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CHAPTER-II

A SHORT LIFE-SKETCH OF MUSTAFĀ LUTFĪ AL- MANFALŪTĪ

2.1 BIRTH & GENEALOGY:

Sayyid Mustafa bin Muhammad bin Hasan bin Muhammad bin Lutfi al-Manfalūti was one of the most outstanding essayists of modern Arab world. He was born on 30th Dec, 1876 A.D. (10th Zilhajj of 1293 Hijri) to an Arab father and a Turkish mother, both of fairly high social standing, at “Manfalūt”, a town in the province of Asyūt of upper Egypt in a religious family. “Manfalūt” is a small town situated on the western bank of river Nile. He was brought up in a noble family, which inherited a high order of religious tradition. All the members of this family performed their religious duties in accordance with Qurān & Hadith. So it was a natural phenomena that the sons followed the way of their grand fathers and forefathers. His name was connected with the title of “al-Sayyid” who belonged to the honourable descendant of al-Husayn bin ‘Ali bin ‘Abi Talib®, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad(sm).\(^1\) He is also known “al-Manfaluti” in the history of Arabic literature in keeping the name of his birth-place at “Manfalut”.

The name of his father was Sayyid Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Hasan bin Muhammad bin Lutfi and he was a judge (Qādi) of Manfalūt as well as one of the most distinguished persons of that area. He hails from such a reputed family that his forefathers were offered the posts of the judges hereditarily. His family also inherited the Sufism since almost two hundred years and their residences turned into a centre of Sufism and pious people. His father was a respectable person of Manfalūt and assigned as a prominent leader of his family as well as figured as the head of the Alids.\(^2\)
His father had also performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. Thus, this house was full of religious mannerism and light of knowledge. The forefathers of this family had a great reputation of generosity and liberal attitude to all sections of people in Manfalût.

His mother’s name was “al-Sayyidah Hânim Ali Husayn al-Shurabji”, who hailed from an aristocratic Turkish family of great generosity and honour for which al-Manfalûti was regarded as a half Arab and half Turkish. She was a member of the most respect Jurunji family of Turky. Afterwards al-Sayyidah Hânim Ali Husayn al-Shurabji merged with the Egyptian society. But it was a matter of regret that she had been divorced by his father due to some misunderstandings between them. She then decided to get married to another person and thus spent a fresh life. At that time, Mustafâ was a young boy. These unexpected tragic events affected the life of al-Manfalûti tremendously and all his literary works bear testimony to the storms and stress of the early period of his life.

Mustafâ Lutfî al-Manfalûti got married at first in an early age while he was a student of al-Azhar University. His spouse’s name was “Sayyidah Aminah Abû Bakr al-Shaykh” who hailed from a rich aristocratic family of Manfalût. Al-Manfalûti inherited from her some properties including a few plots of agricultural lands. But it was a matter of tragedy in his life that she passed away prematurely in 1910 A.D.. Then he again decided to marry a cultured lady from Cairo. Her name was “Sayyidah Rutaybah Husna”.

2.2 THE TRAGIC PART OF HIS LIFE:

It has been seen that al-Manfalûti was not happy in his private life. His life was neither cheerful nor enjoyable. His first wife, whom he loved very much, expired at a premature stage of life. She bore him a few
sons and daughters but the death of some of them in their childhood left him broken hearted and melancholy. He used to compose elegies to console his grief stricken mind and heart. In “Al-Dafin al-Saghir” (Burial of small child), he gives vent to his sorrowful heart in the following lines:

"الآن نفضت يدي من تراب قبرك يا بني، وعدت إلى منزلتي كما يعود القائد المنكسر من ساحة الحرب...."

He expresses extreme grief at the demise of his child through the above-mentioned story. It is assumed from the manner of its description that he is depressed upon his destiny. It is said that while his first consort passed away, al-Manfalūti forbore much because, no influence of her death reacted on him and he went on as usual discussing various issues with his companions on the night of his wife’s death. These abnormal attitudes of al-Manfalūti definitely indicate that such bitterest events had visited him repeatedly in his life and he just wanted to adjust himself with them bravely.

His miseries did not stop here because while he was a student of al-Azhar University, some allegations of writing stories to undermine the prestige of Khadive Abbas - II and of publishing in some weekly papers were brought against al-Manfalūti. As a result, he was convicted and imprisoned in these charges for some time in which he experienced the bitterness of the jail. At that time, the Britishers ruled Egypt. In the prison, he felt the grief, sorrow and mental agony of the common people severely under the British occupation. These events influenced the future life of al-Manfalūti and exposed his internal moanings and the tears towards the
common people through his writings. He had been always experiencing the
sufferings of poverty and grievances of the people seriously. Al-Manfalūtī
himself had to face a life of hardships since he had neither any relative nor
anyone of his close friends beside him at the time of such critical situation.
He had to struggle with disease, paucity, helplessness while he was alone in
his house and far away from his neighbours. This situation constantly
affected the heart of al-Manfalūtī and compelled him to stay in tension,
anxiety, sadness, distresses and anguish. He wept for his departed family.
At last, al-Manfalūtī repented himself for such circumstances. He expresses
these feelings in the “Muqaddamah” of “al-Nazarat” thus:-

