ABSTRACT

TOPIC: CONTRIBUTION OF THE UMAYYAD POETS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GHAZAL.
The Umayyad Era (661 A.D.-750 A.D.) is remarkably significant for Arabic Literature especially Poetry. During this period poetry underwent a seachange both in its content and style-qualitative and quantitative. It appears quite different from the poetry of earlier eras, as the Umayyads did certainly differ from their predecessors in politics and social life. They shifted the capital from Hijāz and took it to Damascus. The predecessors of the Umayyads were purely bedouin. Also, the Umayyads expanded their Kingdom through fresh conquests. Consequently, foreigners had started influencing them politically, socially, and culturally. Literature could not escape this influence, more particularly genre of the Ghazal. The present thesis aims at studying the aforesaid change and the influence of Umayyad poets and to take stock of their contributions to the development of Ghazal.

Chapters I and V are divided into a number of sections. The first Chapter deals with the origin and development of Ghazal from Pre-Islamic days to the early Islamic Period. The Ghazal is supposed to be one of the earliest disciplines developed by the Arabs in the realm of Poetry. The pattern of Ghazal did not remain the same
because with the advent of Islam certain restrictions were put on its subject matter. Earlier the Ghazal was only in the shape of Taghib or Nasib in the Odes and did not have a separate form. Also, previous poets dealt with many subjects in one and the same Ode. These pagan poets hardly appeared to be concerned with the morality, as such, their compositions from Islamic standards often sound quite obscene. Islam emphasized the moral aspects of life, and, therefore, obscenity was discouraged in literary composition. However, poetry did not disappear just for this reason as the decent and moral pieces were permitted. The fair sex found mention in panegyrics, where poets tried to stress the virtue, morals, and chastity, which were possessed by the ladies belonging to families or tribes of adorned persons. Ladies also found mention in satire, these were of the enemy tribe and their vices, were, therefore, stressed. However, this interlude between Pre-Islamic and Islamic periods was short lived, and Arabic Ghazal regained a praiseworthy position with the establishment of Umayyad dynasty.

In general, the Umayyad Era is very important in Arabic Literature for now poetry of many kinds flourished, although the roots could still be traced to the Odes of
the Pre-Islamic period. The Umayyads encouraged the full development of satire, Eulogy, Elegy and Love Poetry, i.e., Ghazal. Now, the poetry of this period is divided into three main streams (1) the Traditional Ghazal, (2) the 'Udhrite Ghazal, and, (3) the 'Umarite Ghazal. This period may be considered the golden period in Arabic Literature, for it can boast of a galaxy of well-known and celebrated Poets like Jarīr, Farazdāk, Akḥṭal, Kuthayyir-'Azzah, Jamīl-Buthaynah and al-Majnūn, 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'ah, Al-'Arj ī, Al-Aḥwas etc.

In Chapter II, III, IV the general themes of the representative Ghazals of that era are highlighted. All these Chapters have presented the poetical specimens of the representative poets of the Ghazal during the Umayyad days and assess their contributions to the development of Ghazal. It is also discussed side by side how much the verses of a Ghazal appeal to our hearts, due to the fact that, they depict the utmost warmth of emotions and sincerity of feelings. Mostly the poets in composing Ghazal paid their fullest attention and devotion to do justice to the poetic art itself.

Chapter III analyses the factors which contributed significantly to the development of the Ghazal. An outstanding feature of the poets of Ghazal of these three
periods, viz., Pre-Islamic, Islamic and the Umayyads, is that they represented the factors responsible for the development of Ghazal.

In the conclusion attempt is made to evaluate the extent of Umayyad poets' contribution to the artistic elevation of Ghazal which became a source of inspiration for the later poets. This is also true about the poets of the 'Abbāsid era, although this latter era is thought to be the golden age of Arabic Literature. The 'Abbāsids could in fact, boast of having good prose compositions and other kinds of poetry than Ghazal and the laurels for poetry have ultimately to rest with the Umayyads and the poetic traditions especially of Ghazal of this period.

Nevertheless, the classical tradition persisted because the supple love lyric which arose in later times seemed very different from the long, heavy, classical Ode, it was really an adaptation of the amatory prelude of the tribal Ode, detached and handled as an independent unit.