INTRODUCTION

Besides being a reputed Arabic playwright, essayist and short story writer, Tawfiq al-Hakim is also a novelist as he has authored many novels in Arabic. His contribution to the Arabic drama is so bulky and decisive that he is often entitled as the 'Father of Arabic Drama'. Tawfiq al-Hakim though is celebrated as one of the greatest dramatists of the modern Arabic world, yet his contribution to the store house of Arabic novel is by no way ignorable as his novels have taken the tradition of Arabic novel a step ahead. By means of his novels Tawfiq al- Hakim has attempted to portray the socio-political corruptions, the conflict between the western and eastern culture and revival of national solidarity and in this respect he has succeeded considerably. Tawfiq al-Hakim as a dramatist has got a considerable critical study but as a novelist he has been studied less.

Al-Hakim's *Awdat al-Ruh* is a comic novel the main theme of which is love and revolution for Egyptian freedom. Through the novel the author shows that love awakens the vital power in men which in turn may usher them to nobler deeds as Muhsin and all his uncles are seen to join the revolutionary party for the Egyptian liberation from the yoke of the British rule. In the novel *Awdat al-Ruh* there are characters who, in most part, are depicted as individuals rather than type. All his characters have some peculiarities as Zanuba is desirous of getting married to an unequal match. Hanafi is entirely comic and he suffers from sleepy nature. Thus are Abduh and Salim who bear their peculiar individual characteristics. Humour is the essence of the novel. All the episodes and incidents have begun comically and met their ends comically. For examples the love affairs of Salim and Saniya, love affairs of Saniya and Mustafa etc. The

plot construction of the novel though is not so coherent yet it bears some unity and logic if compared to that of his *Yawmiyyat Na'ib fi al- Aryaf*. It has visible exposition, complication, crisis, climax, falling action and denouement. The setting (environment) of the novel is unique and the novelist is very keen in observing the surrounding of any event that he goes on to depict in his novel and the vivid narration of the setting has made the novel more life-like and realistic. Tawfiq al-Hakim may be called a master of dialogue. He has employed ample dialogues to meet his purpose. His dialogues have played a veritable role in evolving the plot and expressing the inner motives, feelings and passions of his characters. The language of Tawfiq al- Hakim employed in the novel *Awdat al-Ruh* is characterized by complexity in structure, much use of dashes, use of similes, and symbols.

Al-Hakim's novel entitled *Usfur min al-sharq* published in 1938 is a socio-political novel. It is a novel of intellectual contrast between the spiritual East and the materialist West. The theme of contrast is firmly established by a comparison of the opening and closing chapters. In the first chapter, Muhsin, the Egyptian hero is given the nickname, "Sparrow from the East" by the French friend Andre` when he catches Muhsin eating dates on the street on Paris.[1] Andre drags Muhsin to a Christian church for the funeral of an acquaintance's relative, only to abandon him there, temporarily and Muhsin's eastern perspective is revealed far more in his sensitivity to the spiritual dimension of the service than by the dates. Andre, who represents the western perspective, replies when chided by Muhsin for not allowing him proper time to prepare before entering the sacred place like church. He says: "Going there is the same for us as entering a cafe. What is the difference? Each is as much a public

[1] Tawfiq al-Hakim: *Usfur min al Sharq* ,P. no. 48

site as the other. One has an organ. The other has an orchestra."[2] Muhsin corrects him saying: "To the contrary, in the former, we encounter the heavens….. It's not easy for the soul to ascend at any moment. It definitely requires efforts.[3] In the French church Muhsin experiences the same feeling that convulsed his soul each time he entered the mosque of al- Sayyida Zaynab in Cairo. So he realizes that the house of God is identical in essence in every place and every age.[4]

His novel entitled *Yawmiyyat Naib Fil Aryaf* published in 1937 is a socio-political novel through which he has portrayed the corruption of the government officials as well as the forlorn social status of the poor peasants. It is a comic novel where there is no specific plot but some sequence of episodes put together. The main outstanding themes of the novel are the arbitrariness and corruption in legal system, fraud and corruption in politics, crime in society and consequently the sufferance of poverty-stricken *fellahin* (peasants) of Egypt. The main episodes of the novel are – the investigation regarding the shooting of Kamar al- Dawla Alwan, the judgment episode, Rim episode, the childbirth episode and the episode of politics. In this novel *Yawmiyyat Naif fi al- Aryaf* there are characters but to the real sense there is no characterization as all the characters are depicted partially and none has got full depiction. However the prominent characters in the novel are- the Prosecutor, the two Judges, Kamar al- Dawla Alwan, the Ma'mur, Rim and Shaik Asfur. Tawfiq al Hakim has depicted all his characters from the personal point of view of the Prosecutor, the narrator of the novel. Almost all the characters are portrayed typically, though there are some individual traits in some characters.

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[2] Tawfiq al-Hakim: *Usfur min al Sharq* ,P. no. 19
[3] Ibid., p. no. 19
[4] Ibid., p. no. 13

In a nutshell Taqfiq al-Hakim's novels are the true picture of an age which were full of chaos, unrest, sufferance, injustice and pathos.