CHAPTER - IV

PROSE STYLE OF DR. TAHA HUSAYN :

4.1 Dr. Taha Husayn and His Literary Style :

Dr. Taha Husayn is a prolific Prose writer in modern Arabic literature. He has done a lot of works on the prose in comparison to other modern writers in Arabic. He has elevated prose to a considerable height while going through the whole of his Prose works. Dr. Taha Husayn lifted up the style of Prose writing with the flow of Poetic style. Prosiac and Poetic qualities are found in the writing of Dr. Taha Husayn for the manifestation of the excellency of his Prose works.

The salient feature of Dr. Taha Husayn's Prose is that it contains all the prosiac qualities with the flow of poetical qualities. It contains all the virtues of good Prose as well as of good Poetry, which fills the mind of the reader and general people with romantic prose and poetical delight. It may be mentioned that Dr. Taha Husayn's 'Dua' al-Karawan' (The call of the curlew) is a unique work of fiction in modern Arabic literature. Many Critics agree with the author's description that the novel is a piece of poetry, and this applies to both its romantic theme of the triumph of love over revenge, as well as its highly elevated style.

In fact, it is on its style that this novel has established its literary fame. So much so, that the reader often forgets the content as his attention is attracted to the form which becomes an end in itself.
4.2: Good presentation and Melodious character of his Prose writing:

In almost all his works, priority is given to the form of presentation over purely narrative considerations. To him, the language of fiction should invariably be what he calls "artistic Prose" where highly classical language is used even in the dialogue of native villagers and uneducated townspeople. His narrative Prose is always studded with Poetical features. There are whole paragraphs written in parallelisms of meticulously balanced structures numerous traditional mannerisms, the most obvious examples being the graceful assonances and the rhythmic repetitions of words, phrases and complete sentences.¹

The most important feature of his prose is that it can make all minute emotion and indistinct image clear. This capacity of clarity is present in the Prose of Dr. Taha Husayn. To introduce the subject in a balanced way of depth and vastness is the topmost quality of him, which remains as a matter of realisation for Arabic.

This speciality as well as capacity is found in all fields of his Prose works. The aptness for experimentation makes his Prose better and highly developed. Scientific approach is applied to literature in a powerful way by Dr. Taha Husayn. It has been found that his literary writing became an independent form and readers competed in it passionately, reading and

¹ Husayn, Dr. Taha, the call of the Curlew (trans- As-Safi, A.B.), Preface.
interpreting, discussing analyses and extracting clear meanings from ambiguous allusions, while looking at his publications, one will find allusions to phenomena that one abhored and could not speak of openly.

To give attention to small matters is the sign of perfectness, which is found in Dr. Taha Husayn's prose. The writings of the first part of his creative period are related to reason, scientific approach, adversity as well as melancholy. A major portion of Dr. Taha Husayn's prose is found full of proverbs, the liberal use of local terms, complex and simple sentences, flow of poetic qualities, healthy story telling, beautiful composition as well as sonorous diction are some of the unique qualities of the prose of Dr. Taha Husayn.

Dr. Taha Husayn's style is characterised by an undulating and beautiful prose. His expressions seem to roll off and follow one another in quick succession to give a strong rhythmic effect. To achieve this, Dr. Taha Husayn uses short sentences and the stylistic technique of parallelisms which he perfects in 'al-Ayyam'. Most of his sentences are composed of two or more parallel parts which are either synonymous, complementary or contrasting. At first this seems like repetition, but it is actually a succession of phrases or sentences, very much like the technique of variations on theme in music.

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The parallel sentences, apart from giving an effect of movement and vitality, magnify or emphasize an idea and bring it out in relief. Dr. Taha Husayn's method of writing is not to make any change while dictating. Thus there are often repetitions and these are intentionally retained to create a wave like cadence.

4.3 The uses of phrases and light saj' :

Dr. Taha Husayn uses phrases like "there is no doubt," "in which there is no doubt," or "whatever the matter" either in the beginning or in transition to enumerate details. There is also an abundant and varied use of prepositions to serve as links.

To give further shades of music, Dr. Taha Husayn employs light Saj but unlike the traditional Saj; which comes at the end of phrases, he repeats his Saj twice in the same phrase and then also at the end of sentences.

Dr. Taha Husayn's Style is further marked by a tendency to address the reader as if he were talking to him and not placing before him a written text. He hardly resorts to a dialogue and when he does so, he subjects it to his distinctive Style so that there is no difference between narration and dialogue.¹

¹ Haykal, Ahmad, Tata wwuur al-Adab al-Hadith fi Misr, P. 380
It is found that Dr. Taha Husayn's literary output, is the consequence of deep thought and feeling, starting in his prime stage of life, not to be frustrated in his thought to make a clarity of anything, while he started taking in his sense the complete image of the same, after deep thinking, as it is found in "al- Ayyam".

