



NAAT PERCEPTION

A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO
THE LITERARY GENRE



BY

SHAYKH ABDUL AZIZ DABBAGH





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FIRST EDITION PUBLISHED IN FEBRUARY, 2025

COPIES PRINTED: 500

PAGES: 68

ISBN: 978-969-8918-97-2

PRICE RS. 400/-



PUBLISHER: N'AT RESEARCH CENTRE,
B-306, BLOCK 14, GULISTAN-E-JAUHAR, KARACHI.

POSTAL CODE: 75290

EMAIL: SABEEHREHMANI@GMAIL.COM

PRINTED BY:

MEHAR GRAPHICS & PUBLISHERS FAISALABAD

0306-5267717, 0343-4487717

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INTRODUCTION

The poetic expression of admiration and devotion to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ holds a cherished place in Islamic tradition. Known as Naat, this literary genre has evolved over centuries, capturing the reverence and love of countless believers across cultures and languages. This booklet, *Naat Perception: A Historical Introduction to the Literary Genre*, embarks on a journey to uncover the origins and early development of Naat, exploring its transformation into a vibrant and enduring cultural phenomenon.

Part 1 of this study focuses on the formative period of Naat, tracing its roots to scriptural influences and examining the poetic expressions of devotion that predate the Prophet's birth. The booklet sheds light on the emergence of Naat as a distinct genre during the Prophet's lifetime, as his Companions and their families cultivated a rich tradition of poetic praise. This phenomenon laid the foundation for a "Naat culture," where poetic homage to the Prophet became a defining element of community and personal devotion.

Subsequent parts of the booklet will explore the flourishing of Naat in diverse literary traditions, including love odes and praise poetry in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu. Together, these chapters aim to offer a comprehensive historical and cultural perspective on the evolution of Naat and its enduring resonance in the hearts of millions.

This opening segment invites readers to delve into the early stages of Naat, a genre born of profound love and reverence, and to discover how it became an integral part of Islamic literary and spiritual heritage.

Shaykh Abdul Aziz Dabbagh

According to Ibn Rasheeq:

“There was not a single individual from amongst Banu Abd al-Muttalib, except the Prophet, who would not compose poetry.”

It was so common a practice amongst the Ansar of Medina, that according to Anas رضي الله عنه:

قدم علينا رسول الله وما في الانصار بيت الا وهو بقول الشعر
قيل له وأنت أبا حمزة قال وأنا.

“When Allah’s Messenger ﷺ came to us, all the Ansar people would compose Naat; it was asked, ‘O Abu Hamza (Anas رضي الله عنه): do you also compose Naat poetry?’ He said: ‘yes.’”

NAAT PERCEPTION

Naat is a peculiar genre of praise poetry, essentially free from exaggeration. It is the voice of a noble-hearted and sincere person, charged with spiritual love for the Messenger of Allah. An aesthetic piece of poetic art, a Naat is crafted with eloquent words, adorned with linguistic brilliance. A thing of beauty and purity, it does not contain the baseness of selfish desires; nor does it deal with any materialistic interests. It is offered as a debt of gratitude to the venerated and exalted Messenger, wrought in the diction commensurate with his sublime station. Its creative phenomenon does not tolerate unrealistic emotions, artificial thoughts, and substandard expressions in its noble form and genetic format. It is the passionate expression of the celebrated reverence of the Messenger of Allah.

1.1 THE WORD NAAT AND ITS SYNONYMS EULOGY, PANEGYRIC, NASHEED AND OTHERS

Usually Naat is considered a synonym of praise poetry—Hamd, Madah, Manqibat, etc. However, it is quite different from these forms of poetic compositions as regards its meanings and objectives. It is an Arabic denuded trilateral verb that lexically implies praise and aesthetic appreciation. Its synonym ‘wasaf’ does not exactly convey what Naat signifies, although both refer to describing Prophet’s portrayal of divine attributes and exalted features as depicted in the heavenly scriptures: Torah and Bible. The People of the Book would readily recognize him by this scriptural description, which we technically call Naat. The Jews would always beg help from God through his mediation as revealed in Torah and they used to receive the divine help by mentioning him in their prayers.¹ According to Ibn Hashsham, this

¹ Seerat al-Nabvia wa’l-Athar al-Hamdia by Syed Ahmed Zaini al-Shafei, Egypt 1327HJ, p. 392.

word was in use to portray physical beauty of the Messenger of Allah in panegyric form.² These two expressions were employed with this connotation even in the time of Imam Tirmidhi (209–279 AH). However, its application in modern sense came about with gradual usage.

The probe into Naat and Hamd reveal their synonymy. The public speakers and orators of religious congregations, while delivering their sermons used both these expressions to convey the same meanings: *الْمَنْعُوتُ بِسُورَةِ* and *الْمَنْعُوتُ بِسِرْحِ الصَّدْرِ وَ رَفِيعِ الذِّكْرِ*.³ Also while addressing somebody, the Arabs would praise others. The Companions of the Messenger of Allah would vent their affluent love and fervent submissiveness for the Messenger of Allah invoking upon him peace and greetings.

In English language the expressions employed to connote *نَعَت* are, devotion, encomium, tribute, etc. For praise poetry, expressions like eulogy and panegyric are used. However, they have specific usages and do not exactly convey what we mean by Naat. The word *نَعَت* Naat, has been frequently used in Arabic Hadith literature whenever adoration, glorification or admiration of the beloved Messenger of Allah is made subject of creative aesthetics. In Urdu literature, there is no other word used for the purpose. Hamd *حَمْد* is used for Allah's glorification and hymn and not for the Prophet's praise. These two expressions are specific and are recognized as a genre of Urdu literature. It is, therefore, worthwhile to use these two expressions in English language as well because words like eulogy or panegyric have their own etymology and connotations.

Eulogy: As for eulogy, in English language and culture, it is a way of saying farewell to someone who has died. That, in a sense, brings the person to life in the minds of the audience. They define it as a speech or piece of writing that praises someone or

² Seerat Ibn Hashsham, Vol 1, Egypt, p. 401.

³ Dalail al-Khairat, Muhammad b. Sulaiman, Idara Tahqiqat, Islamabad

something highly, especially a tribute to someone who has just died.⁴ Eulogies may be given as part of funeral services. In the US, they take place in a funeral home during or after a wake; in the UK, they are said during the service, typically at a crematorium or place of worship, before the wake. In the US, some denominations either discourage or do not permit eulogies at services to maintain respect for traditions.

Panegyric: A lofty oration or writing in praise of a person or thing, panegyric was a poetic oration or laudatory discourse originally delivered as a speech at an ancient Greek general assembly such as the Olympic and Panathenaic festivals. Speakers would frequently take advantage of these occasions, when Greeks of various cities gathered to advocate Hellenic unity. With this end in view and also in order to gratify their audience, they tended to expatiate on the former glories of Greek cities; hence came the encomiastic associations that eventually clung to the term panegyric. So it has a Greek, Roman, Arabic and Persian etymological history. Panegyric poems were a major literary form among the Arabs. As for Naat, there were creative endeavours by several prominent poets even before the Prophethood of Allah's Messenger was commissioned. What to talk of poets, even when Prophet Adam was first spiritually inspired with divine message, he was called "Abu Muhammad" (the father of Muhammad). When he discerned the light of Muhammad, he asked: Lord! What this light is? He was told: "This the light of the exalted Prophet who will be amongst your offsprings. He will be named 'Ahmed' in the heavens and 'Muhammad' on the earth. Had this light not been created, neither you nor the heavens and the earth would have been created."⁵ These were the first laudatory words Allah the exalted voiced to introduce the First and The Last of His Messengers. Persian language panegyric poems from the Middle

⁴ <https://virtualspeech.com/blog/eulogy>

⁵ Seerat al-Nabviya wa'l-Athar al-Hamdia by Syed Ahmed Zaini al-Shafe'i, Egypt 1320HJ, p. 392.

Agas contain details on the life of court poets and their patrons, and shed light on contemporary attitudes and matters of political and military interests, like *qasida* on Ghaznavid ruler Mahmud of Ghazni's incursion against the Somnath temple by Farrukhi Sistani.

Poems were composed for festivals like Eid al-Fitr, Nowruz and Mihragan as well. Some poems depicted the patron as a hero in a battle between Islam and infidels. Wars against Muslims required additional explanations and some poems by Farrukhi and Mu'izzi advocated in favor of Mahmud's capture of Rayy and Ahmad Sanjar's attacks against the Ghaznavid ruler Arslan-Shah in 1117. In a panegyric poem address to Mahmud Ghaznavi, Firdausi said: "Noble buildings are ruined by rain and by the heat of the sun. I have laid the foundations of a high palace of poetry which will not be damaged by wind and rain."⁶ In 1660, several panegyrics were published by English poets in the honor of Charles II of England coming to power.

"Nasheed" (نشيد): An Arabic word which is quite in use these days is "nasheed" (نشيد). It is being employed as synonym of Naat, which it is not. It signifies musical composition of a praise song or a hymn, panegyricized in chorus like an anthem, or a musical composition performed in praise. It is in use more in Arabic and English. In Urdu, the word "tarana" (ترانه) is used to convey the sense. According to Arabic lexicon, it implies a melodious voice, a hymn or song and a collection of enthusiastic or patriotic verses which people sing together. It is, however, by mistake, being used these days as a synonym of Naat.

We have seen that these English words do not describe what we mean by Naat. The words نَعْت and حَمْد specifically denote and connote what we actually intend to express and communicate. Therefore, I have used the word Naat for the genre that is our subject here.