Annotation: “I don’t know which thing has been drawing my
attention to study the poem of depression and grief, but I knew the
distressed situation of needy person and the wretched condition of the poor,
the tales of grieved and sad people particularly. Definitely it surprised me
to a great extent and made me weep profusely, saddened me like the
sadness of Muhalhil (death-531 A.D.) for the sake of taking revenge of his
brother, like the misfortune of Imru’–al- Qays (d. 540 A.D.) in seeking of
revenge for his father, like the crying of Jalilah, daughter of Jassās for her
husband and her brother, like the weeping of 'Adi bin Zaid due to the imprisonment of al-Nu&mash;an, like the tears of Mutammim bin Nuerah for his brother Mâlik even he wept so much so that he became one-eyed, like the moaning of Lylâ, daughter of Tarif for her brother al-Walid, like the lamentations of Hayyâm Umme Hakim, wife of Ubaidullah bin al-'Abbâs in such a way that she elegized for her two slaughtered infants, like the mourning of al-Sharif for al-Munâdirah for the sake of devastation of al-Hirah, like the wailing of 'Abi Ubâdah for the demolitions of al-Madâyen, like the bewailing of Riḍâ for Bani Hâshim, like the roaring of Ublâ for Bani Ummayya, like the agony of al-Raqqâshi on account of Bani Barmak, like the sorrow of Jill Abi Farâs for his self captivity, like the melancholy of al-Mu'tamid bin Ubbâd in his prison, like the sadness of al-Uzîr bin Jaidûn once for himself and for his other children........”

Thus, he mentions here the names of concerned persons one after another and compares his mental situations with their circumstances. The aforementioned names are famous in the different areas of their fields in the history of Arabic literature. Apart from this discussion, al-Manfalûti mentions some significant examples like Majnûn-Laylâ, Majnûn-Lubnâ, Jamîl bin Mu'ammar, Uruwât bin Hazâm with ‘Afrâ binte Uqqâl etc. in the “Muqaddamah” of “al-Nazarât”.

2.3 (a) AL-MANFALÛTI'S EDUCATION:

Mustafâ Lutfî al-Manfalûti got his early education at Manfalût in a traditional manner and was educated in an orthodox style. At first, he was admitted to the primary school of ‘al-Shaykh Jalâluddin al-Suyûtî’. Accordingly, here he committed the Holy Quran to memory under the guidance of Shaykh Muhammad Rizwân, while he did not even attain eleven years of his age. In 1887 A.D., his father sent him to the University of Al Azhar for higher education where he studied from 1888 A.D. to 1898.
A.D. for ten years. During this period, he did not confine his studies to the religious traditions, theologies and textbooks only but read thoroughly numerous books on different literary topics. He attended the classes of Islamic religious scholar & reformer Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905 A.D.), whom he greatly admired as a teacher and who in turn, was impressed with al-Manfalūti. The extent of Muhammad ‘Abduh’s support for him may be judged from the fact that, when al-Manfalūti penned a poem in 1897 A.D. in “al-Sā’iqah” magazine criticizing the Egyptian Khedive, he was sentenced to one year in prison but released after six months after a plea from his respectable teacher on his behalf. However, al-Manfalūti did not complete his education in the University of al-Azhar. Because, he was extremely dissatisfied with the old traditional system of education prevailing there. He was also bored with its curriculum. Therefore, he refrained from attending classes and acquiring its education. Since, he did not find a congenial situation to fulfil his dreams in the University of al Azhar in some areas. He had to face criticism from the scholars and professors of the University. He had also to confront with the condemnations of these critics, who made a scathing attack against him during his study at al-Azhar to dissuade him from the reading of literature. The Professors of the University tried to convince him that the composition of poems is a work of Devil. Nevertheless, such advices of the critics did not stop him from his writings. He tolerated all these criticisms and persisted on his principles. Regarding literary pursuits heretical and literature the veritable domain of the Devil, these inquisitorial vigilantes at al-Azhar felt thoroughly aghast when, during surprise search raids, they seized a volume of poetry or literary prose hidden under a pillow or in a closet in his room.5 His main interest was not in cultivating religious studies but in absorbing various literary works. He, therefore, decided to leave this institution for the sake of reading of Arabic literature. At last, he
achieved what he had been looking for. Al-Manfalūṭī himself writes regarding it in this way:

"وكتيرا ما كانوا يهجمون مني على ما لا يحبون؛ فإذا عثروا في خزانتي أو تحت وسادتي، أو بين لفائف ثيابي على ديوان شعر، أو كتاب أدب خيل إلىهم أنهم قد ظفروا بالدينار في حقيبة السارق، أو الزجاجة في خزان الغلام، أو العشيق في خبر الفتاة، فأجد من البلاء بهم، والغتص بمكانهم ما لا يتحمل مثله مثلي."

**Annotation:** “Most of them who attacked me, suddenly fell down in my treasure house or under my pillow (under my possession) or between the folding of my cloths in the Diwāns of poetry and the book of literature. They thought that they were successful in taking away the Dinner from the pocket of a thief or a water bottle from the pocket of a servant, or a lover from the curtain of a girl. I, therefore, find trouble with them and the place was overcrowded.”

