

## The Theology of a Muslim Artist: Tawfiq al-Hakim

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**Abstract :** Tawfiq al-Hakim remains one of the most prominent playwrights in his native in Egypt, and in the broader Arab world. His works, at the time of their release, drew international attention and acclaim. His first 1933 masterpiece Ahl al-Kahf (The People of the Cave) especially, garnered fame and recognition in both Europe and the Arab world. Borrowing its title from the Qur'anic Sura, al-Hakim's play relays the untold story of the life of those 'three saints' after they wake up from their prolonged sleep. The playwright's selection of topics upon which to base his works displays a deep appreciation of Arabic and Islamic heritage. Al-Hakim was clearly influenced by Islam, to such a degree that he wrote the biography of the Prophet Muhammad in 1936 very early in his career. Knowing that Al-Hakim was preceded by many poets and creative writers in writing the Prophet Muhammad's biography. Notably like Al-Barudi, Ahmad Shawqi, Haykal, Al-'Aqqad, and Taha Husayn who have had their own ways in expressing their views of the Prophet Muhammad. The attempt to understand the concern of all those renaissance men and others in the person of the Prophet would be indispensable in this study. This project will examine the reasons behind al-Hakim's choice to draw upon these particular texts, embedded as they are in the context of Arabic and Islamic heritage, and how the use of traditional texts serves his contemporary goals. The project will also analyze the image of Islam in al-Hakim's imagination. Elsewhere, he envisions letters or conversations between God and himself, which offers a window into understanding the powerful impact of the Divine on Tawfiq al-Hakim, one that informs his literature and merits further scholarly attention. His works occupying a major rank in Arabic literature, does not reveal Al-Hakim solely but the unquestioned assumptions operative in the life of his community, its mental make-up and its attitudes. Furthermore, studying the reception of works that touch on sensitive issues, like writing a letter to God, in Al-Hakim's historical context would be of a great significance in the process of comprehending the mentality of the Muslim community at that time.

**Keywords :** Arabic language, Arabic literature, Arabic theology, modern Arabic literature

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