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Economic Ideas of Rifa`ah Al-Tahtawi*

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Jami`al-Azhar (al-Azhar Mosque University) has been the oldest and most renowned seat of Islamic learning and education in Egypt. During the nineteenth century it had been very faithful to its past pattern and courses of studies. It was hardly affected by the developments that were taking place elsewhere in the world in social and natural sciences (al-Jabarti, 1985, 1: 276). In general, its teachers ceased to produce original work. The overall environment was that of imitation and repetition. Writing a commentary or commentary over commentary, on an earlier work, was considered a great achievement. There was dearth of creative and innovative writings. However, some of its graduates were ignited with new spirit of change and reform when directly or indirectly they came across modern world of learning in theory and practice. Rifā`ah Rāfi` al-Tahtāwī was one such personality. The present paper studies economic ideas of this modernized Azharite graduate of the nineteenth century Egypt.

Life and work

Rifā`ah Rāfi` al-Tahtāwī (1801-1873), born in Tahta, in the year the French troops evacuated Egypt, was a writer, teacher, translator, Egyptologist and renaissance intellectual. He obtained his early education at his home town. Then he spent 5 years (1817-1822) in Jami` al-Azhar. After graduation he started teaching there. In 1824 he was appointed religious instructor in the army. In 1826 he was deputed as the chaplain of an educational mission to Paris with the Egyptian students who were sent to get military education and training. Teaching and preaching and religious guidance was his assignment. In his stay at Paris he mastered the French language and studied their culture and sciences. Al-Tahtawi was much influenced by the French Scholars and Philosophers, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Mantesquieu. During his stay in Paris he realized what a big gap existed between the science, culture and economic progress of France and backward condition of Egypt.

In 1831, he returned home to be part of the statewide effort to modernize the Egyptian infrastructure and education. He was appointed director of the School of

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Languages in 1835. He supervised translation activities and himself translated a number of works from French to Arabic⁽¹⁾. Being a graduate of al-Azhar and well-versed in Islamic heritage, he was not simply a translator of Western literature. He used to correct in his translation various misconceptions and bias statements of Western scholars. In many cases, al-Tahtawi mixed up a translation with his original ideas. So much so that it would have become difficult for a reader to distinguish between the two. From 1850 to 1854 he spent four years in exile in Sudan. In 1854 he returned to Egypt from exile and resumed his academic and training activities. He died on 27th May 1873 (Rabi'II, 1290 H) and was buried near al-Azhar University. Some important works of al-Tahtawi are as follows:

1) *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz*. This is his travel account of France, first published in 1834 (1250 H). It deals with the aims and objectives and fruits achieved of his journey to Paris. It describes briefly the way how French people organized the industries and sciences, their beliefs and establishments⁽²⁾.

2) *Manahij al-Albab al-Misriyah fi Mabahij al-Adab al-'Asriyah*. This is repository of his socio-economic ideas first published in 1869 (1286 H). It contains al-Tahtawi's opinions on economic, social and political issues. It also consists of applied aspects of agriculture, soil, livestock, fisheries and how to nurture silkworm. He learned and fully digested western sciences on these aspects and skillfully applied to Egyptian situation.

3) *Al-Murshid al-Amin fi Tarbiyat al-Banat wa'l-Banin*. This gives an account of his views regarding education, training and culture.

4) *Al-Qawl al-Sadid fi'l-Ijtihad wa'l-Taqlid* (Pertinent discourse on original thinking and imitation). The contents are clear from the title.

He translated more than two dozen books, on history, law, geography politics, philosophy, literature, military science, etc. However we did not find any work of political economy in his translations. Some important works of translations are: *History of ancient people of Egypt* (1254H/1838), *Commercial Laws* (1258/1868), *Treatise on mines* (1884/1867), *A Book on Ancient Philosophers* (1252/1836), *Principles of Engineering* (1270/1854), *Beneficial metals for people's living* (1248/1832), etc. Through his books and translations, he became a key figure in the new intellectual opening to the West that began in the nineteenth century.