Whether al-Manfalūṭī’s hard works during his ten years’ sojourn at al-Azhar were indeed as acute as he describes or whether the description also contains a modicum of hyperbole, is of no serious consequence. For more important is his use of the dramatized experience as a backdrop to his own development as a writer; and to the critical agency he assigns literature in the momentous task of reforming modern Arabic literature and culture as a separate identity. However, he was very interested in the reading of Arabic literature, classical Diwāns and the biography of the writers. He left no stone unturned in acquiring knowledge of different subjects. He was fond of knowing about Arabic literature since his childhood. At last, his critics and the Professors of the University were compelled to recognize his potentiality. “Al-Manfalūṭī was sticking, says Prof. Tāhir al-Tunāḥi, uninterruptedly to his work in his house. Sometimes he came out to the shadow of the trees and sat under the flowers and branches of the trees. Sometimes, he read, then enjoyed the beauty of
reading. Now and then, he thought deeply about the things around him. He felt happiness thinking about nature. Sometimes he listened to the coos of the pigeons, songs of knightingale. So his conceptions were enriched with exquisite meanings. Then his subject matters came into his mind and abandoned his anxieties. He was unusual about his family and his inhabitants. He did not relax from tragedies in the happiness. When his friend ‘al-Ustad ‘Abdullah Hāshim’ a great scholar of Arabic literature and a fan of poem as well as prose, came to his house, he appreciated Sayyid Mustafā Lutfī al-Manfalūṭī for his deep rooted interest and concentration on Arabic literature and he extended full-cooperation to him offering his Diwāns and some literary books. Since then, Sayyid Mustafā Lutfī al-Manfalūṭī was constantly sticking to the study of different original classical odes and prose. Thus, his attention used to turn towards learning of language and literature. Al-Manfalūṭī began to read extensively the classical Arabic poetry Diwāns (old poems), the literatures of Abdullah bin Muqaffa’, Abul Bahar al-Jāhij and Badi‘ al-Zamān al Hamdānī and also the literary criticism of Amdi, Baqīlani, Ayaz etc. Influenced by these studies, the mirror of his ideology had been polished and widened. In the preface of the first volume of al-Nazarāt, he mentions a few names of authors whom he was studying, and at the same time, he was surprised tremendously on the styles of these works. According to its description, the most amusing books of al-Manfalūṭī were 1. “Al ‘iqdul Farid” written by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī, 2. “Kitābul Aghānī” by Abul Faraz Isfahānī, 3. “Zahrul Adāb” by al-Hasrī, 4. “‘Asrārul Balāghah wa Dalā’īlul Ijāj” written by al-Jurjānī etc. Apart from these books, he used to read the autobiographies of ‘Abdul Hamid al-Kātib, ‘Abdullah bin al-Muqaffa’, Ibn Khaldūn, Ibn al-Athīr and ‘Āmīdī etc. Among the poems, he used to read the Diwans of al-Mutanabbi, al-Buhtārī, Abu Tammām, Sharīf al-Rīzā etc. The most interesting writers to him were ‘Abdul Hamid al-Kātib, Ibnul Muqaffa’, Ibn
Khalidun and Ibnul ‘Athir etc. Al-Manfaluti used to memorize classical poems with rare sayings and began to compose poems and write articles while he was only sixteen years old. He used to imitate the styles of poems, Diwans and prose literatures of ‘Abbasid period. It is known that he studied different types of classical poetry and prose literature very minutely during this time. After going through these books, al-Manfaluti developed a new style to cope with the other modern literatures of the world. So he selected the words for his works very cautiously in a new formation. Gradually al-Manfaluti was known to all of the contemporary people for his sagacity, intelligence and scholarship. He introduced a new dogma on education system, which was objected by the Azharities. He did not stress on so-called theoretical system of education but advocated on practical issues and reality.

2.3 (b) RELENTLESS EFFORT FOR ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE:

Mustafä Lutfi al-Manfaluti knew no European languages and his education was limited to the study of Arabic Literature only. But he was sticking to the reading of books translated into Arabic from France or English literature. So, he tried his level best to extend the scope of his thinking in every field with strong capability. He became successful also in this regard and wanted to translate some short stories from European literature. Some of his close friends, who were educated in Western schools of languages, came forward to help him and translated a few French literatures uneditedly. Afterwards, al-Manfaluti copied these works and shaped them into his own peculiar style. He published a series of moralistic and sentimental essays in which he made use of fictional context as a means of discussion pressing social and moral issues. These factors as mentioned above were primarily responsible for turning Mustafä Lutfi al-Manfaluti into a litterateur of high order from the theological point of view.
2.4 RELATIONS WITH SHAYKH MUHAMMAD ‘ABDUH:

Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh is the most important name in the history of modern Egyptian thought. He converted from Sufi mysticism to rationalism and inspired to devote his life to the cause of reform by his contact with Jamaluddin al-Afghani. He taught that Islam and modernism were compatible and this became the axiom of modern Arabic literature, the starting point of all its contemplation. Mustafâ Lutfî al-Manfalûti came in close relation with Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh since about 1895 A.D. and was greatly influenced by his teachings. Therefore, he was pleased to dedicate his first poem "تَحْبِيْبَهُ نِعَمَةَ الْعَوْدَةِ مِنْ أَدْرَنَا" (Congratulation to the symbol of peace coming back from Edirne, [city in N.W. Turkey]) in praise of Shaykh Muhammad Abduh. He recites as the following:

(1) The star i.e. Shaykh Muhammad Abduh toured to meet in a contest of good fortune and he i.e. Imâm came back just like a sword with its sheath.

(2) He (The poet himself) saw a distinguished person (like Imâm) and spent sleepless night for his high esteemed price. Then he endeavoured to sleep and attained peace in his sleepless night.

(3) So (He got so much peace in his mind as) the lying of a sleeping man in his house is just like lying position of a dead man in his grave.

Thus, al-Manfalûti completes this poem with the following verse:

ماحيلة الحسنات فِي نعمة أسْبِغْهَا اللَّهُ عَلَى عَبِيده
There is no alternative for a jealous man except the contributions which Allāh has bestowed upon his servant (‘Abduh).