⁶ Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911), *Panegyric*;
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panegyric>

THE ARABIC NAAT

1.2 THE WORD ‘NAAT IN HADITH LITERATURE

The word Naat (نَعَتِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ) has been used in several Prophetic hadiths implying admiration of the attributes of the Holy Prophet:

- According to Abu Hurayra (رضي الله عنه), the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “I met the Prophet Moses during the ascension night.” The narrator says:

قَالَ: فَنَعَتُهُ

“He then described his traits.”⁷

- According to Abu Malik Ash’ari (رضي الله عنه), the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: a villager came to him and said: some people, neither prophets, nor martyrs, will be such that the Prophets and martyrs will envy their proximity to Allah;

انْعَمْتُهُمْ لَنَا

Tell us their merits and features.⁸

- According to Abd Allah b. Abbas (رضي الله عنه), he asked K’ab al-Ahbar (رضي الله عنه),

كَيْفَ تَجِدُ نَعْتَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ فِي التَّوْرَةِ؟

How did he find the praise of Allah’s Messenger in Torah?⁹

- According to Yusuf b. Mazin, a person requested ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه):

⁷ Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Bk., The Prophets, Ch., Allah stated: ﴿وَأَذْكَرٌ فِي﴾

⁸ Ahmed b. Hanbal, al-Musnad, 5:343, §22957.

⁹ al-Darimi in *al-Sunan*, Ch., Prophet’s praise in scriptures preceding him,

1:17 §8, 1:185–186.

يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، أَنْعَتْ لَنَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ

“O the Master of believers! Tell us the attributes of Allah’s Messenger.”¹⁰

- Ibrahim b. Muhammad رضي الله عنه, one of ‘Ali’s رضي الله عنه descendants, has narrated: ‘Ali while رضي الله عنه إِذَا نَعَتَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ describing the sacred features of the Holy Prophet رضي الله عنه would praise: “His blessed eyes were black and eyelashes long.”¹¹
- According to Umar b. ‘Ali, ‘Ali was requested: Abu al-Hasan! رضي الله عنه يَا أَبَا حَسَنِ، أَنْعَتْ لَنَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ Describe for us the praiseworthy features of Allah’s Messenger.¹²

We have seen that wherever the description of blessed attributes of the Messenger of Allah is the subject, the word نَعَتْ has been employed.

1.3 NAAT IN SCRIPTURES

The scriptures bestowed upon various Prophets and the heavenly books like Zabur, Torah, and the Old and New Testaments contain exalting description of the Final Messenger of Allah and his divinity that has survived attempts to adulterate the holy text. These scriptures are embellished with the aesthetic liveliness of his divine attributes lauded in heavenly expressions.

In Torah

Amr b. al-‘Aas has produced his portrayal depicted in Torah:

“Witness to the plight of his community,
The warner and the savior of the optimists,
My servant and messenger, neither ill-mannered nor rude,
Never retaliating with evil,

¹⁰ Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Bk., The Prophets, Ch., Allah stated: ﴿وَأَذْكُرُ فِي﴾
3:1269, §3254.

¹¹ Al-Tirmidhi, *al-Sunan*, Bk., Praises, what has come about Prophet’s attributes, 5:599, §3638.

¹² Ibn Sa’d in *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, 1:412.

Rather sparing and pardoning,
 Making the blind to see and deaf to hear,
 Broadener of the narrow hearts.”¹³
 K’ab b. Ahbar has reported from Torah:
 “Muhammad, My Beloved Messenger,
 Regardless of the evil brought against him,
 Forgives and spares,
 Mecca is his birthplace, Medina, the migration abode and Syria
 the central state.”¹⁴

IN BIBLE

Isaiah 42

“Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.” — Isaiah 42:1-4

Muslim tradition holds that Isaiah 42 predicted the coming of a servant associated with Qedar, the second son of Ishmael, who went on to live his life in Arabia, and so interpret this passage as a prophecy of Muhammad.¹⁵

Song of Songs 5:16

¹³ ‘Ataar b, Yasaar, Mishkat al-Masabeeh, Muslim Bk. Virtues of the Chief of Messengers ... فقال انه لموصوف في التورات

¹⁴ Nashr al-Tayyab, ref. Mishkat al-Masabeeh, Section-II, hadith # 7

¹⁵ Zepp, Ira G. A Muslim Primer: Beginner’s Guide to Islam. Vol. 1. University of Arkansas Press, 2000, 50-51

His mouth is sweetness itself; he is altogether lovely (*mahmadim*). This is my beloved, this is my friend, daughters of Jerusalem. — *Song of Songs 5:16 (New International Version)*

The Hebrew word *mahmadim* in Song of Songs 5:16 has been argued to mean Muhammad.¹⁶

John 16

Interpretations and meanings of Ahmad

“7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8. And when he comes, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. ...12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” — *John 16:7-8, 12-13 (King James Version)*

Many Muslims believe that the Paraclete in this passage from the Gospel of John is referring to Muhammad.¹⁷

The Gospel of Barnabas 97:9–10

[The Prophet Jesus lived before the time of our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. His traditions provide the most beautiful tributes to the Prophet of Islam ever written. These traditions are from a version of the Gospel of Barnabas

¹⁶ Hess, Richard S.; Wenham, Gordon J. (1998). *Make the Old Testament Live: From Curriculum to Classroom*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 139. ISBN 978-0-8028-4427-9.

¹⁷ Reynolds, Gabriel Said. *The Emergence of Islam: Classical traditions in contemporary perspective*. Fortress Press, 2012, 126

compiled by a thirteenth century Italian scholar on the basis of early Christian sources.]

According to the Gospel of Barnabas 97:9-10, Jesus said: ‘Verily, I say unto you that every prophet when he is come has borne the mark of the mercy of God to one nation only. And so their words were not extended save to the people to which they were sent. But the Messenger of God, when he shall come, will be given as it were the seal of the hand of God, insomuch as he shall carry salvation and mercy to all the nations of the world that shall receive his doctrine..... ‘I therefore say unto you, that the Messenger of God is a splendor that shall give gladness to nearly all that God has made, for he is adorned with the spirit of understanding and counsel, the spirit of wisdom and might, of fear and love, prudence and temperance; he is adorned with the spirit of charity and mercy, of justice and piety and gentleness and patience, which he has received from God three times more than He has given to all His creatures combined. Blessed will be the time when he shall come to the world! Believe me that I have seen him and have done him reverence, even as every prophet has seen him. And when I saw him my soul was filled with consolation, saying, O Admirable One! God be with thee, and may he make me worthy to untie thy shoe-latchet for obtaining this I shall be a great prophet and holy one of God.’

NAAT BY TUBBA AL-HUMAIRI

Tubba, the king of Yemen, invaded a millennium before the arrival of Allah’s Final Messenger. The Aus and Khazraj tribes who would fight his forces the whole day would serve food to his forces at night. This high morality changed Tubba’s mind who then concluded with the indigenous tribes of Medina a peace treaty. On inquiry as to why they showed such hospitality to the invading army, Banyamin Qarzi, the Arab representative in peace treaty, opened his mind to a crucial matter of faith. He said that they

knew that the invaders would not be able to conquer them because their town was going to be an abode of Allah's Final Messenger Muhammad from the Quraysh tribe of Mecca. The King Tubba composed a panegyric for the glory of the exalted Prophet who would bless that land with his blissful sacred feet. He wrote.

“He advised me to retreat,
For the town was kept for Muhammad.”

He then wrote:

“I bear witness that Ahmed is the Prophet of Allah,
Who gives life;
If I survive until he arrives,
I will be his minister and a cousine;
I shall wield sword against his foes,
Until he feels pleased, free of worries;
His will be the best community as revealed.”

He expressed his deep longing and prayed to survive up to his time:

“Then a super human will emerge,
The Prophet who will forbid the unlawful,
Named Ahmed;
Would that I survived to be with him for a year!”¹⁸

The Arab Soothsayers' predictions

There was a group of soothsayers amongst Arabs who would disclose news about the unknown world in verbose and pompous style. They would frequently predict about a Prophet's arrival. Sufyan b. Mujash'e al-Tamimi found a group of people around a she soothsayer and sat there. She was admiring the supporters of someone and foretelling destruction of his enemies. Sufyan asked who he was, so she said: “He is a Prophet who would be reinforced by unknown forces, and he would be raised soon. His time is not far and he would bring an eternal book with him and Muhammad would be his name from M'ad b. Adnan's tribe.” So

¹⁸ Sharh al-Shifa, (Qazi 'Ayaz), Shahab al-Din al-Shifa Vol, III Egypt; Rehmat-ul-lil 'Alamin, Qazi Suleman Mansoorpuri, Vol II, p. 411.

Sufyan named his son Muhammad.¹⁹

1.4 ON THE HOLY PROPHET’S BIRTHDAY

Ka'b b. Luī was probably the first one who would deliver a sermon on Fridays to give glad tidings about the welcome arrival of the awaited Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the world. He advised his audience in one of his sermons:

الدَّارُ أَمَامَكُمْ، وَالظَّنُّ غَيْرُ مَا تَقُولُونَ، حَرَمُكُمْ زَيْنُوهُ وَعَظْمُوهُ،
وَتَمَسَّكُوا بِهِ فَسَيَأْتِي لَهُ نَبَأٌ عَظِيمٌ، وَسَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ نَبِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ.

My view of that house in front is the opposite of what you say. That is the guarantor of your safety. You should adorn that and honor that because soon there will be a great news about that house. Soon a Prophet will appear from there.²⁰

Then he recited these verses:

نَهَارٌ وَ لَيْلٌ كُلُّ يَوْمٍ بِحَادِثٍ
سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْنَا لَيْلَهَا وَنَهَارُهَا

Day and night each day brings something new but for us it is all the same.

يُؤْبَانِ بِالْأَحْدَاثِ حَتَّى تَأْوَبَا
وَبِالنَّعَمِ الصَّافِي عَلَيْنَا سُتُورَهَا

Two eras brought new events, one after the other, and

¹⁹ Muhammad Rasool Allah, Muhammad Raza Misri, editor Maktaba Jamia' Fawad Cairo

²⁰ Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya w'al-nihaya, 2/244

pleasant relief came to our lot.