Economic Development of France strikes al-Tahtawi: When al-Tahtawi reaches Marseille, the port city of France, the scene of its economic development struck into his heart. He was surprised to its spacious and wide lanes and streets, halls and houses fixed with mirrors, underground sewerage, water storage system, bridges, garden, etc., as if he came to a new satellite. (*Takhlis*, p. 73). When he reached Paris, he was extremely impressed by its economic institutions, means of communication, government and private undertakings such as mining, factories of soap manufacturing, leather, cotton etc. He was astonished to see in Paris big trading houses, trademarks and licensing system, commercial and technical experts. He was astonished to see the advanced system of sea and surface transportation, post offices and journals (*Takhlis*, 150-51). He compares everything with the situation in Egypt. He notes Parisians' habit of saving and moderate spending. Even their ministers have few servants, while an ordinary

Egyptian soldier has a number of servants (ibid. p. 153). He was also impressed by the scientific and academic institutions, libraries, laboratories, colleges and schools, publishing houses and speed by which books and journals are printed (*Takhlis*, 159-72). All these have played very important role in formation of his aims and objective and his call to modernize Egypt scientifically and economically.

Economic Thought of al-Tahtawi

Significance of industry (*al-manafi' al-Umumiyah*): According to al-Tahtawi, civilization depends on two types of things: spiritual and material. The first denotes good moral character, religious etiquettes and human values. The second refers to things of *al-manafi' al-Umumiyah* (*industrie*) resulting from wealth and economic development (*al-Manahij*, 1912, pp. 79). Happiness and prosperity lie in achieving both sources of civilization. He further explains what he means by *al-manafi' al-Umumiyah* (things of general utilities). To him it is synonymous with the French word – *industrie*, i.e. diligence and advancement in skill and expertise. It can be defined as a technique through which the raw material, from which one cannot benefit in its original form, is transformed to a new form so that one can benefit from it and it can fulfill needs. In this sense it refers to commerce and industry. The term is also used to mean a process through which riches and wealth are increased and human happiness is enhanced. In this sense it converse all the three sectors of economy – agriculture, trade and manufacturing (ibid. p. 129). As the mastery of industry grows, the society makes progress. The scopes of agriculture, commerce and trade expands by the help and cooperation of government machinery (*al-Amal al-Kamilah*, I: 346).

Productive and unproductive labor: Al-Tahtawi divides labour into productive and unproductive. A productive labor is defined as one who adds to the value of the object accruing profit. One that does not result into financial gain is unproductive. A labor, who works in agriculture or industry, imparts value to the product of his field, and benefits the owner. This is a kind of productive labour. On the contrary, a house servant does not give his master any financial gain. Thus, he is unproductive. A hired labor may demand his wages in advance. Even then this does not cost the employer anything extra, as his wage will be coming from the surplus produced by him. He earns from the fruits of his work and sweet of his forehead. Just opposite is the case of the house servant. Whatever he demands from his master, is not coming from any product of his labor. This is the reason that as a producer employ more and more laborer, his wealth increases. On the contrary, as more and more menial servants are employed by a master, they cause decline of his wealth (*al-Amal*, I: 324-25).

Similarly, all the government officials, their servants, army are put into unproductive as they do not, directly add to the stock of goods, although they indirectly help into continuation of production process. They enjoy very high salaries which come from products of others. They are only consumers, not the producers. In this category he includes all those who perform religious rituals,

judicial services, physicians, performers of fine arts, etc. (*Manahij al-Albab* Ch. 1, Section 3). On the contrary, he considers landowners and those who are engaged in agricultural activities, as productive labour; they add to the tangible goods.

By this illustration, al-Tahtawi justifies his classification of labor as productive and unproductive. This does not mean he denies the utility of menial labor. Both kinds of labor are required and praiseworthy as both involve struggle. Idleness is condemned by all nations (ibid, p. 329). However, he seems to be suggesting that one should minimize the use of employing unproductive labor.

He advocates rights of labourers and stresses that the business gain profits from the fruits of the laborer's work and sweat of his forehead (*Manahij*, p. 104). He encourages his people to work hard supporting his call with Qur'an, Hadith, and sayings of the caliphs. (ibid, p. 112-128). He attacked sufis' views. To him they were the reason for leading people to laziness and surrender (*al-Murshid al-Amin*, p. 32).

Importance of foreign trade: Al-Tahtawi, visualizes importance of travel and maritime trade. This he supports with the early history of Arabs and Muslims. The invention of compass, division of jurisprudential discussions in chapters on the basis of various economic transactions, travel of Makkan people in summer to Syria and in winter to Yemen, all these show that people in the past were aware of the importance of foreign trade (*al-Amal al-Kamilah*, I: 357-379).

