't find amelioration and ornamentation in their writings.

Top representatives of this group are: Hasan Naseef and Zahir Al-Almaee, Al-Sibae, and Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee.

The last group characterized with all features that all three groups have therefore it can't be classified in any particular way. Hasan Kutbi and Abdullah Bulkhair are leading writers of this group.

Kind of words used in the autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Words play greater role in giving an idea about the time and milieu a writer tries to portray. Arab authors were particularly conscious about the usage of words to make an impact. This aspect of literary work is evident in the writings of Saudi

Arabia authors as well. This aspect is important for understanding evolution of modern Arabic literature and its ability to compete with other forms of the world literature. Autobiographers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia followed different methods of usage of words.

One can find lexical words in the writing of Hamd Al-Jasir when he said "يقرزم" (he rhymes the verse),⁴ or "ولقد كان الجو سحسحسا" (Indeed the atmosphere was upset),⁵ "لولا زعارة في أخلاقه" (he got astonished and bewildered),⁶ "وأصاب بالحيرة والتلدد" (if the meanness had not been in his character),⁷ "وما أحسست أثناء الرحلة تعباً أو تأثراً بالهدام" (I did not feel tired or affected by airsickness during the flight).⁸

In all these six sentences there are words like *يقرزم*, *سحسحسا*, *التلدد*, *زعارة* and *الهدام* **which are** not used commonly in the modern writings and a reader could find such type of unfamiliar words in his writing. Meaning of such words can't be understood without referring to any dictionary. Therefore, when Al-Jasir used lexical words he tried to explain meaning of such words in two ways. Either he explained it briefly inside text, or with some detail in footnote.⁸ One can also find easily magnificence and eloquence of classical compositions in his autobiography, he says:

" ما أرحم هذه الفيافي الرحبة الفجاج المترامية الأطراف في هذه الصحراء الفسيحة، حيث يتنسم المرء أرح الانطلاق والانتعاق مما كبل فؤاده، أو هي قواه، فعجز عن الهوض به"⁹.

⁴ -Al-Majalla Al-Arabia: No. 144. Al-Moharram 1410 H. P. 22.

⁵ -Ibid: No. 153. Shawwal 1410 H. P. 22.

⁶ - Ibid: No. 154. Zul Qada 1410 H. P. 26.

⁷ - Ibid: No. 156. Al-Moharram 1411 H. P. 25.

⁸ -Ibid: No. 153. Shawwal, 1410 H. P. 22 and No. 171 P. 23. And No. 172 P. 23. And No. 153 Shawwal 1410 H. P. 22

⁹ -Ibid: No. 153. P. Shawwal. 1410 H. P. 22

At another place he said:

فما يشعر من في جواره إلا بسقوط الرجل على الأرض كأشد ما يسقط من يرمي به من مكان شاهق، ثم يعلو شخيره، وتجحف عيناه، ويمتد كل عضو من أعضائه، ويمكث على هذه الحالة نحو ساعة حتى يبدأ الهدوء شيئاً فشيئاً، فيتصبب العرق من جسمه بعد أن يفحص الأرض بأحد أصابع يديه¹⁰

Hamd Al-Jasir also intended to use some colloquial words with classical roots, like (القدوح ، التخرف، المشراق شي قعدي). And some time he used colloquial words while narrating his story when he felt that colloquial words suited best in order to conveying the rare happenings. For example, while narrating his experiences in the village he said:

"و بجواري أمه تتوسل إلي: أنا فداك، ما لي غيره ، بيا يأخذونه مني...."

Then he explained it in standard Arabic

"أنا فداؤك، ليس لي سواه، يريد الجن اختطافه فأنقذه"

(May my life be sacrificed for you, except him I have no one else, Jin want to snatch him so pleas save him)

Muhammad Abdul-Hameed Mordad explained uncommon vocabularies and colloquial words which he used in his autobiography under such titles *Lughwiyat* (linguistics), or *Tashihul Kalemaat Al-Tarikhiyyah wal Loghawiiyyah* (correction of historical and linguistic words)¹¹. He also wrote standard word for some colloquial words and explained where distortions have occurred in its origin.

¹⁰ -Ibid: No. 129. Shawwal. 1408 P. 9

¹¹ -Rehlatul Umr: P. 30, 53, 99

For example he said “الهدا (Al-Hada) with Alif in the end is a colloquial word and the right word is الهدة (Al-hddatu) with Haa having Fatha vowel on it and intensified Daal and round Taa”¹².

Similarly, Mordad explained word زعلانة in both classical and colloquial languages, he said: Zaaalanatun زعلانة with the Fatha of Za and Ain Sakin then Laam and Alif and Noon with Fatha and round Taa, means angry (woman) in the colloquial language of Makkah. Whereas, in the classical language it means activeness, in all forms like trilateral (زعل), quadrilateral (أزعل) and pent-lateral it is used in the meaning of activity, strength and stamina. It is rarely used for meaning of inconvenience¹³.

Mohamed Abdul Hamid Mordad also gave references from the classical Arabic poetry and verses of The Holy Quran to prove his point. He said:

“أغدقوا” means “they multiplied”, and for the similar meaning it is used in the sacred verse “ماء غدقا”,. It also refers to the year that witnessed torrential rain, fertility and welfare, as well as it refers to generous man with great generosity, and to handsome and strong boy. Arab used (غيداق) for all these three meaning. A popular classical Arabic poet Ta’abbat Sharra said:

بواله من قبيض الشد غيداق

حتى نجوت ولما يتزعوا سلبي

¹² -Ibid: P. 76

¹³ -Ibid: P.163

(Then I survived (from Bujailah tribe), they didn't snatch what I ransacked, because I ran very fast like a mad man). Then he warns readers from making plural of غيداق on the pattern of غياديق "because غياديق are snacks"¹⁴.

Al-Mordad had expertise in classical Arabic literature and linguistic, therefore, one can find, in his autobiography, lots of strange and uncommon words which can't be understood without referring to any dictionary. For example "خذروف" (top), "الشهيرة" (old lady) "اطلخم" (pitch darkness) , "بكلكة", "المفتند المفتاد" (burn)in the following lines.

"صرت في يديهما كخذروف الوليد"

" و حمدت الله الذي خلصني من العجوز الشهيرة "

" وجاء الليل و اطلخم و احتلك و ناء بكلكة "

فنهضت نهضة المفتند المفتاد ماذا جرى"¹⁵

He has been criticized for using strange words in his autobiography and then explaining it. But he believed it was useful to use such words and then explain it so that the Arab reader may become aware of his standard language, and may preserve the original Arabic legacy¹⁶. At the same time he gave another reason for explaining difficult words that explanations are for junior students and for some non-intellectual seniors who don't get time to consult dictionaries and

¹⁴ -Ibid: P. 185, 186

¹⁵ -Ibid : P. 214

¹⁶ -Ibid: P. 117, 118

language books and expert and intelligent readers do not need to read explanations of these words so that they do not waste their time¹⁷.

Mohammed Husain Zaidan rarely used strange and unfamiliar words in his autobiography. Rather he intended to choose sweet and musical words such as:

"وأشرق وجهه واكفهرت وجوه"¹⁸

"ولم يغرب ولم يتشامل"¹⁹

"هم آتون ولن يكونوا البعيدين"²⁰

"ما أحلى تلك الأيام على مراتبها وما أشد مراتبها اليوم على حلاوتها"²¹

"تلك أيام مضت أتطري بذكرها حين أستريح إليها"²²

Zaidan is also fond of using words in enigmatic way that sometimes leads to ambiguity in expression, for example:

"فالرجال الذين حوالبه بعضهم كان معه ولم يكونوا له وإنما كانوا عليه وبعض الرجال كانوا له ولم يكونوا معه ، وما كانوا عليه"²³.

At another place he said:

"دارالعلوم الشرعية التي ما كنت فيها، ولا بها، ولكني لها... وأما دار الأيتام فقد كنت فيها بها ولها"²⁴.

"فما زالت الصغير بينهم وإن كنت الكبير معهم"²⁵.

¹⁷ - Ibid: P. 118

¹⁸ - Zikriyyatul Ohud Al-Salasa:P. 69

¹⁹ -Ibid:P. 74

²⁰ -Ibid:P. 107

²¹ -Ibid:P. 155

²² -Ibid:P. 244

²³ -Ibid: P. 60

²⁴ -Ibid: P. 172

²⁵ -Ibid:182

One can find some unfamiliar words in autobiography of Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri also but those words are not too strange and difficult. In fact, those are abandoned words and “he intends to revive these words”²⁶. For example he used "خريتا" "وسوستي" "المهذرم" و"العكن" و"تهدل" و"يتقرفص" و"اقصعر" in the following sentences.

"وما كنت خريتا قط"²⁷

"لاتحقق شيئا من وسوستي العلمية"²⁸

"ولكن المهذرم باللغة"²⁹

"لايعرفون السمنة والعكن وتهدل الثروب"³⁰

"ويتقرفص في عباءة مزوية"³¹

"واقصعر في زاوية أمام باب الغرفة"³²

Ibn Aqueel also didn't explain meanings of any unfamiliar or abandoned words in any way in his autobiography, whereas, Al-Jasir and Al-Mordad explained meaning of words which are unfamiliar, ambiguous and vague. They might have intended to revive such words

Aziz Zia always tended to use easy and clear words in his autobiography. His words are also characterized with flow, liveliness and warmth. Example can be seen in the following paragraphs from his autobiography:

²⁶ -Al-Maqalato fil Abad Al-Saudi Al-Hadis: P. 287/1

²⁷ -Tabarihut Tabarih: P. 5

²⁸ -Ibid: 16

²⁹ -Ibid: P. 36

³⁰ -Ibid: P. 42

³¹ -Ibid: P. 48

³² -Ibid: 65

و اليوم بعد هذا الترحال الطويل في دروب الحياة...تزدحم في القاع السحيق من أغوار النفس الكثير من مشاعر الحزن والأسى و مشاهد الفجائع و الحسرات، ولكن هذا الحزن الذي أطبق على قلبي يوم ماتت تلك الخالة الحبيبة كان هو أول الأحزان و أبعدها أثرا و تأثيرا في النفس لأنه كان الحزن الذي ارتوي من ينبوع الحب الخالد، فإمتدت له الجذور في الأعماق، و الفروع و الأغصان في الآفاق"³³.

In this paragraph words like *سحيق*, *أغوار*, *ينبوع*, and *أطبق* are full of warmness beauty and flow.

" و مشيت خلف الشيخ و قد هب جميع الصبية واقفين إلى أن جلس على مصطبه في صدر الكتاب، و هنالك إلى جانبه أكثر من خيزرانة...و الأهم من كل ذلك "الفلكة" معلقة على الجدار خلفه، أما أنا فقد أجلسني محمد بين و لدين في مثل سني، و ارتفع صوت الشيخ يقول:

اقرأ يا ولدا!... و ارتفعت أصوات الأولاد تقرا"³⁴.

" و كانت بدرية تضيئ لنا الطريق من الدهليز إلى الديوان بتلك المسرحة المألوفة في كل بيت و قد حملتها في يدها مرفوعة إلى مستوى الكتف تقريبا، و مع ذلك فقد استطعت أن أتأمل ملامحها، و لعل الأصح أن ملامحها هي التي شددت انتباهي"³⁵.

One can easily realize that he used very easy and simple words in these two paragraphs but this only increased the liveliness and flow in it.

Dialogues contained almost half portion of his autobiography. One thing is sure that he didn't use dialogue because of any linguistic weakness. His other books and articles have already proven that he was capable of writing in beautiful standard Arabic. Along with all the characteristics in selection of words in his autobiography, Aziz Zia used colloquial words in all dialogues he brought in his autobiography. One of the critics said that "I don't know what did impress him to use colloquial language in all his dialogues. He is capable of subjugating his

³³ -Hayati Ma'al Jue wal Hubbe wal Harbe: P. 112/1

³⁴ -Ibid: P.187/2

³⁵ - Ibid: P. 264/1

stands and makes it closer to reality by using standard Arabic language which is understood by all whereas every region has different colloquial language. Besides, standard Arabic language is capable of accommodating any kind of thoughts and events as well as it is understood by every Arabic speaking person across the Arab world. Therefore, I don't know a convincing reason that made him using colloquial language in dialogues which is not stable and keeps changing in every generation and defers in every regions"³⁶.

Since the author didn't mention reasons or any justification for using colloquial language in his autobiography. If he wanted to maintain realism, he was capable of presenting it in easy and simple standard Arabic language which can be understood by every reader. Aziz Zia might have used colloquial language in order to make it easier for those who were around him with less education.

Mohammad Umar Taufique used familiar, simple and easy words in his autobiography. He used verbs more than nouns therefore one can find delicacy in his writing style. Critics also said that "usage of more verbs in content makes it delicate"³⁷.

Example can be seen in below paragraphs:

"و اختلط الليل و النهار في إحساسي و في تصرفاتي إذ أنام إن تيسر النوم أو الإغماء في أي وقت كان، و أقرأ كذلك أن تيسر ما أقرأ، و أفكر باستمرار، و أعيش فيما حوالي و أنتظر العملية، و أتمثل شعور المحكوم عليهم بالإعدام قبل أن يتحدد موعد التنفيذ... الزمن الثقيل يمضي ببطء شديد، و قد تعبأ إحساسي أشد تعبئة لاستقبال يوم العملية أو التنفيذ!"³⁸.

"و استيقظت الطبيعة حوالها و في جبالها و قد دبت حركة الصباح بفتور كفتور الشمس و هي تغمر بأشعتها بقايا الليل"³⁹.

³⁶ - Muslim Bin Abdullah Al-Muslim: Derasah Tahliliyyah Le Ketabil Ustad Aziz Zia Hayati Ma'al Jue wal Hubbe wal Harbe, Jaridatur Reyaz. No. 9581, 21/5/1415. H. P. 13.

³⁷ -Lughatun Nas Al-Adabi. P. 58

³⁸ -Ayyamun Fil Mustashfa: P. 13

و أخذت أتأمل الدنيا الجديدة فكانت خواطري ترجع حزينة إلي. إن كل شيء في هذه الدنيا الجديدة موضوعه المرض، فعلى الأسرة مرضى...و في الممرات مرضى، حتى هذه الوجوه الجميلة التي يجلس بعضها خلف مكتب طويل مستدير، و يطوف بعضها هنا و هناك بخطوات سريعة رشيقة كالموسيقى ترتاح لها الأعصاب م تهش لها الخواطر، إنما كانت للمرضى⁴⁰.

Mohammad Umar rarely used any colloquial words in his autobiography but he used some imported words such as المورفين، الزنانة، الطريزة، أسانسير، in his autobiography.

Autobiography of Ghazi Al-Qosaibi is characterized with sweet and delicate words which provide easiness in sentences and clarity in ideas. Therefore, musical balance in words comes automatically without any deliberate attempt. Examples can be found in below paragraphs.

" لقد فكرت طويلا في ظاهرة عزوفي عن الشعر الأجنبي، و لم أصل إلى تفسير سوى إيماني بأن الموسيقى عنصر أساسي رئيسي من عناصر الشعر، و أعني هنا الموسيقى التي تعودت عليها الأذن العربية من خلال العروض و القوافي.... و لعل هذا التعلق بالموسيقى هو الذي يدفعني إلى الاعتقاد أن الكلام الذي يتحرر من الموسيقى نهائيا لا يمكن أن يكون شعرا، و إن أمكن بالطبع أن يكون نثرا بالغ الروعة...⁴¹

In the below paragraph أيام and تخشى are ordinary words but its way of usage in the content increased sweetness and swiftness in it.

" كانت تخشى علي المرض أيام العافية، و تخشى علي الموت أيام المرض، تخاف أن أضل طريقي إذا ذهبت ألعب في الشارع، تتصور أنني أشلاء ممزقة تحت دواليب سيارة إذا تأخرت في المجيء من المدرسة⁴²"

Similarly, one can realize clarity and easiness in the autobiography of Abdul Karim Al-Jahiman. He used very simple language in order to express his ideas. He is not seen trying hard to select and beautify words. He leaves words to its

³⁹ -Ibid:P. 21

⁴⁰ -Ibid: P. 24

⁴¹-Siratun Sheriyyatun: P. 41-42

⁴² -Ibid: P. 52

natural formatting. Therefore it can be said that he didn't try for stylistic formatting as well as he doesn't attempt for softening, decorating and improving words. His style is journalistic and is not different from other journalists. Example can be seen in below paragraph.

" وفي هذه المناسبة السعيدة يكون أولياء الطفل الذي ختم القرآن قد أعدوا وليمة لجميع الطلاب، كما أنهم يعدون هدية مناسبة للمطوع الذي ختم الطفل كتاب الله على يديه، فإذا انتهت مدة الدراسة الصباحية خرج الطلاب جميعا ومعهم الطفل الذي ختم القرآن، وهم يحملون على أعناقهم، ويرددون مختلف الأناشيد، ويثيرون ضجة في جميع الشوارع التي يمرون بها"⁴³

One can see usage of familiar and simple words connected with each other beautifully in the above paragraph.

4.2 Writing style

Writing style refers to the mode in which an author decides to present his writing to his readers. Readers get an idea of writer's personality from his style of writing. It also shows how an author perceives the readers. Writing style is also about word choice, sentence structure, metaphor, phrasing as well as how the author presents the words to the reader, how well the author knows the beauty of the language, how well a fiction world or fictional characters are blended together, how each sentence starts and ends, how each paragraph is unified with the narrative, how narrative and description are invented. It's how well a writer tells their stories.

Use of present tense

Some autobiographers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia used *present tense* to express about the past in order to bring forth its image. This style is significant in

⁴³ -Mozakkeratun wa Zikriyyatun min Hayati, p, 39

the autobiographical works of Mohammed Hussein Zaidan, Aziz Zia and Mohammad Omar Tawfiq.

Mohammed Husain Zaidan used present verb in place of the past imperfect verb a lot in his autobiography. While reading his autobiography one can easily realize that events which he is talking about from his memories occurred on the very same day, or in the near past. For example, he described outbreak of fire in a way that he was watching it at the time of writing his memories.

وإنما اتصل الحريق والتدمير ينال بيت السيد علوي السقاف⁴⁴

In this sentence use of present tense (ينال) instead of (نال) depicts the scene as though it was happening in front of him when he was writing his memories. Another example one can see when he said:

فإذا إبراهيم ملا يقول: جدع يا حسين... يتعانقان⁴⁵

In this sentence he used present tense يتعانقان instead of past تعانقا. In the writing style of Zaidan, present tense is based on present imperfect verb, such as “ ورجعنا إلى ”. “بيتنا نصلي المغرب، نتناول العشاء

Sine, present tense is used to describe movement and change⁴⁶ as well as it indicates towards modernity and new happening. It also indicates towards occurrence of action compatible with time in present or future⁴⁷. Thus it helps writer in creating liveliness in narration which he couldn't create with usage of past tense. Frequent usage of present imperfect verb in the autobiography of

⁴⁴ -Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasa: P. 188

⁴⁵ -Ibid: P. 32

⁴⁶ -Fil Usloob Al-Adabi: P. 18

⁴⁷ -Ahmad Al-Khaus, Qissatul Erab, Publisher, writer himself, from Beirut. P. 34/1

Zaidan indicates that he didn't use it incidentally; he must have used it deliberately. He used it to infuse liveliness and warmness in the events which he narrated.