عَلَى غَفْلَةٍ يَأْتِي النَّبِيُّ مُحَمَّدٌ
فِيخْبِرُ أَخْبَارًا صَدُوقٌ خَبِيرَهَا

(This time) when the Holy Prophet comes (suddenly for testing you) you are told such events whose teller is truthful.²¹

In one of his poetic verse, he prays to live at least that long, he should be able to embrace faith and declare belief in him.

يَا لَيْتَنِي شَاهِدًا نَجَوَاءَ دَعْوَتِهِ
حِينَ الْعَشِيرَةُ تَبْغِي الْحَقَّ خِذْلَانًا

I wish! I would have lived until his invitation, while his family would have raised their hands supporting his faith.²²

THE IDOLS IN THE IDOL HOUSE COLLAPSED

Ibn Asakar has reported in “Tareekh Damishq al-Kabir” that Urwah stated: Waraqa b. Naufal, Zaid b. Amar and Ubaid Allah b. Hajash went to an idol-house that night and saw that all idols had drooped and collapsed prone on the ground. Taken aback, they lifted up their helpless and powerless gods and put them straight, but they fell down. They erected them up yet again but they went down on their faces. When the idols slumped down the third time, the three men abruptly said together: There was certainly some supernatural or mysterious ghostly reason to that occurrence. In the meanwhile, a voice from one of the idols said:

²¹ Buloogh al-Adab, Allama Shukri Aalusi, 545

²² Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya w'al-nihaya, 2:244

تَرَدَّى لِمَوْلُودٍ أَنَّارَتْ بِنُورِهِ
جَمِيعُ فِجَاجِ الْأَرْضِ فِي الشَّرْقِ وَالْغَرْبِ

All these idols have collapsed, for the newborn; His dawn has filled East 'nd West with his light.²³

THE WALLS OF ALLAH'S SACRED HOUSE HUMMING

It is narrated in “Sirat al-Halbiya”²⁴ that while Allah’s mercy had wrapped up the whole universe that night, the walls of Allah’s Sacred House were crooning and humming:

وُلِدَ الْمُصْطَفَى الْمُخْتَارُ
الَّذِي تَهَلَّكَ بِيَدِهِ الْكُفَّارُ
وَيُطَهَّرُ مِنْ عِبَادَةِ الْأَصْنَامِ
وَيَأْمُرُ بِعِبَادَةِ الْمَلِكِ الْعَلَّامِ

The empowered and chosen one has born, He’ll wipe out the disbelievers; Purifying Sacred House of idol-worship, Commanding the Worship of Omniscient Sovereign.²⁵

1.4.1 THE GRANDFATHER IN K’ABA

According to Al-Bidaya w’al-Nihaya Bk. al-Sirat al-Rasool p. 325, when the Holy Prophet’s grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib, learnt about the birth of his grandson, he named him

²³ Ibn Asakar, “Tareekh Damishq al-Kabir”, 38:336–337.

²⁴ Sirat al-Halbiya, 1:115; a book about the history of Islam in six volumes by Islamic scholar Ali Ibn Burhan-ud-din Halabi (also written as: Nur ad-Din al-Halabi, or, Nuraddin Halabi).

²⁵ Ibn Asakar, Tareekh Damishq al-Kabir.

‘Muhammad’, took him to the Sacred House, submitted his gratitude and recited the following verses, praying:

الحمد	الله	الذي	اعطاني
هذا	الغلام	الطيب	الاردان
قدساد	في	المهد	على
اعيده	بالله	ذى	الاركان
حتى	يكون	بلغته	الفتيان
حتى	اراه	بالغ	البنيان
اعيده	من	كل	ذى
من	حاسد	المضطرب	العنان
ذي	همته	ليس	على
حتى	اراه	رافع	اللسان
ات	الذي	سميت	في
في	كتب	ثابته	المثاني
احمد	مكتوباً	على	اللسان

All praise be to Allah alone; He has gifted me the sweet lad; the holy son leading the neonates even in cradle. I place him in Almighty’s safeguard. I see him with strong positions and footholds; I put him in Allah’s protection, from all evil, jealous and arrogant beings. Gallant and dauntless, with captivating speech, He’s named ‘Ahmed in scriptures and Qur’an; inscribed on the peoples’

tongues.

1.4.2 THE FOSTER MOTHER

According to the Arab social norms, the newborn were sent to the caretaking foster mothers to feed and nourish them and foster them into decent, pious, brave and constructive humans. After the holy birth of the Prophet, Abd al-Muttalib, his grandfather, would hear voice from the unseen world, guiding, goading and counseling him to give him to the lady named Halima from the Banu S'ad tribe, for she was divinely directed towards him to embrace his responsibility. The voice blossomed:

إِنَّ ابْنَ أَمِينَةَ الْأَمِينِ مُحَمَّدًا
خَيْرُ الْآنَامِ وَالْأَخْيَارِ وَخَيْرَةُ

The heart and soul of Amina, the peace-maker Muhammad was indeed the most exalted one; unparalleled amongst the most pious.

مَا إِنَّ لَهَا غَيْرَ الْحَلِيمَةِ مُرْضِعًا
نَعْمَ الْأَمِينَةَ هِيَ عَلَى الْأَبْرَارِ

None but Halima his foster mother be, Trustworthy, honest and emblem of piety, Expert caretaker of the noble is she.

مَأْمُونَةٌ مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ فَاحِشٍ
وَنَقِيَّةٌ مِنَ الْأَثْوَابِ

Flawless and decent, free of blemishes, Guarded, equipped with strong character.

لَا تَسَلَّمَنَّهُ إِلَى سِوَاهَا أَنَّهُ
أَمْرٌ وَحُكْمٌ جَاءَ مِنْ جِبَارِ

Put him not under care, other than her; A divine decree from the Most Dominant.²⁶

It is reported in *Tabqat Ibn S'ad* (1:111) that Halima S'adia had apprehensions about material benefits from an Orphan. On her reluctant gestures, Syeda Amina spoke to her and uttered these verses that would strengthen her heart with faith and conviction:

أُعِيدُهُ بِاللَّهِ ذِي الْجَلَالِ
مِنْ شَرِّ مَا مَرَّ عَلَيَّ الْجِبَالِ
حَتَّى أَرَاهُ حَامِلَ الْجَلَالِ
وَيَفْعَلُ الْعَرَفَ إِلَى الْمَوَالِي
وَعَيْرِهِمْ مِنْ حَشْوَةِ الرَّجَالِ

I place my child in my Lord's safeguard, From the evil that stride's in mountains; Until I find him riding camel, Extending compassion n' benevolence to the indigent.²⁷

1.4.3 THE FOSTER SISTER

His foster sister Sheema would calm him for inducing sleep with this lullaby:

يَا رَبَّنَا أَبِئْبَى لَنَا مُحَمَّدًا

²⁶ Zaini Dahlan, *al-Serat al-Jabwiya*, 1:56.

²⁷ *Tabqat Ibn S'ad*, 1:111.

وَأَمْرًا	يَافِعًا	أَرَاهُ	حَتَّى
مَسُودًا	سَيِّدًا	أَرَاهُ	ثُمَّ
وَالْحُسْدَا	مَعَا	أَعْدِيهِ	وَأَكْبِتُ
أَبْدًا	يَدُومُ	عِزًّا	وَأَعْطِهِ

O Lord! Keep our Muhammad ever-surviving, Until I see him in youth, And find him as a chief, Overpower his jealous enemies in a blink, And crown him with eternal majesty and power.²⁸

1.4.4 THE FINEST ARABIC VERSE

Ali b. Zaid b. Jad'an has narrated that the issue was taken up before a group of leading hadith experts to decide which of the Arabic poetic verses can be graded as the finest. They unanimously declared this verse the best one:

وَشَقَّ	لَهُ	مِنْ	إِسْمِهِ	لِيَجِلَّهُ
فَدُّوا	الْعَرْشِ	مَحْمُودٌ	وَهَذَا	مُحَمَّدٌ

For his majestic glory, Allah derived his name from His own, He is Mahmood and our venerable Prophet, Muhammad.²⁹

Al-Bayhaqi has narrated a few verses of Abd al-Muttalib in Dala'il al-Nubuwwa, containing his word of advice for his son Abu Talib about Muhammad, his grandson:

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Abu Bakr al-Khali, *al-Sunnah*, 1:193, §209; Ibn 'Adi, *al-Kamil fi Du'afa' al-Rijal*, 5:197, §1351; Ibn 'Asakar, *Taikh Medina Damishq*, 3:32-33.

أَوْصِيكَ يَا عَبْدَ مَنْأَفٍ بَعْدِي بِمُؤَحَّدٍ بَعْدَ أَبِيهِ فَرَدٍ
فَارَقَهُ وَهُوَ ضَجِيعُ الْمَهْدِ فَكُنْتُ كَالْأُمِّ لَهُ فِي الْوَجْدِ

Remember my word when I depart, in cradle his parents
left apart; Leave him not for a moment uncared, I took
him to my bosom, loved and mothered.³⁰

1.5 THE FIRST PANEGRIC FOR ALLAH'S MESSENGER

WARQA B. NOFIL'S LOVE DISCOMFORT FOR COMMISSIONING OF MESSENGERSHIP

When the venerable Khadija ﷺ heard from his slave Maisra on his return from Syria, his observations and feelings about the exalted Muhammad, and predictions of soothsayers Bahaira and Nastoora about him, she mentioned it to her cousin Warqa b. Nofil. The elderly Warqa, a Christian by faith, was a renowned scholar of theology. Learning the detailed account of venerable Muhammad from Khadija, he felt a love pang for holy Muhammad in his heart. A state of discomfort permeated his inner self longing to live on until the divine event would transpire and he would join the Holy Prophet as his Companion. This spiritually aesthetic state overwhelmed him and he composed a famous panegyric in the glory of his exalted person which has been attributed by the biographers to the episode of first revelation at Hira. In this great Naat compositions, Warqa expresses his ardent aspiration in this poetic creation to live until the Prophet is commissioned as Allah's Messenger and his desire to work with him for the spread of his faith. He vented his sad feeling if he died before that, knowing that his antagonists would be devastated. Here are some of the verses

³⁰ al-Bayhaqi in *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, 2:22.

from his panegyric.³¹

لَجَجْتُ وَكُنْتُ فِي ذِكْرِي لُجُوجَا
لَهُمْ طَا لَمَّا بَعَثَ النَّشِيجَا

I waited for an occasion that roused on his toes the one
who collapsed persistently shedding tears,

وَوَصَفِ مِنْ خَدِيجَةَ بَعْدَ وَصَفِ
فَقَدْ طَالَ اُنْتَظَارِي يَأْخِذِ يَجَا

From Khadija he heard his attributes one after the other.
O Khadija! It's desperately long to wait!