Al-Tahtawi seems to be influenced by the classical theory of free trade. He advocates opening up of Egypt to foreign traders and investors, and treat them as if they are native of the country. This he supports by the history of Pharaoh called Ramsis, and Alexander the great. He presents the exemplary rule of Muhammad Ali and before him Ottoman Sultans that strengthened the country by expanding the economic and political boundaries of the country (*al-Amal al-Kamilah*, I: 393-417). Development of Egypt lies in the best management of the economy – its production and distribution. This is supported by the example of Prophet Joseph (ibid, p. 378).

Role of colonies in development of Western countries: Muslim thinkers, who visited Europe, noticed how Europe's need for expanding market induced them to colonize African and Asian countries. For example al-Tahtawi wondered what a tremendous profits European countries had exploited from the occupied territories. So much so that al-Tahtawi forgot the evils of colonization and called the occupation as the movement of development which brings about lot of benefits to the conquered country! In the opinion of Yared (1979, p. 97), al-Tahtawi seems to be influenced by the opinion of Simon who stressed the value of colonization in development of industry and trade that results pumps with benefits to colonized country. It seems that al-Tahtawi adopted this view as Egypt was not threatened by the colonizing power at that time.

Competition: Perhaps al-Tahtawi is the first Muslim scholar in the modern history who discussed, defended and praised competition. He says: "Competition may appear to be a comrade of greed and sister of jealousy. But reality is that it

has nothing to do with these two evils. In fact, the two are quite different from each other. Competition does not mean to limit virtues in oneself It simply means to surpass others in knowledge and compete one's rival, so that each tries to get something first through efforts and catching others (*al-Murshid* 3:6, 1292 H, cited by Imarah, 1973, p. 184). He confines his discussion of competition in general term and does not deal with competition in market and its role in bringing the price down.

Equal opportunity for all: He has clear concept of equality. It means equal opportunity and impartiality before law and not in economic means. He reiterates that this is also the Islamic stand in this regard. He argues: "If we just examine equality among the citizens, we find it relative and not absolute, as the Divine Scheme has made difference at the very outset. Some people are born with high qualities, while others are not. Some are strong while others are weak. Almighty Allah has bestowed livelihood more upon some than the other. But He has made them equal before the law; there is no difference between the ruler and the ruled. This is clear from the revealed books to His Prophets (Peace be upon them). Thus, equality means equality before the law (*al-Murshid* 4:6; Imarah, p. 185). However, he criticized the French becomes of disparity and gap between the rich and the poor: "Equality exists among them only in their words and their actions but not in their possessions. True, they do not refuse their friends, provided that they ask them for a loan and not a gift, and even then only if they are sure of being repaid" (Rifa'a, pp.120-148, cited by Lewis, 1982, pp. 219-20).

Justice, freedom and human brotherhood – the foundation of economic welfare: The maintenance of justice was recognized by al-Tahtawi as the most important element in the French system. He considers it as the foundation of civilization. He wonders: "Even though most of what the French constitution consists of justice, is not to be found in the Book of God, nor in the Tradition of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), how their reason led them to recognize that justice and equity are prerequisites for the welfare and well-being of states and people; and how the rulers and the ruled followed these laws, which permitted their countries to prosper, their knowledge to increase, their domains to expand and their hearts to be at rest. One will never hear anybody complaining of injustice; justice is the foundation of civilization" (al-Tahtawi, *Takhliis* pp. 95-96).

Al-Tahtawi imparts justice (*al-adi*) the highest place in human life. To him no society can be considered as civilized without the existence of this quality. According to him, all good qualities and moral values emanate and spring from the attribute of justice (*al-Murshid al-Amin* Ch. 4, Section 6). In his work *Takhliis al-Ibriz*, he commends the place of justice that the French constitution has assigned: Its various provisions are based on justice By their own mind they have concluded that justice and equity are must for development of countries and welfare of people. The authorities and public have adopted it and that is why their country has developed; their sciences have increased; their wealth has multiplied and their hearts are satisfied No doubt, justice is the foundation of civilization. He finds strong support for this in the basic sources of Islam – the

Quran and sunnah to which the French reached by their own thought (Imarah, 1973, 1: 104).