Mohammad Omar Tawfique also used present tense in order to bring past events and its images in front of readers so that they may imagine as it occurred before them. Such as he says:

وأنتجول في المستشفى أحياناً.. وأجلس، أو أقف... وأتأمل الدنيا وراء السور... ثم قد أزور بعض الناس في أقسام المستشفى ..
وأتناول الغداء.⁴⁸

Aziz Zia also used present tense to provide liveliness in his narration so that it may leave long lasting impact on the mind of readers and remain in their mind for longer time. He used present tense in his autobiography so beautifully that one can realize his expertise and skills in the language.

Some grammarian and linguistics say that narrative present tense is "used to present events of past on the stage of present or to take readers or audience on the stage of past"⁴⁹, so that one could feel that he was present there when it occurred. This type of narration is obvious in usage of present tense in the autobiography of Aziz Zia. Such as he says:

"كان جدي في صباح تلك الليلة يقف على الصندوق الخشبي الأسود، بينما تُخرج أمي تلك الأشياء التافهة التي زهد فيها اللصوص،
وتتناولها منها خالتي لتعيد ترتيبها ... كان عبد الغفور في هذه اللحظات يرتعي على صدر أمي يريد أن يرضع"⁵⁰.

It is obvious from the above paragraph that the writer initiated the incident with past imperfect verb "كان" to make the readers feel about what narration contained

⁴⁸ - Ayyamun fil Mustashfa: P. 74-75

⁴⁹ -Al-Zaman fil Nahw Al-Arabi. P. 190

⁵⁰ -Hayati M'al Jue wal Hubbe Wal Harbe: 48/1

so that, later he could take help of narrative present tense to make the readers live in the time of happening of the event and feel that the writer is describing events that take place now and it didn't occur in the past.

Sometime, Aziz Zia used present tense to indicate changes from one state to another. On seeing change of state of his mother after a restless night she was looking comfortable. It happened when sun illuminated her on the bench of the Divan. Describing this change, he says,

"وكانت الشمس تضيئها، بحيث بدت مطمئنة"⁵¹.

(Sun was illuminating her, as she looked satisfied)

Change of tense here indicated transformation and change from one state to another. لم تبتد - بدت, before this, she was not feeling comfort. Usage of present tense تضيئها gave some vitality and warmth in the narration. It reflected positively on the feelings of mother, therefore, she started feeling comfort.

Use of verbs derived from كان

There are two writers 'Ahmad Al-Sebaee and Hasan Naseef who used verbs derived from كان widely in their autobiographies. They used these verbs to narrate events of past with comfort and pleasure or with sorrow and pain. They expressed all these feelings using different conjugation of kana such as كانوا، لم تكن. Few examples are given below.

"كانت تحفظ عن ظهر قلبوكانت رحمه الله ...وكانت تنهي"⁵².

⁵¹ -Ibid: P. 48/1

"كان كرسي الأستاذية وكنا نتمتع بصولتنا في الجلد... وكانت لذتنا... لهذا كان كل همنا... وكان زميلنا"⁵³.

One could easily find this type of writing style in the autobiography of Hasan Naseef. Such as he says:

"كان فضيلة الأستاذ... كنا في السنة الأولى

كانت أمسيات جميلة... وهكذا كان... وكانت تقع مكان قلم المرور الآن

كنا قد بلغنا مبلغ الرجال... ومع ذلك فقد كنا... وكنا في السنة النهائية"⁵⁴

Usage of diminutive pattern (تصغير)

Hamd Al- Jasir and Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri used diminutive pattern quite frequently in their autobiographies. Hamd Al-Jasir used it for minifying things such as: "نخيلات ، وسويغات كثيرة" و "مضت لييلات خمس" و "قدعت بقليل من التميرات"⁵⁵.

Sometimes he used diminutive pattern to indicate to minified form of a thing

such as "للقيام ببناء البويت"⁵⁶.

Ibn Aqueel used diminutive pattern for different purposes. Sometimes he used it for the purpose of exaggerating smallness of a thing like "في شويرع محمد بن عبد الوهاب"⁵⁷ sometimes he used it for and sometimes for depicting nearness like sometime for stating silliness of a thing and sometimes for degrading or humiliating someone.

⁵² - Ayyami: P. 60, 61.

⁵³ - Ibid: P. 84

⁵⁴ -Mozakkerat Talebin: P. 61, 59 , 65, . such example can be found on other pages such as, 64, 65, 67, 68, and 82.

⁵⁵ - Al-Majallah Al-Arabia, No. 125, Pages No. 12, 150, 22, 182, 183, 21 and 20.

⁵⁶ - Ibid. No. 196, Jamadil Oula 1414 H, P. 20

⁵⁷ -Tabarihut tabarih, p, 59

Since this style of writing is rarely found in the works of their contemporary writers. It can be concluded that Hamd Jasir and Ibn Aqueel revived this style. Perhaps it can be a result of the influence their Najdi background, in which, the usage of Tasghir was wide spread in its colloquial language.

Question-answer style

Many autobiographers of Saudi Arabia used the question answer style, in which they ask questions and then they themselves give answer to those questions. Among such writers was Abdul Aziz who, in his autobiographical work ask question and reply to the same. Here are some examples:

"وهكذا كان هؤلاء القفاصة يصنعون من أغصان النخيل طائفة من الصناعات، فلماذا سموا بالقفاصة؟"

He replied immediately,

"وفي أغلب الظن أن ذلك يعود إلى أن النسبة إلى القفص أسهل كثيرا من النسبة إلى الستائر، أو إلى السرر"⁵⁸

While talking about Rumiah street, he asked

"ولست أدري لماذا سمي هذا الشارع بإسم الرومية"

He replied without a pause

أغلب الظن أن ذلك يعود إلى أن بعض الأتراك كانوا يسكنون في هذا الشارع"⁵⁹

"لست أدري من أين جاءت هذه التسمية (الضبة) ربما لأن شكلها في صورته العامة يشبه الضب، أو لأنها إذا انخلعت أشبهت

الضب حين يطبق فكيه على إنسان أو حيوان، فلا يجد سبيلا إلى الفكك أو الخلاص"⁶⁰

⁵⁸ -Zikriyyato Tiflin Wadein, p, 171

⁵⁹ -Ibid, p, 248

⁶⁰ - Ibid, 237

This phenomenon can be found in the writing of Ahmad Al-Sebaee and Ghazi Al-Qosaibi but to a lesser extent.

Repetition of words in sentences

While reading autobiographical works of Saudi Arabia, one could easily realize that some of the Saudi autobiographers repeated one word in a sentence in order to emphasis on one thing. Hasan Kutbi used this style in his autobiography frequently. Example can be seen in following sentences from his autobiogrphy.

"إننا ننتقل من مجهول نعيش بين أحضانہ إلى مجهول لا نعرف عنه شيئاً"⁶¹،

"وكانت هذه نقطة البداية، بداية الحياة، بداية الشعور بالمسؤولية، بداية البحث عن موطن قدم"⁶²

"مرت خالية من كل شيء، خالية من العمل، خالية من التفكير، خالية حتى من الإحساس"⁶³

Aziz Zia also used this style, one can see he used word حرب more than once in a sentence in an attempt to describe horrible picture of the war, which, he witnessed in his childhood. He wrote:

"ثم حرب أخرى... حرب عالمية... حرب... حرب"⁶⁴

But when he used words like يا رب in below sentence, he tried to present his psychological status.

"يا رب... يا رب... يا عزيز قول يارب!"⁶⁵

⁶¹ -Hazehi Hayati, p, 60

⁶² -Ibid,p, 77

⁶³ -Ibid, p, 81

⁶⁴ -Hayati Ma'al Jue wal Hubbe wal Harbe, p, 15/1

It also can be said that he repeated words in order to emphasize on the matter and to express the meaning which he wanted precisely. Repetition of a word can also been seen in following sentences of his autobiography:

"فالأرض تمشي، الجبال تمشي، والأشجار الصغيرة المتناثرة هنا وهناك هي أيضا تمشي"⁶⁶

و بعدين ... و بعدين يا عزيز؟⁶⁷

Use of simple and clear writing style

Al-Maee wrote his autobiography in very simple and clear language because he wanted to make a less educated person understand his autobiography easily. Therefore, he avoided usage of unfamiliar words and complicated and high standard language. One could hardly find artificiality in words and expressions in autobiography. He said "I wrote it in narrative style and in simple language and make it in chronological order. It is free from artificiality, strangeness, and twist"⁶⁸.

He was a capable poet and writer; therefore, one can't say that he was unable to produce his autobiography in artificial style. Furthermore, he himself didn't like the writing style which he used in his autobiography and he apologized for it⁶⁹.

Similarly, Abdul Aziz Rabee used simple and common words and expressions in his autobiography. He preferred short sentences and rhythmical and beautiful words in order to achieve balance between sentences and rhythm. Example can be seen in below paragraph from his autobiography.

⁶⁵ -Ibid, 231/1

⁶⁶ -Ibid, p, 20/1

⁶⁷ -Ibid, p, 231/1

⁶⁸ - Rehlatus salasin aaman, p, 13

⁶⁹ -Ibid, p, 13

" لقد تخلى التمر عن مكانه، وتخلي الناس عنه فلم يحفل به أحد، لقد قلبوا له ظهر المجن، فليس لحصاده موسم، ولا لإقباله بهجة، ولا لغيابه أسى، ولا لأصنافه لذة، ولا لأشجاره رواد... لقد تقلصت غاباته الفينانة، و زحفت المباني على مزارعه الجميلة"⁷⁰

Abdul Aziz Rabee also didn't like his writing style and methods which he used in his autobiography. He clarified the same that after writing his autobiography he realized that chapters in his autobiography are not coherent, some of it is long and some are shorts. Therefore, he wanted to revise composition of his autobiography and use standard expressions and attractive style but later he gave up the idea and left all the chapters of the book in its initial style because he thought rewriting may harm spontaneity in the book⁷¹.

Alliteration and repetition of words in the autobiography of Sa'ad Al-Bawardi

Al-Bawardi used alliterations quite frequently in his autobiography. Examples can be seen below.

"من رحم الأم الصغرى حيث كنا معا السكن والسكان والسكينة، إلى رحم الحياة الكبرى، حيث الصخب والسغب"⁷².

But by doing so he, sometimes, used artificiality in his writing, such as he wrote:

"يبعث إشعاعا دافقا رافقا" و "وأذكت جذورها حتى الاحتراق والاختراق"⁷³

Second characteristic of his writing is he also repeated words in a sentence. Such as:

"و من يوم إلى يوم ، و من شهر إلى شهر، و من عام إلى عام، و من طفل تحمله أمه... إلى طفل يحبو، إلى طفل يخطو"⁷⁴.

⁷⁰ - Zikriyyato Tiflin Wadein: P. 168

⁷¹ -Ibid, p, 25

⁷² - Al-Hars Al- Watani: Jumadil Aakherah, 1415 H. P. 94

⁷³ - Al-Hars Al- Watani: Sha'aban, 1415 H. P. 87

Similarly, any reader of his autobiography can realize that Al-Bawardi used word "قد" a lot in his autobiography. He says:

"قد ينهزم إلى حين... قد تعطيه كل شيء، قد تأخذ منه كل شيء، وقد تكون عادلة"⁷⁵.

Parenthesis

Parenthesis is one of the characteristics one could find in the autobiographical works of Saudi Arabia. It is most obvious in the writing of Al-Rawwaf. He is always keen to enrich reader information in his autobiography. In this course, he even didn't care whether it was right time to write that information in his autobiography. Therefore, one can see frequent usage of parenthesis in his autobiography. On usage of parenthesis he clarified that he loved to elaborate all his interesting and sad memories in details. At one place he wrote speech of an Egyptian leader after talking about him⁷⁶.

Sometime parenthesis contained half page and sometime it contained more than ten pages. In order to connect to the previous talk, it was imperative for him to use such sentences now I would return after this parenthesis. Even, he apologized readers to forgive him for leaving the topic and starting discussing other things⁷⁷.

Use of parenthesis to this extent disconnected the flow in his narration and even sometime it caused weakness in his writing style.

⁷⁴ - Al-Hars Al- Watani: Jumadil Aakherah, 1415 H. P. 94

⁷⁵ - Al-Hars Al- Watani: Jumadil Aakherah, 1415 H. P. 94

⁷⁶ -Safhaat Matwiyah min Tarikhena, p,7 and 103

⁷⁷ -Ibid, p, 143

Parenthesis is also one of the main characteristics of autobiography of Abdul Karim Al-Jahiman. He narrated two long stories in his autobiography which he had heard from his father and it contained over twenty pages. Whereas, it would have been better if he would have leaved it or he could have put it in reference so that a reader could read it from there. By doing so, he could have avoided disconnection in the narration while talking about himself. But he used parenthesis in order to entertain and refresh the reader. He knew when he deviated from the topic, therefore, he clarified that I realized that he deviated from the topic and deviated for long as well, but he did so deliberately, he shall do the same again and would narrate any anecdote he would remember, because the reader would find it more precious and sweet, he would bring happiness for a reader after reading his serious talks⁷⁸. But when he realized that parenthesis caused disruption and discontinuation in the narration, he apologized to readers and said "I feel o, my distinguished readers the pen deviated me and it took me far from what I was discussing"⁷⁹. After reading his autobiography, it can be concluded that if he would have avoided long and frequent parenthesis, chapters of his autobiography would have been well connected with each other and chronological order in the narration would have been more coherent.

Similarly, one could find often usage of parenthesis in the autobiography of Mohammad Abdul Hamid Mordad. At one place, while talking about himself, he disconnected the main talk and started discussing another topic and got back to what he was discussing after twenty pages. Thereafter, he too apologized to readers twice for deviating from the topic⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ - Mozakkerat wa Zikriyyatun min Hayati, p, 80-98

⁷⁹ - Ibid, p, 70

⁸⁰ -Rehlatul Umr, p, 53-80

Zahir Al-Al Mae'e also used parenthesis in his autobiography but to a very limited extent. At one place, he talked about the generation that studied at Ma'ahad Shaqra before him at length. At another place, he talked about education of his father which he received from some of the Sheikhs of Jazan⁸¹.

Use of WaW(و) in the autobiography of Mohammad Husain Zaidan and some other characteristic of it.

Mohammad Husain Zaidan is one of pioneer in modern Arabic literature in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. His writing style is unique and distinguished. It is characterized with simplicity, easiness, flow, spontaneity, maturity and clarity, and good beginning. It is free from any ambiguity, complication and flexure. He used short sentences which are filled with liveliness and music. A reader of his writing can recognize it even if there was no signature of him. Zaidan is artist of word; he used very simple and easy words, which are always free from any kind of ambiguity⁸². One can see example of these characteristics in the following paragraphs:

خاصمني قبل أن يعرفني، و صافاني حين عرفني، و اصطفيته حين عرفته. " تلك أيام مضت أتطرى بذكرها
حين أستريح إليها و المقدمة هذه أنفوس بها ولا أنافس"⁸³

He himself disclosed secret of his use of short sentence. He says "we are writers of dictation, therefore, there is music in our words, we don't dictate to write it on copy but we use it as we are speaking it from dais"⁸⁴.

⁸¹ -Relatus Salasin Aaman, p, 16

⁸² -Al-Mujaz fil Adab Al-Saudi, p, 131.

⁸³ -Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasa, p 229, 244, 235

⁸⁴ -Khawatir Mohajjanah, p, 63

Most distinguished feature of his writing style is his frequent use of waw. He used waw in his autobiography so much that prompted one his contemporary term it as "*waw Zaidaniyyah*". He was questioned many times about frequent use of waw in his writing style. He had to write an article answering all questions related to use of waw. He wrote the article titled *waw in the language of poet*. In this article he answered those who had asked questions about beauty of eloquence, when they found bell ringing melodiously, they tasted beauty of eloquence. Some of them didn't like it and accused him that he distorts elegance when he uses waw but there are different meanings and significance of waw and he cited reference from Quran in order to prove his point and said that he uses waw because of its multiple meaning and beautiful music and he loves this waw to provide music of eloquence in a text and it gives me more space to explain my thought⁸⁵.

Some features of writing style of Hamd Al-Jasir

Hamd Al-Jasir used Ha "ها" of caution before pronoun, particularly before أنا، هو، ها هو الفتى مكبل اليدين "ها أنا أقاسي" وها هي أذواد الحي باركة" ها هو جبل رضوي أمامك" ها هي "such as . هي، نحن، تشارك بالترحيب بالضيف، وها هم رجال الحي"⁸⁶

Similarly, he used قد a lot in his autobiography. Sometime he used it for minifying and sometime for affirmation.

"قد يتسلل إليها" و"قد أكون وحدي" و"قد أرففه صاحبه البدوي" و"قد رسم فوقه" وقد رسم ظاهرها...وقد يخونني ترسمها"⁸⁷

⁸⁵ -Khawatir Mohajjena, p, 63, 64

⁸⁶ -Al-Majallah Al-Arabiah, No, 129, p, 8, 9, 135, 169, 21

He also used verb of preference a lot in his autobiography. Such as:

“فقد كان رجلا صالحا أبعد ما يكون عن التعرض لما لا يعنيه، وأكره الناس لأن ينال أحد في مجلسه بغيبه، ثم عو من أعف الناس لسانا، و أنزههم معاملة، و أزددهم في غشيان المجتمعات” و هو من أروع علماء هذا العهد و أبعدهم عن المظاهر، و أزهدهم في الدنيا⁸⁸”

Sometime, one could also find glimpses of excellent academic research in his writing style and one can hardly see authoritative and affirmative style in his autobiography. He used common language of academic research which a researcher uses to prove his points in his research. Therefore, one can find words like "لعل" "يكد" "يظهر" "بيدو" generally these words are used in academic research. At the same time one can also find him analyzing, explaining and paying lot of attention to margins and explaining tough and uncommon terminologies in his autobiography.

Use of third and first person in autobiographies

Usage of pronoun in narrating events of life is considered essential phenomenon of autobiographies. Critics differ whether autobiographer should use third person or first person, or one should use both. One of the critics says “first person is more suitable for expressing reality. He further says that “realistic story is inspired by autobiography in presenting details and in writing style, particularly in paying more attention on first person and story is an autobiography”⁸⁹. He further said that “appearance of *I* is better than hidden and

⁸⁷ -Ibid, No, 125, p, 7,8, 21, 12, 127, 169

⁸⁸ -Ibid, No, 170, Rabiul Awwal, 1412 H, p, 26

⁸⁹ - Al-Sirato Tarikhun wa Fannun: P. 249

moreover use of third person is novelistic element"⁹⁰. But later he asked what is more suitable for autobiographer, usage of first person or usage of third person? He replied himself and said "most of the autobiographers used first person. As far as third person is concerned it was used by Abu Sha,ma in the seventh Hijri and it was used by Taha Husain among contemporary writers, he added saying that the reality is when writer of autobiography uses third person, he discharge himself, before us, from astonishment and pride, he deviates our eyes from himself time and again and pushes us to believe that we are reading a realistic novel, but this characteristic is vanishing. Talking in first person presents real fact whereas there is feeling of escape from this psychological reality in use of third person and disguise behind novelistic curtain"⁹¹.

Due to more usage of first person one critic said that "there is no difference between autobiography and biography in terms of purpose, writing style and content except that autobiography is written in first person and biography is written in third person"⁹². But this concept is far from reality because many successful autobiographies are written in third person.

It can be concluded that one who found himself comfortable in narrating events of his life and expressing what is going through in his mind by using first person, he used first person. One who believed that usage of third person is more suitable in the context and better from interacting with readers by using *I*, like *I said* and *I was*, and *for me*, and *on behalf of myself* or *I am*, he preferred third person"⁹³.