يَبْطِنِ الْمَكْتَبِينَ عَلَى رَجَائِي
حَدِيثُكَ أَنْ أَرَى مِنْهُ خُرُوجَا

Khadija! Your dream methinks will come true in Meccan
velly.

بِمَا خَبَرْتَنَا مِنْ قَوْلِ قِسِّ!
مِنْ الرَّهْبَانِ يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يَعُوجَا

I don't like what Qis has told proves wrong,

بَانَ مُحَمَّدًا سَيَسُودُ فِينَا
وَيَخْصِمُ مَنْ يَكُونُ لَهُ، حَاجِجَا

³¹ Seerat al-Nabwiyya, Ibn Hashsham, Vol. I (Arabic)

For Muhammad will soon be the Chief,

وَيَظْهَرُ فِي الْبِلَادِ ضِيَاءُ نُورٍ
يَقِيمُ بِهِ الْبِرَّ يَتِيَّ أَنْ تَمْوجَا

Whoever represents him will prevail.

فَيَلْقَى مَنْ يُحَارِبُهُ خَسَارًا
وَيَلْقَى مَنْ يُسَالِمُهُ فُلُوجًا

The light of guidance will spread all around, save people
from disintegration and walk them the straight path.

فَيَا لَيْتَى إِذَا مَا كَانَ ذَاكُمْ
شَهِدْتُ وَأَكْثَرَهُمْ وَلُوجًا

Those fighting him will lose and obeying him will win.

وَلُوجًا فِي الَّذِي كَرِهَتْ قُرَيْشُ
وَلَوْ عَجَبَتْ بِمَكَّتِهَا عَجِيجًا!

I yearn to embrace his faith; it may hurt the infidels
making hue and cry;

أَرْجِي بِالَّذِي كَرِهًا جَمِيعًا
إِلَى ذِي الْعَرْشِ إِنْ سَفَلُوا عُرُوجًا

What hurts them will bring me divine rise, abasing the

nonbelievers.

وَهَلْ لِمَنْ يَخْتَارُ
أَمْرُ السَّفَالَةِ
عَيْرٍ كُفْرٍ
مِنْ سَمَكِ
الْبُرُوجِ

Is there any bigger humiliation and shame than denying and disbelieving Him Who has assigned heavens to zodiacs?

فَإِنْ يَصِحُّ
يَبْقُوا
وَأَبْقِ
تَكُنْ
أُمُورٍ
الْكَافِرُونَ
لَهَا
ضَجِيحًا

If both they and me survive, they will witness such occurrences that will afflict the infidels with wailing agony.

وَأَنْ
أَهْلِكَ
فَكُلَّ
فَتَى
سَيَلِقَى
الْأَقْدَارِ
مُتَلَفَةً
خُرُوجًا

And if I pass away, then every noble human is to succumb to the divine decree to depart.

The Naʿt poetry of that era brightens a horizon of life, an unparalleled vision of life and the clear and bright paths of an unfailing goal, for which the people were restlessly longing as they had to spend the distant time of Prophethood (Fitrat). Warqa was especially aware of the heart-soothing reality and was commensurately excited but impatient. When Khadija took noble Muhammad to Warqa, he bowed and kissed the effulgent forehead, submitting:

“By Him, the Holy, the Holy in whose possession is my soul, you are the undeniably true Prophet of this Umma. In fact, the same Supreme Honour came to you who came to Musa. Your people will deny and harass you and drive you out of Makkah. If I live till such a day, I will help Allah as much as He has the right to support.”³²

The agony of disgust with the present, and the wave of hope for the future is flowing in the words of the naat of that era. The verses of the Holy Qur’an, which deal with the subject of love and obedience of the beloved, added to it more warmth, dedication and grace.

1.5 ABU TALIB’S DEFENSIVE AND PROTECTIVE NAAT

His kind, compassionate and clement uncle Abu Talib brought him up with great care and responsibility and faced heavy odds with firm resolve, resoluteness and steadfastness. So he served Islam quietly and persistently. Owing to threats from Quresh, when he would exhort the holy Prophet, he used to say with tears in eyes: “Uncle! I would never withdraw from pronouncing my faith even if they bring the sun and the moon under my control.” On this, he would large-heartedly declare in valorous thunder: “Do whatever you want to do; by God! I will never leave, never leave you alone.” Bukhari has related in al-Sahih how Abu Talib loved and mothered his nephew and took him as a mercy and bliss for all. Uttering these powerful words he felt ecstatic and weaved his sentiments into these poetic lines.

وَاللّٰهُ لَنْ يَّصِلُوْا اِلَيْكَ بِجَمْعِهِمْ
حَتَّى اَوْسَدَا فِي التُّرَابِ دَفِيْنَا

³² In Sahih Bukhari and several Books on Sira, Warqa b. Nofel has been mentined as one of the Companions of Holy Prophet.

By God! They cannot reach you with all their numerical strength until I lie on my back in the grave.

فَأَصْدَعُ بِأَمْرِكَ مَا عَلَيْكَ غَضَاصَةً
وَأَبْشُرُ بِذَلِكَ وَقَرًّا مِنْكَ عِيُونًا

Go and spread your message, feel delighted and cool your eyes with what you do.

وَدَعَوْتَنِي وَرَزَعَمْتَ إِنَّكَ نَاصِحِي
وَلَقَدْ صَدَقْتَ وَكُنْتَ ثُمَّ أَمِينًا

You have called me to the truth as a well-wisher; you speak the truth and are ever trustworthy.

وَعَرَضْتَ دِينًا لَا مَحَالَةَ أَنَّهُ
مِنْ خَيْرِ أَدْيَانِ الْبَرِيَّةِ دِينًا

The Din you have brought is certainly the best of religions in the world.

لَوْ لَا الْمَلَامَةُ أَوْ حِدَارِي سُبَّةً
لَوْ جَدَّتْنِي سَمَحًا بِذَلِكَ مُيِّنًا

If it were not the blame or cursing perceived, you would find me open to believe.³³

³³ Deewan-e-Abu Talib, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Bairut Lebanon, 1994, p. 91.

1.6 NAAT: DEFENDING AND REINFORCING; ROAR OF VALOR AND CHIVALRY

When Abu Talib confirmed that the whole tribe had become hostile, he found a way out and wrote a sizeable panegyric (Qasida poem) seeking refuge with the Sanctuary of Mecca and his own social status, pointing out to the elite his love for them and assuring the holy Prophet of his support and security at the same time. He admired the exalted Messenger and stimulated sentiments of regard and assistance for him among all the tribes. He also made it point blank clear that at no cast Muhammad PBUH would ever be handed over to them even if the tribes are eliminated in defending him. It is a unique Naat Abu Talib wrote which brightens the path of aesthetic creation even today, enthused with gallantry and chivalry. Every word he has employed is a sharp knife dipped in sincerity and zeal and, in essence, a jewel emitting honour, freedom and burning concern. This Naat of his is a mirror that reflects a true and subtle rebuke as well as an appealing justification. See a selection of its verses here:

وَلَمَّا رَأَيْتُ الْقَوْمَ لَا وَدَفِيهِمْ
وَقَدْ قَطَعُوا كُلَّ الْعُرَى وَالْوَسَائِلِ

When I found that my folk abandoned affability, regard and decency and cut off relations,

صَبَرْتُ لَهُمْ نَفْسِي بِسُمْرَاءِ سَمَحِهِ
وَأَبْيَضُ عَضْبٍ مِنْ تُرَابِ الْمُقَاوِلِ

I stood to this challenge wielding the blazing sword and adaptable lance inherited from the valorous forefathers.

أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ طَاعِنٍ
عَلَيْنَا بِسُوءِ أَوْ مُلِحِّحٍ بِيَاطِلٍ

I take refuge with God, the Lord of people, from slanders of all those who insist on falsehood.

وَبِالْبَيْتِ حَقُّ الْبَيْتِ مِنَ بَطْنِ مَكَّةَ
وَبِاللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِعَافِلٍ

I seek Allah's refuge through the House of God and the right of the Sacred House Who doesn't neglect helping the people of Truth.

فَهَلْ بَعْدَ هَذَا مِنْ مَعَاذٍ بِعَائِذٍ
وَهَلْ مِنْ مُعِينٍ يَتَّقِي اللَّهَ عَادِلٍ

Is there any better place of refuge or anybody who provides shelter, fearing Allah?

كَذَّبْتُمْ وَبَيْتُ اللَّهِ نُبِزَى مُحَمَّدًا
وَلَمَّا لَطَاعِنُ دُونَهُ وَنُنَاصِلُ

By God, you are mistaken that we shall give in about Muhammad; we are yet to employ archery and lancing to protect and save him.