He had liked to coming out of the house, while the Sun was setting and the people had their dinner, then he sat down on the reed of the siyaj(fence) being overwhelmed with deep thought.1

4.4. His language and style:

His mastery over the language enabled Dr. Taha Husayn to reach the highest level of aesthetic rendering in his writings. He developed a style which is unmatched in Arabic prose. No writer has produced the same magical effection in the past, nor is likely to do so in the future because the accent in contemporary prose, with some exceptions such as yusuf Idris, is no longer on the qualities of music and cadence while the Writers came to realize that a simple style could have literary merits of its own. A modern Arab, reading the works of Dr. Taha Husain and Najib Mahfuz recognizes the artistry of the language, though he may find it rather elusive to explain.

1. Husayn, Dr. Taha, al-Ayyam, Part - 1, p . 5
The forms of modern Arabic prose literature nearly all have some roots in the classical literature. The chief modern forms are novel, short story, essay and drama. In addition, mention should be made of less creative forms, such as biography, auto-biography, history, literary criticism and a large body of literature which for want of a better term, may be called 'polemical'. Into the latter category books on social reform, books calling on the Arabs to reform themselves and their institutions, to gain their proper place in the world, to revive their former glories. A good deal of such literature is to our ears, vague and repetitive, but in so far as it aspires to recognition as creative literature by aiming at a high literary style, to make an emotional appeal to the reader. Before Dr. Taha Husayn, the classical Arabic language was stagnant and not in the reach of the general populace. His style was quite easy to comprehend, yet it adhered to the rules of the language and fully exploited expressions and vocabulary. He applied simple, direct style, devoid of padding, natural dialogue, incident and action proceeding at a pace which retains the reader's interest with an element of mystery and surprise, and credible characterization sketched with the minimum of words. On the other hand they lack the psychological insight, and detailed and developing characterization.

It has been found from Dr. Taha Husayn's "al-Ayyam" that the people of Egypt had bought books like, 'the tales of Bani Hilal', 'Antara', and the 'holy Quran', while they swallowed up the books by mind and attained knowledge from them.1

1. Husayn, Dr. Taha, al-Ayyam, Part - 1, p. 97
4.5. The use of old method and style:

It has been found that his style, rambling and redundant, possesses fine qualities, is psychological, personal and effective, enriched by touches of wisdom and penetrating in sights while his greatness remains apparently unimpaired among the intellectuals.¹

Dr. Taha Husayn’s biographical writings really come under the category of literary criticism. Like all his works, it is clearly written in an identifiably personal manner, treating the reader as his confidant. What is notable and new is his deep psychological insight into the minds of the subjects of his study for example -al-Mutanabbi, and Abu al -‘Ala al-Ma’arri. Simpler still are some biographies now being written as for example Uthman Amin’s ‘Muhammad ‘Abdu’.

Dr. Taha Husayn was able to throw his bombshell into traditional literary criticism, his book ‘Fi al-She’ir al -‘Arabi’, which was an epoch-making work, challenging the authenticity of the oldest and most revered secular literature of the Pre-Islamic Poetry. While the dust had cleared from the furore produced by his book, literary criticism could never be the same, however much the author might have mollified his views. Old methods are found to have applied and still have some part to have

¹. Eban, A.S., The Modem Literary Movement in Egypt, Vol. XX, No. 4
played for understanding of the ancient texts demanding a deep knowledge of obsolete language.¹

The style of Dr. Taha Husayn in his stories as well as novels, has a typical structure for his style of poetic metre in branches of varied literary sciences. Where the scholar considered upon two basic acts influenced on his fictious style. And it meant its deformity, which constrained to the dependance upon the fulfilment of high sound and this inverted greatly to his style.

As far as the second act is concerned, which meant his French and Arabian culture. Then the Arabian style rose in smooth way of spiritual development. Later on, the Arabic style followed its special method which distinguished its style, Particularly, while it intermingled between it and between the French allegory.

Dr. Taha Husayn followed the ancient Arabic culture. He sought the help of Text at the time of metaphorising sentence or simile. Certainly, he followed poetry and brought the poetic verses in his style. He repeated the words and placed in his style. He sometimes metaphorised the simile and spread it out in his style. Let us take an example from the saying of Imrul Qais,

فيالك من ابلى كان فجومه بكل مغازل النثل شدد بذيل

¹ Hay Wood, John A, Modern Arabic Literature (An Introduction with extracts in translation) pp. 21-23
"I am extremely surprised to see (that) what sort of night it is, as if, its stars are tied up with strong rope of pearl."

