



ORIENTAL LITERATURE IN THE EYES OF REYNOLD NICHOLSON

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Received: 6 th April 2023 Accepted: 6 th May 2023 Published: 7 th June 2023	This article provides information about Reynold Nicholson's life and his work, his translations made by the scholar. The scholar's Oriental classical literature and Jalálu'ddín Rumi Mathnawí and Divani Shamsi Tabriz's works incomparable contribution to the translation from Arab, Persian and Turkish languages into English
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INTRODUCTION

Reynold Nicholson was born in Yorkshire, England August 18, 1868. He studied at Trinity College Cambridge and Aberdeen university where he won the Porson Prize twice.

R. Nicholson, was an eminent English orientalist, scholar of both Islamic literature and Islamic mysticism and widely regarded as one of the greatest Rumi (Mevlana or Mawlana) scholars and translators in the English language. If we pay an attention about Reynold Nicholson research activity, he was a professor of Persian at University College London from 1901 to June 1902, then lecturer in Persian at the University of Cambridge from 1902 to 1926, and Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge from 1926 to 1933. During Nicholson's translation activity, he was engaged in translating Sufi texts from Arab, Persian and Turkish languages into English [1]. So, he is considered a leading English orientalist in Islamic literature and Islamic mysticism.

What motivated R. Nicholson to study at Oriental classical literature if we take notice of it. As English sources are said, an orientalist Edward Granville Browne who was a contemporary scholar to Nicholson, made researches and translations [2] with the oriental classical literature that motivated Reynold Nicholson to raise his interest and respect to the oriental classical literature. As Nicholson was inspired by Edward Browne's works, he began his research and creative activity.

MAIN PART

In 1905 he translated "the Tadhkiratul-Awliya" by Faridu-d-din Attar. The preface of this work Nicholson said following ideas: Mysticism itself has influenced people's outlook and thinking that relate to the Persian race. It is known by history; Persian literature was said to have had particular concepts and views and mystical ideas in Sufism doctrine. This work has been appreciated as a main source in the history of Sufism doctrine [3].

It is known by history; the great Persian poet Jami's Nafatul-Uns is the most important role in Persian literature. However, Nicholson's point, the Tadhkiratul-Awliya" by Faridu-d-din Attar takes advantages Jami's work particularly. For instance, Jami gives only a rapid sketch, Faridu-d-din Attar draws a full-length picture. Initially, this work has been appreciated as a Persian prose.

¹ Reynold Nicholson creativity, translations and commentaries, Wikipedia-Encyclopedia 2 p

² Reynold Nicholson creativity, translations and commentaries, Wikipedia-Encyclopedia 3 p

³ The Tadhkiratu'l-Awliya by Shaykh-Farid'din- Attar: Cambridge University-1905, 6-16 p.

Reynold Nicholson translated "theTarjuman Al-Ashwaq" (The Interpreter's Desire) by Ibn Al-Arabi in 1911. This work has been depicted Arab and Persian poetry and two nations' similarities and literary views. It is written this work, even though Arab prose is strong, this cannot be compared with Faridu-d-din Attar, Jalaliddin Rumi, Hafiz and Jamis' competencies. Persian poets' works are reported to have been translated into several languages. We can cite "Futuhāt Al-Makkiyya" and "Fuṣuṣ Al-Hikam" treatises by Ibn Al-Farid. As Nicholson said, theTarjuman Al-Ashwaq might be considered these treatises [4].

At the same year the orientalist translated "theKashf Al-Mashjub Al-Hujwiri" treatise by Abu-I Hasan Al-Gaznavi about an ancient Persian in Sufism doctrine. This treatise has been included more information about the ancient and popular Persian. This treatise based on some information, orientalist raised their interest of mystical history and they tried to compare mystical views of Christian, Buddhism and Islam religions.