⁹⁰ -Ibid: P. 272

⁹¹ - Ibid: P. 245

⁹² -Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah fit toras: P. 13

⁹³ -Al-Nazayer: P. 28

As far as autobiographers of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are concerned, most of them used first person. However, some have used both first person and third person like Hamd Al-Jasir but he was more inclined to use first person in his autobiography. He used third person only where it was necessary in the context and he used it deliberately and skillfully. He used third person in different ways, sometime, he mentioned his name clearly as though he was talking about any other person. Such as he said Hamd remained in the clod. Sometime, he addressed himself by calling young boy⁹⁴ and our fellow⁹⁵ or one of them. Sometime, he talked about himself by using demonstrative pronouns such as this is Hamd or that young boy.

Mohammad Husain Zaidan clarified in the introduction of his autobiography would be about his friend, contemporaries and about his hometown Al-Madinah. Therefore, it wouldn't focus only about himself. He wouldn't use *I* but he would use *we*. Due to this claim of him, it was expected from him that he would use *we* frequently in his autobiography but he didn't do so and he apologized for not keeping his promise. But in the end he said that "I am about to finish this autobiography, I don't think that I wrote about *I* because I was keen to write what I witnessed, what I knew and if *I* was used in some places, it wasn't for talking about self"⁹⁶.

Apart from these two autobiographers of Saudi Arabia none have attempted to write his autobiography in first person.

Trend of storytelling in autobiographies of Saudi Arabia

⁹⁴ - Al-Majallah Al-Arabia. No. 180. Al-Moharram 1413 P. 21

⁹⁵ -Ibid: P. 153. No. Shawwal 1410 H. P. 22

⁹⁶ - Zikriyyatul Ohud Al-Salasah: P. 16

Autobiography is all about story of life of a person. A reader feels that he or she is reading a real story and knows its protagonist. Therefore, many critics went on to say that autobiography is a kind of story. But there are some basic differences between an autobiography and a story. For example story deals with one aspect of life whereas autobiography deals with entire life. In a story, there are some sub characters around main character whereas autobiography is all about main character. Similarly, in a story incidents develop from very beginning towards complexity and then in the end towards its solution. Its diverse incidents surround one incident whereas autobiography brings together each and every incident and crisis that happened in the life of the autobiographer and he doesn't care about plot and unity while narrating these events⁹⁷.

Likewise, a story is not only bound to reality. Imagination plays important role in channeling, controlling and arranging incidents some time by adding and some other time by deleting something. But "autobiography has to present only real incidents that have taken place in the life of author without any addition and omission"⁹⁸. Autobiographer has to limit himself with the setting, time and place. He can't go beyond certain time and place whereas author of a story is generally free from the boundaries of time and place. He can go forward by a century or get backward to a century. He can cross any boundary of place and time and go to even unknown places. Thus space of story is wider than autobiography. Also it lacks many characteristics and element of story. Particularly, it lacks modern techniques of story like symbol, conscience, drowning into imagination, psychological analysis of characters, exaggeration in synthesizing complexity and then to reach to the solution.

⁹⁷ -Fil Adabe wa fonoonohu: P. 165

⁹⁸ Ibid: P. 165

Authors of autobiography in Arabic literature have presented accounts of their lives in two ways. Some have presented it in narrative style like Mekhael Nouaima did in his autobiography *Sab'oon*. In narrative style the author narrates events of protagonist in chronological order according to time of its happening in his life. There are some characteristics of this style. Like, putting every incident in the frame of time and place in which it had taken place. Cohesive and arranged connection of incidents illustrates development of the character and its perfection as well as the phases through which this process has gone to achieve the perfection. This style is natural to human nature. It is result of continued experiences a human being goes through. This style is considered the best for autobiography. Almost, all the prominent autobiographers of Arab world followed this style.

There are other writers who have presented stories of their lives in informative and analytical style. In this style writers don't care much about chronicle order of the incidents that happened in their lives. Because, they don't have any document to refer to or to get any help from it. First, the authors present every angle of the character then they explain and analyze it.

Apart from Aziz Zia almost every writer of autobiography in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has written his autobiography in informative and analytical style, because narrative style requires special ability and talent of storytelling. It has been mentioned that history of definitive autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not older than fifty years. It is still evolving and developing year after year. Therefore, there was a chance that most of the writers were not aware about all the technical elements and characteristics of the autobiography. Secondly, most of the autobiographers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had been

writers of articles throughout their life. Therefore, when they decided to write their autobiographies they couldn't get rid of the style they were used to. They couldn't try to adopt any other styles because it might have required more efforts and time from them. Majority of autobiographies in the Kingdom weren't written due to artistic reason. Most of the writers wrote their autobiographies in their old age on consistent request of their friends, newspapers and magazines and. This was the reason they chose style of article writing and didn't care about adopting new style and putting more efforts at this stage of their lives.

Aziz Zia used both description and dialogue equally in his autobiography. He began a chapter with description and narration of the incidents. Then he brought dialogue to play its role spontaneously and smoothly. Thus description and dialogue made artistic structure help in using divisive styles in storytelling and made it interesting as well.

Dialogue is one of the main characteristics of the autobiography of Aziz Zia. He depicted incidents, highlights thoughts and portrayed characters through dialogue. He also used dialogue as a tool to express his feelings, emotions and pushing incidents forward.

It is worth mentioning that in the autobiography of Aziz Zia, some time a dialogue takes place between two characters and some times more than two characters participate in a dialogue while some other time two characters speak and third one listens to the view points of the others. For example following dialogue took place between mother of the protagonist and one of his friends, whereas he is a mere listener to it.

“I don’t know O, Fatima.....I wonder why they don’t bring this orchid from Istanbul after the First World War and my mother replied in a tone that was full of sorrow. It is stopped O aunt. Routs of Istanbul is closed for quite some time....and you know it as well that they say they want to remove the Sultan Rashad.

(My mother was about to say this meanwhile Aunt Fatima beat her chest with her hand and says)

They will remove the Sultan? Who is able to remove the Sultan O my daughter? Do you believe in such type of talk?

All right O Aunt, hang on, they removed Sultan Abdul Hamid previously.

(Aunt Fatima again beat her chest with her hand and says)

Who said that they had removed the King? He himself ordered to make Rashad the King so that he could get time for worship and prayer.

(My mother got angry and gave her a wink and says)

You mean that the previous king was not removed by anyone and he wasn’t dead”⁹⁹.

A reader sometime also observes that the writer is not part of a dialogue. He only described those gestures done with hands and face and he only tried to make it lively and warmly through the dialogue by adding some connecting words and giving expression to the emotions of the speakers.

⁹⁹ -Hayati Ma’al Joee wal Hubbe wal Harbe: P. 94/1

One also realizes that Aziz Zia played two characters at the same time in a dialogue. One is that of a child who narrates the story and second is the character of the writer at the time of writing the story but his role is limited to explanation of the incident so that the view points are understood by the readers easily, the below mentioned exception is again illustrative of such style.

“ Bread, from there did you buy it?

(I felt some kind of satisfaction or arrogance) so I said

I didn't buy it O my aunt, I brought it from there.

From where?

From there, from far!

(When my mother came and saw the bread lying on the floor, she didn't pay heed, didn't stop there to see it. She turned towards me, but my aunt embraced me with her arms and said)

He says sorry, he says sorry Satitah and sees what he had brought!

(Meanwhile my grandfather entered frowning and tense filled with severe horror but my aunt was able to intervene the bread was also taken to the kitchen) then my mother said)

We may meet at the place of Latafat Baji, a little bit grit.

(My grandfather left the room wrathfully. My mother followed him. When I turned to my aunt I saw that thin smile that she was expressing as a sign of gratitude or victory in my defense)

When we gathered at the small dining table in the evening, plate of bread was at its place. It was tasty. My grandfather said smilingly:

This Abdul Aziz O Fatima.. will be a man if God wills"¹⁰⁰.

One can observe that characters like mother, aunt, grandfather, writer himself have appeared in this dialogue, besides Latafat Baji as a secondary character. When one reads this dialogue he realizes that writer seems very keen to portray emotions which he was watching closely. Therefore, he presented portrayal of angry mother, loving aunt, frowning, tensed and furious grandfather whose tension and stubbornness got transformed into a wide smile in the evening due to tasty dish.

Thus, dialogue and description of emotions of the characters by the writer gave characters their energy and filled the content with liveliness and warmth.

There must have been some reason why Aziz Zia chose a different style and made dialogue an important part of his autobiography instead of using it as a secondary tool like other autobiographers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries have done.

Abdullah Al-Haidary gave a reason that seems to be appropriate in this regard. He says "he might be fulfilling his desire regarding story by using dialogue in his autobiography and applying it in an artistic and dramatic way. It could also be due to his profession in radio"¹⁰¹. He was an announcer in radio in India and prepared plays which consisted of thirty episodes for radio and seven episodes

¹⁰⁰ -Ibid: 98/1

¹⁰¹ -Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah fil Adab Al-Saudi: P. 423

for television. The reason could be his desire to instill life and excitement in characters.

Aziz Zia always tended to fill liveliness in the happening when he describes them. Therefore, he stops and looks around in order to present true description of the happening. He said: "His face got pale. His entire body was trembling. His teeth were chattering. We all kept looking at him. No doubt we were terribly scared. We didn't move from our place. My mother, all she could do was she put prayer cloth on her head which was in her hand. Abdur Rahim couldn't resist his fear from this missile burst rather it made him even worse as he kept looking at the door in a way that we expected they all were here at the threshold and would enter the house"¹⁰².

Aziz Zia also seems to pay more attention to analyzing and describing psychological conditions of the characters by describing movements of their hands, face impressions, way of their talking to tell the reader if they were happy or angry, or whether they were showing their happiness or hiding it. How they were dressing. He said "my mother vanished from the gathering for a while. He returned in red velvet dress. Women were looking at her as tailor whooped in surprise and Badriyyah started looking at her with great appreciation. And Fatima aunt got serious and started saying repeatedly *Alf Masha Allah*"¹⁰³.

Another example of his expertise in narration and description is seen in the following paragraph:

"It didn't take long. I regained spineless strength. I found neck of my mother. She covered me with her arms, she put her face in front of my face and I was

¹⁰² - Hayati Ma'al Joee wal Hubbe wal Harbe: P. 50/2

¹⁰³ -Ibid:P. 55/2

looking into her eyes. I was about to cry but I held on and swallowed my saliva with difficulty. Meanwhile, tear burst from eyes and I couldn't stop it. My mother saw it and her intellect couldn't cheat her. She gave me a long hug. She raised my face with her hand and kissed me more than once eagerly and affectionately"¹⁰⁴. These excerpts show the style of storytelling adopted by Aziz Zia in his autobiography.

Other writers presented events and happenings in form of information or news but one could find tendency of stories in their autobiographies as well as good presentation and suspense. Some even used dialogue but in a very limited way. Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee narrated many incidents that happened in his life and in his surroundings in storytelling style from the point of happening, presentation, conflict and solution but in a very simple way. He says:

“ one student happened to die due to being beaten up by a teacher. His father got angry and insisted to take revenge of his son from this teacher. One mediator intervened in the matter and sat with the father of the student and had a quiet discussion with him:

“ -do you think that the teacher wanted to kill your son?

- No
- Do you think that beating up of teacher was not in the interest of your son
-but it was for his interest
- Don't you think that this teacher cursed you and he is a memorizer of the Qura'an?

¹⁰⁴ -Ibid:P. 61/2

- The man kept quiet and tears shed from his eyes. He stopped for a while and said: I forgive him, I forgive him”¹⁰⁵.

Glimpses of storytelling style are also found in the autobiography of Hasan Mohammad Kutbi. This tendency is clear from the narration of incidents given about his life, particularly in the chapter *Fi Ghayabatis sijn*. In this chapter he narrated incidents of his imprisonment in an interesting storytelling style. It is also clear when he depicted and described his characters. He said while talking about Mohammad Saleh Jamjoun. “In his talk, you will always feel sprit of compassion over this dimming flame. This kind of compassion wasn’t only in his way of expression and way of talking, but it was a strong torrent expression that was obvious in all the muscles of his body. We see his eyes filled with complete expression, his brows and features of his face, even color of his appearance. When he speaks in this regard you will feel that his appearance has started congesting and blood might flow from his stoma. His hand started carrying his turban off from his head and floating right and left with his movement and went upward and downward. He put it back on his head only to take it off again as though this auspicious turban had a special role in giving expression about himself”¹⁰⁶.

Similarly, one can see some glimpses of storytelling style in *Rehlatul Umar*” the autobiography of Mohammad Abdul Hamid Mardad. He says “ then uproar got decreased and calmness prevailed. We stopped to see if there was anyone from them following us or we succeeded and they were unable to catch us. We turned and didn’t find anyone. We stopped and started taking deep breath. We would

¹⁰⁵ -Zikriyyato Tiflin Wadien: P: 108-109

¹⁰⁶ -Hazezi Hayati:P. 157-158

see what would happen after this calmness and peace. Would we be surprised with attacks from any unknown side or it was over and nation had returned?"¹⁰⁷.

Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri mentioned many stories and information in the style of storytelling. However, his style lacks elements of story like emotion, imagination and technical plot. It is like bringing news only. He says " one of my classmates visited me one night. I was ready with my father to go for my wedding. It was my first marriage. My father returned him harshly and didn't tell him where we were going. I went to him and told him apologetically: in fact I was going to get married with the daughter of so and so. Marriage got spoiled and I lived with her in unbearable hell until separation"¹⁰⁸.

Another example of his simple narration is where he says "I bought an expensive American car. I entered Al-Boulaidah in it for the first time. I got pleased with savings, when I returned to Riyadh and got out of old cultural building on Amir Fahad Street on a rainy and cloudy day. I got on footpath. It started going back whereas it should go ahead. Engineers were unable to fix it. I spent double of its price. Then I sold it for three thousand Riyals within two years. It remained with the buyer. Allah my provide ease for him"¹⁰⁹.

These examples give fair idea that autobiographers of Saudi Arabia tried to present happenings and events of their lives and surroundings in a narrative style but they were only partially successful in it. Major portions of their autobiographies are in informative style. It lacks technical elements of story.

Dealing with time in the autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

¹⁰⁷ -Rehlatul Umr:P. 87

¹⁰⁸ -Tabarihut Tabarih:P. 86

¹⁰⁹ -Ibid: P. 87

Time is considered one of the components of the literature but literary tense, its nature and its function are different. "Study of of time which is discussed in the modern literary criticism is boundless, technically it helps readers of literary work enter bottom of the text from point of time"¹¹⁰ . It may provide particular information about placement and timing in which an event or story takes place such as Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and in the year 1925. Change of time has immense effects on personality, character as well as on writing style and way of expression.

Sometime, autobiographers find difficult to deal with adverb of time particularly when they return to far past they mess with chronological order. Therefore, it is imperative to understand how autobiographers of the Kingdom of the Saudi Arabia dealt with this characteristic.

Ghazi Al-Qosaibi was able to deal with adverb of time successfully in his autobiography. He chose descending chronological order in order to narrate his stories. He started his autobiography from the day of its writing then he descended gradually. He identified 1980 AD, in which he wrote his autobiography, when his age was forty years and adverb of time of story started when he was twelve years old or even prior to it. He says "today, when I am getting forty of my age, it is tough for me to return to my memories when I started my relation with poetry"¹¹¹.

Al-Qusaibi narrated stories of his life in descending order gradually in order to describe elements and things which influenced him reaching where he was at the

¹¹⁰ - Abdul Malik Murtaz, Binyatul Khetab Al-Sheri, Beirut, Darul Hadasah Letteba'a wan Nashr wat Tauzee, 1986, P. 157

¹¹¹ -Siratun Sheriyyatun: P. 17

time to writing his autobiography. Whenever, time of writing crossed time of narration, it can be identified easily as events moves from present to future. In such places he used ascending order but arrangement between tenses is balanced. He said: "When I return with my memories to years of my primary education, I didn't try to write a verse of poetry until first year of my secondary education"¹¹².

"I believe, during fourteenth years of my age, I started writing something which can be called poetry"¹¹³.

Then he used ascending order slowly. He says "in the sixteenth year- I think-clear improvement in the style and subject started"¹¹⁴.

After this, he mentioned about his experience with publishing of his first collection of poems (Divan). Then he narrated his education in the university in Cairo and talked about his higher education in America and Britain and then he narrated his professional life in addition to mentioning his second Divan. Al-Qosaibi narrated all these in ascending order. He moved from present tense to future tense. Occasionally, he disconnects tense but he returns to complete it. While narrating events in ascending order, sometimes, he breaks the tense which he was talking about and starts talking about another tense or gets back to any incident which was previously mentioned in its ascending order context. This is called arrangement of intermittent tense. In such arrangement, tenses are intermitted in narrating descending order from present to past or in ascending order from present to future in order to welcome another tense¹¹⁵.

¹¹² - Ibid: P. 18

¹¹³ - Ibid: P. 19

¹¹⁴ -Ibid: P. 28

¹¹⁵ -Al-Saniyyah wan Naqd Al-Adabi: P. 89

Al-Qusaibi used this when he wanted to narrate story of adopting a pen name, then he disconnected the present tense and went into future in order to get back to complete the event. He says “for this name, there is a story, I shall return to it after sometime”¹¹⁶. Then he continued his talk about sending his poem to the Magazine *Al-Mosawwir* and soon he disconnected ascending tense from present to future and reached to the future far from time of the narration. He says: “Important is that Saleh Jaudat continued publishing a pen name for me until I met him in Cairo after few years and I informed him about the story”¹¹⁷.

Then he got back to talk about support and encouragement which he received from his family that helped him continuing writing of poetry then he return again to where he was and talked about story of his pen name as per his promise in descending order.

To avoid parenthesis, Al-Qosaibi used *style of deletion* which is used in narration and it consists of clear and ambiguous hints for some period of times, in which events are told in ascending towards future or descending order toward past. He mentioned that efforts for poetry continued for next two years then after few years he joined University after his return to Riyadh, he got back to Commerce College as a teacher then he became head of the political science department and then the principle¹¹⁸.

Many a times, Al-Qosaibi goes from present tense of narration to present tense of writing in order to connect some events which he is talking about or explaining and analyzing it. Or at least he connects it with present tense in which he is

¹¹⁶ - Siratun Sheriyyatun: P. 24

¹¹⁷ -Ibid: 25

¹¹⁸ - Siratun Sheriyyatun: P. 19, 25, 86, 104

writing it. Such as he says: “around in the sixteenth year I discovered Ibrahim Naji, I liked him very much, and I still like him”¹¹⁹ in the second sentence he jumped from present tense of narration which is sixteenth year to present tense of writing which is fortieth year but this jump from one tense to another didn’t disconnect the narration, rather it gave the context a connection between his interest in poetry in his early days and his interest of present.

A write needs great expertise in usage of tenses and changing from one order to another. When a writer uses it successfully in his autobiographical writing, his writing becomes very interesting for readers. But if one is not able to deal with tenses and changes of its order successfully in his autobiographical writing, his writing gets confusing for readers to comprehend.

Al-Qusaibi was able to deal with tenses effectively because he didn’t interrupt his tenses with long and irrelevant events and he used connecting sentences between while connecting one tense to another.

Aziz Zia also used descending chronological order in his autobiography *Hayati Ma’al Jue wal Hubbe wal Harbe*. He started his autobiography from time of his writing and then tried to remember events of past. He says “who can remember first morning of his life” then he himself replied “I remember first morning of my life”¹²⁰. Then he narrated what he could remember from that morning. It can be noted that distance between time of writing and time of narration is a long distance but he didn’t specify it by telling the exact or approximate year.

Aziz Zia talked about his psychological feeling with time while narrating events, such as he narrated story of theft in his house in Halb. One can realize that he

¹¹⁹ -Ibid, p, 50

¹²⁰ - Hayati Ma’al Jue wal Hubbe wal Harbe: P.18/1

was stunned when he was narrating successive and fast events which happened at that night which he described as night of fear and terror¹²¹.