He also emphasizes on freedom and equality among the citizens in all spheres including economic (*Murshid*, pp. 473-77). Al-Tahtawi gives account of five types of freedom – natural freedom, social freedom, religious freedom, civic freedom and political freedom. In political freedom he includes economic freedom also as he says: ‘A government should provide assurance to every citizen over his/her legally acquired properties and give natural freedom without any violation. This means everyone has right to use, in legal way, whatever he or she owns’ (quoted by Imarah, 1973, 1: 170).

According to al-Tahtawi there is no contradiction between human brotherhood and religious brotherhood. Both are desirable. Human brotherhood requires equality in human rights among the people of a country. Religious brotherhood is a special case which means equality in the religion’s requirements. In rest of the things both Muslims and non-Muslims are equal. It is obligation for both to work together to improve the condition of the country with respect to its dignity, enrichment and wealth creation (al-Tahtawi, *al-Amal al-Kamilah*, vol. I, p. 319).

On the relation between the landowner and the farmer: Al-Tahtawi critically examines the relation between the landowner and the farmer. He supports the rights of the latter and advocates for him in the agricultural product a share larger than the landowner. He laments that the greater supply of agricultural labour than the demand for them, causes diminution in their wages and put the farmers in less advantageous position in bargaining the wages. He says that it is the landlord who gets the lion shares in agricultural product, although his role in production process is zero. He pays the agricultural labour only the subsistence wages (*Manahij al-Albab*, Chapter 1, Sections 2 & 4). This shows his understanding of wage determination through demand for and supply of labor.

Al-Tahtawi emphasizes that the sources of wealth creation are mainly three – agriculture, industry and commerce. He considers agriculture the best of them, and supports his opinion by a number of texts (al-Tahtawi, *al-Amal al-Kamilah*, vol. I, pp. 307-10). To him labor is more important in creation of wealth than the land, although both are necessary (ibid, pp. 310-11, 312).

The major portion of fruits of agricultural reforms and improvements are picked up by the landlords. They monopolize the product. They remain on the advantageous side without involving into cultivation and land tilling. They pay the land tillers and farmers only the subsistence wages which never matches to their labor. Because of large number of agriculture laborers, the competition by the job seekers, brings the wages down. This competition benefits only the landowners. They never realize that the agricultural product is the outcome of workers who are constantly exploited. The landowners not only monopolize the fruits of agricultural laborers, but the fruits of all the farm-related industries like blacksmith, carpentry, etc. (ibid, p. 316).

Al-Tahtawi supports the rights of farmers to just wages and reasonable share in the agricultural product by a *hadith* which says that “the crops are for the farmer.”⁽³⁾ He also presents, as an evidence, the practice of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)

who made an agreement with the Jews that they would do the job of farming and in return they would receive the half of the product. Al-Tahtawi warns the landlords that their exploitation of agricultural laborer which is prohibited by the Shariah will only invite their enmity and loss of their love. “One who plants cactus, will never pick up grapes” (ibid, p. 317).

He praises the Egyptian nation as they had been, since the ancient time, a very hard working people, who built the pyramids and big statues. They had presented sketches of idle person in most condemnable fashion (ibid, p. 336). He reminds this so that they should play their traditional role in the modern age when the world has become very small due to inventions of steam engines, telegraphic services, excavation of Suez canals and establishment of railways (ibid, pp. 338-39). Al-Tahtawi seems to have foreseen the age of globalization.

Like past many scholars⁽⁴⁾ al-Tahtawi considers various occupations and industries as socially obligatory duty as the management of the country and improvement of people’s economic condition depends upon them (*al-Amal al-Kamilah*, I: 288).

Moderate spending and saving: Al-Tahtawi condemns borrowing habit without the intention and capability to return the loaned amount. But borrowing for productive use, like carrying business is praise worthy (al-Tahtawi, *al-Amal al-Kamilah*, vol. I, p. 283). One of the reasons of the richness of French people is the fact that they know how to save and how to manage spending. So much so that they have written on this topic and have made it a separate subject of asset management. They know a number of great measures to increase their fortune. For example they avoid show-off that involves a lot of expenditure.