Al-Manfalūtī was greatly impressed by the trio-figure of Egypt and they were Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abduh, Sa’d Zaghlūl Pāshā and Shaykh ‘Alī Yūsūf respectively. Regarding the relationships of these trio-figures, Prof. Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyāt, a great educationist and a litterateur of Egypt, says thus:

"ومن زلفاه لدئ هذين العظمين نفوشه إلى صاحب المؤيد (الشيخ على يوسف), و هؤلاء الثلاثة كانوا أقوى العناصر في تكوين المنقولى الأديب، بعد استعداد فطرته وإرشاد والده"

Annotation: “He (Al-Manfalūtī) approached these two great personalities (Imām Shaykh Muhammad Abduh, Sa’d Zaghlūl Pāshā) and took support from the owner of al-Mu‘ayyid, Shaykh ‘Alī Yūsūf. These three were most powerful components in making al-Manfalūtī a writer after his natural leaning and getting guidance from his father.”

As the reputation of al-Manfalūtī as a good writer got publicity in the University of al-Azhar, Muhammad ‘Abduh took him to his company and apprised him of the best ways and means of developing literary talents and guided him living an ambitious life. When Muhammad ‘Abduh used to impart lessons on “Tafsirul Quran” (Interpretation of Holy Quran) and the writings of ‘Abdul Qahir al-Jurjānī regarding the book of rhetoric & prosody namely- “Dalā‘il al-I‘jāz wa Asrār al-Balāghah” (Evidence of miracles and secrets of prosody) al-Manfalūtī was greatly impressed by its essences. It is known that his relation with him became very close during the study of this great book. He continuously adhered to his companion and fulfilled his thirst of knowledge, also gained the skilfulness and expertness in that area, which was not matured and perfect in him. Regarding his relation with Muhammad ‘Abduh, ‘Abdul Qahir al-Jurjānī says:
“Al-Manfalūti’s college days began to transform from al-Azhar to the house of al-Imam Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abduh for literary discussion. He was associated with him like a son with his father or as like as a disciple with his saint.”

Al-Manfalūti became an exceptional student for him. From this time, his attitude about education was going to be changed. He created new literary trends and reformation of political thoughts came to his mind. Muhammad ‘Abduh was also deeply fascinated by him and appreciated him for his potentiality and merit. He hoped that al-Manfalūti would very soon become a pan Arabian figure through his sagacity, mastery and an exposcer of his ideology and teaching. Then, al-Manfalūti took up journalism as his profession and rose to high offices in the administration of Sa’d Zaghlūl Pasha. It was through Muhammad ‘Abduh that al-Manfalūti succeeded in securing access to Sayyid Pasha & Sa’d Zaghlūl Pasha, whose relationship also enabled him to be introduced to the proprietor of “Al-Mu’ayyid” an important magazine in which he got a position of high esteem. It has been already mentioned that, at that time, Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abduh, Sa’d Zaghlūl Pasha and Shaykh ‘Ali Yusūf were the most outstanding figures of Egypt who influenced on al-Manfalūti’s personality in shaping him as a humanitarian, a social worker and a genius writer. Hence, Muhammad Siddiq, a modern Arabian critic, writes as such:

“Faithful to the views of his teacher and mentor, Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abduh, al-Manfalūti broaches the problems of the literary creation through its direct bearing on religion. The combined effect of ‘Abduh’s teaching and al-Manfalūti’s formation on the relationship between Islam and imaginative literature goes much further than any alternative, contemporary or subsequent, articulation.”

While
al-Manfalûti became disappointed with the traditional subjects of al-Azhar University, he found in the lectures of the modernist al-Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abduh, what his perplexed soul was yearning for since long days. He was influenced strongly by the bold, revolutionary teachings of ‘Abduh, especially by his new approach to the exposition of the Qur‘ân and to the works of pioneer Arab writers.¹²

In 1905 A.D., when al-Imâm Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abduh passed away, al-Manfalûti was extremely aggrieved because he was like his right hand and one of the strong supporters in each ground. His death was a tremendous blow to him. He immediately came back to his native place ‘Manfalût’ so that he gets consolation in his heart and relaxes from this tragedy. He thus, stayed in ‘Manfalût’ for some times and was busy in study. During this period, he held the literary conventions in his house and discussed elaborately on the development of literatures and completed his degree of ‘‘Alîmiyyah”¹³ Then, he came back to Cairo to work in the newspapers and also wrote editorial columns for some esteemed journals of Egypt. The most celebrated from amongst them were “al-Sâ ‘iqah” in 1906 A.D. and “al-Mu‘ayyid” in 1907 A.D. It is noteworthy that the majority of his essays and poems were published in the journal “al-Mu‘ayyid” under Shaykh ‘Ali Yusuf. He had been writing the poems, short stories and essays since 1896 A.D. in that journal. Some of the essays of Al-Manfaluti are really poems in prose.¹⁴ After distinguishing himself first as a poet, he began his career as a prose writer under Shaykh ‘Ali Yusuf’s aforementioned wing. At last, the name of al-Manfalûti became familiar with the people of the country and his fame was widely spread. Then he used to write his articles on political, Social, economic issues in this daily. Thus, he had established himself as a great writer and a poet amongst the common people.
2.5 Al-Manfalūṭī’s Political Career:

Al-Manfalūṭī’s political career involved all aspects of his motherland because he loved his country profusely, wept for it at the time of its catastrophes, lamented extremely for its loss of independence and the occurrence of its disastrous situations. These feelings are expressed by himself as in the following lines:—"I come to know that the life of Egypt is for you only and for me it is nothing but the loss of my whole life. Definitely the way of death is more desirable than the way of such life". He grieves here for Egypt due to the British occupation. He protested vehemently against the British occupation in Egypt through his writings and struggled for upholding of Arabian civilization. Al-Manfalūṭī played a tremendous role in bringing reformation amongst the people through his significant views and he therefore, opined that there should be one party in the country without having division amongst the people. He noticed that the presence of multi-party system might bring hatred and malice among the different communities, which may restrict the process of getting independence of the motherland from the foreign occupation. Moreover, Al-Manfalūṭī felt that there was a great need of a strong leader to lead the nation in right direction to emancipate his country from foreign aggression and used to focus his observations through valuable writings in different newspapers. Many people were impressed by his ideology and thought. But it is an important fact to note that Al-Manfalūṭī always hated politics and politicians. Though he called for social reformation and the refinement of style of writing, he did not intend to penetrate into the politics to raise his reformative issues from the political platform. It is known that a couple of verses cast him into the jail in November/1897 A.D. After spending a few days in jail, he became very cautious in writing anything on political issues. Therefore, he did not join in any political party during his lifetime.
His bitterest scorn was against the politicians. "Can a man be a politician without being a liar and a deceitful?" He exclaims, in seeking to justify his abstention from political debate. He justified the cause of his refusal into the politics by saying in this way:

"يعلم الله انى ابغض السياسة واهلها بغضى للكدب و الغش و الخيانة والخد الخان لا احب ان ان يكون سياسياً. لا انى لاحب ان ان يكون جلاداً. فرق عندي بين السياسيين والجلادين. لا ان هؤلاء يقتلون الافراد، واولئك يقتلون الامم والشعوب."

Annotation: “Allâh knows that I hate politics and the politician, (The cause of) my hatredness is for false speaking, fraudness, betrayal and treachery in politics. I do not like to be a politician because I would not like to be a butcher. In my view, there is no difference between politicians and the butchers except one thing that the butcher kills a single person and those politicians kill the nations & communities.”

2.6 AL-MANFALÛTÎ’S SERVICES AS A GOVT EMPLOYEE:

Mustafâ Lutfî al-Manfalûtî had a cordial relation with the nationalist leader Sa’d Zaghlûl Pâshâ (1857-1927 A.D.) of Egypt. When Sa’d Zaghlûl Pâshâ became Education Minister, he appointed al-Manfalûtî as the Arabic Editor (Muharrir ‘Arabi) of his ministry in 1909 A.D. Al-Manfalûtî became one of the best friends of him and attached with him like a shadow of a man. When the ministry of Sa’d Zaghlûl Pasha fell down and the opposition party formed the next government, al-Manfalûtî gave up his service. But afterwards when Sa’d Zaghlûl Pâshâ again came into power with a stable position in the parliament, al-Manfalûtî got re-appointment in the ministry in a job which was almost similar to the one he previously held. When Sa’d Zaghlûl Pâshâ was transferred to the Law Ministry, he also took him away with him and after completing his tenure as Law Minister in 1919, al-Manfalûtî left his post. When the parliament was re-formed in February/1923, Sa’d Pâshâ appointed him as a
commissioner in the office of Upper House. At that time, his monthly salary was not less than 50 Egyptian pounds. But his destiny did not favour him to survive for a long time in this position. It is said that Sa’d Zaghlūl Pāshā was attempted to murder by his enemies and accidentally al-Manfalūtī was also bestowed the title of “Prince of Poets” by a board of eminent scholars on the same day. It is an irony of fate that al-Manfalūtī also expired within short period due to some disease. That was, therefore, the tragic day for the fans of al-Manfalūtī. His death took place at about 48 years of age in 1924 A.D.17

Thus, we have seen that al-Manfalūtī had a vast experience in doing different official duty such as in the Ministry of Justice, the Secretariat of the Legislative Assembly, the Secretarial Department of the Royal Court and the Egyptian Parliament etc. in addition to his writings. It has been seen that though the aforementioned progression in appointments of al-Manfalūtī gives us the impression of a model civil servant’s seamless career, the reality appears to have been considerably less straightforward: “The period, actually was a difficult one for Egypt, which had had to endure a series of humiliating episodes in its relationship with Britain. The Britishers occupied the country since “Urābi” revolt of 1881 & 1882 A.D. Popular resentment against British rule, personified in the autocratic rule of the Governor- General ‘Evelyn Baring’ (later known Lord Cromer), finally spilled over in the popular revolt of 1919 A.D., which was followed by a series of negotiations with Britain led by the nationalist leader “Sa’d Zaghlūl”. Thus, he had to face such type of various ups and downs in his life.

2.7 CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS OF AL- MANFALŪTĪ:

1897 A.D.: Al-Manfalūtī began to publish in this year some of his literary essays in a few reputed journals particularly in “al-Sā’iqa”
and "al-Mu‘ayyid" (المؤيد) of Egypt. He gradually established himself through his publications amongst the people where he called for reformation in the field of literary styles and beauty of art. The language of al-Manfalûti is easy and understandable to common man although he uses more phrase & idioms. These publications raised his position amongst the other writers and he became extensively popular throughout the Arab world.

**November-1897 A.D.:** During this period, al-Manfalûti had to face some critical problems. He composed a satire on Egyptian ruler "Khedive ‘Abbâs Hilmi" while he was returning from Turky in 1897. This satire enraged the Egyptian ruler very much and he immediately ordered concerned department to arrest al-Manfalûti. He was imprisoned for one year and six months.