وَلِنُسَلِمَهُ حَتَّى نَصَرَ عَنِ ابْنَائِنَا
وَنَذْهَلَ عَنْ وَحَلَائِلِ حَوْلَهُ

We shall spread around for his safeguard and ignore and forget even our families and children.

وَمَا تَرَكُ قَوْمٍ لَّا أَبَالَكَ سَيِّدًا
يَحُوطُ الذَّمَّارَ غَيْرُ ضَرْبٍ مَوَاكِلِ

Your father be cursed, you are turning away from the Chief who guards helpable matters; neither unruly nor buck passer.

وَأَبِيضُ يَسْتَقِي الْعَمَامُ بَوَجْهِهِ
ثَمَالَ الْيَتَامَى عِصْمَةٌ لِلرَّامِلِ

He has such an effulgent face that rain is prayed for through him; a caretaker of the orphans and a shelter of the widows.

لَعَمْرِي لَقَدْ كَلَّفْتُ وَجَدًا بِأَحْمَدِ
وَإِخْوَتِهِ دَابَّ الْمُحِبُّ الْمَوَاصِلِ

By my life, I have become a captive of eternal love of Muhammad and his Companions.

فَمَنْ مِثْلُهُ فِي النَّاسِ أَيُّ مَوْكَلِ
إِذْقَاسَهُ الْحَكَّامُ عِنْدَ تَفَاضِلِ

Who is like him amongst people? The comparison of virtues revealed that he is matchlessly superior.

حَلِيمٌ رَشِيدٌ عَادِلٌ عَيْرٌ طَائِشٌ
يُؤَالِي إِلَهًا لَيْسَ عَنْهُ بِغَافِلٍ

Tolerant, rightly guided, just and patient, he is linked with God Who would never neglect him.

لَقَدْ عَلِمُوا أَنَّ ابْنَنَا لَا مُكَذِّبَ
لَدَيْنَا وَلَا يُعْتَنِي بِقَوْلِ الْأَبَاطِلِ

All know that Muhammad never tells lies, nor does he pay any heed to lies.

فَاصْبِحْ فِينَا أَحْمَدٌ فِي أَرْوَمَةِ
تَقْصِرُ عَنْهُ سَوْرَةٌ الْمُتَطَاوِلِ

From amongst us, Muhammad has descended from an ancestry whom no transgressor can harm; nor can its glory be diminished.

فَدَيْتُ بِنَفْسِي دُونَهُ وَحَمَيْتَهُ!
وَدَافِعْتَ عَنْهُ بِالذَّرَى وَالْكَلاَئِلِ

I have sacrificed my life for his safety and protection and have stretched up my sinews to fight for his safeguard.

SHAAB ABI TALIB

When the Quraysh unanimously broke away from Banu Hashem and Banu Abd al-Muttalib, they gathered in the Shaab Abi Talib, except for Abu Lahab. On that occasion Abu Talib produced this Naat:

أَلَا أُبَلِّغَا عَنِّْي عَلَى ذَاتِ بَيْنِنَا
يُورِيَا وَخَصًّا مِنْ لُؤْيِي بِنِي كَعْبِ

Send a message to Bani Luei especially K'ab, about our mutual relations.

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَا وَجَدْنَا مُحَمَّدًا
نَبِيًّا كَمُوسَى فِي أَوَّلِ الْكُتُبِ!

Don't you know that for us the chosen Muhammad is the Messenger as was Musa whose struggle has been described in earlier scriptures?

وَأَنَّ الَّذِي الصَّقْتُمْ مِنْ كِتَابِكُمْ
لَكُمْ كَأَنَّ نَحْسًا كَرَانِحِيَّةِ السَّقْبِ

And remember! The inscription that you have hung will prove ominous for you like the voice of the offspring of Noah's she-camel. (The termite consumed the paper and people found a way to freedom).

أَفَيْقُوا أَفَيْقُوا قَبْلَ أَنْ يُحْفَرَ الثَّرَى
وَيُصْبِحَ مَنْ لَمْ يَجِنِ ذَنْبًا كَذِي الذُّنْبِ

You better come to your senses before your grave is dug and the innocent commits sins.

فَلَسْنَا وَرَبُّ الْبَيْتِ نُسَلِّمُ أَحْمَدًا
يَعْرَأُ مِنْ عَصِّ الزَّامَنِ وَلَا كَرْبِ

By the Lord of the Sacred House! We are not the ones who will back out from supporting and defending Muhammad owing to difficulties and heavy odds.³⁴

His two verses took fame like his other love-laden versification:

وَأَبْيَضَ يُسْتَسْقَى الْعَمَامُ بَوَجْهِهِ
 ثِمَالُ الْيَتَامَى عِصْمَةٌ لِلْأَرَامِلِ
 يَلُودُ بِهِ الْهَلَاكُ مِنْ آلِ هَاشِمِ
 فَهَمُّ عِنْدَهُ فِي نِعْمَةٍ وَفَوَاضِلِ

His effulgent countenance is the agency of rain and vegetation for people; shelter for orphans and widows; straying Hashims seeking his haven for sustenance; so are they affluent and blessed, for his holiness.³⁵

NAAT BY HAMZAH BIN ABD AL-MUTTALIB BIN

HASHIM D. 3 A.H. 625 A.C.

حَمِدْتُ اللَّهَ حِينَ هَدَى فؤَادِي
 لِي الْإِسْلَامَ وَالِدِينَ وَالْمُنِيفِ

I pay thanks to Allah, when He guided my heart, To join Islam, the noble religion.

لِدِينٍ جَاءَ مِنْ رَبِّ عَزِيزِ
 خَبِيرٍ بِالْعِبَادِ بِهِمْ لَطِيفِ

³⁴ Dewan-e-AbuTalib

³⁵ Bukhari, *al-Sahih*, 1:342 §963.

The Faith that has descended from, My Lord, The Creator, Who knows, and is beneficent towards every worshipper.

إِذَا تَلَيْتَ رَسَائِلُهُ عَلَيْنَا
تَحَدَّرَ دَمْعُ ذِي اللَّبِّ الْحَصِيفِ

When His Message is read to us, Then everyone who hears, Having prudence and a sense to understand, sheds his humble tears.

رَسَائِلُ جَاءَ أَحْمَدُ مِنْ هُدَاهَا
بِآيَاتٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ الْحُرُوفِ

Those Messages and Instructions, That Muhammad has brought, Are verses comprising clear words and expressions, So that we could be taught.

وَأَحْمَدُ مُصْطَفَى فِينَا مُطَاعٌ
فَلَا تَغْشَوهُ بِالْقَوْلِ الْعَنِيفِ

He is exalted amongst us, And so he is obeyed. Take care that no unkindly word, Against him should even slip.

فَلَا وَاللَّهِ نُسَلِمُهُ لِقَوْمٍ
وَلَمَّا نَقَضَ فِيهِمْ بِالسُّيُوفِ

We take a vow! We yield him not, To the mercy of the foes, About whom we have had no chance, To settle with the sword.³⁶

³⁶ Ibn Ishāq in *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2:153. Suhaylī in *al-Rauḍ al-Unuf*, 2:45.

A JINN’S VERSES ABOUT UMM-E-M’ABAD

Ibn Hashsham has narrated in *al-Seerat al-Nabwiya* that Asma’ ؓ, daughter of Abu Bakr ؓ reported that she was deeply concerned about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and her father when they had left for Medina and there was no means to learn about their journey and safety. The Meccans were mad to find some clue and reach them but they only met frustration. In the meanwhile, a jinn passed Mecca’s lower valley, reciting these verses that served a pointer to the Meccans about Umm-e-M’abad. The Jinn would loudly rhyme:

جَزَى اللهُ رَبَّ النَّاسِ خَيْرَ جَزَائِهِ
رَفِيقَيْنِ حَلًّا خِيَمَتِي أُمَّ مَعْبَدِ

Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, reward best, both companions who visited Umm-e-M’abad’s tent.

هُمَا نَزَلَا بِالْبَرِّ ثُمَّ تَرَوَّحَا
فَأَفْلَحَ مَنْ أَمَسَى رَفِيقَ مُحَمَّدِ

Both of them came for good and moved on, He who accompanied Muhammad a, triumphed.

لِيَهْنِ بَيْتِي كَعْبِ مَكَانُ فَتَاتِهِمْ
وَمَقْعَدُهَا لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِمَرْصَدِ

Felicitations to the lady of Banu K’ab, Blessed be her shelter and the safe stop.³⁷

Hearing the voice, people sprinted towards it but failed to find

³⁷ Ibn Hashsham, *al-Seerat al-Nabwiya*, 3:14.

any reciter.

A Jinn is a supernatural creature. He observed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companion staying at Umm-e-M'abad's place. Pleased on the sight, the Jinn felt a Naat inside him that bloomed on his tongue and he started rhyming it around in a rapturous mood. The verses depict his character and love for the Prophet ﷺ. It seems ironical that he rhymed these verses loudly in the Meccan valley so that they could learn that the Prophet was on his way, safe and sound and out of their reach. He declared their failure. See the sentiment these verses have flashed.

That is Naat.

We need to meditate what phenomenon is at work when a Naat is produced by the idol, the Jinn or the K'aba walls.

1.7 PROSE NAAT THAT UMM-E-M'ABAD UTTERED

On their way to Medina, when Allah's Messenger ﷺ accompanied by Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه reached Umm-e-M'abad's tentage, he enquired if some milk was available. Not knowing who she was talking to, she regretted and submitted that her goat was too feeble and spent to yield any milk. He asked her if she would allow him to milk it; she agreed. Allah's Messenger ﷺ prayed to Almighty Allah, then milked the cow and it milked so profusely that there was hardly any utensil in the tent left unfilled. Everyone there took milk to his fill and milk would not ebb.