Opposition to idleness and begging: Al-Tahtawi is against begging, especially by able-bodied persons. He gives an account of measures taken by the French invaders to abolish begging from Egypt. Two things are important: offering employment to able bodied persons and provision of assistance for those who cannot work. In developed countries, benevolence to a beggar is hardly shown. They hold that charity to an able bodied person is a kind of helping him not to work. He expresses his satisfaction that the then existing Egyptian government has taken full care of the poor and miserable population, including old ages and children without guardians (ibid, p. 284).

Al-Tahtawi's additions: Al-Tahtawi was not simply the follower of Western economic ideas. He adds to them human norms and Islamic values. While describing the meaning of “Industry” in French language, he emphasizes that “industry” depends on human qualities like bravery, physical power and reasoning. The human society depends on these qualities. He considers the saying of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.): “One cannot be a true believer unless he likes for his brother what he likes for himself.” as the basic pillar in religious and worldly affairs (ibid, p. 354).

Government has to play a role: Al-Tahtawi fully realized danger of Western commercial invasion on Egypt and exploitation by colonial forces. He felt that the new challenge could be met only by organized efforts in private sector and through central planning by the government sector. He saw economic salvation of Egyptian in cooperation between private and public sectors and working together side by side – a situation known in economics as the mixed economy. He encouraged the rich population of Egypt, on the one hand, to engage in commerce and other economic enterprises. On the other hand, while appreciating Muhammad Ali's efforts regarding unorganized and scattered canals and irrigation means, he expresses his desires to have them well-organized and centrally planned way. They should be designed by the group of engineers with necessary water sources and barrage (*al-Murshid al-Amin*, Ch. 4, Section 2). In his work *al-Murshid al-Amin*, al-Tahtawi (p. 8) writes: The ruler should provide best opportunity of training for his subjects and compel those who control agriculture, industry, commerce and construction to fulfill all rights of their artisans and employees.

Al-Tahtawi reiterates that the role of government is not limited to security and sorting out individual disputes. Rather it has to play a role in over all planning for the betterment of citizens' condition, guidance to better course of actions, provision of education, training and employment (*Murshid* p. 440-41). The Government should encourage well-to-do section of the country to voluntarily participate in provision of merit goods like education and health services (*al-Murshid al-Amin*, Chapter 1, Section 1).

Taxation and public borrowing: Al-Tahtawi was in favor of tax reform and adoption of some of the features of Western taxation system. While commenting on section two of the French constitution which deals with the imposition and collections of taxes, al-Tahtawi wished that the Muslim countries would have followed it. "Since Zakah, spoils of war, booty are not sufficient for Public Treasury or they are not found altogether, had the Islamic countries administered their finance on this pattern, people should have welcomed it, especially while they were permitted according to certain opinion of the Great Imam" (Imarah, 1973, 1: 105). He is also fascinated by the European governments public borrowing to meet deficits. According to him, this was not known to the earlier governments. They used to borrow from some rich men of the country at personal level. The practice during the Prophet's time was voluntary contribution by the well-to-do companions. This was the most idealistic situation (*al-Amal al-Kamilah*, I, pp. 353-4).

Banking and riba: It may be noted when al-Tahtawi visited Paris, there was no modern bank in Egypt. First time was established in 1855. Existence of banks in France attracted the attention of al-Tahtawi. He observes: "Know that the greater businesses are those of tradings, and the most famous of them is the banking business. Banks are two types, state banks and banks of Paris. State's business is such that people can deposit with its bank whatever they want to deposit, and take the legally fixed profit which is not considered by them as *riba*

(usury) unless it exceeds the limit fixed by the law. People can withdraw their money whenever they like. Same is the function of Paris Bank. However, dealing with the state Bank is more secure because the city Paris may become bankrupt but the state will not” (*Takhlis*, p.149). Thus, he mentions two types of banks – state bank and Paris corporation bank. To him, the state is, after all, more strong and trustworthy. He praises Parisians’ love to work and earn. However, he does not approve their practice of interest. He remarks: “Had their earning not been mixed with interest (*riba*), they would have been the best people from earning point of view” (ibid.152). He casts critical view on the French economy. “Their economy would have been the best among the nations” he observed, “had it not been involved *riba*.” He notes that the activities like publishing books and spreading knowledge are also aimed at earning profit only (*Takhlis al Ibriz*, Chapter three, section eleven cited by Imarah 1973, pp. 101-102).