He recalls event of past with usage of present tense and tries to balance between past tense with its fast events and present narration with his fast breath. He says “but soon he started whispering and it was for a short while and all these ended in a while then there was silent¹²².

This horrifying incident was over in a very short span of time but its effect on his psychology remained for a longer time. Therefore, when he was writing about this incident after eighty years, it seemed that he never forgot it¹²³. In this case Aziz Zia didn't specify the time in a conventional method but he intensified events in short span of time so that he could give it psychological length.

Sometime, Aziz Zia plays with tense and uses near past with present therefore future is not clear whether is it extension of past which he wanted or is it present in which he is living. While describing his feeling on return of his family from Syria to Madinah after a difficult and terrible journey he says “I slept on bed, in that fraying quilt which was left for us though long travel, I was still sleeping.... In this condition I felt that our travel was more interesting and satisfying from this dark house”¹²⁴.

Hasan Kutbi talked about tense with psychological measurement. He described a day of imprisonment was equivalent to thousand days. He says “days of imprisonment were slow and cramped, it didn't get over by reading, sleeping

¹²¹ - Ibid: P. 44/1

¹²² -Ibid: P. 44/1

¹²³ -Ibid: P. 44/1

¹²⁴ -Ibid: P. 201/1

and talking to write feelings of the prisoner, an hour was like a thousand hours, and a day was like a thousand days"¹²⁵. This type of measurement of tense is different from what is measured by hour. This is psychological hour, it can't be counted and measured by any instrument.

He described future in two ways. One is characterized with innocence and simplicity as he is fond of reading old books with a feeling that he is living with writers. He says "these were my feelings, it got established very early of my age and it started pushing me to compete with tense and I remember how at the age of eighteen, I used to confined myself in a dark room, light would only come to middle of this room from holes of its door, and I would try hard to memorize a book of riddles containing principles of Fiqh. My biggest desire in life was that one day I would be in the Al-Haram Mosque and students would be around me"¹²⁶.

Hasan Kutbi described this simple imagination of future with a feeling that was full of optimism. But after this, he looked at future with confusion and anticipation. He finds future full of surprises and events and time is taking people to those events slowly slowly and they can't do anything except waiting for it. He says "this is my lifeand I don't know what lies in future, I hope it would bring all good. Future is full of surprises and events, time take us to it day by day, whenever, we get close to any of its circle, we know what it consisted in the unseen"¹²⁷.

Mohammad Umar Taufique, in his autobiography *Ayyamun Fil Mustashfa* talked about his days which he spent in the Hospital of American University in Beirut

¹²⁵ -Hazehi Hayati: P. 107

¹²⁶ -Ibid: P. 56, 57

¹²⁷ -Ibid: P. 111

for the treatment of right arm. While describing his feeling about the time he spent in the hospital he says “ long night reminds me night of Imra’ ul-Qais¹²⁸, whenever night falls I recall the following verses of Imra’ ul-Qais when he talked about night that was full of sorrow and grief.

عَلَيَّ بِأَنْوَاعِ الْهُمُومِ لِيَبْتَلِي وَلَيْلٍ كَمَوْجِ الْبَحْرِ أَرْخَى سُدُولَهُ

(Night has often let its curtains fall and surround me in my grief,

It has swallowed me as a wave would, weighed me with sorrow)

فَقُلْتُ لَهُ لِمَا تَمَطَّى بِصَلْبِهِ وَأَرْدَفَ أَعْجَازاً وَنَاءً بِكُلِّ

(Then I said to the night, as his huge bulk dragged over me)

بِصُبْحٍ، وَمَا الْإِصْبَاحُ مِنْكَ بِأَمْثَلِ أَلَا أَيُّهَا اللَّيْلُ الطَّوِيلُ أَلَا أَنْجَلِي

(Oh long night, dawn will come, but will be no brighter without my love)

بِكُلِّ مُغَارِ الْفَتْلِ شُدَّتْ بِيذْبَلِ فَيَا لَكَ مِنْ لَيْلٍ كَأَنَّ نُجُومَهُ

(You are a wonder, with stars held up as by ropes of hemp to a solid rock)

Similarly, he felt in the hospital that dial of the watch was not moving and whenever he would look at the watch he would get angry because time was passing very slowly. He said that “ dial of the watch would annoying me, dial of minutes was not moving like me, seconds were like hours and minutes were like days¹²⁹.

Mohammad Umar didn't write about happenings of time in descending or ascending chronological order so that it could be measured by days and dates in order to reach to the last day of happenings. To record all the happenings, he used psychological measurement which was going through in his mind. He

¹²⁸ - was an Arabic poet in the 6th century AD.

¹²⁹ - Ayyamun fil Mustashfa: P. 46

didn't believe in solar timing system all the time, therefore, he was annoyed by the watch, which is used to measure external time. He lived with his particular feelings and expressed the same.

Hamd Al-Jasir talked about environment in which he lived. He talked about its social, political and cultural conditions in more than eighteen pages in an attempt to retrieve the past and make it familiar for readers. After this long introduction, he started the main point and talked about himself. He tried to fix year of his birth. But at the time of writing, it was difficult for him to fix it, because, there was no trend of recording year of birth in Najd at the time of his birth. They would remember it by remembering year of any happenings in their life. He tried to enquire the events which were recorded by his family and connected it with birth of his two elder brothers and two younger brothers. Thus he fixed approximate year of his birth. As per this calculation, he would have been born in the end of third decade of previous century in 1327 Hijri or a little later. After fixing the tense, he started his autobiography from past to present in ascending chronological order. The events develop slowly and move from present tense of story to future. He mentioned that except few things, he didn't remember about his childhood after that he talked about his school and mentioned that the teacher wrote alphabet on his and his brother's slate¹³⁰. After that, events moved in natural chronological order from present to future until he was compelled to interrupt this order as while he was talking about events of 1355 H, he was talking about an incident when police has taken out him forcibly from the library. At this time, he recalled a similar incident which took place twenty five years ago then he broke the chronological order and

¹³⁰ -Min Sawanehiz Zikriyyat: Al-Majallah Al-Arabia, No. 110, Rabiul Awwal, 1407. P. 6,7

narrated that incident before. He mentioned that as he told previously that he was taken out from library by police, similar incident was repeated again after twenty five years in 1386 Hijri¹³¹. In this case he moved from discussing about events of 1353 to discussing about 1358 that means he moved from descending order to future tense and disconnected the chronological order. Sometime, he disconnected chronological order by leaving some gap, as he said “quarter of a century passes”¹³² and sometime he moves from present to future in dream and anticipation. He says “now third decade of my life passed, and in an atmosphere of self-comfort and satisfaction of conscience, he started feeling a huge vacuum A vacuum during which he was unable to return to his future after assuring satisfaction for it”¹³³. In this case his narration goes ascending from present to future. But sometime, he cuts the ascending narration from present to future by returning to past and starts using descending chronological order. Such as, he started talking about an incident that had taken place in 1347 H while he was talking about events of fifties. He paved the way in such case by saying “ so that you may connect this incident with previous one about education in this country. It is worth mentioning in brief about a teacher that played effective role in this regard”¹³⁴.

Hamd Al-Jasir used parenthesis quite often and by doing so, he talked about issues which have no relation with his autobiography. For example, he talked about situation of education in Ah’sa, A’al Hamdan family and population of old Al-Kharj. Therefore, one can find interruption in chronological order and disconnections and overlapping in his narration.

¹³¹ -Ibid, No, 168, Al-Moharram, 1412, H, p, 8

¹³² -Ibid: No. 160, Jumadal Oula, 1411 H, P. 20-21

¹³³ - Ibid: No. 170, Rabiul Awwal, 1412 H, p. 36

¹³⁴ - Ibid: No. 185, Jumadil Aakherah, 1413 H, P. 20

Contrary to Hamd Al-Jasir, Zahir Al-Almaee used chronological approach in his autobiography *Rehlatu Salasin A'aman*, in which events descend as per its historical sequence. Sometime, he mentions day, month and year and sometime he mentions year only. By doing this, he doesn't allow any chronological overlapping among events and at the same time, he takes the reader along with him in a logical chronological order and reader follows phases of his personality regularly without any disorder and difficulty.

There are some autobiographers who didn't follow any chronological order and historical sequence. Such as, Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri believes that chronological order is not required in autobiography, because autobiographer classifies his autobiography into chapters and "an autobiographer may want to narrate most important events of his life early, then why we confine him with chronological order"¹³⁵. He himself didn't follow any chronological order in his autobiography *Tabarihut Tabarih*. Therefore, he narrated many incidents in brief whereas it required more elaboration and details, such as he talked about his experience with Radio in three lines¹³⁶ only while it required a complete chapter. At one place, he said that he has memories regarding his master (M.A) but he wouldn't mention it. He just said "like this Word Zrot taught me"¹³⁷. Similarly, he talked about his teachers in the beginning of his autobiography instead of talking about his early childhood. He talked about his early childhood without any sequence. He discussed his adolescence and old age in brief but he talked about his forties in length¹³⁸.

¹³⁵ - Tabarihut Tabarih: P. 6

¹³⁶ -Ibid, p,18

¹³⁷ -Ibid, p, 125

¹³⁸ -Ibid, p, 97-117

But critics of autobiography don't agree with his views, they believe that chronological order is one of the main elements of the autobiography because it helps the character to grow and helps the reader to follow events of every phases of the author clearly and logically. Some of the critics say that "basic material of the autobiography is like pages of a book and some pages were torn out and many of it was destroyed"¹³⁹ and a writer should rearrange those torn pages in logical chronological sequence in order to provide liveliness and flow in the autobiography. Because, autobiographer neither piles scattered information nor he writes diary in which repetition is not an issue.

But Mohammad Husain Zaidan, another autobiographer from Saudi Arabia almost agrees with the views of Ibn Aqueel. He also didn't follow any chronological order in his autobiography. He said "my autobiography didn't bind me to write it with chronological order"¹⁴⁰.

Dealing with place in the autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Place is considered very important element of literature because a writer is bound to assimilate and inherits the distinguishing characteristics of the place he lived in. Relation of human being with place starts before his birth and doesn't end even after his death. It carries lots cultural important and plays an effective role in life of a person.

Autobiographers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia described different kinds of places in their autobiographies. Some of them described their feelings about

¹³⁹ -Al-Tarjuma Al-Zatiyyah fil Adab Al-Arabi Al-Hadis. P. 8

¹⁴⁰ -Zikriyyatul Ohud Al-Salasa: P. 192

popular places known through society and culture such as provinces and big cities and writers knew about them by living near to it. Other writers talked about a place to describe some social aspects related to that particular place, whereas, some of them paid more attention to talk about a place from historical perspective only. At the same time, they talked about places which are more attached to human being such as Masjids, houses, prisons and hospitals.

Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee talked about Madinah and Al-Masjid Al-Nabwi quite often in his autobiography. He described them as two holy places for every Muslims. He also mentioned his personal relation and regards towards them. He says Al-Haram "is the eminent landmark of Al-Madinah, it is the center point around that life runs. All who were born or brought up in Madinah had highest regards and emotional feelings for it. All would go there in every morning and evening, their breath and happiness were attached to it. They would meet their friends for study and discussions. Describing his personal relation with it, he says: "I spent my early childhood there, until my primary education I would go to Masjid Al-Nabwi in every morning and evening, at least three times daily"¹⁴¹.

Apart from Madinah and Masjid Al-Nabwi, Al-Rabee talked about a beautiful tourist park in Madinah which was known as *Al-Maharis*. Al-Mihrah (pl. Maharis) is a huge pit inside rock; it preserved sweet and clean rainy water for long time. This name was given to rocky pits inside Uhd Mountain. Every Mehras with ascending and descending rocks and mountainous plants and big and small stones in different shapes make a pleasant scene. Best characteristic of these Maharis was, sun wouldn't reach there, neither in summer nor in winter and that would make the sitting places inside Maharis very pleasant.

¹⁴¹ -Zikriyyato Tiflin Wadein, p, 30

During his childhood he would go to Al-Maharis with his mother, her friends and children with foods and stuffs to make tea¹⁴². Abdul Rabee also mentioned about a rocky place known as Dakkato *jalal* . One part of this place was plane and has view of Al-Weda hill. Employee would go there with foodstuffs preferably by walking and spend one or few days there. They eat, drink and have a casual chat and enjoy a lot. On their return, they would talk about their activities there in their Majalis¹⁴³.

His talks about Al-Maharis, Dakkato Jalal, Al-Weda hil inform reader about recreational ways of people in his time and how people would spend their time when there was no media and modern means of amusement. A mention of these places also carries social cultural importance.

Mohammad Husain Zaidan showed his affection towards Al-Madinah and talked it in a way that he was talking about his love in his autobiography. In fact he declared in his autobiography that his autobiography is also about geography of Al-Madinah¹⁴⁴ and he mentioned about meadows, ponds, place of horses, Hurrato Qoraiza, Hurrato Waqim in surrounding of Madinah¹⁴⁵. He believed that a person has great attachment with his place of birth and upbringing, therefore, any talk about a person without talking of place is incomplete. We should talk about place while talking about people in autobiographies¹⁴⁶. At one place he confessed that Al-Madina taught me to be weak before weak, to not get in the way of anger of powerful. This city which taught me so much how I don't

¹⁴² -Ibid: p, 255

¹⁴³ -Ibid, p, 260

¹⁴⁴ -Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasa, p, 16

¹⁴⁵ -Ibid: p, 17

¹⁴⁶ -Ibid: p, 66

love it¹⁴⁷ ? He felt pain when he was compelled to spend his Ramazan out of Al-Madinah¹⁴⁸ . Zaidan talked about every corner of Al-Madinah and the effective role it played in his life¹⁴⁹.

Hamd Al-Jasir described about few places in his autobiography. He described about places where he lived in or attached to them in his life. Such as, he described his school, its location, its surroundings and arrangement of sitting in classroom on ground. He says “school that was built to educate children of the village, looked like it was built a prison, one who wanted to be educated would gather in it, there were ten holes in the wall that was built to separate two rooms on the ground floor. The place which was fixed for study was furnished with sand that was brought from outside of the village”¹⁵⁰. This way of description of place indicates that he wanted to talk about a place which had historical importance. Al-Jasir described palace of Al-Shoyukh in almost one page. He identified the location and described what it had. He mentioned about all four sides of palace and what it contained. He said “along with North West wall of there was market of women, they would sell and purchase in it. Most of the shops of the city were located in southern and eastern side of the palace. In the north of the palace there was place fixed for sell and purchase of seasonal things”¹⁵¹. Describing Yunboo he said: “I spent a pleasant summer in that country which was present in that time, it was a prosperous country, water of its fountain was strong, its land was fertile. There were rivers running between its gardens and orchard that made them more beautiful and it helped in growing different

¹⁴⁷ -Ibid: p, 119

¹⁴⁸ -Ibid: 206

¹⁴⁹ -Ibid: p, 230, 231

¹⁵⁰ -Al-Majallah Al-Arabiah, No. 116, Ramzan, 1407 H, p, 8

¹⁵¹ -Ibid, No. 142, Ramzan, 1409 H, p, 24

kinds of trees of fruits and trees of Al-Hena which filled the air with its fragrance”¹⁵². It seemed from these descriptions that Al-Jasir dealt with place like scientist and historian as he didn’t express his feelings in those descriptions like it was done in the description of Zaidan.

Zahir Al-Al Mae started his autobiography with geographical description of place *Rejaal Al-Ma* in order to take readers to place of happenings. He says “though roads of region of Rejaal Al-ma were uneven, it was beautiful because of its natural scenes and open air. This region was located at slope of Al-Saruraat Mountain in the west”¹⁵³. This is a geographical description but at another place he gave a description of his place of birth that was characterized with his feelings and longings for the place when he went out of Rejaal Al-Ma for education to other cities¹⁵⁴. He remembered Al-Ma when he paid a visit to Jabal Al-Sauda with his teachers, friends and other staffs of his institution. From there he could look toward Rejal Al-Ma, therefore, he became nostalgic and said “I was looking towards Rejal Al-Ma, I saw with my bare eyes mountains and planes, I was scaling through it enjoying in its planes and holes”¹⁵⁵.

Abdul Hamid Al-Mordad gave description of few places which he visited or lived in it in very interesting and beautiful way. After reading his description of places one could desire to see them. Particularly, he described few places of Taef where he spent his childhood and days of his early youth. He says “we reached grassy hummock that had sweet water and deep square, water was falling down in it, we stayed for an hour, then we reached Laqueem and entered garden of

¹⁵² -Ibid: p, No, 165, Shawwal, 1411 H, p, 23

¹⁵³ -Rehlatu Salasin Aaman, p, 17

¹⁵⁴ -Ibid, p111

¹⁵⁵ -Ibid, p, 113

Ghena that had birds and fruits in abundance”¹⁵⁶. At another place describing Al-Naqb Al-Ahmar in Tayef he said: “ we stayed around it for four days roaming orchard of Al-Shefa, enjoying and plucking its ripe fruits, gathering honey, drinking from yellow aromatic oral margarine of made of Al-Zameri herbs. Our eyes also enjoyed with Berry olives and its trees”¹⁵⁷. Al-Mordad described a mythical house of wealth women in Al- Makkah Al-Mukarrama in a horrifying style that reminded readers of stories of Arabian nights.

Abu Abdurrahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri is very fond of his village and its people. He is always nostalgic about it. He feels pain when he finds his village becoming like a small city. He talked about the changes that took place in his village over the time. He becomes emotional when he remembers his village and time he spent there in his childhood. Therefore, he described his village in poetic style at many places¹⁵⁸ in his autobiography. He used present tense to describe it in a style that one could feel that he was seeing it while reading his description. He said “you will find the village active and vibrant like a youth, when you will get near to it, you will bow your head to eat what you want of quality dates ...”¹⁵⁹.

Ghazi Al-Qosaibi also described few places in his autobiography. From his description one could understand that some places play important role in life of a person socially and emotionally. He believed that a person gets too much attached with the place he lived in whether he was born there or not. One always recalls the place where lots of things had happened in his life. He mentioned his

¹⁵⁶ -Rehlatul Umr, p, 38

¹⁵⁷ -Ibid: 51

¹⁵⁸ - Tabarihut Tabarih, p, 43, 47, 102, 124, 125

¹⁵⁹ - Tabarihut Tabarih, p, 43

love about Bahrain where he was brought up. He talked about his pain which he felt after of leaving Bahrain. He said “for the first time in my life I am leaving peace and love of home to live alone”¹⁶⁰.

Mohammad Umar Taufiq described amazing nature of Lebanon when he visited Beirut for his treatment. He reached Beirut at night. He felt like “it was sleeping; perhaps it sleeps like this daily when night falls, and at the sun rise nature awake it in its mountain, with rays of sun movement of the morning starts”. At another place, he said: “Had my hands not tied up I would have been flying among mountains of Lebanon”¹⁶¹. He gave many description of the hospital where he got treated and how he felt at one point that hospital was like a prison. He described rooms and Operation Theater of the hospital¹⁶² .