Reynold Nicholson proceeded his creative activity and translated "the Kitab Al-Luma fil-Tasavvuf" by Abu Nasr Abdullah B. Ali Al-Sirraj Al-Tusi in 1914. This work contains Turkish, Arab and Persian manuscripts. This work also involves main sources of Sufism history namely, beginning and ending the century of Islam, books related to Mysticism between VIII-X centuries. Sufism theory and practical parts have been kept by Harith al-Muhasibi, Husayn b. Mansur al-Hallaj, Muhammad b. Ali al-Tirmidhi. Others mostly vanished. We have mainly relied on more lives, legends, and doctrines of the ancient Sufis with following treatises:

1. The Kitab al-Luma by Abu Nasr al-Sarraj (378)
2. "The Kitab Al Tarruf Al Tasavvuf" Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi (380-390)
3. "The Qut Al Qulub" Abu Talib al-Makki (386)
4. "The Tabaqat al-Suffiya" Abu Abdul Rahmon al-Sulami (412)
5. "The Hilyat al-Awliya" Abu Nuaym al-Isbahi (430)
6. "The Risalat al-Qushayyira" Abul Qasim al-Qushayri (465)
7. "The Kashf al-Mahjub" Ali Utman al-Hujwiri (470)
8. "The Tadhiratul-Awliya" Fahrid-din Attar (620) [5]

Above mentioned sources are so essential role in Europe and East literary world and constantly attracting orientalist and researchers' attention.

In 1921 "The Mystics of Islam" and "Studies of Islam poetry" were translated by Reynold Nicholson. These works can be seen Arab and Persian literature, philosophy, religion and priceless sources owing to Islam mysticism.

As it is given this work, scholars Muhammad Avfi and Abi-L-Ala Al-Maarri possessed Islam mysticism deeply. Ibnul Farid was also a creative poet. Abu Sayyid Ibn Abil Xayr was pious and faithful. In Sufism doctrine Ibnul-Arabi and Abdul Karim Al-Jili tried to listen to students' points in Medieval century so as to solve philosophical and theological problems. In Islam religion Sufism was so vital conception that any idea or views cannot be imagined without it and these kinds of conceptions are so essential but Mystical ideologies are a bit tough to catch [6].

"Lubabi l-Albab" anthology which was written by Edward Granville Browne motivated Reynold Nicholson to research Persian poetry [7].

He went on the translation activity and translated and issued "Tales of Mystic Meaning"(being selections from Mathnavi of Jalaliddin Rumi). In this work states the conquest of Persian by the Arabs, an Islamic literature in Persian language, very different in character from the contemporary Arabic literature. For a thousand years Persian poetry and ideology have been the chief interpreter for people in the East and the West. These periods more achievements have been obtained the Epic and Romance. Particularly Shahnama by Firdavsi can be compared with Oddisey by Homer [8]. It can be said, Persia poets were so popular in the West literary world.

Between 1911-1920 Reynold Nicholson wrote "Rumi poet and mystic". The scholar studied several Persian manuscripts to write this work. In the work we can see the translations of Persian poems with valuable information together about Islam mysticism.

Eastern and Western nations' religion, literature, and visual arts are described in this book. It is confessed in the parentheses, there are various ethnic groups and their origins, social-philosophical views, poetry, visual arts and proses. Besides, wars occurred that period and people experienced difficulties. Nicholson dedicated this work directly to the life and work of Rumi and expressed his invaluable opinions about him.

The great Sufi poet of Persia Jalaluddin Rumi was born in Balkh, in the northern Persian province of Khurasan. The city had flourished at that time during the reign of the great Khorezmshah empire. Edward Brownie gave such a description of it, that it occupied areas from the Ural Mountains to the Persian Gulf and from the Indus River to the Euphrates. The ancestors of the poet's family lived in Balkh.

They also had a high rank among the people living in the city. His grandfather's ancestors are said to have belonged to the Arab race and were of slightly lower caste than Abu Bakr, the first Caliph of Islam. Although Rumi's biography in the East is as legendary as that of other Persian saints, his immortal works have made an inestimable contribution to the formation of historical evidence.

⁴ The Tarjuman-Al-Ashwaq-Global Grey Publication:1911, 1-5 p.

⁵ The Kitab Al-Luma Fi L-Tasavvuf-Abu Nasr Abdullah B. Ali Al-Sarraj Al-Tusi: London 1914, 3-5 p.

⁶ The Mystics of Islam: Cambridge University Publication-1921, 5-9 p.