**October, 1907 A.D.:** Al-Manfalûti went to Cairo. Here, he associated with different literary organizations and got opportunities to express his feelings in the journals.

**1909 A.D.:** This year was significant for al-Manfalûti because Sa‘d Zaghlûl Pâsha appointed him as a director of Education Ministry and Arabic spokesman of the ministries. Sa‘d Zaghlûl Pâsha helped him immensely in each field. Thus, he was acquainted with the great leaders of the country. As such, his literary reputation was widely spread to the hearts of the common people.

**1910 A.D.:** The year was remarkable for al-Manfalûti because his famous book "al-Nazarât" vol-I, was published in this year. The articles of this book were taken from the Egyptian journal "al-Mu‘ayyid" (المؤيد) and these were collected in this book and published.
Moreover, during this period his patron Sa’d Zaghlūl Pāshā was appointed as a minister of Law. Then he picked up al-Manfalūtī to his department and appointed him in a new post as Arabic spokesman.

1912 A.D.: He wrote an important book that is “Mukhtārāt al-Manfalūtī” and published it in this year. It was a book of some selected literary topics and this book is a guidebook for the students of schools. It is a significant book for the fans of Arabic literature. This year is also highly mentionable for the publication of his celebrated book “al-Nazarāt” vol-II. It comprises many collections of essays on different topics which were published from time to time in the journal “al-Mu‘ayyid” (المؤيد).

1913 A.D.: The first part of “al-Nazarāt” was reprinted after the first print was completely sold in the market due to its massive popularity. Therefore, this year was also a magnificent landmark for al-Manfalūtī.

In this year, Sa’d Zaghlūl Pāsha was nominated as the deputy speaker of Legislative Assembly. So he also took away al-Manfalūtī to his department and appointed him to the post of secretary in the parliament. He continued in this post till the dissolution of the parliament in 1914 A.D. due to the occurrence of World War-I. Although he lost his rank of the post, yet he remained as a govt. official of the parliament. During this period, he got an opportunity to write articles in the journals. Through these writings, he defended Sa’d Zaghlūl for his movement and supported his views, while Sa’d Zaghlūl was exiled to Malta. Therefore, ‘Abdul Khāliq Tharwat, then care taker of the govt. had confiscated al-Manfalūtī’s published book “al-Nazarāt” and dismissed him from the post of secretary of parliament in 1921 A.D. It was known that some members of al-Wafd Party had demanded his reinstatement in his previous post for the sake of the pending works in the parliament. But this effort was in vain.
1915 A.D.: Al-Manfalūtī had published his most popular book “al-‘Abarāt” (العبرات) for the first time in this year. It contains his self-composed and translated stories from French literature and aims at the description of some fundamental conceptions about social reformation and moral education. This book is the topic of my research work and I shall discuss the various aspects of this book in detail in my humble project.

1917 A.D.: This year was memorable for al-Manfalūtī due to the first print of his popular novel “Mājdūlin or Tahta Zilāl al-Zaizafūn” which was published in this year. Originally, this novel was written by a French writer “Alphonse Karr”. A friend of al-Manfalūtī, Muhammad Fuād Kamāl helped him in translating it into Arabic.

1920 A.D.: In this year, the first edition of his novel “Fi Sabil al-Tāj” was published. This novel was originally a drama, which was written by the French author Francois Coppée in 1895 A.D. “Hasan Bek al-Sharīf” one of the close friends of al-Manfalūtī translated it into Arabic and al-Manfalūtī arranged the novel by application of his ideology. Here in this book, al-Manfalūtī wanted to highlight the achievements and heroic performances of his patron Sa‘d Zaghlūl Pāsha of Egypt.

1921 A.D.: ‘The first edition of al-Manfalūtī’s other popular novel “Cyrano de Bergerac” was published in this year. This novel was also originally a drama and the French author “Edmond Rostand” wrote this novel entitled as “Cyrano de Bergerac” in 1898 A.D. Abd al-Salām al-Jundi, a close friend of al-Manfalūtī, translated it into Arabic from the French original, who requested al-Manfalūtī to improve the novel and to modify its styles in Arabic manner. Al-Manfalūtī Arabicised its characters and events in accordance with Arabian cultures as well as its civilizations.
Apart from the aforementioned publications, this year was also important for al-Manfalûti for the cause of the first edition of the third part of his famous book “al-Nazarât” that was published in 1921. Here in this part of “al-Nazarât”, he describes some essays based on political issues particularly in praise of Sa’d Zaghlûl Pâshâ of Egypt.

1923 A.D. : Sa’d Zaghlûl became the prime minister of Egypt in this year. After becoming the prime minister of the country, he immediately appointed al-Manfalûti as a commissioner of Secretariat in the Upper House.

This year was also very important for al-Manfalûti. Because it was the last year of his literary life and he published his last novel “Al-Fadila or Paul et Virginie (الفضيلة)” in spite of his busy schedule in various programmes. This was originally a French novel, written by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, a French writer, entitled as “Paul et Virginie”. While he was arranging this novel, al-Manfalûti was assisted by a translator, author and poet Muhammad Othmân Jalâl in Arabicization from French in 1872 A.D. which was first entitled as - "الأمانى والمنة في حديث قول ورد جنة" (The Safety and blessings in the speech of acceptance and a flower of Paradise). This novel was also translated by Farah Antûn entitled as “Police and Virginie”. It was the last literary work done by al-Manfalûti before his demise.