4.6 : Rhyming, infinitive, repetition & Quran based writing :

The poetry as well as the fashion is not only related into the style of Dr. Taha Husayn but there is a clear trace by holy Qura’n on his style, where he applied the words and simile practically. Dr. Taha Husayn followed the Quranic order and prosiac metre and tried to impute its tradition in his stories taking hold of some Quranic verses with its text to ascertain thought and express his gallant faith or for ascertaining a thought in his story, he says that "the almighty Allah introduces the night into the day and the day into the night and exits the alive from the dead and the dead from the alive. He is able if he wills to combine into the nature of the flying sect in men and the men to the flying sect."

Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have used to metaphorize the images and words, while quoted the simile from the holy Qura’n.

(And the heart of our companion, this became pitiless as if it was just like the rock or too hard) Dr. Taha Husayn sometimes used short sentences and the uniform description with some light rhyming and the infinitive is manifestly found in his style. Verily, this is the spreading of inspiration of Dr. Taha Husyan where the Arabic inheritance metaphorize the meaningful
charm and repeat it in his style. While he handled the beautiful sentence or repeat the last word of verse to the title for confirmation of meaning and repetition of it neither in the picture of repetition. Verily for giving another meaning in his style.

It is a clear exposition in regard to the style of Dr. Taha Husayn that he applied some infinitive from the Holy Quran. Some of the noted Litterateurs and Rhetoricians followed his style in their writings to bring a new trend of modernity.¹

4.7 Use of contradictory quality and of music in words and sentences:

Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have applied Contradictory method of writing in his book. So far the social book, ‘Ma wara’ an-Nahar’ is concerned, Dr. Taha Husayn used as,

؟ادة (أم خذيلة) ذكاء وأبدئًا (صورة رائعة للتبجي)

While Khadija, her face was i.e. charming figure for ugliness. It has been found that, Dr. Taha Husayn applied such controversial method only for finding out the authenticity and true justice on the matter. The presentation of opposite quality is the helping method for up to date knowledge of the matter concerned while he produced two opposite quality like beauty and ugliness in the particular book, ‘Ma wara’ an-Nahar’.

¹ Al-Talawi. Dr. Muhammad Najib Ahmad, Taha Husayn wa-al Fann al-Qasasi, pp. 267-270.
As if the collection of contradictions in the quality, according to Dr. Taha
Husayn, is the outburst of new outlook and the essence in excellent words.
In this manner, some deformities of words are found in the style of Dr.
Taha Husayn's writing while he had emphasized on short sentences to
draw attention for reader as well as hearer.¹

Repetition is one of the excellent quality writings of Dr. Taha Husayn
to give a comprehensive knowledge to the reader and hearer as well. Dr.
Ahmad Haykal is of the opinion that Dr. Taha Husayn applied short sen­tences and expressed wide meaning with repetition. It may be cited as:

\[ \text{بِينَّةً لِلَّذِينَ يَضْرِبُونَ أو يَضْرِبُونَ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَبَّعُونَ} \]

(He takes seat to anyone or anyone takes seat to him)

In this line, although deformity is found, but it removed the ambiguity
of understanding from the mind of the reader. This deformity is pre­pared in the light of short style while giving music and co-relation with
words. It has been found that such writing used itself for correctness
through strong sound and clarity of pronunciation. Such sound is found
to be led to the freshness of words through its results, co-relation and the
system for melodious narration. Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have com­mented that the words in the prose have the affinity and co-relation
between them like words in the poetry. As he mentioned in the book
“Alwan”, while the origin of writing in the book is as the origin in the

¹ Ibid, p 273
Poetry. Despite that, Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have used the method of rhyming in his writing like the ancient Writers, who diversified words for the perfection of rhyming. As the beauty of style depends not only on light saj but also on repetition of words, while adding for it a sentence having innovative idea or the stream of meaningful music. As Dr. Taha Husayn speaks in his book, "Jannat al-Haiyan".

\[(\text{Its sight troubles you, its hearing tires you out while its understanding makes you desirous). This consecutive process of writing words in a sentence is truly a brilliant contribution of Dr. Taha Husayn to his style of writing.}\]

4.8 Prose and Poetry mixed language :

Dr. Taha Husayn was one of the prolific modern prose writers and who had multifaceted quality in developing Arabic literature. It has been found that Dr. Taha Husayn had imputed a new style of writing in Arabic

Simultaneously, by the shareforce of his writing, he had given a new shape in the prose literature while applying poetic style in the same. It has been found that the book, 'Dua' al-Karawan' (The call of the Curleiw) is one of the important fictitious works of Dr. Taha Husayn, while most of the critics agree with the book to be a piece of poetry and that

