

The Significance and Necessity of Historic Knowledge in the Example of Al- Sakhawi in “ al- I’lan bi-al-Tawbikh li-man Dhamm al-Tarikh ”

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ABSTRACT

This text addresses the writings of the historian Al-Sakhawi regarding the significance of the study of history. It explores his defense of the study of history against those who generalized history because they saw it as mere storytelling.

Al-Sakhawi considered the study of history to be comprehensive in that it includes details of accounts and various eras and could be applied to multiple disciplines. He discussed the importance of historical reasoning as knowledge of past events help, for example, politicians establish practices of good management.

Moreover, the study of history includes the study of ethics and honors the scholars of the past, in particular those who have exemplary morals. As such, historians have an obligation to study accounts carefully so as to report events accurately.

Finally, the text cites the benefits of studying history according to Al-Sakhawi.

Key words: knowledge economy, philosophy of Arabic and Islamic history, the necessity of being aware of historical knowledge

1.Writer:

Al-Sakhawi was a historian and a scholar of hadith, tafsir (Quranic interpretation) and literature. His ancestors came from an Egyptian village called Sakha. He was born in Cairo and died in Al-Medina Al-Munawara. He traveled often despite the political fragmentation of the Islamic world. He wrote and he was book author also almost 200 books, including **A;-Dhau' al-lami' li ahli al-Qarni al-Tasi**, a work of 12 chapters, **AL-kawkab Al mudee'i** in which he translated the work of some of his contemporaries, and **al-I'lan bi-al-Tawbikh li-man Dhamm al-Tarikh** which we will discuss here.

2.Era:

Al-Sakhawi lived in Egypt during the Mamluk period (Burji dynasty) which was an age of political and cultural relapse of civilization. The Sultanate was under political threat from the thriving Frankish and Cyprus states and there were constant disputes between the Mamluks and Ottomans. However, under these circumstances Al-Sakhawi never lost hope or repealed art or history; instead he wrote a book “ He erected a valuable monument to the science of history “ ; according to the scholar of Middle Eastern Studies, Franz Rosenthal. Al-Sakhawi viewed history as an important cultural subject that should supplement the prevailing religious studies at that time.

3. Al-Sakhawi Thoughts

Al-Sakhawi stated, “People who speak [of the] evil of history, allocate or generalize.” Those who allocated history believed it to be forbidden slander, of which Al-Sakhawi disapproved., He claimed there was sufficient evidence to prove the magnificence of the academic field of history, its merit, grandeur, the status of its preservers, its nobility in the Quran narrative, and its aims. He believed that those who generalized history depreciated and despised the value of history as they concluded its aim was to tell stories and pass on news and that knowledge of history was only for the purpose of conversing and chatting.

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He wrote his book and published it although he claimed it was not a final draft. He had collected the material and felt that it needed to be reviewed and cataloged. He was enthusiastic that the work would express his concerns about history and that it was a comprehensive representation of Islamic history. Nevertheless, Rosenthal hesitated to name it a chronicle of Islamic history. The book can be considered an adjusted record of the achievements and failures in Islamic history in which he detailed the cultural and linguistic events of several Islamic periods.

Al-Sakhawi was interested in the writings and opinions of his contemporaries. He attempted to arrange his quotations on the benefits of history in a chronological order in which Al-Sakhawi made use of direct and indirect quotations, indicating the type in each instance. For the purpose of this study, we will consider the choices he made to be reflective of his opinions.

Al-Sakhawi viewed the study of history from an Arab and Islamic viewpoint . He gave a comprehensive, yet idiomatic definition of history:

" The definition of the time through which we become aware of the date of birth and the date of death of narrators and scholars, in addition to death, health, mind, body, journey, Hajj ,set ,documentation, offenses and anything similar referencing the review of cases of initiation and cases, also in connection to what is consistent in venerable actions and facts, from the appearance of epidemic and serious tragedies " and renewal as imposed by taxes , successor and minister in a foray, epic battle, war, open territory and taking it from others, state transition, and perhaps the expansion of it from the beginning of creation, the stories of the prophets, and other occurrences of past nations, the conditions of resurrection and the introduction for what will come next, or the school of thought , trends or the domain which benefits from it, what is generally visible and divinely concealed , such as locusts and eclipses, or in an earthquake, fire, torrent, flood, drought, plague and other things from great verses and powerful wonders". He added "Essentially, it is an art of research searching for past occurrences from the details of accounts and periods about occurred in the world.