⁷ Studies of Islamic Poetry: Cambridge University Publication -1921, 3-7 p.

⁸ Tales of Mystic Meaning: Westminster, London, 1924, 11-13 p.

The main sources below summarize the main events of Rumi life and some of the events that occurred in this work show his mystical enthusiasm and poetic inspiration.

Thus, in 1922 Reynold Nicholson wrote "Translations Eastern Poetry and Prose". After this book was published, the number of book readers had increased towards Persian and Arab literature and attracted more West orientalist's attention. Then, As English orientalist researched less theology, law, philosophy, science and medicine branches, orientalist began studying Islam history, religion, manner, culture and character. Poetry and prose have been selected as a main part of literature [9]. Abridges and diverse images have been cited from works of great figures namely, Firdausi, Abu Zaid Savaya and Fahrid-din Attar.

DISCUSSION

Certainly, Nicholson's research activity had a sharp turning to study Eastern classical literature between 1925-1940. Reynold Nicholson intended to research "Mathnawi" and "Devani Shamsi Tabriz" by Jalal al-Din Rumi. During 15 years, Nicholson was to be as a great translator who translated Jalal al-Din Rumi - "Mathnawi" consisting of 6 volumes from Arabic, Turkish and Hindu languages into English. This Mathnawi includes critical notes, translations and commentary. Basically, these books encompass highest as well as the lowest still popular for West students in the life of Middle Ages. In modern standards Mathnawi is very long poem, almost as many verses as the Iliad and Odyssey together and about twice as many as the Divine Comedy. Every verse of the Mathnawi has twenty-two syllables, with 25,700 verses. Mathnawi means, for scientific purposes, a faithful translation revealed by a full commentary. Jalal al-Din Rumi - "Mathnawi" has been appreciated by Arab scholars, namely, Behrooz Mahmoodi-Bakhtiari and Reza Abbasi. As their points, Nicholson's translation has been warmly received by students and researchers for its accuracy and thoroughness [10].

Turkish scholar Sultan Adanir studied Nicholson's translation and estimated as follows, although Rumi's works have been researched by several translators and scholars for ages, English translation of Nicholson made accessible to understand for thousand people and readers the all over the world [11].

Nicholson researched and one of his greatest creative samples included Rumi's lyric poetry "Devani Shamsi Tabriz". In this book has been reported Jalaliddin Rumi's life, creativity and his family and events that happened to him.

Reynold Nicholson also published "A Literary History of Arabs" in 1907. The scholar presented detail information Arabs' history, literature, politics, religious conceptions and great figures, Firdaws, Umar Khayyam, Sa'adi and Hafiz as well.

In 1923 the orientalist issued "The Idea of Personality in Sufism". In the work, Nicholson expressed the sentences of Sufism and Islamic mysticism in mere and simple ways [12]. According to this idea, a person oneself devotes to Allah, the eternal and greatness of God, it is said that man is not eternal, in short, as long as Allah exists, the beliefs of Muhammad are obligatory.

The translations made by R. Nicholson and his works written by him which serve as the main source for many orientalist dealing with Arabic-Persian literature and Rumi's creativity.

Particularly, Muslim scholars Sadia Asif, Shabana Zafar, Zafar Iqbal Bhatti and Tamsila Naeem, Shaykh Muhammad Iqbal and English scholars Coleman Barks, John Moyne and John Arberry made works and translations related to Arab-Persian literature that served as a program.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that Reynold Nicholson is worthy of praise development of Oriental classical literature and Jalaliddin Rumi's works to the whole Europe, America, Canada, in the whole world, also translations made from Arab, Turkish and Persian languages into English and his great contribution to the West oriental studies in the whole world.

We hope that our performing research will motivate many scientific researches in our country as well as in the countries of Central Asia.

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¹⁰ A Syntactic Analysis of Metaphorical Phrases in R. Nicolson's Translation of the Mathnawi"- Research Article, 1-2 p.

¹¹ Jalaliddin Rumi I-II-III Mathnawi va "Devani Shamsi Tabriz"- Article, 2022, Istanbul, Turkey, 10 p.

¹² The Idea of Personality in Sufism: Delhi 1923, 6 p.

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