Al-Tahtawi's this statement shows that he was against permissibility of bank interest. This is just opposite to the statement of Yared (1979, p. 98) who says that the nineteenth century Muslim scholars did not consider interest as usury.

The rich community of this country should establish commercial establishments based on the principle of “*al-salam*” to facilitate economic transaction and abolish *riba* and relieve the needy persons from borrowing on interest. Even the bankrupt traders might be helped through them (*al-Murshid al-Amin*, Chapter 1, Section 1).

Al-Tahtawi called the rich Egyptian people and capital owners to establish companies based on *al-salam* (advanced sale at deferred date win immediate payment). He also suggested establishment of bank to finance such projects and called it *Jama'iat al-Iqtiradat al-Umumiyah* (Common Borrowing Society) (Imarah, 1973, p. 185 quoted *Manahij*, Conclusion, 4th section). He does not provided details how to use *al-salam* contract for establishment of companies and what will be method of banking. However, this shows an urge on the part of Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth century to develop the economy. Of course this was first step. The next step was how to do it in Islamic way. This materialized more obviously in the next century.

Islamic way of business: Al-Tahtawi says: “There are numerous chapters of Shariah transaction which cover business rules such as partnership profit sharing, lending, *mukhabarah*, *`ariah*, *sulh* etc. There is no doubt that the European laws are adopted from them (*Manahij*, p. 162 quoted by Yared, 1979, p. 92). He does not go in details of those transactions, since they were dealt in all books of jurisprudence.

Insurance: Al-Tahtawi also gives an account of insurance which is called by him as “partners in guarantee (*al-shuraka fi'l-daman*). This association guarantees to those who contribute to it in case of a calamity or accident (*Takhlis*, p. 149). It may be noted that insurance was not unknown to Muslim scholars in the nineteenth century. It may be noted that a query regarding insurance was addressed to Ibn Abidin during 1240H (1824/1825) who did not permit it on certain fiqhi opinions. Ibn Abidin calls it *sukarah* (security). It was a form of

insurance in which one party gets protection from risk of robbery or piracy on payment of premium (Ibn Abidin, n.d. 2: 177-8). From the term used by al-Tahtawi it appears that he is talking about a mutuality-based insurance in which all partners contributed and the affected person was compensated by them. Al-Tahtawi does not pronounce any judgment about it. Many scholars of the present age consider it acceptable in Islam.

Women's economic empowerment: Al-Tahtawi was a great supporter of women's economic empowerment. He advocates for the woman to engage in economic activities and work for support of the family if need arises so. This may be considered something revolutionary in a period when women's place was within the boundaries of her home. He says: "It is possible for women, should circumstances require, to engage even in businesses and jobs that are generally carried on by men. Of course to the extent of their capabilities. This will save them from unemployment and protect them from wasting times in gossiping and undesirable talks (*al-Murshid al-Amin*, Ch. 3, Section 3). He strengthens his stand by the story of the daughters of prophet Shuayb and the practice of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and his Companions. Even they fought in the battle field and worked for nursing the injured (ibid, section 3 and 4). This does not mean that he was against the *hijab*. A woman could do numerous works while observing Shariah rules of *hijab* (ibid, section 5, *Manahij al-Albab*, Ch. 2, Section 3).

Al-Tahtawi as an economic historian: In most of his works al-Tahtawi gave accounts of the bad economic condition of Egypt during the Mamluk governors of Egypt appointed by the Ottomans, who paid attention to collect taxes and did not pay attention to develop its land and the means of irrigation. So much so that most of the land got transformed in desert or dead land (*al-Amal al-Kamilah* I, p. 324). He quotes Napoleon after French conquest of Egypt: "If I were to rule this country in the way of the governments of France, Italy, England and Austria, its farms and people would have increased three folds as compared to the rules of Mamalik" (ibid, p. 424).