Furthermore, Al-Sakhawi considered that the sections of history are (Page 301 and beyond)

Chronicle, accidents and deaths, translation books, books on the dates of deaths, various history books recording trips.

3.1. Historian Conditions:

The terms of a historian: Due to the significance of history, Al Sakhawi laid out a few conditions for a historian (page 114). Some are listed below:

- Perfectly controlled just account arising from more diligent attention to detail and is insufficient to simply transcribe common transfer.
- To avoid exposure of the facts issued in (shboubia) the youth which he considers a sign of instability. Perhaps this is some of what is seen in current media.
- Understand people's values, situations and homes. Master the ability to differentiate between acceptable and refined and piety as well as not being deluded in recognizing clues that do not align.
- Be honest in transmitting the text and creating a reputation for the transferee.
- Knowledge of the translator's situation and religion is useful. Translate with excellent terminology of verbal concepts and a detachment from conjecture.

4. Summary:

A summary of Al-Sakhawi's thoughts on the importance and necessity of historical knowledge:

Knowledge of history is learned through other disciplines, including the field of politics, which Al-Sakhawi defined as the field of types of leaderships, policies, and virtuous and narrated stories, meetings and the consequences thereof. If the politicians look at history, they should view it as though they had witnessed or attended the events. This also applies to political events that kings witness as well as those who could benefit from the events. If the events were disagreeable, people abhor and reject them. They announce the events or work to repel the harms inflicted upon them by enemies. They claim they survived because of these events. and hosted the most precious cities and having mutual relations. In all cases, the individual increases in intelligence according to Al-Sakhawi.

As historical knowledge benefits politicians in "good management, using firmness, politeness the bossy , sharpening the minds and a beautiful green grove for the foot-traveler in what is learned through narration and listening" (page 60), quoted from Benefits of Biographies and Dates for Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi.

This includes the study of ethics which he defines as the study that teaches the types of virtues and how to acquire them, and the vices and how to avoid them. In this, he quoted from Al-Masri, who wrote the Dawltaeyen book, "That in its meaning an indication of the noblest things, a guide to the best ethics and deeds, deterrent from servility and ugliness, motive to proper management, good estimation and lenience in politics, for the writer it will be prudence, for the astute scientist it will be a lesson, and for other people a preceptor, the boards are filled with it in seriousness and humor, retentions become clear by that, will is reached with a lighter supply, and take over things as if they were observation" (page76-77) This result is not prevented by a few interested parties; there has to be a willing, interested, pensive individual with vision and perception" (Page 79).

Furthermore, history commemorates scholars of the past, imagining them in their hearts and knowing their actions, their asceticism, their piety, their religion and their detachment from this world. As well as the best scholars and their doctrines, the wise men and their words, ascetics and hermits with their lectures are greatly adequate, with the evident benefit in how a person rectifies his affairs and his worldly reward" (Page 32).

In addition, "Mentioning those who are loyal and have good morals, are known for their courage and chivalry, those with high determination and pure instinct are beneficial role models and in following their masters they are well-praised and well-mentioned" (Page 33)

Another area that benefits from history is domestic affairs which Al-Sakhawi defined as the domain which addresses the common household circumstances between an individual, his wife, his children, and his servants and the proper state of affairs among them. "It is useful in all sociology and the study of sociology fields such as social and economic history."

Furthermore, the rule of history lies in judgments and it is related in a careful study, not in a steady in one, and that the study of history is linked to a form of duty because it outlines a way to discover the connection of the story from the chain of narrators, knowing who recorded the transcription, knowing the lineage from which inheritance and competence arise. Although some claimed that history is a field of competences, others claimed it is what it should be.

This includes recognizing the wonders of things, the fluctuations of time, 'fate expense and hearing news' supported by a quote from P'mad ad-din Al-Asfahani in Al-fath al quodse: that nation' is adhere by the odds days. Otherwise, the connection is suspended and the countries remain ignorant, and currently the masters of the past are no longer mentioned" (Page 45).

Quotes about Al Moufaq Alkhuzrajy (1409 CE/821 in the Islamic calendar) in the introduction of Yemeni history relates that "without knowing history, people would not able make connections between now and the people of the past, and we would not know who has been preferred and who has not been, and no one would be recognizable" (Page 62).