1. Ibid. p. 274
applies to both its romantic theme of the triumph of love over revenge as well as its highly elevated style. It may be mentioned that no foreigner would dare to translate this text as a prose work while most of the paragraphs of that book are written in poetical style. It is found that the Poetical style of writing is clear in that book and some scholars also considered that book as untranslatable for Prosaic english, while that book is much more poetical despite the romantic theme of the triumph of love in the book. As such it has been found difficult to ascertain Dr. Taha Husayn whether to be a poet or to be a prose writer while the combined genius are found in the same man. He enriched the prose work with a masterful adoption of Western forms and ideas while these trends are best represented in the writings of Dr. Taha Husayn and he incorporated European methods of research into the sensitive areas of Arab legacy such as history and poetry.¹

Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have expressed that prose is the language of the intellect while poetry is the language of imagination. The latter grows earlier than the former in the life of both individuals and communities ² while it is importantly found that both intellectual as well as imaginative thought is expressed through his writings simultaneously.

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² Husayn, Dr. Taha, Hafiz wa Shauqi, pp. 168-70.
4.9 : Execution of Music, Thought and Meaning:

Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have been placed in the rank of ancient litterateur by Shauqi Daif and is compared with al-Jahiz, who took help of music for creation of impression on the Arabic word and sentence. According to Shauqi Daif, sentence cannot be performed in short diction but it should be performed after explanation so that it may create music along with the execution of thought and meaning. The root cause of it in ancient period was that literature was not studied with eyes like that of today, while it was learnt through sounds and ears. As such, it was a great need of musical word and sentence. Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have presented such literature which could all of a sudden fascinate ear and heart together while he wished to create every possible beauty in his sounds. He used to repeat most of the words so as to make unload to the memory of reader and hearer.

Muhammad ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Umadi wrote by giving assurance about his imaginative power for authentic and innovative research that there was an exercise of the power of imagination of Dr. Taha Husayn, who created the spirit of innovative research and investigation in his mind by presenting lively and blooming picture of concealed things.

1. Daif. Dr. Shauqi, al-Adab al-‘Arabi al-Mu’asir, p. 287
2. Al-Umadi, Muhammad ‘Abd al-Qadir, al-Rafi Wa Taha Husayn, p. 51
4.10: Varied literary personalities and colours in his writing:

Though Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have been blamed for his style in 'Naqd al-Ayyam' for co-ordinating to words and repetition of the same. Anis al-Muqaddas wrote by responding to that in the book 'al-Adabiyya' that this matter was not out of rhetoric but he himself chose the structure of rhetoric. The repetition of words in it created a beauty of explanation.¹

So far the book 'Dua' al-Karawan' is concerned, Muhammad Mandur blamed Dr. Taha Husayn for his particular static style ² and for want of originality in his fictious style, while Dr. 'Ali ar-Rai' opposed to the view of Dr. Muhammad Mandur and acclaimed Dr. Taha Husayn to be a distinguished artist, while he is found to have mixed various literary colours in the subject matter concerned. And he portrayed the various sides of personalities in his writing.³ Anwar al-Jundi wrote the views of T.J. Kolin in the book "an-Nathr al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir", through the reference 'al-Hilal' (March / April-1943) that Dr. Taha Husayn was one of the greatest personalities in the field of literary composition, while he appeared to be an excellent and most successful writer in the book 'al-Ayyam' ⁴.

¹ Al-Muqaddas, Anis, al-Funun al-Adabiyya, p. 573
² Mandur, Muhammad, Fil-Mijan al-Jadid, p. 53
³ Ar-Rai, Dr. 'Ali, Dirasat fi ar-Rawiya al-Misna, p.145.
⁴ Al-Jundi, Anowar, an-Nathr al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir, p. 402
(with reference T.J. Kolin, al-Hilal)
Ahsan Abbas is found to have said, "the style of Dr. Taha Husayn is the collection of music, singing and painting in which there is much repetition".1

In the eye of most of the critics, 'al-Ayyam' took a brilliant position in autobiographies, being an important book, in modern Arabic literature in which, the writer applied a beautiful literary style and diction.

It is obvious from the above discussion of prose style of Dr. Taha Husayn that he had applied very simple and easy style to understand the matter concerned, although the actual language used is grammatically excellent and the ideas are profound.

It has been found that some omissions or slight modifications are available in his writings and for the first time, it reveals a theory of the nature and function of literary history and literary criticism, while it is entirely new in Dr. Taha Husayn's prose works.

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1. Abbas, Dr. Ahsan, Fann al-Sira, p.149