1924, 12th July: Mustafâ Lutfî al-Manfalûti was a dynamic man. He did never neglect his duty in any condition. He was going on his work till the last hour of his death. One day he suddenly felt uneasy and he was immediately admitted into the hospital. The doctor diagnosed his disease as blood toxaemia and after some time, Mustafâ Lutfî al-Manfalûti died in the hospital. He passed away on 12th July/ 1924. That was the Saturday on which day the enemies of Sa’d Zaghlûl attempted to murder him. That is why, it is said that al-Manfalûti died as a result of a shock he received on
the attempt to murder his benevolent master. During this short period of literary life, he reached the top level of his achievement in the history of Arabic literature.

2.8 TRIBUTE TO AL-MANFALÛTI:

It should be mentioned here that al-Manfalûti did not cross his age of 48 years. His death marks the end of an epoch. It was announced that his untimely death was a great loss to the nation as well as for the history of Arabic literature. It is already said that, on that very day, the bullet was fired on the leader of the country, Sa’d Zaghlûl Pâshâ although he escaped from this attack. Both incidents were very tragic and unfortunate. Therefore, at the very first, his death failed to attract as much immediate attention as might have been expected and a small crowd went to the residence of al-Manfalûti to visit his corpse on the day of his demise. Finally, thousands of people came to bid farewell and to pay tributes for the last hour to their deceased writer. Thus, he was soon being widely mourned, not only in Egypt but indeed throughout the Arab World. On the other hand, the entire nation was filled with grief and shock as the news of an attempt to murder their great nationalist leader spread far and wide. So, the whole nation could not pay attention to the passing away of al-Manfalûti because he had neither political base nor membership for any party that would weep for his prestige & assets. Thus, the life of a great writer came to an end.

It is known that the eulogies were delivered at a large public gathering in the *Ezbekiya Garden* in Cairo by prominent members of the literary association including Ahmad Shawqi and Hâfiz Ibrahim, their tributes, together with a member of other tributes paid to the author, are reprinted by ‘Alî Shalash in *The Unknown Works of Mustafa Lutfî al-Manfalûti*. Ahmad Shawqi, an outstanding poet of modern era and a
prince of poets, elegizes profusely and pours out his emotional feelings in a tearful, pathetic poem. A few verses of this poem have been mentioned below:

Annotation: (1) (Oh virtuous man, al-Manfalūti), You choose the day of terror (attack on Sa’d Zaghlûl Pâshâ) on the day of your bidding farewell (day of demise). This day announces about your death like a violent storming wind, which laments for you.

(2) The information of your death was spread on that day, while the injury of the leader (Sa’d Zaghlûl Pâshâ) closed the passages of their (people’s) ears.

(3) He died in the panic of revolution (against his patron Sa’d Zaghlûl) because he did not find any way to adhere to his mission or any solution of the hour.

(4) There is no loss if your riding camel has patience for a while, when he frightens the propagandist, then how he is to resist it?

Ahmad Shawqi, has also recited another elegy on the occasion of premature demise of al-Manfalūti as the following:

1. فقع البيان واهله بمصور
2. حر البيان: قديمه وحديثه
3. يا مرسل النظائر في الدنيا وما فيها على ضجر وضيق ذراع
4. ومرفقه العبارات تجري رقة

لقب بوشي الممتعات صناع
كالشمسم جدة رقة وشعاع
لعالم الباكي من الأوجاع
Annotation:
1. The news of his death was painful that shocked my family because he was a versatile, skilful, multi-coulred artist.
2. Your works have been free whether these are classical or modern just like a sun in a new area with new rays.
3. Oh transmitter of ‘al-Nazarāt’ in the world and there cannot be any grief so much sorrowful in this world.
4. Oh pourer of profuse tears in ‘al-‘Abarāt’, You have down poured the pains heavily on the wailing universe.19

2.9 AL-MANFALŪṬĪ AS AN IDEAL MAN AND HIS INNAT QUALITIES:

Sayyid Mustafā Lutfī al-Manfalūṭī was a man of well-balanced physical structure and always strict in keeping his moral character and commendable qualities, which gave him a rare and charming personality. He always put on a turban on his head, a long-sleeved outer garment and a woolen wrap on his body. Although al-Manfalūṭī was a turbaned Azharian, he lived until his death in his Arabian uniform.20 He did not long for something more in his life and was always satisfied with the thing, which was in his hand. He was also a man of peaceful nature, a sagacious poetical searcher in his early life and an excellent critic depending upon the full evidence and authenticity. Besides, he was a creator of an elegant style in writing, led a natural disposition with the presence of mind with transparent interpretation of all issues.21

It is necessary to mention here that he owned minimum necessary wealth and that he bestowed to his parents. Naturally, he was so much liberal and generous that he did never accept any remuneration for composing his valuable articles during his life. As a result, his family had to face immense financial troubles and this condition prevailed till the last
hour of his life. Al-Manfalûti was endowed with some invaluable inborn qualities. It is said that al-Manfalûti was a man of humble nature, peaceful mind, polite behaviour, smiling face, modesty in talking, accuracy in feelings, love for mankind with generosity and excellent hospitality. Most of the people, therefore, needed his vicinity. Such sincere attitude of al-Manfalûti raised his position in the society in to high esteem. He occupied the post of public prosecutor in which he served for long fifteen years. He composed an ode eulogizing the former Khedive for the sake of his humanity, hospitality and peace of his mind. We have already mentioned that al-Manfalûti was a munificent person. Whenever he saw a person in perilous condition, he quickly came forward to assist him and often distributed money from his purse amongst the needy persons. He learnt patience, etiquette and shyness from his parents. The first impression he made upon people was that of a weak and timid person who could not raise strong protest against any kind of injustice done either to him or to anybody around him. But this proved to be wrong. Though he was poor in conversation, he could establish his strong personality both by his words and by action whenever occasion demanded.