¹⁶⁰ -Siratun Sheriyyatun, p, 49

¹⁶¹ -Ayyamun fil Mustashfa, p, 21 and 22

¹⁶² -Ibid, p, 66, 73, 34

Chapter 5

Critical assessment of prominent autobiographies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- **Issues**
- **Writing style**

Chapter 5

Critical assessment of prominent autobiographies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

5.1 Issues

The contribution of the autobiographers in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia can be looked at by juxtaposing it against the writers from Arab other countries. Historically, Saudi writers started dealing with the genre a bit late. However, the body of work produced by these Saudi writers is remarkably high in comparison to their counterparts in the Arab world. As discussed earlier, Autobiographers of Saudi Arabia were impressed and motivated to a great extent by literary works, particularly, autobiographical works of other Arab countries. Because, Saudi autobiographers would get to read literary works of prominent writers of the Arab world and what were published in the leading newspapers and magazine like *Al-Helal*, *Al-Seyasah*, *Al-Muqtatif*, *Al-Resalah*, *Al-Katib Al-Misri*, *Al-Ketab* and *Al-Saqafah* in twentieth century. Most of these magazines and newspapers were headed by prominent writers of different Arab countries including Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Morocco. It was natural that autobiographers of Saudi Arabia would get impressed with thought, opinion and writing style of these writers. Therefore, there is great similarity in the subject matters and issues dealt by Saudi writers and writers of the Arab world. Similarly, one could also see how autobiographers of Saudi Arabia tried to follow writing style of prominent writers of the Arab world in their autobiographies. However, there are some differences in dealing with issues and writing style as well as there are some different characteristics. Efforts will be made here to assess autobiographical works of Saudi Arabia from these two aspects, issues dealt by Saudi autobiographers and their writing styles by placing them alongside the same aspects of autobiographical works of the Arab world.

Socio-cultural Issues

Autobiographers of Saudi Arabia and Arab world discussed socio-cultural, historical and political issues in their autobiographies. The socio-cultural issues will be taken up first to see how Saudi writers and the writers from other Arab countries have dealt with these issues and what are the similarities and differences while dealing with them.

Autobiographers and other Arab countries are almost similar in dealing with socio-cultural issues. Both have discussed this issue more than any other issues in their autobiographies.

Similarity of condition and psyche is obvious in the two blind autobiographers. One is Mohammad bin Saad Bin Husain from Saudi Arabia and another is the great Taha Husain from Egypt. Both have written about their hatred towards sympathy showed to them by their family members and relatives because of their blindness. Both disliked such behaviour of their family members and relatives because they had great regards for themselves. Taha Husain mentioned his aversions to sympathy showed towards him by his brothers and sisters due to his blindness because he felt a kind of contempt for blind in their sympathy. He said "care of his brothers and sisters used to hurt him because he found their sympathy mixed with some contempt"¹. When he took a bite with both hand his sister laughed at him and his mother cried"². Similarly, Mohammad bin Saad Bin Husain, a Saudi writer, mentioned his disgust about the sympathy showed to him due to his blindness, he said "I used to hate to be a subject of sympathy although I used to suffer from poverty, blindness, loneliness and childhood then self-respect"³.

¹ - Ibid: P, 18. Vol. 1

² - Ibid: P, 20. Vol.1

³ -Min Hayati: P. 24

Taha Husain criticised some habits of women in Egyptian villages. Particularly, he criticised their habit of talking nonstop even when they were alone. He said “women in villages of Egypt don’t like to remain quiet. They don’t get bored of talking and when one of them gets alone and doesn’t find anyone to talk with; she talks to herself on different matters”⁴. This phenomenon could be a little extra in Egyptian villages but it is a universal phenomenon and is not limited to only Egyptian rural society.

Taha Husain mentioned behaviour, customs, tradition, life style and even way of thinking of Egyptians in his epic Autobiography *Al-Ayyam*. In this autobiography, he described society of villages in Egypt as ignorant and was characterized with simplicity and negligence. Elderly people, youth, children and women all had a particular rationale. It was characterized with simplicity, Taswwuf and negligence⁵. He further mentioned that this society believed in superstition, myths, fortune-telling and magical works⁶.

Taha Husain also seemed to be of the opinion that the negligence and mistreatment were prevailed in the society and it caused his blindness as well. Women in both rural and urban areas had a false philosophy. If a child would complain of feeling unwell or feeling pain in any parts of his body, a mother would hardly pay any attention to such complains. If a mother was careful the maximum she would do it she would try to treat her children herself at home, she wouldn’t think of consulting any doctor. Due to such prevailing mind set, Taha Husain had lost his vision in his childhood. He suffered from sore-eyes, it was ignored for many days, then a barber was called and he treated him with a remedy that took away his vision⁷.

⁴ - Ibid: P, 25. Vol. 1

⁵ - Al-Ayyam: P, 25. Vol, 1

⁶ - Al-Ayyam: P, 110, 111. Vol. 1

⁷ - Ibid: P, 120. Vol. 1

Talks about issues of education

History of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is reflected in the autobiographies of Saudi autobiographers. They talked about poor condition of the schools during twenties and thirties of the 20th centuries. They mentioned the development that occurred in the field of education. They described how education system had evolved from an ordinary schooling system, which used to be found in villages, town and cities and it would teach how to read and write, then up to college and university level. Thereafter a separate ministry came into existence to look after education related affairs. It took up the responsibility of taking care of education and taking it to a greater height.

Autobiographers of Saudi Arabia writers mentioned that initially, Saudi society didn't like the subject of geography to be included in the school curriculum. They didn't want their children to study this subject. Sometime, people, even have took out their children from such schools which included geography in their curriculum. Because they got to know that geography said that earth is round. Even in one village of the Kingdom people opposed a teacher in strongest possible way when they came to know that he had talked about the methodology of teaching geography in his book titled *talks on methods of teaching*. People complained against that school and consequently many students left it⁸.

Ahmad Amin also mentioned similar situation in his autobiography *Hayati* that in the beginning of twentieth century Egyptian society also didn't accept the subject of geography and other modern subjects. They believed that these subjects had been imported from the United Kingdom. There were schools which wanted to impart Islamic education along with modern subjects like Algebra, chemistry, mathematics and geography but they didn't mention in their curriculum all these names due to fear of society and the Azhari scholars.

⁸ - Al-Majallah Al-Arabiah, No, 108, Al-Moharram. 1413, p, 20

Ahmad Amin mentioned that Madrasatul Qaza wanted to educate its children with modern subjects like geography, history, nature, chemistry, mathematics, Algebra, and engineering and its curriculum was mixed with all these subjects but most interestingly they couldn't use word *nature* in their curriculum because of the fear of Azharis. Therefore, they used a trick and kept natural sciences and chemistry in their curriculum under the name of *characteristics bestowed in our body by Allah*⁹. At the same time he described level of knowledge of some teachers who had old mentality that didn't hear anything like geography¹⁰.

Similarly Hamd Al-Jasir mentioned simplicity in the school as students used to sit on the ground without any mat¹¹. A similar description of school is also given by Najd Ahmad Al-Shami of Yemen. He described condition of schools, colonies and districts were characterized with simplicity. The students used to sit on the ground, or on the naked tiles. They used to sit on it even in their houses and streets¹².

Ahmad Al-Shami mentioned history of education in Yemen. He talked about demand of the people from the government to establish primary and secondary education and due to public demand government built first primary school and named it *Madrasatul Islah*. All the children who used to study in schools gathered in it. Later government built education department and soon that department got changed into ministry and created curriculum. Government imported books for primary from Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon¹³. Likewise Hamd Al-Jasir talked about history of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its development and hurdles faced by the Nezami education in particular¹⁴.

⁹ - Hayati: P. 116

¹⁰ - Ibid: P. 117

¹¹ - Al-Majallah Al-Arabiah, No, 116, Ramzan, 1407 H, P. 8.

¹²- Reyahut tagheer fil Yemen: P. 43

¹³ - Reyahut tagheer in Yemen: P. 44-45

¹⁴ - Al-Majallah Al-Arabiah, No, 180, Al-Moharram, 1413 H, P. 20 and 184.

Autobiographers of the Saudi Arabia and other Arab world also talked about the crisis faced by the Arabic language after the decline of the Ottoman Empire. They mentioned how colonialists tried to eradicate Arabic language not only from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia but from across the Arab world. For which, they even tried to introduce Latin alphabet. Later some Arabs helped their cause when they started demanding to replace the standard Arabic language with colloquial one. Though, in the wake of such situation, almost all the Arab countries tried to double their efforts to save the standard Arabic language. Hence, they included Quran in their curriculum as compulsory subject at all level of education. They also gave more space to classical Arabic literature in the curriculum. But they failed to realize that it was not enough without narrowing down space for colloquial language¹⁵.

Ahmad Ali mentioned the attempts that were made by teachers in the Ottoman Turkish schools to weaken Arabic Language and how they had tried to discourage use of Arabic language in class rooms. He said that “he heard from a student who was studying in *Rashidiyyia* School at Makkah that whenever any student would make a mistake of using Arabic language he would be fined one Qirsh on this mistake”¹⁶.

Nezar Qabbani mentioned that French tried to impose their language on the Arabs by force. They prohibited them to speak their own language. They would not even allow Arabs to speak Arabic language during playing a game. And if anyone is heard speaking Arabia language he would be shown a signal of punishment. Describing this situation he said “we grew up under the shadow of French culture. We were talking in French in a play ground due to fear of severe punishment. There used to be a small piece of wood, it would be used to give signal to those who would use any word of Arabic language”¹⁷.

¹⁵ -Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah fil Ababis Saudi: P. 661

¹⁶ - Zikriyyat: 27

¹⁷ - Qissati Ma’ash sher. P. 43

Similarities found between a Saudi writer Aziz Zia and Khalil Al-Handawi¹⁸, a writer from Syria. Both talked about same place, period and circumstances in their autobiographies. They mentioned their wound which didn't heal easily because wounds caused by any carnage in childhood hardly get healed. Khalil Al-Handawi said "wounds on hearts of children don't heal and if it heals it leaves its scars and whenever eyes see it, it gets scared"¹⁹. Both described their feelings of a miserable childhood. Moreover, both of them described their autobiography as story. Therefore, there is great similarity in dealing with issues of the war and its tragedy in their biographies. Al-Handawi said in the introduction of his auto biography *Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah* that "this is the story of my life"²⁰. Further he added "this is story of my life, starting with my childhood"²¹.

Similarly, Aziz Zia said in the introduction of his Autobiography that "shall I be able to adhere to this kind of truth when I would write story of my life *Hayati Ma'al Joee wal Hubbe wal Harbe*"²².

Both autobiographers have described catastrophe of First World War. They mentioned how people of their country had suffered so much distress and agony during this period. Al-Handawi talked about deteriorating health condition of the people due to hunger. While describing how children were suffering in their childhood at that time he said "I remember many children including me were suffering from pain and distress"²³. Then he asked himself in pain "who wouldn't remember those children who were competing with each other everywhere on sandy pavements and on abandoned roads for

¹⁸ - Khalil Handawi was born in "Saida" Labanon in 1906, later got Syrian citizenship.

¹⁹ -Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah. P. 15

²⁰ -Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah: P. 11

²¹ -Ibid: P. 11

²² - Hayati Ma'al Joee wal Hubbe wal Harbe: Vol. 1. P. 15.

²³ - Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah: P. 12

plates of burned breads. Hunger had left them like skin on their curved bones moving like shadow. Depression had choked their voices and hunger had handcuffed their hands. When hunger and diseases got together, they looked like skeleton. Hunger was knocking on our doors with its hard hammer. Behind it, there was disease which was not leaving the weak and sucked body that had become huge walking skeleton²⁴.

Aziz Zia also talked about those tragic conditions in his autobiography. He mentioned everything around him which was caused by the war. He said "I saw homelessness in streets and on roads. Typhus started spreading on its pavement. Then there were mule carts which started to come there to take away dead bodies. It was filled with caravan of hungry people. Hundreds of huge skeleton of men, women and children were walking on the streets without any motive and hope. They hardly had pieces of black bread. I knew my disease which was threatening my life every moment. I experienced the hunger, the hunger which was tearing the intestines"²⁵.

He further described the disastrous condition of the people as health of the poor was deteriorating day by day. His cheek bone was elevated and his eyes went inside. With the passage of some time, he realized that it was hunger that caused such condition for hundreds and thousands of people whom they used to see on the streets. His condition was not different. Bones got elevated, eyes were recessed, face looked sucked and turned yellow and neck got higher as if it would collapse under the weight of skull or head²⁶.

Similarly, Morad Al-Sebaee, another autobiography writer from Syria, also talked about tragedy of First World War in Syria in his autobiography *Shaiun Min Hayati*. He was a child when the war erupted. Al-Sebaee recalled all the

²⁴ -Ibid: P. 15

²⁵ - Hayati Ma'al Joee wal Hubbe wal Harbe: Vol. 1. P. 15.

²⁶ -Ibid: Vol. 1. P. 92

incidents related to the First World War that took place during his childhood. He described anxiety, hunger and fear among people at that time. Al-Sebaee also talked about diseases that were spreading rapidly and taking lives of human beings. He said "life was horrible during First World War. I was a child and all that I saw and remembered were painful. I don't recall any other picture so I could compare it with the other one. People were dying of hunger. They were begging for a piece of bread. Plague, chicken pox, cholera and typhus were natural and common. This was the life which I saw and experienced"²⁷.

Talks about aversions of people from doctors and hospitals

Autobiographers as well as writers of other Arab countries have mentioned in their autobiographies that people at the time of their childhood used to dislike getting any treatment by professional doctors or getting hospitalized for the treatment of any kind of disease even if it may cost their lives. They mentioned many examples where condition of a patient got worse due to not getting proper treatment in a hospital. This aversion some time even led to death of the patient or patient became paralyzed.

Taha Husain mentioned in his autobiography that people would avoid visiting doctors for treatment in his society. His sister was suffering from disease and her condition was getting worse day by day but she wasn't taken to hospital. On this situation he commented "it was strange that nobody thought about doctor"²⁸.

Ahmad Amin also mentioned that his brother had fallen sick severely and his condition got worse but his father declined to take him to the hospital. Ahmad Amin commented on such mentality in his autobiography. He said "hospital was a terrible word in the society. People would associate hospital

²⁷ - Shai'un Min Hayati. P. 13-14

²⁸ -Al-Ayyam: Vol. 1. P. 135

with death in the back of their mind. They wouldn't call it hospitals like we do in these days. They would call it carnage²⁹".

Like these two autobiographer from Egypt, Ahmad Ali, a Saudi writer, also gave example from Saudi Arabia where people didn't want to go to a doctor or visit a hospital for treatment. They were afraid of hospital and would consider hospital a place full of horror and repulsion. They would hate its medicines and smell of acid that was coming out from its windows. Many people would believe that one who gets hospitalized would get out of the hospital only to go to grave. Therefore, whenever, anyone would advise any patient to go to hospital-no matter how worse his condition might be- he would reply him "say good word oh brother³⁰".

Talks of social changes in autobiographies

Autobiographer in Saudi Arabia and in other Arab world also described social changes that occurred in the society as well as in their daily lifestyle. Some of them talked about differences between past and present.

Ahmad Amin³¹ mentioned social changes that occurred in his time and how much it had affected the lives of people. He talked about environment and customs of his society in detail. He presented true picture of the Egyptian society during last quarter of nineteenth century and first half of twentieth century. He talked about social changes in his society and mentioned that civilization didn't enter the houses. There was no running water in the houses. There were particular persons to bring water who would carry a pot made of skin on their back. But when he was young, he saw that the colony was excavated, pipes were spread and taps were fitted in houses. Now water was in our reach. Likewise, our foods were cooked on wood fire, then they

²⁹- Hayati: P. 135

³⁰ -Zikriyyat. P. 14

³¹ - Ahmad Amin (1886–1954) was an Egyptian historian and writer.

advanced and started cooking on coal then they got advanced further and cooked on Wabour³² primus³³.

Ahmad Amin also talked about the tradition of choosing life partner in his society. Describing traditional of marriages, he mentioned that they were arranged according to old tradition in those days. A young boy would hear from any of his friends and relatives that a person had a daughter who had reached the age of marriage. Then a person from boy side would go to father or guardian of the girl. They would describe her qualities to him. If he got convinced he would come for marriage without seeing her and without knowing about her look, nature and morals³⁴.

Mohammad Abdul Hameed Al-Mordad also mentioned tradition that was followed in his time to arrange a marriage. When a person wanted to propose any girl for marriage, he would send his mother or sister to any known or unknown family in Makkah. When mother or sister would reach the concerned house, she would clap at the doorstep. A female member from the girl house would come and greet her. After the hospitality, the female from the boy's family would put forward her proposal. If family member of the girl would find it suitable, she would ask the girl to come in front of her. Girl would come in best possible dress and make up. If female from boy side would get satisfied with the look of the girl, she would say, I want her for my son or brother³⁵.

Mohammad bin Saad Bin Husain also talked about tradition of marriage in his autobiography. He mentioned that his family asked him to send proposal of marriage to three girls one after all other and he had to obey them although he didn't have any feeling for anyone of them. He was not able to object to it

³² - Kerosene gas stove.

³³ -Hayati: P. 62-63

³⁴ -Ibid: P. 174

³⁵ - Rehlatul Umr: P, 251-250

or give his opinion in this matter due to his shyness from his father and subjugation of traditions but fortunately, after some inquiry, it was found that all of them were his foster sisters. Thus, he was able to choose his life partner and lived a happy life with her³⁶.

Saad bin Abdul Rahman Al-Bawardi presented tradition of arranging a marriage in his autobiography which was published in *Majallatul Hars Al-Watani*. He criticised the tradition because it caused his break up. He mentioned that one of his friends told him that there was a girl suitable to him. He praised her beauty and described her as being very much similar to her handsome brother. Therefore, Al-Bawardi sent marriage proposal to her and got married. But he was shocked when he saw her for the first time after marrying her. She was less beautiful than her brother. She was short, with dark skin and normal feature. Just after one month he decided to get separated amicably³⁷.

Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad from Egypt commented on nature of social relations among people in his autobiography *Ana*. He said "it is hard to keep people happy because it is an impossible mission to keep them happy. They hardly get agreed on one thing³⁸".

Abdul Karim Al-Jahiman expressed similar point of view in his autobiography while commenting on the philosophy of social relations. He said "human beings are naturally social. It is not possible for them to live a natural life alone. Therefore, it becomes necessary for them to live together. This intermixing, some time, leads to competition among them and some time enmity and friendship are born and many ambitions and goals clashes with each other³⁹".

³⁶ - Ibid:70

³⁷ -Majallatul Hars Al-Watani: P. 75. No. 152

³⁸ - Ana: P. 109

³⁹ -Mozakkeratun Wa Zikriyyatun Min Hayati: 262

Al-Aqqad and Ahmad Amin from Egypt and Hasan Kutbi and Mohammad bin Saad bin Husain from Saudi Arabia talked about similar trend of upbringing children in their societies. This trend was characterized with harshness, punishment on every minor mistake and compelling them to follow their elders and be serious even in their childhood.

Ahmad Amin said that "his father made him wear Al-Qubba, Al-Jubba, Turban and Al-Markoub when he reached fourteen years of his age. He felt that he had become Shaikh before time. Commenting on this tradition he said "If a child tries to be a man or if a man tries to be a child, both scenarios look odd"⁴⁰.

Similar kind of story about his childhood was narrated by a Saudi writer Hasan Kutbi in his autobiography *Hazehi Hayati*. He said "we were feeling manhood early in our mind and acute seriousness in our childhood, our parent made us hate our peer group and their activities and show wise opinion and good wit"⁴¹.

Dr. Ibn Husain also mentioned similar kind of upbringing he had received from his family members. He said "his family forced him to lead a very serious and strict life. Therefore, he started behaving like a man in his childhood"⁴².