When her husband returned home and saw the dry goat lactating, he was astonished and asked Umm-e-M'abad about the source of huge quantity of milk in the tent, while there was no other lactating goat with them she voiced 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', uttering Naat fervently and fluently:

رَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا ظَاهِرَ الْوَضَاءَةِ، أَبْلَجَ الْوَجْهِ، حَسَنَ الْخَلْقِ، لَمْ تَعْبُهُ
تَجَلَّةٌ، وَلَمْ تُزْرِيه صَعَلَةٌ، وَسِيمٌ قَسِيمٌ، فِي عَيْنَيْهِ دَعَجٌ، وَفِي
أَسْفَارِهِ وَطْفٌ، وَفِي صَوْتِهِ صَهْلٌ، وَفِي عُنُقِهِ سَطْعٌ، وَفِي لِحْيَتِهِ

كَثَائَتْهُ، أَرْجُ أَقْرَنُ، إِنْ صَمَتَ فَعَلَيْهِ الْوَقَارُ، وَإِنْ تَكَلَّمَ سَمَاهُ وَعَلَاهُ
 الْبَهَائِيُّ، أَجْمَلُ النَّاسِ وَأَبْهَاهُ مِنْ بَعِيدٍ، وَأَحْسَنُهُ وَأَجْمَلُهُ مِنْ
 قَرِيبٍ، حُلُوُ الْمَنْطِقِ فَضْلًا، لَا نَزْرٌ وَلَا هَذْرٌ، كَأَنَّ مَنْطِقَهُ خَرَازَاتُ
 نَظْمٍ، يَتَحَدَّرْنَ رَبْعَةً لَا تَشْنَأُهُ مِنْ طُولٍ، وَلَا تَقْتَحِمُهُ عَيْنٌ مِنْ قِصْرِ،
 غُضْنٌ بَيْنَ غُضْنَيْنِ، فَهُوَ أَنْضَرُ الثَّلَاثَةِ مَنْظَرًا وَأَحْسَنُهُمْ، قَدْرًا لَهُ
 رُفَقَاءُ يَحْفُونُ بِهِ، إِنْ قَالَ: سَمِعُوا الْقَوْلَ، وَإِنْ أَمَرَ تَبَادَرُوا إِلَى أَمْرِهِ،
 مَحْفُودٌ، مَحْشُودٌ، لَا عَابِسٌ، وَلَا مُفَنَّدٌ⁽³⁸⁾.

“I saw a being with evident beauty, charming countenance and excellent noble conduct; didn’t have a bulging belly that looks ugly, nor thin neck and small head seeming awkward; he was charismatic and highly beautiful. With big black eyes and long lashes, he had a booming voice. Shining neck and thick beard, with thin eyebrows joined together, would look honorable when quiet and glowing while talking, most gorgeous; impressive when distant and elegant, pretty and sweet when close. Clear while talking, would never utter anything meaningless, his speech was reeved pearls’ downpour; medium height, neither imperfectly tall, nor inadequately short; a healthily green and comely branch amid two branches. His companions had encircled him, listening to him actively, doing what he said there and then. Everyone’s master, venerable; neither bitter, nor disobeyed, nor opposed.”³⁹

³⁸ al-Hākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 3:10-11 §4274. Ṣāliḥī in *Subul al-Hudā w’al-Rishād*, 3:245.

³⁹ Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3:10-11, § 4274.

Umm-e-M'abad saw him first time and then, overwhelmed, described him to her husband, uttering this prose-Naat. Whenever she mentioned him, she would call him "Mubarak" (مبارك). When she visited Medina to see him, her son, seeing Abu Bakr ﷺ there, said, "Mom, this is the man who was with 'Mubarak'; and he took them to 'Mubarak'. Later, the whole family embraced Islam.⁴⁰

It has been reported from al-Muṭṭalib b. Abī Wadā'a ﷺ that he said:

جَاءَ الْعَبَّاسُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَكَانَهُ سَمِعَ شَيْئًا، فَقَامَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ فَقَالَ: مَنْ أَنَا؟ فَقَالُوا: أَنْتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ السَّلَامُ، قَالَ: أَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ فِرْقَةً، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُمْ فِرْقَتَيْنِ، فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ فِرْقَةً، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُمْ قَبَائِلَ، فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ قَبِيلَةً، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُمْ بُيُوتًا، فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ بَيْتًا، وَخَيْرِهِمْ نَسَبًا.

Al-‘Abbās came to Allah’s Messenger ﷺ, for he seemed to have heard something (indecent from unbelievers and was in a rage), so the Prophet ﷺ stood on the pulpit and said: ‘Who am I?’ They said: ‘You are Allah’s Messenger. Peace be upon you!’ He said: ‘I am Muhammad ﷺ, the son of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Allah created the creatures, so He put me among the best of them (the human beings). Then He divided them into two segments (the Arabs and the non-Arabs) and He put me among the best of them (the Arabs). Then He made them tribes and He put me among the best of them (the tribe of the Quraysh). Then He made them households and He put me among the best of them as a household (Banū

⁴⁰ al-Bayhaqi, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, 2:492.

Hāshim), and the best of them as a lineage. (So I am the most exalted of the entire creation, my lineage, my tribe, my household and personal glory.)⁴¹

In his narration, ‘Abbas b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib has related:

قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ قُرَيْشًا جَلَسُوا فَتَدَاكُرُوا أَحْسَابَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ، فَجَعَلُوا مَثَلَكَ مِثْلَ نَخْلَةٍ فِي كَبْوَةٍ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِهِمْ، مِنْ خَيْرِ فِرْقِهِمْ وَخَيْرِ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ، ثُمَّ تَخَيَّرَ الْقَبَائِلَ فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِ قَبِيلَةٍ، ثُمَّ خَيَّرَ الْبُيُوتَ فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِ بُيُوتِهِمْ، فَأَنَا خَيْرُهُمْ نَفْسًا، وَخَيْرُهُمْ بَيْتًا.

‘I submitted, O Messenger of Allah ﷺ! The Quraysh have described your lineage in a meeting like a date-palm tree grown in a mound of eroded soil (for the tree grown in such a soil does not have firm roots. (Replying these satirical remarks) The Prophet said: ‘Almighty Allah brought into being the creation and then divided them into segments and put me in the best of them (the humans)—the best of the two. Then He made them tribes and He put me among the best of them (the tribe of the Quraysh). Then He made them households and He put me among the best of them as a household (Banū Hāshim). So know that I am the best one of the best household and the best of them as a lineage. (So I

⁴¹ Set forth by •al-Tirmidhī in *al-Sunan*: Bk.: *al-Da‘awāt* [Supplications] according to Allah’s Messenger ﷺ, Ch.: (99), 5:543 §3532, & Bk.: *al-Manāqib* [Virtues] according to Allah’s Messenger ﷺ, Ch.: ‘The excellent merit of the Prophet ﷺ,’ 5:584 §3607–3608. •Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 1:210 §1788. •al-Bayhaqī in *Dal‘il al-Nubuwwa*, 1:149. •al-Daylamī in *al-Firdaws bi-Ma‘thūr al-Khiṭāb*, 1:41 §95. •al-Ḥusaynī in *al-Bayān wa al-Ta‘rīf*, 1:178 §466. •al-Hindī in *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, 11:415 §319500.

am the most exalted of the entire creation, my lineage, my tribe, my household and personal glory.)⁴²

According to ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Rabī‘ah b. al-Ḥārith b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، مَنْ أَنَا؟ قَالُوا: أَنْتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: أَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ. قَالَ: فَمَا سَمِعْنَا قَطُّ يَتَمَيِّ قَبْلَهَا، أَلَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ﷻ خَلَقَ خَلْقَهُ، فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِ خَلْقِهِ، ثُمَّ فَرَقَهُمْ فِرْقَتَيْنِ فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِ الْفِرْقَتَيْنِ، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُمْ قِبَائِلَ فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِهِمْ قَبِيلَةً، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُمْ بِيُوتًا فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِهِمْ بَيْتًا، وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ بَيْتًا وَخَيْرُكُمْ نَفْسًا.

‘O People! (Do you know) who am I? They submitted: ‘You are the Messenger of Allah.’ He said: ‘(Besides that) I am Muhammad son of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. The narrator submitted: ‘We never heard from you about your pedigree before this.’ (Then the Messenger said) ‘Beware, indeed Allah (the Most Exalted) brought to being His creation and raised me amongst the best of the creation (the human beings). He then divided them into two groups and put me in the best one. Following that, he developed amongst them tribes and put me in the best of the tribes (the Quraysh). Later, he split the tribes into households and put me in the best of the households (Banū Hashim). Remember, I am the most exalted of my tribe, my household and personal glory.’⁴³

⁴² Stated by al-Tirmidhī and Aḥmad in the Virtues of Companions and al-Bazzār and Abū Nu‘aym.

⁴³ Set forth by •Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 4:449 §165. •Ibn Abī Shayba in *al-Muṣannaf*, 6:303 §31639. •al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 3:275

In another narration the Mother of Believers, ‘Ā’isha has reported from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying:

عَنْ جِبْرِيلَ ﷺ قَالَ: قَلَّبْتُ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا، فَلَمْ أَجِدْ رَجُلًا أَفْضَلَ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ، وَلَمْ أَرِ بَيْتًا أَفْضَلَ مِنْ بَيْتِ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ.