He was a man of pious heart with delightful appearance and had a host of his friends for whom he sacrificed immensely. In many cases, he offered his hard-earned money to the children of poor families for their educations and sustenance of their daily lives. Some of them were so nasty opportunists that they took advantage of his such generosity for their self-interest. But these friends had betrayed him at the hour of his crisis. Yet he paid no attention for their cheatings and just expressed his feelings in this way:—"Certainly Allah is one, who can change the nature of mankind." He led a liberated life and was completely detached in personal life. Unlike other people, he tried to understand the true purpose of human life. He
considered wealth and property as obstacles in the path of liberation. Like a saint, he was never swayed by vicissitudes of life having no joy in good luck and no lamentation in misfortune. He treated both his admirers and enemies with an equality of mind. His wife Ramad's eyesight was very poor to look anything for which he spared no effort to keep her full consolation in all situations.

He did never fear the Britishers or al-Khedive or the opponents of Sa'd Zaghlûl or the members of al-Wafd Party. It can be therefore, undoubtedly said that after the bitterest experience of imprisonment, his literary career improved much and he emerged as a distinguished writer, a strong social reformer as well as his towering personality. His transparent image, his patriotism etc. were established firmly in the minds of the common people. The aforementioned qualities have been reflected in his different literary writings.

Regarding the moral character and nature of al-Manfalûti, Prof. Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyât writes thus:

"كان المنفلوطي قطعة موسيقية في ظاهره وباطنه، فهو مؤلف الحلق، ملتائم الذوق، متناسق الفكر، متسق الأسلوب، منسجم الذري، لا تلمح في قوله ولا في فعله شنوذ عبقريه ولا نشور النداءه. كان صحيح الفهم في بطاقة، سليم الفكر في جهد، عفوي الصدر في تحفظ؛ وهذه الخلاص تظهر صاحبها للناس في مظهر العين الجاهل، فهوذلك كان يتقى المجالس ويتجنب الجدل ويكره الخطابة؛ ثم هو إلى ذلك رقيق القلب، عف ضمير سليم الصدر، صحيح العقيدة نفاد البدموع العقل، الفضيل، الهوي بين أسرته ووطنيته وإنسانيته.

Annotation: "Al-Manfalûti was just like a musical piece from the inside and outside. He had harmonic morals, appreciative sense, organised thought, straightforward style and suitable clothing. No anomaly of originality is noticed in his words and actions and no hatred for ignorance has been seen in his behaviour. He understood everything slowly and accurately. He had peaceful mind at the time of trouble. These qualities of
him were unadjustable with other people. He, therefore, avoided to participate in the meetings, kept himself away from the controversy and disliked to deliver a lecture in the conference. Moreover, he had a heart that was so kind, a creed that was so solid, a hand that was so generous, and all his mind, money and love were devoted to his family, nationality and humanity.  

In this extract, al-Zayyāt, describes al-Manfalūṭi’s genuine and natural character and it is quite clear that al-Manfalūṭi always maintained his principles in all situations. He was well disciplined within himself. He could be compared with the knitted sickles of a garland. There was never found any hypocrisy, violation of promise, and irregularity in the duty or no animosity and hostility towards others were noticed in his nature. He always followed a middle path throughout the journey of his life. He attends the meetings but keeps himself aloof from delivering any lecture. He feared to confront the opposition of the public, as he did not desire to face any controversial issues, disputed factors and factionalism.

It is noted that al-Manfalūṭi did not like to write in those newspapers, which preferred use of Western words avoiding his mother tongue. It has been already mentioned that regarding the contradictory issues, he always keeps away from presenting his comment without the strong ground. It is therefore, seen that he uses more quotations from classical literature to make his subjects more authentic. Hence, he might be called a great modern writer.

2.10 AL-MANFALŪṬĪ’S POPULARITY:

Al-Manfalūṭi was a very popular writer of modern Arabic literature in Egypt. The general public were ardent readers of his writings and fans of his works. Because they found a real picture of their daily lives
in his writings and their mental aspirations as well as their characteristic values were addressed by his fictions. It can be said confidently that his story type essay was the most powerful means to influence the minds of the common people. It was the secrecy of al-Manfalūtī to become a successful writer and wholeheartedly accepted author. It is thought that al-Manfalūtī did not able to bring a change in the field of cultural development of the common people but these poor common people were the sources of encouragement that had revived and inspired tremendously the soul of al-Manfalūtī. In this study, it is found that al-Manfalūtī always maintained firmly his self-respect at any cost and his chief aim was to create a good generation in the society. As he says in his book "Fi Sabil al-Tahajj":

"إني لا أعرف شرفًا غير شرف النفس، ولا نسبي غير نسب الفضيلة"

Annotation: “I do not know any honour except my self-respect and not any descendant except the excellent descendant.”

Al-Manfalūtī contributed some translated novels to the Arabic literature for which he acquired wide popularity. These novels influenced immensely the minds of Arabians and Muslim authors and prepared strong base for modern novel in such a conservative atmosphere.

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