Mikhail Noaima⁴³ (1888-1988), criticised some of the inherited traditions saying that "traditions have rulers and a ruler doesn't know mercy"⁴⁴. He further said "it tyrannizes mind and hearts of the people in ugliest way and plunder their ability of looking towards wide horizon and beautiful things of their life"⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ -Hayati:90

⁴¹ - Hazehi Hayati: P. 127

⁴² -Min Hayati: 284

⁴³ - was a Lebanese writer and poet of the New York pen league

⁴⁴ - Yanzoro Saboon: Vol.2 P. 226

⁴⁵ -Ibid: Vol.3. P. 66

Fadwa Tuqan⁴⁶ criticized Palestinian society for its harsh treatment of women and some traditional practices in her autobiography *Rehlatun Jabaliyyatun, Rehlatun Saabatun*. She said "Nablusi had their own social laws and to make people happy one needs to follow that law. One of the important points of law was that one couldn't take any stand in a gathering that indicated one being more knowledgeable than the others; otherwise, people would think that that person was an arrogant one and an imposter. Sarcastic and harsh criticism was a common characteristic of people in Nablus"⁴⁷. But, after the Palestinian (nakba) catastrophe in 1948, situation got changed and she started feeling sense of liberation. Feudalism collapsed. She could mix freely with their male counterparts. She said "When the roof fell on Palestine, the veil fell went off the face of the Nablus woman,"⁴⁸.

Claim of writers being honest

Saudi autobiographers and autobiographers of other Arab world claimed in their autobiographies that they tried to be honest in presenting their stories. Hamd Al-Jasir said in the beginning of his autobiography that he tried his best that his emotion wouldn't come in what he would write so that he wouldn't snatch right of anybody⁴⁹.

Similar claim is made by Khalil Handawi when he said "this is story of my life, a story in which I tried to be truthful. I didn't try to present myself as a noble person and free from any fault. Rather I tried to present myself as a human being, only a human being who has good deeds and bad deeds both"⁵⁰.

Similarly, Abu Abdurrahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri also claimed moderation while talking about himself in his autobiography *Tabarihut Tabarih*. He said "I tried hard in Al-Tabarih to record in my memories with honesty"⁵¹.

⁴⁶ - A Palestinian female poet and writer (1917 - 2003).

⁴⁷ - *Rehlatun Jabaliyyatun, Rehlatun Saabatun* P. 114

⁴⁸ - *Ibid.* P. 141

⁴⁹ - *Al-Majallah Al-Arabia*. No. 3. Sha'ban 1406 H. P. 12

⁵⁰ - *Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah*: P. 13

⁵¹ - *Tabarihut Tabarih*: P. 4

Murad Al-Sebaee confessed that he recorded only some incidents of his life in his Autobiography because it was tough to disclose everything about himself without feeling shy. He said "I spent over sixty years of life. Now when I go back to review that long reel of ambiguous, disarranged and fainted picture to record some of those in a book titled *Shai'un Min Hayati*. It seems tough to uncover my life in front of the society without feeling any kind of shyness. I am a human being and I don't think that there is any human being on the face of earth who can disclose every secrets of his life. I am afraid it is better not to mention about it"⁵².

Murad Al-Sebaee also has the same opinion that one shouldn't mention every painful incidents of his life. Therefore, he tried to present only positive incidents of his life in his autobiography. But he gave a different reason for not doing this. He said "when he refuses to uncover his life he doesn't mean to present only good and noble things of his life..no. but it is better that some of the things shouldn't be said particularly when it is painful. I try not to be committed to any useless thing or to anything that may hurt some of my friends and acquaintances"⁵³.

All these claims, reasons and clarifications indicate that Saudi autobiographers lived under great pressure of the society. They didn't dare to face any kind of criticism and accountability.

Political-historical issues

Autobiographer in the Arab world talked about World Wars, particularly about the First World War, colonialism and its effect and national revolution against it, whereas Saudi autobiographers mentioned the two World Wars only.

⁵² - *Shai'un Min Hayati*: P. 12-13

⁵³ - *Shai'un Min Hayati*: P. 12-13

Taha Husain described his journey to France for higher education and how situation in the wake of First World War compelled him to return to Egypt. But he was not able to enter his own country without the permission of British occupant at that time. Remembering this situation he said "Egypt was in the hand of non Egyptians. Particularly entry to it was narrowed down and made difficult. Surveillance was imposed on it, under this surveillance; it was not easy for an Egyptian to enter his country. He had to wait for long time until he was allowed to enter"⁵⁴.

Taha Husain also talked about struggle and sacrifice of Egyptians in order to get independence from the colonialists. He described how Egyptians stood against colonialist for the right of their country across the Egypt. Describing his feeling in that period he said "he was happy, his heart was filled with happiness and conscience was filled with satisfaction. Then news came that Egypt was demanding freedom from colonialists and occupants. Then the news came that colonialists started oppressing Egyptians because Egypt got angry for its sons and revolted against its enemies"⁵⁵. But when he saw some glimpses of dispute that was arising among political parties at that time, he felt that politicians who were revolting against colonialists and occupants would differ with each other sometime soon or later. He was afraid that internal clash could be the biggest hurdle in the way of conquering enemy. He described his fear saying "Egyptians were about to get together and become one hand against their enemies, the British forces but the stick might get broken soon and dispute might get shrill than it was back then"⁵⁶. But at the same time he was optimistic and hoped that learned people and intellectuals would come out and handle

⁵⁴ -Al-Ayyam: Vol. 3. P. 89

⁵⁵ -Al-Ayyam.Vol.3. P. 137.

⁵⁶ -Ibid:Vol.3 P. 163

such situation when it arises. He said “learned people and intellectuals would make a balance among politicians when they would differ”⁵⁷.

Similarly, Ahmad Amin also mentioned British occupation of Egypt and its effect over the psychology of Egyptians in his autobiography *Hayati*. He said “Egyptians were occupied by a kind of fear and pessimism at that time because British forces surrounded them with their majesty and power”⁵⁸. Quoting his father who would hardly speak about politics and its affairs he said “if he would speak about politics, in this regard his philosophy was similar to the philosophy of many people who would believe that this was the judgment of Allah and his revenge against his worshipers because Egyptians oppressed each other. Their ruler oppressed them. Due to going against the commandment of Allah, He empowers British over them who are torturing them badly. This calamity would be continued until Egyptian would repent and act justly and get committed to the affairs of the Deen”⁵⁹.

Ahmad Amin also talked about the disaster caused by the First World War. He said “Egypt suffered from disaster of the War. Economic condition got deteriorated. British oppressed Egyptians and Egyptian workers had to work against their will”⁶⁰.

At the same time he also felt that these atrocities and oppression committed by the British men nurtured a sense of nationalism among Egyptians and therefore they stood against the tyrant and fought for freedom. And finally after a long gruelling struggles and great sacrifices they obtained freedom.

Mikhael Noaima also felt pain and agony when he saw killing of millions of people in the First World War that also left uncountable number of orphans,

⁵⁷ -Ibid: Vol.3 P. 158

⁵⁸ -Hayati.P. 110

⁵⁹ -Ibid: P. 110

⁶⁰ -Ibid:P. 185

widows, injured and handicapped behind it. He criticised the First World War as well as coalition of nations after the war and their hidden agenda behind the coalition in strongest term in his autobiography *Sab'oon*. He also criticised the Belfour Declaration and the promised made in this Declaration which he believed was nothing but their conspiracy and their goal was to occupy Palestine and disperse its people. Bitterness of this tragedy is still being faced by Palestinians and Arabs. He said "what was the gain of these four years of killing? Millions of people were killed, injured, defaced, distorted and crackbrained then children orphaned and women widowed"⁶¹. Criticising the coalition of nations after the war he said "the coalition extended the authority of British and French and helped them implement their conspiracy. Then report on Egypt was issued after making a strange body in the name of deputation. However, Belfour Declaration was even worse than this"⁶².

Autobiographer in Arab world as well as autobiographers of Saudi Arabia talked about war of 1967 in their autobiographies. This war was also known as *The Six-Day War* or in Arabic as (النكسة) an-Naksah ⁶³. It was fought during June 5 and 10 in 1967 between Israel and the neighbouring states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria which was known at the time as the United Arab Republic⁶⁴.

Fadwa Touqan (1917-2003)⁶⁵, known as *the Poet of Palestine* dealt with issues of Palestine including The Six-Day War in his autobiography *Rehlatun Jabaliyyatun Rehlatun Sa'abatu*. She witnessed from her own eyes all those incidents that took place in the land of Palestine after the Israel occupation. Also, she suffered more than others because of her geographical location and due to being a

⁶¹ -Sab'oon: P. 132/2

⁶² -Ibid: P. 132/2

⁶³ - also known as "The Setback" or حرب, as the June War, 1967 Arab–Israeli War, or Third Arab–Israeli War.

⁶⁴ - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-Day_War

⁶⁵ - A Palestinian poet and writer. She was well known for her representations of resistance to Israeli occupation in contemporary Arab poetry.

Palestinian. That is why she dealt with all these issues better than other autobiographer. She talked about how this war had begun and how Palestinian revolution started against the British occupation before the declaration of Jewish state. She mentioned that Sheikh Azduddin Al-Qassam raised his Arab hand and gave the first knock at the door of revolution. As soon as the revolution started it gained popularity and got stronger and stronger day by day. Soon a big national meeting was held in Nablus and the National Council was formed and it issued a statement expressing anger of Arab over policy of the government which was aimed at uprooting Arabs from their Arab land⁶⁶.

Describing the oppression by the British forces and the condition of Palestinians during the war she said “we were shocked at the declaration of curfew any time during the day. People were besieged where they were. They were not allowed to leave their homes and raiding homes in the name of search became common. It used to happen during nights and day times. There was no difference”⁶⁷. In such a situation revolution against British rule got stronger and every Palestinian started participating in this revolution to protect their country from the tyrant Britain.

Entire Arab world had suffered from tragedy of June war but Palestinian had suffered the most. Fadwa Touqan mentioned that catastrophe occurred over the land of the Arabs. They were defeated and lost the battle. Their sorrows were unbearable. Air was playing with white flags over roofs of their houses. They were occupied by Israeli forces. She got distressed and will remain the same until she would die⁶⁸. She further stated her mental condition during this war as she was not able to compose poetry due to effervescence of her

⁶⁶ - Rehlatun Jabaliyyatun Rehlatun Sa'abatu: P. 101

⁶⁷ -Ibid: 105-106

⁶⁸ -Ibid: 236

emotion and scattered mind. She said "I suffered from numbness for two complete months after the war of June"⁶⁹.

Palestinians were subjugated by Israelis after the June War. They had to live their lives under the mercy of Israelis. They were so frightened that mere a thought of Israeli presence in their city would make them numb. Fadwa Touqan described such condition during the war. She said "from the first day I remained in my house. I didn't get out for next two months during the occupation. My heart beat would even beat faster whenever I would think of going to the trade centre in the heart of the city. A mere thought of presence of Israelis and their tanks would shake my existence and disable my ability to move"⁷⁰.

Fadwa Touqan also talked about emergence of Palestinian revolt against Israeli forces. She spoke highly about it. She believed that it has more values than the political one. It was most important incident in the history of Palestine and in Arab-Israel clash. It had more moral values than the political one⁷¹.

People of Palestine had great hope from peace initiatives called by President George H. W. Bush to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Bush's announcement was followed by eight months of continued shuttle diplomacy by Secretary of State James Baker, culminating in the Madrid Peace Conference in October 1991⁷². The Conference was co-chaired by Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. It was attended by Israeli, Egyptian, Syrian, and Lebanese

⁶⁹ -Ibid: P. 110

⁷⁰ -Al-Rehla Al-As'ab

⁷¹ - Rehlatun Jabaliyyatun Rehlatun Sa'abatu: P. 101

⁷²- The Madrid Peace Conference started October 30, 1991, and ended on November 4 in Madrid, hosted by Spain and co-sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union. It was an attempt by the international community to revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace process through negotiations, involving Israel and the Palestinians as well as Arab countries, including Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. (Eran, Oded. "Arab-Israel Peacemaking." The Continuum Political Encyclopedia of the Middle East. Ed. Avraham Sela. New York: Continuum, 2002, p. 137) (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/madrid-conference>)

delegations, as well as a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. It was the first time, all of the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict had got together to hold direct negotiations. This conference was followed by a series of bilateral and multilateral negotiations. Bilateral talks between Israeli officials and their Arab counterparts began in Washington in December 1991, while multilateral negotiations began in Moscow in January 1992. The bilateral track was aimed at achieving peace treaties between Israel and its three neighbouring states i.e. Jordan, Lebanon and Syria as well as with the Palestinians. The multilateral track was about shared regional issues like water, environment, arms control, refugees and economic development. Unfortunately, The Conference didn't yield desired result. The Washington talks had become deadlocked and were overtaken by secret Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Jordanian negotiations, which produced the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration, known as *Oslo Accord* in September 1993 and the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty of October 1994⁷³.

Fadwa Touqan expressed her views over the failure of Arab Israeli peace talks which started post Madrid conference. She said "with Madrid conference a luminary line was drawn in front of us. We were happy with it. Our dreams and hopes were pinned on it. But soon Arab Israeli negotiations process stumbled without gaining anything. It didn't reach to any conclusion and we immersed and immersed in the quagmire of despair and pessimism"⁷⁴.

Another great poet and writer of Autobiography Nizar Tawfique Qabbani also talked about the Six Day War in his autobiography *Qissati Ma'ash She'r*. But he dealt with this subject in a quite different and philosophical way. He

⁷³ - The Madrid Framework. Israel MFA, 28 January 1999- Preamble: Madrid Conference. PNA, archived on 19 December 2003 - https://web.archive.org/web/20031219142434/http://www.pna.gov.ps/Peace_Process/Peace_files/madrid.asp (<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20madrid%20framework.aspx>)

⁷⁴ - Rehlatun Jabaliyyatun Rehlatun Sa'abatu: P. 166

said "I shall not talk here about June of Military or June of the War. This is suitable for the historians and compilers of documents. The June I will talk about is a June of psychology which I believe has more effect than the effect of June of Military"⁷⁵.

Similarly, Ghazi Al-Qosaibi from Saudi Arabia also talked about the tragedy of the Six Day War in his autobiography to a great extent. He said: "I have seen that period. It was a comprehensive collapse which ended in deadly tragedy for Arabs in Black June. This tragedy was such a scion stab in the heart of the Arab nation that it hasn't been healed yet. I don't expect that it would be healed after such a long period of bitterness"⁷⁶. Furthermore, he considered this tragedy as a turning point in his life in the true sense. It exposed him to torn apart, impotent and humiliated Arab World⁷⁷. He got very disturbed with this war which got penetrated life of every Arabs. He becomes very pessimistic while talking about this six-day war which took place in June and that the reason why he termed it as Black June.

However, at the same time, he pondered upon reasons and root cause of the defeat. He believed that the biggest enemy was not Israel. They were powerful because we were weak. Their power was simply a reflection of our weakness. Similarly, he neither blamed the western colonialism completely nor he considered them as the main enemy. He said "colonial world colonises only those who are ready to be colonized "⁷⁸. He strongly believed that backwardness was the root cause of all problems in the Arab world. He also believed that first enemy was the backwardness⁷⁹. Every step that would be taken to get rid of any form of backwardness, be it financial backwardness or

⁷⁵ - Qissati Ma'ash She'r (Siratun Zatiyyatun). P. 210

⁷⁶ - Ibid: P. 77

⁷⁷ - Ibid: P.. 82

⁷⁸ - Siratun Sheriyyatun: P. 118

⁷⁹ - Siratun Sheriyyatun: P. 118

intellectual, social or political backwardness it would be a step towards overcoming defeat and marching towards victory⁸⁰.

Zahir Al-Almaee, another Saudi writer also talked about this *Six-Day War* or the *Setback* that hit the Arab nation very badly. He pointed out some mistakes that were made by Arab leaders. Then he gave different reasons for the defeat. He believed that some Arabs didn't fight for the sake of Islam and upholding the word of Allah in the land and Allah has promised victory only for those who help His religion and establish His laws on the face of the earth, whereas, the Arab army did not have a united leadership. There was no coordination before the beginning of the war. Any front didn't have any idea about what was going on the other front. Particularly, they didn't have any idea about the sudden attack by Israeli. He believed that the Arabs were defeated because America also stood with Israel and participated in the war with its opinion, weapons and supports⁸¹.

There is another point where autobiographies written by Saudi writers differ with autobiographies written by writers of the other Arab countries that is shameless confessions. Taufiqul Hakim confessed in his autobiography with no shame when he said "since we knew those particular houses at that time we came to know about sexual intercourse with woman. We would sneak to it secretly without any fear of shame and watchman"⁸². Fadwa Touqan confessed that she would smoke and she wouldn't lead a religious life and her relation with religion and its book was not good"⁸³. Such types of confessions were very rare in any literary genre of Saudi Arabia, let alone autobiography. However, Nawal Sa'adawi, Khalil Handawi and Nezar Qabbani mentioned similar type of confessions in their autobiographies. Khalil Handawi wrote in

⁸⁰ - Ibid: P. 119

⁸¹ -Ibid: P. 133-136

⁸² - Sijnul Umr: P. 103

⁸³ -Rehlatun Jabaliyyatun: Rehlatun Saabatun P. 129 and 219

his autobiography that he opposed some of commandment of Islamic law and compulsions to follow those laws actually led him to ignore performing some of the basic pillar of Islam⁸⁴. Nezar Qabbani said “we were in love under the shadow of fear. We were going for dates under the shadow of fear”⁸⁵. He also said that “every glass of grape-wine I drank, there was smell of blood of Lorca”⁸⁶. Similarly, Nawal Al-Sa’adawi confessed some of harassment shamelessly which she faced during her adolescence. She said “she faced what Islam has forbidden between man and women except through legal way”⁸⁷. These examples are rarest of rare in Saudi literature because of teaching of Islam and Islamic law. Therefore, one can see it as shameless confessions otherwise it is a common trend in literature of the world.

Thus one can see similarities and differences in interest and concern among Autobiographer in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. They talked about issue of Palestine and Israeli occupation as well as impact of the Two World Wars in their autobiographies. Some of the Saudi autobiographes and autobiographers of other Arab countries tried to analyse the *Setback* of 1967 in their own way. Some called for unity of the Arab nations to fight against the Zionists. Some reminded the need of upholding the word of Allah in His Land. While some others called for combating backwardness in every form.

⁸⁴ -Al-Sirah Al-Zatiyyah: P. 24

⁸⁵ -Qissati Ma’sh She’r: P. 93

⁸⁶ -Ibid: P. 107

⁸⁷ - Mozakkerato Tabibah: P. 9

5.2 Writing style

Saudi writers used to read literary works of prominent writers of the Arab world in the leading newspapers and magazines that were being published from other Arab countries like Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Morocco. These magazines and newspapers were headed by prominent writers of that time. Hence, it was likely that autobiographers would follow writing style of those writers while writing their autobiographies. Therefore, one finds Saudi writers following writing style of the prominent writers like Taha Husain, Ahmad Amin, Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, Mikhael Noaima and some other writers of Arab countries.

Use of third and first person in narrating events of life in autobiographies

Taha Husain was the first writer of autobiography who used third person pronoun in writing his epic autobiography *Al-Ayyam*. He used third person pronoun to talk about himself instead of using first person pronoun. He talks about himself and the reader feels that he is talking about another child he grew up with him and lived his whole life with him. At the same time, he also used other words like fellow, child, and young boy to address himself. He wrote "our fellow goes to the school and returns from it without doing anything"⁸⁸. At another place, he wrote "our child got closer to the monitor and started reciting the Qur'an in front of him"⁸⁹. But gradually one could realize in the second part of *Al-Ayyam* that these two terminologies *fellow* and *child* vanished and replaced with *young boy* to address himself. He wrote "mind of young boy was full of sorrow and anger but the young boy felt another thing"⁹⁰. At another place he writes that the young boy didn't get

⁸⁸ -Al-Ayyam: P. 39/1

⁸⁹ -Ibid: P. 50/1

⁹⁰ -Ibid: P. 146/2

only two breads but he also got cupboard with it in the hostel. The young boy was very happy with his bread and cupboard”⁹¹.