Gabriel ﷺ said: “Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said that Gabriel ﷺ said: ‘I have searched and scrutinized the eastern regions of the earth and its western regions, and I have not discovered any man more excellent than Muhammad ﷺ, nor have I seen any home more excellent than the household of the Banū Hāshim.’”⁴⁴

1.8 THE BELIEVERS’ MOTHER ‘AISHA ﷺ TRANCED

The mother of the believers, ‘Aisha ﷺ has narrated: “I was sitting, weaving cotton and the beloved Messenger of Allah was mending his shoes. He perspired and the blessed sweat started emitting light. This beautiful sight entranced and lifted me out of myself. Seeing me in ecstasy, the exalted Messenger of Allah said, “‘Aisha, what happened; why overwhelmed?” I submitted: “(Messenger of Allah!) Sweat is dropping from your blessed forehead, spewing light. Had Abu Kabir Hazli (famous Arab poet) seen you, he would indeed have learned that truly you had the right to his poetic verse.” He said: “‘Aisha, what has Abu Kabir Hazli said?” The mother of the believers, ‘Aisha ﷺ said: “I submitted: He says:

وَمُبْرَأٍ	مِنْ	كُلِّ	عُزْبٍ	حَيْضَتِهِ
وَفَسَادٍ	مُرْضِعَتِهِ	وَدَاءٍ	مُغِيلٍ	

§5077. •al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*, 20:286 §675–676. •Abū Nu‘aym in *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa*, 1:58 §16.

⁴⁴ •Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *Virtues of Companions*, 2:628 §1073; •al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ*, 6:237–238 §6285; •Bayhaqī in *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa*, 1:176; •Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim in *al-Sunna*, 2:632 §1494.

فَإِذَا نَظَرْتَ إِلَيَّ أَسْرَّتَهُ وَجْهَهُ
بَرَاقَتِ كَبْرَقِ الْعَارِضِ الْمُتَهَلِّلِ

My love is pure of the blemish of menses, lochia and feeding; If you see her effulgent visage, you'll only see blushing cheeks.⁴⁵

1.9 HASSAN B. THABIT'S ﷺ UNIQUE SENTIMENTS

Looking at the illumined face of the Prophet, Hassan b. Thabit ﷺ used to cover his eyes with his palms, lest his dazzle should snatch his vision.

لِمَا رَأَيْتُ أَنْوَارَهُ سَطَعَتْ
وَضَعْتُ مِنْ خَيْفَتِي كَفَى عَلَيَّ بَصْرِي
خَوْفٍ عَلَيَّ بَصْرِي مِنْ حَسَنِ طَلْعَتِهِ
فَلَسْتُ أَنْظُرُهُ إِلَّا عَلَيَّ قَدْرِي
رُوحٍ مِنْ النُّورِ فِي جَسْمٍ مِنَ الْقَمَرِ
كَحَلِيَّةٍ نَسَجَتْ مِنْ الْأَنْجَمِ الزَّهْرِ

When I saw his light shining forth, in fear I covered my eyes with my palms, afraid for my sight because of the beauty of his form. So I was scarcely able to look at him at all. The lights from his light are drowned in his light and his face shines out like the sun and moon in one. A spirit of light lodged in a body like the moon, a mantle made up of brilliant shining stars. I bore it until I could

⁴⁵ al-Bayhaqi in *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, 7:422 §15204; Abu Naeem in *Hulit-ul-awlia*, 2:46.

bear it no longer.⁴⁶

Hassan b. Thabit added a sublime couplet to his collection (*Diwan*):

وَأَحْسَنُ	مِنْكَ	لَمْ	تَرَ	قَطُّ	عَيْنٌ
وَأَجْمَلُ	مِنْكَ	لَمْ	تَلِدِ	السَّاءِ	عَيْبِ
خُلِقْتَ	مُبْرَأً	مِنْ	كُلِّ	تَشَاءِ	كَمَا
كَأَنَّكَ	قَدْ	خُلِقْتَ	كَمَا	تَشَاءِ	كَمَا

No eye saw the lovely personality like you. And no mother has given birth to such an emblem of beauty. You are created flawless and perfect. You are created, as you wanted to be.

JIBRAEL'S DIVINE HELP AND STATUS OF HASSAN

Recitation of poetic verses by Hassan on the pulpit was a practice with the Messenger of Allah. He would glorify the Prophet, denounce the disbelievers and praise the divine beauty of the Beloved Messenger of Allah. Feeling glad, the Messenger would say:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يُؤَيِّدُ حَسَانَ بَرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ مَا يُفَاخِرُ أَوْ يُنَافِحُ عَنْ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ.

Allah Most High indeed helps Hassan through the Holy Spirit for glorifying and defending the exalted Messenger of Allah.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Al-Nabhani, *Jawahar al-Bahar*, 2:450.

⁴⁷ al-Tirmidhi in *al-Sunan*: Bk.: *al-Adab* [Noble Conduct] What is said about reciting Na't, 5:138, §3609.

The Prophet believed that Hassan b. Thabit was inspired by Angel Gabriel, and could even reply on his behalf.

ABD-ALLAH BIN RAWAHA رضي الله عنه D.8 A.H. 629 A.C.

رُوحِي الْفِدَاءُ لِمَنْ أَخْلَاقُهُ شَهِدَتْ
بِأَنَّهُ خَيْرٌ مَوْلُودٍ مِنْ الْبَشَرِ

My spirit, nay my very life be sacrificed, On his morals so exemplary, so sublime. He is the most Eminent among humankind.

عَمَّتْ فَضَائِلُهُ كُلَّ الْعِبَادِ كَمَا
عَمَّ الْبَرِيَّةَ ضَوْءُ الشَّمْسِ وَالْقَمَرِ

His virtues are so popular amongst humans Spread out like the Sun and Moon's heavenly light,

لَوْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ مُبِينَةٌ
كَانَتْ بَدِيهَتُهُ تَكْفِي عَنِ الْخَبَرِ

Even in absence of signs to stamp his veracity His towering personage was enough for his trueness,

1.9 SAYYIDUNA ʿALĪ رضي الله عنه BEAUTIFUL DESCRIPTION OF PROPHET'S PORTRAYAL

See how beautifully Sayyiduna ʿAlī رضي الله عنه described the portrayal of the Beloved Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. According to al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Abī Shayha, Ibn Saʿd and al-Bayhaqī, he stated:

لَمْ يَكُنْ بِالطَّوِيلِ الْمَمْعُطِ وَلَا بِالْقَصِيرِ الْمُرَدِّدِ،

He was neither tall and lanky nor short and stocky.

وَكَانَ رُبْعَةً مِّنَ الْقَوْمِ،

He was slightly taller than medium height.

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ بِالْجَعْدِ الْقَطَطِ وَلَا بِالسَّبِطِ،

His hair was neither curly nor straight,

كَانَ جَعْدًا رَجَلًا،

but moderately wavy.

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ بِالْمُطَهَّمِ وَلَا بِالْمُكَلَّثِمِ،

His head was neither large, nor small,

وَكَانَ فِي الْوَجْهِ تَدْوِيرًا،

He had a round looking face.

أَبْيَضٌ مُّشْرَبٌ،

His complexion was white tinged with reddishness (like a flower).

أَدْعَجُ الْعَيْنَيْنِ،

He had large black eyes, the lids of which seemed to be outlined,

أَهْدَبُ الْأَشْفَارِ،

and he had long lashes.

جَلِيلُ الْمَشَاشِ وَالْكَنْدِ،

He was big-boned and his shoulders were fleshy and broad.

أَجْرَدُ،

He had no hair on his chest,

ذُو مَسْرَبِيَّةٍ،

Fine hair covered the line from mid-chest to navel.

شُنُ الْكَفَّيْنِ وَالْقَدَمَيْنِ،

The palms of his hands and the soles of his feet were firmly padded.

إِذَا مَشَى تَقَلَّعَ كَأَنَّمَا يَمْشِي فِي صَبَبٍ،

He walked with a firm gait, slightly leaning forward (as if he were holding a staff, and without any evident effort, as if striding downhill).

وَإِذَا التَّفَّتَ التَّتَفَتْ مَعًا،

When he addressed a person he turned his whole body towards that person. (He did not only turn his face towards the person he addressed, as this is considered impolite, and sometimes, it even symbolizes pride. He faced the person he spoke to, with his chest and body.)

بَيْنَ كَتْفَيْهِ خَاتَمُ النَّبَوَّةِ،

On his back, between his shoulders, was the Seal of Prophethood.

وَهُوَ خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ،

And he is the seal of the Prophets.

أَجْوَدُ النَّاسِ كَفًّا،

He was the most generous of people in hand.

وَأَشْرَحُهُمْ صَدْرًا،

He was the most big-hearted of them in breast.

وَأَصْدَقُ النَّاسِ لَهْجَةً،

He was the most truthful in speech.

وَأَلْيَنُهُمْ عَرِيكَةً،

He was the softest of them in nature,

وَأَكْرَمُهُمْ عِشْرَةً،

He was the most noble of them in his relations.

مَنْ رَأَاهُ بَدِيهَةً هَابَهُ،

Whosoever saw him for the first time would fear him,

وَمَنْ خَالَطَهُ مَعْرِفَةً أَحَبَّهُ،

and whosoever knew him, loved him.

يَقُولُ نَاعِيَتُهُ: لَمْ أَرْ قَبْلَهُ وَلَا بَعْدَهُ مِثْلَهُ.

Whosoever tried to describe him would have to say: "I

have not seen before him or after him anyone who resembles him.”⁴⁸

This is both Hamd and Naat that portrays his physical beauty.

The Companions composing their feelings of dejection and restlessness, would express their pain but within the bounds of praise poetry, the panegyrics. panegyrics composed after his sacred demise.

Numerous Companions of the Messenger of Allah composed literary Naat poetry concentrating on struggle and victories. Some of the most prominent poet Companions include Siddiq Akbar, Abi Waqas, Sayyiduna Hamza, K’ab b. Malik, Abbas Ibn Mardas, K’ab Ibn Zuhair, Al-‘Asha Abu-Al-Basir, Abd Allah b. Rawaha, Abu Sufyan Ibn Harith, Umar Ibn Khattab, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Abbas Ibn Abd al-Mutalib and Hassan b Thabit (may Allah be pleased with them all).