The lesson and the consideration: here this is attributed to Taqi al-Din al-Maqrizi which denotes the knowledge of history as a prestigious discipline, the individual who learns it has acquired an advanced level in knowledge in the field of ideological studies and the transfer of knowledge. al- Maqrizi has divided the knowledge into two classifications: ideological studies and the transfer of knowledge. He said "a person has to devote himself to acquiring knowledge of both of them (ideological studies and transferring knowledge in a sentence) to go on to study history carefully and consider its lessons" (Page 66).

Additionally, there are quotes ascribed to Ibn al Sa'y in 1275 CE (674 in the Islamic calendar) claiming history as "the most marvelous field and the field with the most delightful stories that share the best wisdom and lessons" (Page 55-54). Al- AkFani (1348 CE/749 in the Islamic calendar) also claimed in his book, *Irshad alqased ila asna almaqasad*, that "we gain the advantage of history books by using them to learn about the stories and history of kings and scholars and about the incidents that happened in the past in a manner that entertains and gives examples to other people."

Al Sofy Alshbly is also quoted as claiming that "common people were busy talking about the stories and some of them were interested in the wisdom and the morals of the stories" (Page 37), noting that most people who study history are in the minority and are interested in its lessons.

The importance of an education in history and the importance of studying the art of history for scholars "in which it makes them open to new kinds of knowledge" (Page 14). Additionally, the importance of an education in history and working in it is increasing.

It is a problem in the work of historians “when misleading information is spread which includes the worst explanations of history, in which there are people who joined this honorable field and their works contain a considerable amount of distortion because they did not apply the narrating and transferring conditions, and, in the case of some, it was known that their writing cannot be trusted; they even write or narrate unreliable works” (Page 112).

Moreover, Al-Sakhawi added his explanations stating that historians “are similar to other documenters in their speech and in their works as well, and the professional historian is the one that people slid his mistakes sometimes and he is the one who is not been criticized a lot. However, every human being, even if the people did not believe what he said, his words will be recorded and some will be preserved. And this is life; no one is perfect, and there is no document that does not receive criticism” (Page 111-112).

The importance of an education of history for all people is exemplified here in a quote from the historian Al Mas’udi (956 CE/346 or 345 in the Islamic calendar) in which he states that history is a field that amuses both the educated and the non-educated person, and it entertains both the fool and the wise, and every unusual event could be a lesson, and every uncommon incidence would be amusing, and morals and manners are taken from history; this also includes the decency of kings’ actions and other similar accounts which could be used as lessons.

In history, one also finds the account of times of long ago as well as recent occurrences; one finds incomplete stories and achieved narratives, the rural and modern history and accounts of kingdoms that existed and those that have been lost without a trace. These have passed through many regulations, and history is celebrated in every gathering or meeting. Al Mas’udi discusses this issue regarding how to solve the problem that the scholars have addressed and how history was founded by past scholars. Thus, history remains guarded (against false accounts and misuse?) and resistant.

After mentioning the benefits of historical criticism and historical reasoning, Al-Sakhawi attempted to draw a complete picture regarding the benefits of history according to the philosophy of history in which he states “Everything mentioned from all the news of kings and their polices, the reasons behind raising the principles of countries and their disappearance, the management of army commanders and ministers, and all the similar events which happened all over the world and are repeated from time to time, and which are of great value, that if it is known by anyone he will feel as if he lived the entire life and he will feel that he experienced everything in life. As a result, his knowledge will enhance and he will become an expert in life affairs whatever their nature is in history.

This briefly summarizes the importance and necessity of historical knowledge with all its forms, images, uses, and the terminology as Al-Sakhawi has stated, who had witnessed an era of uncivilized society, political decline, dissolution of the Islamic world, foreign aggression, and Frankish conquest. Therefore, he resorted to travelling to seek knowledge, to record history, and to explore ideas that are nevertheless related to the importance and necessity of history. He pointed out that one should not uproot themselves from their origins and culture. He highlighted the significance of reading for all people whether they were historians, scientists or scholars or professionals working in any other field.

The question here is as follows:

Is not it a wake-up call for historians and for those who are interested in history to pay increased attention to history and to highlight the significance of historical knowledge and its role in forming this awareness?

5. References

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