On few occasions only, Taha Husain used first person when he was compelled to do so because of the demand of the context. He said “as far as I am concerned, I can’t tell you except what the child remembers”⁹².

Popularity of this autobiography and its role in motivating many writers of the Arab world for writing their autobiographies are well known. They followed the style of *Al-Ayyam* in one way or other while writing their autobiographies. Therefore, we see autobiographers in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia were not different and they also got inspired with *Al-Ayyam* and followed it in many ways.

Hamd Al-Jasir from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is another such writer who used third person pronoun in his autobiography besides using words like *young boy*⁹³ and *our fellow*⁹⁴ like Taha Husain did. But it is strange to know that apart from Hamd Al-Jasir one hardly finds any other Autobiographer in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who used third person pronoun. They used first person pronoun (I) while narrating stories of their life. This is not the case only with the autobiographer of Saudi Arabia, instead most of the autobiographer in other countries of the Arab world also used *I* in their autobiographies.

Critics have tried to give some reasons behind using first person pronoun *I* by writers of autobiographies. Dr. Mahir Hasan Fahahmi said “Ahmad Amin decided to present himself with first person pronoun because he realized that *I* here is similar to narrator or himself. Therefore, he was able to narrate or

⁹¹ - Ibid: P. 148/2

⁹² - Ibid: P. 109/1

⁹³ - Al-Majallah Al-Arabia. No. 180. Al-Moharram 1413 P. 21

⁹⁴ -Ibid: P. 153. No. Shawwal 1410 H. P. 22

halt for making a comment on the narration and time gets spread before him and he could go ahead or he could get back without abiding by order of incidents"⁹⁵. That could be the reason why most of autobiographers in the Arab world including Saudi Arabia, use *I* to narrate story of their lives. It can be easily concluded that Taha Husain and Hamd Al-Jasir might be the exception in this genre.

Choice of words and composition of sentences

A reader of *Al-Ayyam* realizes that Taha Husain choosed his words very carefully. He didn't use uninhibited and unusual words. This is clear from the description he gave about people of his village when they were listening to one of the singers. He said:

"و هم سكوت إلا حين يستخفهم الطرب، أو تستفزهم الشهوة، فيستعيدون و يتمارون و يختصمون، و يسكت الشاعر حتى يفرغوا من لفظهم بعد وقت قصير أو طويل، ثم يستأنف إنشاده العذب بنغمته التي لاتكاد تتغير"⁹⁶

Similarly, Mohammad Husain Zaidan chose very simple words in his autobiography. His sentences are very simple and easy to understand. One can't find any kind of ambiguity or equivocalness are not found in his writing. For example he said:

" خاصمني قبل أن يعرفني، و صافاني حين عرفني، و اصفيته حين عرفته "⁹⁷

" تلك أيام مضت أتطرى بذكرها حين أستريح إليها "⁹⁸

" المقدمة هذه أتنفس بها و لا أنافس "⁹⁹

⁹⁵ -Al-Seerah Tarikhun wa Fan'nun: P. 245

⁹⁶ -Al-Ayyam: P. 5/1

⁹⁷ Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasa:h:P. 229

⁹⁸ -Ibid: P. 244

⁹⁹ -Ibid:P. 235

Taha Husain used reverse style in his writing in *Al-Ayyam* quite often.

"و يده تصطدم بهذه الأيدي الكثيرة المسرعة التي تهوي لترتفع وترتفع لتهوي"¹⁰⁰

"فلما تقدمت به السن أعرض عن التجارة أو أعرضت التجارة عنه"¹⁰¹

"قد إبتسموا للحياة و إبتسمت لهم الحياة"¹⁰²

Al-Zaidan also used reverse style in his autobiography. Following are some examples from his autobiography.

"فالرجال إيمان، و الإيمان رجال"¹⁰³

"شديد القوة بل و قوي الشدة"¹⁰⁴

"أبناء عمه من أهل العوالي حضرا مع البدو، و بدوا مع الحضرة"¹⁰⁵

Musical beauty is also evident in the selection of words and composition of sentences in the writing style of Taha Husain. The below mentioned sentences are a clear witness to this aspect.

"و يمثل بعضها خشبا ينقصم أو عودا ينحطم"¹⁰⁶

"فهناك الصباح والغناء و هناك الضجيج و العجيج"¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ -Al-Ayyam: P. 25/2

¹⁰¹ -Ibid: P.44/2

¹⁰² -Ibid: P. 45/2

¹⁰³- Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasa: P. 107

¹⁰⁴ - Ibid: P. 107

¹⁰⁵ -Ibid: P. 174

¹⁰⁶ -Al-Ayyam: P. 8/1

¹⁰⁷ -Ibid:P.9/1

Same kind of musical beauty is also found in the writing style of Al-Zaidan, his choice of words and in composition of sentences. He said:

"الأمية حين انمحت أصلتهم، و القسوة حين اشتدت لهم"¹⁰⁸

"خاصموا عنها، و اختصموا من أجلها"¹⁰⁹

"قلب تمذهب، و لسان كاد يذهب"¹¹⁰

Similarity between Taha Husain and the autobiographers like Aziz Zia, Sa'ad Al-Bawardi and Hasan Kutbi is also in repeating one word in a sentence in their autobiographies quite often.

Taha Husain writes:

"من قرية إلى قرية و من مدينة إلى مدينة داخل الإقليم"¹¹¹

"ومهما ينس الصبي فلن ينسى ليلة غلط فيها أحد المنشدين و مهما ينس الصبي فلن ينسى تأثير

هذه الغضبة في نفوس الذاكرين"¹¹²

وهي على ذلك غرفة النوم، وغرفة الطعام، و غرفة الحديث، و غرفة السمر، وغرفة القراءة و

الدرس"¹¹³

Aziz Zia writes:

"ثم حرب أخرى، حرب عالمية، حرب... حرب"¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ - Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasa: P.73

¹⁰⁹ -Ibid: P. 192

¹¹⁰ - Ibid:P. 289

¹¹¹ -Al-Ayyam: P.88/1

¹¹² - Ibid: P. 92/1

¹¹³ -Ibid:6/2

¹¹⁴ -Hayati Ma'al Joee, wal Hubbe wal Harbe: P 15/1

فالأرض تمشي، الجبال تمشي، والأشجار الصغيرة المتناثرة هنا وهناك هي أيضا تمشي"¹¹⁵

"يا رب يارب يا عزيز قول يا رب"¹¹⁶

Sa'ad Al-Bawari writes:

ومن يوم إلى يوم ، و من شهر إلى شهر، و من عام إلى عام، ون طفل تحمله أمه....إلى طفل يحبو،

إلى طفل يخطو...¹¹⁷

و كانت هذه هي نقطة البداية...بداية الحياة، بداية الشعور، بالمسؤولية، بداية البحث عن موطن

قدم"

"مرت خالية من كل شيء، خالية من العمل، خالية من التفكير، خالية حتى من الإحساس"¹¹⁸

Taha Husain used superlative form in his autobiography quite often. In the same way one can observe Hamd Al-Jasir used superlative form in his autobiography quite frequently. Taha Husain writes:

"كان أنشط من أبيه و أقدر على الكيد و اللؤم و أنهض للخصومة كان أقرب من أبيه إلى الدنيا، و

أبعد من أبيه عن الدين"¹¹⁹

فهو أسرع الناس خطرا و أظرفهم نكتة و أطولهم لسانا و أخفهم دعابة و أشدهم تتبععا لعيوب

الناس و أعظمهم إغراقا في الغيبة"¹²⁰

Al-Jasir writes:

¹¹⁵ -Ibid: 20/1

¹¹⁶ - Ibid:231/1

¹¹⁷ -Seeratun Zatiyyatun: P.94

¹¹⁸ -Hazihi Hayati: P.5

¹¹⁹ -Al-Ayyam: P. 89/1 uses of same can be seen on page : 59, 78, 80,

¹²⁰ -Ibid: 46/2 then on P. 4 and 47. And

"فقد كان رجلا صالحا أبعد ما يكون التعرض لما لا يعنيه و أكره الناس لأن ينال أحد في مجلسه في

غيبة ثم هو من أعف الناس لسانا و أنزههم معاملة و أزهدهم في غشيان المجتمعات"¹²¹

"و هو من أروع علماء هذا العهد و أبعدهم عن المظاهر و أزهدهم في الدنيا"¹²².

Autobiographers followed other prominent autobiographer in the Arab world. Ahmad Amin is an autobiographer who analyses things to reach a conclusion like he did while mentioning death of his sister at the age of twelve. He said "when she had died I was in the womb of my mother. I drank blood that was full of sorrow and after my birth I drank milk that was full of sorrow, when I was born I received a reception that was full of sorrow again. Could that be the reason I remained sad throughout my life? Allah knows or knowledgeable people could know?"¹²³.

In similar way Abul Karim Al-Jahiman analyzed disease of one of his friends which caused his death. He said "finally, I realized that he was suffering from psychological disease and his disease was acute, but I didn't realize that his physical disease was the reason for his psychological disease"¹²⁴.

Ahmad Amin was also inclined to use lot of prepositions to divide as one finds him doing same in the following sentences"

"منها ما يدور حول مكر النساء و دهائن و منها حول العفارت"¹²⁵

At another place he said:

"منها ما يناسب الطبقة الدنيا و منها ما يناسب الطبقة الوسطى و هكذا"¹²⁶

¹²¹ -Al-Majallah Al-Aabia: No. 170 P. Rabiul Awwal 1412. H. P. 26.

¹²² - Al-Majallah Al-Aabia: No. 164 P. Ramdan 1411. H. P. 25.

¹²³ -Hayati: P. 61

¹²⁴ -Mozakkerat wa Zikriyyat min Hayati: P. 65

¹²⁵ -Hayati: P. 62

A similar kind of style is found in the writing of Al-Jahiman. He said:

منها ما يذهب يمين والدتي، و منها ما يقع شمالها، و منها ما يقصر دونها، و منها ما يقع أمامها¹²⁷

"ومررت تجارب: منها الحلو، و منها المر، و منها ما هو بين بين"¹²⁸.

Abbas Mahmood Al-Aqqad and Al-Jahiman both were so inclined to analyzing things that they analyse their names as well. Aqqad explained why he was called Al-Aqqad and Al-Jahiman explained how he was given the title Al-Jahiman.

Al-Aqqad said "does anyone know from where I got the name Al-Aqqad. No one really, apart from this, there are many things about me which people don't know. As far as Al-Aqqad is concerned, that grandfather of my father was from Damyat. He was in the profession of making silk. From there people have taken Al-Aqqad meaning one who knits silk"¹²⁹

Similar kind of explanation is given by Al-Jahiman in his autobiography. He said: Jahiman is a strange word in the title of my name. It refers to my grandfather because he would go for his work late midnight and *jahama* meant going for work late midnight. From there people have miniaturized it. Instead of Jahim they made it Jahiman"¹³⁰.

Taha Husain, Mikhael Nouaima and Mohammad Husain Zaidan used short sentences in their autobiographies.

Some examples from *Al-Ayyam* are given below.

¹²⁶ -Ibib: P. 77

¹²⁷ - Mozakkerat wa Zikriyyat min Hayati: P. 29

¹²⁸ -Ibid: P. 263

¹²⁹ -Ana: P. 31

¹³⁰ - Mozakkerat wa Zikriyyat min Hayati: P. 23

" فكانت تلبي صاحبنا أكثر وقته بحديثها، و تعديدها، و أقاصيصها، و ألوان رشوتها. و بينما كان صاحبنا يرشو و يرتشي، و يخدع و يخدع، كان القرآن يمحي من صدره آية آية، و سورة و سورة، حتى اليوم المحترم..... و ياله من يوم¹³¹."

Following are some examples from the autobiography of Mikhael Noaima

" و إذ ذاك فالبجر وما توحيه أبعاده و أعماقه، و ارتعاشه، و إنتفاضه، و تجمداته و تبخراته¹³²."

" منكبان عريضان، رأس كبير، جميل التكوين، كيف الشعر، ناعمه، عريض الجبين، عاليه، نافر الصدغين¹³³."

And these are examples from autobiography of Al-Zaidan as well.

" فما زالت الصغير بينهم، و إن كنت الكبير معهم...و لا بأس بالصوت، فهو غير حسيير، و غير محصور¹³⁴."

" إذ لا عبرة بالكرت قبل النطق، أو بعد النطق، فالعبرة بالنطق¹³⁵."

¹³¹ -Al-Ayyam: P. 55/1 we see similar example on page 62/1, 80, 101, and 93 as well.

¹³² Sab,oon: P. 16/3-

¹³³ -Ibid: P. 29/3

¹³⁴ -Zikriyatul Ohood Al-Salasa: P. 182

¹³⁵ -Ibid: 219

Psychological state of autobiographers

Autobiography is almost unique among literary genres in a way that most of the Autobiographer in Arab countries as well as Saudi Arabia wrote about their hesitation and self introspection in presenting autobiographies to the public, whereas such hesitation or self introspection are not common in presenting stories, novel or any other genre. Authors have mentioned about their hesitation and self introspection in the introductions of their autobiographies. They wrote how hesitant they were initially but they had to write their autobiographies or had to give it for publication due to persistent demand and follow-up by their friends, colleagues and readers and some time from magazines and journals as well.

Abdul Karim Al-Jahiman mentioned in the introduction of his autobiography *Mozakkeratun wa Zikriyyatun Min Hayati* that he had thought about writing this memories of my life but he was hesitant¹³⁶. Similarly, Zahir Al-Almaee wrote in the introduction of his autobiography *Rehlatun Salasin Aaman* a quip that he was hesitant a lot and thought for long time before sending it for publication¹³⁷. Abdur Rahman Sabbag also mentioned in his autobiography that some of his acquaintances in teaching and studying field asked him to write a booklet containing my biography. Initially he was hesitant to accept the request and work on the idea but finally he decided to go ahead with this¹³⁸.

Saeed Bouqari also mentioned that he wrote his autobiography on persistent request of his friends¹³⁹.

¹³⁶ - *Mozakkeratun wa Zikriyyatun Min Hayati*: P.7

¹³⁷ - *Rehlatun Salasin Aaman*: P. 6

¹³⁸ - *Zikriyyato Modarresin*: P.5

¹³⁹ - *Min Zikriyyati*: P. 3

Likewise, one finds similar kind of confessions in the autobiographies of other Arab countries. Taha Husain wrote that *Majallatul Helal* asked him for things about himself and was so persistent in its request that he had to answer its request. And when he wrote what was asked from him, he presented it to one of his friends who advised him not to do so. He even apologized to the magazine but the magazine didn't accept his apology and remained persistent in its request. Finally, he gave what he had written to the magazine unwillingly¹⁴⁰.

Ahmad Amin was of the opinion that only the politicians or big personalities deserve to write their biographies and that is why he was hesitant about writing his autobiography. He mentioned in the introduction of his autobiography that he never got frightened to write anything except publishing this book¹⁴¹. He asked himself what people would get from my life? He was neither a politician nor he worked in a coveted position¹⁴².

Abdul Karim Al-Jahiman expressed similar kind of thought in the introduction of his autobiography. He wrote what benefit the reader would get from his autobiography when he didn't play any effective role for his nation, neither from political angle nor from economic angle¹⁴³.

It seems Ahmad Shami had to have tough battle with himself and was more frightened when he thought of publishing his autobiography. He said "initially I was confused and hesitant in publishing story of my life and got into a long discussion with myself"¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴⁰ - Al-Ayyam: 1992 edition. Published by Markazul Ahram Lit tarjuma wal Nashr: P. 8

¹⁴¹ -Hatati: P. 47

¹⁴² - Ibid:P. 48

¹⁴³ -Mozakkerat wa zikriyyat min Hayati: P. 7

¹⁴⁴ -Reyahut Taghyeer fil Yaman: P.7

Trend of naming autobiography

Selection of a good name or giving a good title to any literary work is very important. It reflects interest and psychology of the author. Sometime, it indicates point of view of the author as well as his nature and personality. Now a days, selection of a good name to anything including literary work, is considered like giving wing to it as a good name of a literary work attracts more readers. It effects psychology of readers and plays very important role in increasing popularity and circulation of a book as well. Therefore, be it for a particular reason or general reason, giving a good name or title to anything has become almost a norm in modern day. Media played big role in spreading this trend. Since, literature is an integral component of any society it had to be affected with this trend as well. Every genre of literature went through different phases of evolution and innovation in terms of giving a title, or finding a suitable for a literary work.

While going through the autobiographies, a reader realizes that like other genres, autobiography also went through different phases for giving titles to it. Authors of autobiographies benefitted from the efforts for development, modernization and innovations for giving a name, heading or title to a literary work. Therefore, we see different trends of naming autobiographies. Some are very simple and consisted of just one or two words, like *Ana*, *Al-Ayyam*, *Hayati*. Some are made of compound words but most of them are very easy and simple and in nominal sentences only like *Reyahut Taghyeer fil Yemen*, *Rehlatun Jabliyyatun Rehlatun Sa'abatun*.

In the initial phase, some names were taken from the terminology used for autobiography in Arabic like *Siratun Zatiyyatun* or it were taken from some words which were used interchangeably for autobiography in Arabic , like, *Mozakkerat*, *Zikriyyat*, *Youmiyyat*, *Eiterafat*. Later on, these titles were replaced

by other words derived from word *Hayat* like *Hayati* of Ahmad Amin and *Hayato Qalamin* by Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, *Sijnul Umr*. Then there are some autobiographers who chose titles which were indicative of profession of the autobiographer like *Mozakkerato Tabibatin* by Nawal Al-Sa'adawi and *Hayati Ma'ash sher* by Salah Abdus Shakoor. Some of the authors have added *ya* of the speaker or first person to the word that demonstrate its subject like *Rehlatun Ma'ar rewayah* by Fathi Abul Fazl and *Rehlati Ma'al Qera'a* by Yousuf Al-Sharooni, *Qissati Ma'ash sher* or *Tajrebatu Al-Sheriyyah* by Abdul Wahab Al-Bayani. But in the last few decades, authors of autobiography invented a new way of giving title to their autobiographies. They gave different titles and used traditional word to clarify that it is an autobiography. For example Jabra Ibrahim Jabra named his autobiography *Al-Be'r Al-Oola: Fosulun min Siratin Zatiyyatin* and Fadwa Touqan gave the title *Rehlatun Jabaliyyatun: Rehlatun Sa'abatun: Siratun Zatiyyatun* and Farooq Shosha gave the title *Azaabaatul Umr Al-Jamil: Seeratun Sheriyyatun* to his autobiography. In first instance, the main title doesn't indicate that these are autobiographies. Therefore, authors have added common words which are used for autobiography to clarify that it is actually an autobiography.

Similarly, autobiographers differed in narrating stories and events that happened in different periods of their lives in their autobiographies. Some have talked about their childhood only like Abdul Majid Bin Jalloun did. He only narrated events of his childhood in his autobiography. Jabra Ibrahim Jabra wrote in the introduction of his autobiography that "I decided to write about early period of my life". Mikhael Noaima mentioned events of his life that happened between 1889 and 1959 AD, in his autobiography *Sab'oon*, whereas he lived more than hundred years and died in 1988.