Al-Tahtawi applauded the efforts carried out by Muhammad Ali to revive the "dead land" of Egypt by developing various irrigation systems and excavation of canals (ibid, 425-26). Like an expert of water resources, he analyses the important role of the Nile for people and the economy of Egypt (ibid, p. 428-431). He sheds lights on applied aspects of Egyptian economy and achievements of Muhammad Ali in this respect. To him, the blood is source of life for the human body. Nile is the life blood for both body and soul of Egypt (ibid, 432). Section three, chapter four and sections one and two of chapter five of his work *Manahij al-Albab* is a valuable sources of economic history of Egypt and socio economic and educational development achieved during the time of Muhammad Ali (*al-Amal al-Kamilah*, I, pp. 431-463; 465-477). In the rest of his work *Manahij al-Albab*, al-Tahtawi discusses various crops which are most suitable for the Egyptian land and environment such as cotton, tool and silkworm, rice, sugarcane, livestock's, etc. In this connection, he gives full history of their origin and transplantation.

Al-Tahtawi emphasizes development of all the economic sectors in Egypt. He points out that in any country generally there are three main sectors of the economy – agriculture, industry and commerce. Then they have sub-sections depending on the kind of land and labor in specific regions. However, all work through exchange and trade. Their existence and continuation depend on availability of raw material, capital goods, and wages paid to the laborers. He warns that the situation has drastically changed in his time and it is much different from what was found in old days. Things were simple in the past. Today there is need to pay attention to both minute and big issues. They are carried on by the help of just and good governance, noble freedom, preparation of necessary budget and elimination of monopoly (*al-Amal al-Kamilah*, I: 346-47). He goes on discussing in details the differences in production works in the past and the present, and in this way he draws the attention of his country-fellows to positively respond to new challenges. He is aware that economic development cannot take place unless there are suitable institutions and developed human resources. He stresses on their provision (*al-Amal al-Kamilah*, I: 479-585).

Concluding Remarks

There is no doubt that Al-Tahtawi was highly impressed not only by the economic development of the West, but he was influenced by their economic thought and analysis as well. His division of labor into productive and unproductive is a clear proof of this.⁽⁵⁾ However, he was not blind follower and imitator of the West. As we have seen above, occasionally he criticizes Western ideas, and wherever necessary, he adds Islamic values as well. By his practice, he has shown the way how modern development of Islamic economics may take in future.

End notes

1. The moving spirit of the entire translation movement was *al-Tahtawi*. He was among the few Egyptians who distinguished himself during the early period of Muhammad Ali's rule. As a recognition of abilities and valuable contributions, Muhammad Ali reward him with high financial payments and appointments to high positions (Heyworth–Dunne J. (1939), "Rifa'ah Badwi Raf i al-Tahtawi, the Egyptian Revivalist" *BSOS*, London, Vol. IX, pp. 961-967, and Vol. X p. 400 ft.)

2. Recently its English translation appeared under the title *An Imam in Paris: Al-Tahtawi's Visit to France (1826-31)* about which Daniel L. Newman observes: "This is an annotated translation of al-Tahtawi's *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz*, the first translation of an in-depth Arabic account of a visit to Western Europe by a Muslim from the Near East. Its ideas and notions are as vibrant and palpable as they were over 150 years ago. It was instantly translated into Turkish, so it reached the Ottoman world at large, and really is more responsible than any other book, in the first half of the 19th century, for setting reformist debates in Ottoman and Arab society." Published 2004 by Saqi Books (first published 2002 Saqi, 2004)

3. No such report is found in the correct and authentic collections of *ahadith*.

4. For example, see al-Ghazali, 1967, 2: 106.

5. In Book 2, Chapter 3 of *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith wrote: "There is one sort of labour which adds to the value of the subject upon which it is bestowed; there is another which has no such effect. The former, as it produces a value, may be called productive; the latter, unproductive labour. Thus the labour of a manufacturer adds, generally, to the value of the materials which he works upon, that of his own maintenance and of his master's profit. The labour of a menial servant, on the contrary, adds to the value of nothing. Though the manufacturer has his wages advanced to him by his master, he, in reality, costs him no expense, the value of those wages being generally restored, together with a profit, in the improved value of the subject upon which his labour is bestowed. But the maintenance of a menial servant never is restored. A man grows rich by employing a multitude of manufacturers; he grows poor by maintaining a multitude of menial servants. The labour of the latter, however, has its value, and deserves its reward as well" (Smith, 1937, p. 314).⁽⁵⁾

It may be note that in neoclassical economics, the distinction between productive and unproductive labour was however rejected as being largely arbitrary and irrelevant. All the factors of production (land, labour and capital) create wealth and add value; they are all "productive" directly or indirectly.

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