As far as autobiographers in Saudi Arabia are concerned, they followed almost the same trend in titling their autobiographies. Even, most of them

used common words or words which derived from the terminology *Sirah Zatiyyah* for autobiography in Arabic for giving a title to their autobiographies. For example, *Ayyami*, of Ahmad Al-Sebaee, *Mozakkerato Talibin* by Hasan Naseef, *Zikriyyat* by Ahmad Ali and *Zikriyyato Modarresin* of Abdur Rahman Sabbagh. Some tried to indicate the period of their life they talked about in the title of their autobiography like we see in the case of “46 Youman fil Mustashfa, Rehlatu Salasin Aaman, Zikriyyatul Ohood Al-Salasa, Mozakkerati Khelal Qarnim Menal Ahdas. Some titles indicate profession and interest of the author, like *Bedayati Fis Sahafate wal Adabe* by Ali Mohammad Al-Omair, *Seeratun Sheriyyatun* by Ghazi Al-Qosaibi. One also finds names which are innovative but it carry a secondary name derived from traditional name to indicate that it was an autobiography. For example *Tabarihut Tabarih: Siratun Zatiyyatun*, and *Shaiun Minat Tabarih: Siratun Zatiyyatun wa Homoomun Saqafiyyatun* by Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aquil, *Safhatun Matwiyyatun Min Tarekhena Al-Arabi Al-Hadis: Mozakkerati Khelal Qarnim Minal Ahdas, Rehlatu Salasin Aaman: Siratun Zatiyyatun 1371-1401 H.*

Similarly, autobiographers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia narrated incidents and events that happened in particular period of their lives. Some have mentioned events that took place right from their birth until writing of the autobiography. Some have talked about a particular phases of their lives in their autobiographies. Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee in his autobiography *Zikriyyato Tiflin Wadeein* and Aziz Zia in his autobiography *Hayati Ma'al Joee wal Hubbe wal Harbe* talked about their childhood only like Abdul Majid Bin Jalloon and Jabra Ibrahi Jabra. Zahir Al-Al-Maee mentioned events that took place during thirty years of his life from 1951 to 1981. Similarly, Ali-Al-Omair mentioned in the introduction of his autobiography *Bedayati Fis Sahafate wal Adabe* that he would talk about early phase of his literature and journalism related life

events specifically between 1955 and 1962¹⁴⁵. Mohammad Abdul Hamid Al-Mordad and Hasan Kutbi talked about their childhood and heyday of their youth. Al-Mordad talked about first third part of his life and promised to present second third of it later and would talk about what he had seen regarding the miracles of the universe¹⁴⁶. Hasan Kutbi gave an account of his life starting from his birth 1911 until writing of this autobiography in 1956. Ghazi Al-Qosaibi talked about his initial struggle until the age of forty in his autobiography *Siratun Sheriyyatun*¹⁴⁷. There are other writers who narrated the accounts of their entire lives, starting from their birth to the time of publication of their autobiographies. These authors are Khalil Al-Rawwaf, Ibn Husain, Hamd Al-Jasir.

Theory of truth in autobiographies

The 'truth' is considered very important element of an autobiography. Autobiographies are read with the belief that the story being told is factual, which many critics believe can never be the case. Ehsan Abbas believed that author of an autobiography doesn't describe himself only but he judges himself and tries to get rid of emotional connection. But at the same time he asked himself to what extent this author can be truthful? Or in another word what is level of truth in the autobiography? Is it possible to be completely truthful? Then he tried to answer these questions. He said "answers to these questions are easy. It doesn't require lot of scrutiny. Complete truth is not possible. Reality of self is partially truthful it doesn't matter how sincere writer is in writing it as it is. Therefore, truth is not possible in autobiography"¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁵ -Bedayati Fis Sahafate wal Adabe: P.5

¹⁴⁶ -Rehlatul Umr: P. 569

¹⁴⁷ - Siratun Sheriyyatun: P. 17

¹⁴⁸ -Fannus sirah: P. 113

Furthermore, as per the Islamic law, a person is forbidden from revealing his mistakes and sins. "Every one of my followers will be forgiven except those who expose openly their wrongdoing¹⁴⁹".

Fyodor Dostoyevsky said that "a true autobiography is almost impossibility, and that man is bound to lie about himself"¹⁵⁰.

Yahya Abdud Dayem said that "truth in autobiography is mere an attempt. It is partially truthful, it can't be achieved because there are many hurdles which come in the way of autobiographers and stop him from narrating pure truth"¹⁵¹. At the same time he said that hurdles in the way of narrating pure truth are not intentional like natural shyness and natural forgetfulness"¹⁵².

He further said "certainly, complete truth is not mentioned in an autobiography. A writer must miss something during his writing. Since we realized this reality it appears that claim of truth is very strong whereas we are not capable of quoting the complete reality"¹⁵³.

Mahir Hasan Fahmi said that it is a fact that memory forgets a lot of things which caused pain and remembers things which provides enjoyment. It is certain that memory doesn't forget only, sometime it cheats as well. It mixes names and places and times. And when there is unwanted forgetfulness there is also wanted forgetfulness a man runs away with it avoiding the black pages of the diary of his life. One runs away with it because of the fault which he

¹⁴⁹ - Riyadh Al Saliheen:

¹⁵⁰ - Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. Notes from the Underground. Translated by Kirsten Lodge, Published by, Broadview Press, 2014. Chapter XI, P. 2.

¹⁵¹ - Al-Tarjuma Al-Zatiyyah fil adabil Arabi Al-Hadis: P. 6

¹⁵² -Ibid: P. 7

¹⁵³- Ibid: P. 8

has committed, finally he runs away with it in order to avoid from his guilt which he feels while meeting with others¹⁵⁴.

Mohammad Abdul Ghani Hasan asked few questions with regards to the possibility of complete truth in autobiography. He asked "can a man write something about himself which he doesn't want others to see or know about? Can a man bring out his character to people when he can correct his shortcomings which he doesn't want others to know about. Then he replies with no and said "because shame and shyness stop us from mentioning shortcomings in our lives. Page will not carry things which we want to keep blank"¹⁵⁵.

In this context Fadwa Touqan said "we see great inclination towards beautifying events and adorning reality when people write about themselves"¹⁵⁶.

It is worth mentioning here that autobiography is one of the literary genres which require artistic truth together with moral and realistic truth. Though reality is the essence of an autobiography but success in autobiography isn't related to reality only, otherwise every person would have been able to write a successful autobiography by disclosing about himself. Therefore, it is necessary that autobiography should be truthful from both perspectives human and artistic. Human perspective is seen in the depth of inner and external conflicts¹⁵⁷.

Autobiography is the best example of expressing artistic truth which means originality of the author in his expression and writing style. If an author

¹⁵⁴ -Al-Sirah Tarikhun wa Fannun: P. 239

¹⁵⁵ -Al-Tarajim Wal Sear: P. 23

¹⁵⁶ -Fadwa Tauqan: Rehlatun Jabaliyyatun Rehlatun Saabatun (Siratun Zatiyyatun). Darush shoruq lin nashre wat tauzee: 1988 P. 5

¹⁵⁷ - Al-Sirato Tarikhun wa Fannun: 242

expresses himself in traditional writing style and expression he will not be considered truthful from artistic perspective¹⁵⁸.

As far as authors of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are concerned most of them seemed to have chosen moderate path in narrating accounts of their lives in their autobiographies. They didn't praise themselves much as they didn't reveal things about themselves which needed to be kept hidden. They rarely talked about their faults or confessed sins committed by them in their autobiographies. Though, some of them have mentioned their bad habits and adjectives.

Zahir Al-Almaee said that "it is not difficult to write something about his personal life for people because it is generally considered a talk about self and a little bit exaggeration may happen unintentionally and moderation in this regard is relative in which people have different standards"¹⁵⁹.

Abu Abdur Rahamn Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri said that " it is supposed that an autobiographer would write factual things about his life and his surroundings through external events but there are reasons that stop writers from mentioning many realities about themselves and this is acceptable religiously and logically"¹⁶⁰. Further, in regards to quantity of reality in his autobiography he mentioned that he put every effort to record his memories with honesty except what was not permitted because Allah doesn't like atrocities to be mentioned. Many exciting and wonderful incidents took place but he didn't mention them because it may hurt some of his beloved ones¹⁶¹.

Hamd Al-Jasir believed that truth is very important characteristic of autobiography therefore he accepted some of his bad habits like his

¹⁵⁸ Ibid:23

¹⁵⁹ -Rehlatus Salasin Aaman: P. 5

¹⁶⁰ -Tabarihut Tabarih: P. 6

¹⁶¹ -Ibid: P. 65

foolishness, carelessness, cowardice and greed in his autobiography. He said “why would I not be frank with you and reveal myself before you that my worst characteristic was cowardice Further he confesses that “I wrote a poem in praise of a prominent personality in greed to get reward”¹⁶². But at the same time he calls for moderation in narrating things about self and others. He said “if there is no emotion of what I write I don’t praise anyone when he doesn’t deserve it”¹⁶³.

Hasan Kutbi believed that truth is very important element of an autobiography. He narrated reality without any amendment in his autobiography. He said that “I am committed to complete truth in describing events of my life so that it can be a lesson for readers and I want every person to know that I present honest and truthful description of common man’s life which is full of liveliness as well as full of lesions”¹⁶⁴.

On truth in his autobiography Aziz Zia clarified that he was committed to truth in his autobiography but he was unable to remain committed to it when he talked about others. Certainly, there were events in his life which didn’t happen to him directly though, it happened in lives of those who were around him. There were incidents that took place in the society and environment that he was part of. He still believes that those incidents were rare, and were indicated by concerned writers of the past. But shall he be committed to the whole truth while narrating it? and to what extent of truth? Then he answered that he was not historian at all therefore he was not committed to enquire about accuracy and seek reality but at the same time it wasn’t right that he let it pass without following its effects. Though it wasn’t

¹⁶² -Ibid: P. 12

¹⁶³ Ibid: P. 13

¹⁶⁴ -Hazehi Hayati: P. 46

part of his life, it happened in the life of those who were around him in the environment and society¹⁶⁵.

Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee considered truth an important and essential part of autobiography but at the same time he seemed to ignore some of his memories which he couldn't narrate with complete truth and because he believed that a narration with half truth may confuse readers. Therefore, he openly confessed about some of his shortcomings and faults in his autobiography. He believed that autobiography has advantages and disadvantages and after speaking about some advantages of autobiography he apologized for not talking about disadvantages admitting that it was not appropriate to speak about it¹⁶⁶. Furthermore, he clarified in the introduction of his autobiography that he ignored many of his memories because he found it difficult to write and publish them for the people with similar truth and urged that readers would realize that there was no need to discuss some of the memories in this book and an intelligent reader will understand it easily¹⁶⁷.

Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri said in the introduction of his autobiography that he shall try to record his memories with honesty¹⁶⁸. Therefore, he confessed his addiction to smoking and how he had to fight hard to get rid of it. He narrated his long battle to quit smoking and his many unsuccessful attempts. He was about to be possessed by depression when he said- Allah knew his weakness and his willingness and through His mercy He paved the ways for repentance and Helped him in this regard. Since he was able to win against his weakness and got rid of smoking, he decided to present this lesson and his memory to readers describing cigarette as a worst

¹⁶⁵-Hayati Ma'al Jue wal Hubbe wal Harbe: P. 192/1

¹⁶⁶ - Zikriyyat Tiflin Wadien: P.20

¹⁶⁷ -Ibid: P. 25

¹⁶⁸ - Tabarihut Tabarih: P. 4

companion. He also tried to mention negative effects of this habit which he suffered from. He said "I experienced that smokers rarely go to perform prayer collectively and I experienced that a smoker remains in fear of noble people¹⁶⁹". Though, smoking is not considered a bad habit anymore. Some readers may still consider his confession about his smoking habit to be an ordinary thing. But one who knows the respect Ibn Aqueel enjoyed in his society, his educational background, his contribution in the field of religious issues through radio or any other way, shall realize how bold he was in narrating this addiction.

Khalil Al-Rawwaf also declared in his autobiography that he made a promise to himself that he would narrate what he had seen and touched without any addition or omission and he will tell the truth about what he would write, whether it should be about him or others. He shall abide by mentioning truth as it is without any distortion. He said "neither I am a double-tongued nor I am a liar and I don't fear that people would believe me or not. However, but I don't exaggerate because I write only those realities which I have seen myself. I promised to myself that I will not compose except pure truth in this book. I shall not follow my urge to write other than truth"¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁹ -Shaiun Minat Tabarih: P. 114-116

¹⁷⁰ -Safhatun Matwiyyatun min Tarikhena Al-Arabi Al-Hadis: P. 19

Conclusion

This study entitled *autobiographical writing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during 20th century*, attempted to provide significance findings about emergence and evolution of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during 20th century. At the same time, it also tried to highlight contribution of Saudi Arabia in the development of this genre. This study found that critics of literature have given several definitions of autobiography. Researcher also came to know through this study, we that there are several subcategories of autobiography which are closely related to autobiography and are known as memoir, confessions and diary, but there are basic differences that distinguish autobiography from these genres. Further this also found some other initial autobiographical traces in classical Arabic literature that were known as *sirah*, *tarjamah*, *fahrasah*, *barnamaj* and *manaquib*. These initial autobiographical traces helped in emergence of autobiography in one way or other. There were some other terminologies that were used for biographies of religious personalities such as *akhbar*, *akhlaq*, *faza'il*, *khasa'is*, and *ma'athir wa-mafakhir*. However, *al-sirah al-zatiyyah* and *al-tarjamah al-shakhsiyyah* are the two recognized forms of autobiographies in Arabic literature.

Study also discovered that first trace of autobiographical writing was recorded in the book *tareekho baghdad* by Khateeb Al-Baghdadi. It was a narration of Salmaan Al-Farsi about himself, in the first century of Hijrah. Our study goes further, and found glimpses of autobiographical writing in *al-aghani* written by Abul Faraj Al-Asfahani and in *oyoonul anbaa fi tabaqatil atibba* written by Ibn Abu Osaiba. Similarly, Yaquoot Al-Hamawi provided some glimpses of autobiography in his book *mojamul odaba*. Later, glimpses of autobiography were also found in the writing of Harith al-Muhasibi, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, Muhammad al-Ghazali,

Usama ibn Munqidh, Ibn Khaldoon and Jurji Zaydan. These initial glimpses of autobiographies played pivotal role in emergence of definitive autobiography in modern Arabic literature. Therefore, study made an attempt to know traces of autobiographical writing in modern Arabic literature. It came to know that Mohammad Bin Omar Al-Tunasi wrote first autobiographical text in the introduction of his book *tash hizul azhan be sirate beladil Arab was Sudan*, published in 1832. Next example of autobiographical text was found in *Takhlisul ibriz ela talkhis Bariz* written by Refa'a Al-Rafe Al-Tahtawi. Another book which contains glimpses of autobiographical writing was written by Ahmad Faris Al-Shadyaq and is known as *al-saaqo alas saaq* and it was published in 1858. Ali Mubarak gave an account of his life in his book *al-khitat al-tawfiqiyya*. Ahmad Shawqi prefaced his autobiography in *al-shawqiyyat*. Taha Husain published first part of his epic autobiography *Al-Ayyam in 1926*. It was considered first definitive autobiography which emerged in modern Arabic literature. Next autobiography *hayaati* was published in 1950, it was written by Ahmad Amin. Then Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad composed two autobiographies *ana* and *hayato qalamin*. Subsequently, many writers across Arab countries started writing their autobiographies and a large number of autobiographies were published.

This study also found that press and printing played huge role in the development of autobiography in modern Arabic literature. Most of the autobiographers wrote their autobiographies for three major motives: religious, reconciling the past and for materialistic reason. Saudi autobiographers wrote their autobiographies for speaking about bounty of Allah, for self defense, for purely artistic reason, for educating researchers and students and for their desire to be remembered after their death.

Through this study, researcher came to know that first trace of autobiography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was found in 1926 when Mohammad Soroor wrote about himself in fifteen lines in his book *adabul hejaz*. Next autobiographical text was found in 1951 in the book *Sho'araul Hejaz fil Asr Al-Hadis* written by Abdu Salam Al-Tahir Sasi. However, first definitive autobiography was written by Ahamd Al Sebaee in 1954 in the Kingdom. Initially, progress was very slow as in next fifteen years, only eight more autobiographies were published. But during eighties and nineties, large numbers of autobiographies were published.

Our study found further that autobiographers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia discussed, socio-cultural and political and historical issues in their autobiographies but socio-cultural issue got more attention from them. They mentioned traditional practices like ways of celebrating a festival, occasion of circumcision, sending marriage proposals, norms of upbringing children, outlook of houses, arrangement inside houses by women, ways of spending leisure time by men and women, outlook of schools and methods of education and changes that took place in these traditional practices. While talking about history, Saudi autobiographer mentioned most of the historical events that took place in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and in other Arab and Islamic countries such as the war of June 1967, Gulf wars, two World Wars, and Belfour declaration. They talked about these events, its effect on the society, the changes brought by these events. They also mentioned their feelings and emotions towards these events. Mohammed Hussein Zaidan, Khalil Rawwaf, Zahir Al- Almaee, and Ghazi Al-Qosaibi talked about political issues particularly the issue of Palestine. They believed that occupation by Israel is illegal and they condemned displacement of Palestinian people and financial and

moral support of major countries of the world to the aggressor. At the same time, they reminded the need to unite the entire Islamic and Arab world.

This study went further and tried to know the kind of language and writing style used in the autobiographies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It found that Hamd Al-Jasir, Mohammad Abdul Hameed Mirdad, Mohammad Husain Zaidan and Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zahiri preferred to use eloquent and traditional words. They avoided use of lexical and uncommon words. Aziz Zia, Mohammad Umar Taufeeq, Ghazi Al-Qusaibi and Abdul Kareem Al-Jahimaan preferred to use familiar, tender, sweet and swift words combined with easy expression. They avoided use of strange words in their autobiographies. Hasan Naseef and Zahir Al-Alma'ai, Al-Siba'ai, and Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee preferred to use extremely easy words and focused more on meaning than words. As far as writing style is concerned, Mohammed Hussein Zaidan, Aziz Zia and Mohammad Omar Tawfiq used present tense to express about the past. Ahmad Al-Sebaee and Hasan Naseef used verbs derived from كُن widely in their autobiographies. Hamd Jasir and Abu Abdur Rahman Ibn Aqueel Al-Zaheri used diminutive pattern quite frequently in their autobiographies. Abdul Aziz and Ghazi Al-Qusaibi used Question-answer method. In that they asked questions and then they themselves gave answers to those questions. Hasan Kutbi and Aziz Zia repeated one word in one sentence quite often. Abdul Aziz Rabee, Al-Maee and Al-Bawardi used alliterations quite frequently in thier autobiography. Abdul Karim Al-Jahiman, Rawwaf, Mohammad Abdul Hamid Mardad and Zahir Al-Al Mae used parenthesis frequently in their autobiographies. Mohammad Husain Zaidan used Wao (و) in his autobiography. Apart from Hamd Al-Jasir almost every autobiographers of Saudi Arabia used fist person in their autobiography. Most of

the autobiographies in Saudi Arabia were written in storytelling style. Autobiographers of Saudi Arabia, Aziz Zia and Abdul Aziz Al-Rabee in particular, dealt time and place very well in their autobiographies.

In the end, our study tried to critically analyze major autobiographies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by juxtaposing it against autobiographies of other Arab countries from two perspectives, issues dealt by Saudi writers and their language and writing styles. It came to know that since autobiographers of Saudi Arabia were greatly influenced by prominent autobiographers of other Arab countries, therefore, they dealt with almost similar issues which were dealt by autobiographers of other Arab countries and they followed their language and writing style as well.

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