1.10 IMAM AL-BUSIRI’S ECSTATIC LOVE

Imam al-Busiri رحمته الله wrote in the glory of Allah’s exalted Messenger:

طَلَعَتْهُ	مِنْ	بَدَا	الصُّبْحُ
وَفُرَّتْهُ	مِنْ	دَجَا	وَاللَّيْلُ

The light of dawn is from the radiance of your face
The sparkle of the night is from the glimmer of your hair.

النَّعَمِ	مَوْلِي	الْكَرِيمِ	كَنْزُ
لِشَرِيْعَتِهِ	الْأُمَّمِ		هَادِي

⁴⁸ Al-Tirmidhī in *al-Sunan*, Bk: *al-Manāqib* [Virtues], Ch.: ‘What has been related about the description of the Prophet ﷺ,’ 5:599 §3638; & in *al-Shamā’il al-Muhammadiya*, p. 32 §7. Ibn Abī Shayba in *al-Muṣannaf*, 6:328 §31805. Al-Bayhaqī in *Shu‘ab al-Īmān*, 2:149 §1415.

Our Master is a treasure of grace, a treasure of mercy. He is the guide of the entire nation, with the sacred law.

سَعَتِ الشَّجَرُ نَطَقَ الْحَجَرُ
شُقَّ الْقَمَرُ بِإِسَارَتِهِ

On your finger's gesture, trees walked, stones spoke. And on ripping signal the moon split into two.

جِبْرِيلُ أَتَى لَيْلَةَ أُسْرَى
وَالرَّبُّ دَعَاهُ لِحَضْرَتِهِ

Jibril came with tidings from Allah on the Night of Ascension. Allah invited you to the heavens and gave you glory.

فَمُحَمَّدُنَا هُوَ سَيِّدُنَا
فَالْعِزُّ لَنَا لِإِجَابَتِهِ

Muhammad ﷺ is our benefactor; He is our Chief. His favor and grant will preserve our dignity.⁴⁹

1.11 WHAT NAAT IS!

I started writing poetic verses without any formal introduction to what Naat is. Scholars, poets, intellectuals, critics of literature and historians of eulogistic poetry have given a wide variety of definitions of Naat. I thought it better to serve my readers with the versification of thoughts and feelings of those who had relation of intense love with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. We have seen that all

⁴⁹ Imam al-Busairi, *Poetic works*.

these verses have much more to offer beyond love and veneration. An environment of the unseen divinity emerged here and there out of a system that ensued praise and reverence hued in love and humility with prayers of refuge from Satan's destructive forces and glad tidings of an era immersed in dignity, justice, philanthropy, altruism, sacrifice and fraternization. The idols collapsed and roared a welcome sentiment to the Final Prophet reported in scriptures revealed to preceding Prophets. The walls of the sacred House crooned with enchanting lines of purification of Ka'ba of idol-worship and the Worship of Omniscient Sovereign. The Grandpa begged from God his safety, security, stability and victory against evil forces.⁵⁰ He is divinely guided who to employ for his nursing and brought-up.⁵¹ His mother again is inspired to praise her son to fortify Halima's heart and the foster sister Sheema too would sing the lullaby to tranquil him into sleep. What all is this? Love of course is a conspicuous element that has overwhelmed all events transpiring before and after his holy birth. Veneration and supplications of safeguard and victory against evil forces too are evident. But the divine unseen world's influence over all creations and the creative minds too is quite vividly discernable that signifies his unique, unparalleled status next to God in the universe. Putting all these elements together form what we call Naat. But again it is not possible to wind up this discourse here. Let us see what our master 'Ali has narrated about it:

مَنْ رَأَاهُ بِدَيْهَةٍ هَابَةٍ، وَمَنْ خَالَطَهُ مَعْرِفَةً أَحَبَّهُ، يَقُولُ نَاعِيَتُهُ: لَمْ أَرَّ
قَبْلَهُ وَلَا بَعْدَهُ مِثْلَهُ.

“One who would be blessed with his sight, is awed; he who develops interactions with him, loves him and the one who praises him, says that he has not seen anyone his

⁵⁰ Dr Tahir-ul-Qadri, *Seerat al-Rasool*, 4:2.

⁵¹ Dr Tahir-ul-Qadri, *Seerat al-Rasool*, 4:3.

like before, nor has he seen his similitude after seeing him.”⁵²

In this hadith, the word Naat (نَعْت) has been used and that too by the one whom the Messenger called the door of the city of knowledge that he himself is.

1.12 THE COMPANIONS' NAAT CULTURE

Naat is the voice of the inner self imbued with Prophetic love free from exaggeration, attired in instinctual sincerity and trueness, and adorned with eloquence and linguistic and semantics aesthetics. Devoid of selfish desires and material interests, it is paid as a debt to the adoration incarnate, the most praiseworthy Messenger Muhammad, upon him be peace, consisting of words and styles worthy of his exalted station and divine stature. Its creative aesthetics ban the use of substandard expressions, untrue sentiments, artificial ideas and odd compositions to be employed to hymn the chief of all the prophets, universe and Allah's beloved Messenger. This discourse relates to the panegyrics about the greatest embodiment of truth and veracity in the universe, whose trueness spread its light throughout cosmos all his life and who was also the messenger and the supreme model of truth and righteousness. Naat is a picturesque, pleasing and striking portrayal in flower words of the Beloved Messenger's holy personage, his divine contact with God and human contact with the creation, a rapturous response to the divine inquiry: Who am I? The Naat poets, therefore, are required to observe extreme caution at all the stages one undergoes conceiving and composing Naat. The question is not merely of meeting the requirements of a poetic genre; it is rather, a grave concern of perfect protection of one's faith. It is not a matter of observing strict restrictions of poetic aesthetics devised for the Beloved Messenger's glory; it is, rather,

⁵² Al-Tirmidhi, *al-Sunan*, Bk. *Al-Munaqib*, What is said about the attributes of the Prophet (ﷺ), 5:599, §3638.

an ordeal of how to attain to heights of faith, alarming the risk of walking over bare edge of sword or rope-walking between two hill tops over an abyss vale. There are risks and threats on the way which alarm to be on toes, walking over the sharp-edged sword or doing rope-walking over a dreadful dale.

Naat is one of the most difficult genres of poetic art. However, the Muslim lyricists have proved their worth in such an enviable manner Allah has blessed them with incredible success and exaltation. Be they the elite ones or ordinary folk, everyone has been equally involved in this devotional creativity. The long tradition of Naat poetry is such an honour in Islamic history, its pride can never be befittingly shown.

The Companions of the beloved Messenger of Allah attended on him regularly and constantly at home and on journeys, day and night, in dangers and anxieties, in defeat and victories and found him such a master of all the situations that they became his sincere devotees. Those who had the talent of creative experience of poetic literature admired his accomplishments and expressed their feelings of adoration for him in their poetic creations. We have seen through the hadiths that they used the word نَعْت very often. The Companions who would praise the holy traits of the beloved Messenger in poetic form were sizeable in number.⁵³

After the holy Messenger left, these devotees who loved him more than their own lives and could not stay tranquil without his company were inundated in love pangs and were bestowed with the intuitive moments to express their overwhelming sentiments of his physical absence from amongst them. Then they wrote Naats, praise poems and panegyrics.⁵⁴

What our master ‘Ali عليه السلام described as Naat, was defining and describing the personality, the character, the noble qualities, sublime virtues, and accomplishments of the beloved Messenger ﷺ

⁵³ Armaghan-e-Na't, Shafiq Brelvi.

⁵⁴ Dr Tahir-ul-Qadri, *Muqaddama-e-Seerat Vol I*, p. 254.

of Almighty Allah.

Prof Dr Muhammad Ishaq Qureshi, an eminent scholar of devotional poetry in the sense of Researcher and Critic of the poetic art and literature, in his treatise on Allama Yusuf b, Ismael al-Nabhani—a Naat poet of great literary caliber, has comprehensively described how the majority of Companions would compose Naat poetry venerating Allah’s Messenger ﷺ. He writes:

“Naat of the Prophet ﷺ is the most difficult literary genre to compose; yet the Muslims have proved their worth treading this testing path. They have been writing, reciting, publishing and promoting Naat over last fourteen centuries with great zeal and zest everywhere. The elite as well as common people displayed their devotion, humility and veneration equally well and made the tradition of Naat of the Prophet ﷺ an honor and pride for the history of Islam.”⁵⁵

According to Ibn Rasheeq:

“There was not a single individual from amongst Banu Abd al-Muttalib, except the Prophet, who would not compose poetry.”⁵⁶

It was so common a practice amongst the Ansar of Medina, that according to Anas ؓ:

قدم علينا رسول الله وما في الانصار بيت الا وهو بقول الشعر قيل
له وأنت أبا حمزة قال وأنا.

“When Allah’s Messenger ﷺ came to us, all the Ansar

⁵⁵ Prof Dr Muhammad Ishaq Qureshi, *Allama Yusuf b, Ismael al-Nabhani—a Na’t poet of great literary caliber*, Na’t Rang 25

⁵⁶ *Al-A’mдох-al-Ibn Shareeq, al-Juz’ al-Awwal*, p. 15.

people would compose Naat; it was asked, ‘O Abu Hamza (Anas رضي الله عنه): do you also compose Naat poetry?’ He said: ‘yes.’”⁵⁷

“Hafiz Ibn Abd al-Birr counted 120 Companions composing Naat. Naat could not be made a practice in Mecca due to unfavorable and insecure circumstances there. There, the Companions would be on toes to protect and defend the holy Prophet ﷺ and themselves and were vigilant, alert and valiant soldiers. In Medina, the lighting disclosures of the Prophet ﷺ were at peak—a founder of the state of Medina, inspiring the pious society of Medina, the inventor of a civilization, and the Messenger of a new system of life. A preacher, a thinker, a commander, an army general, reconciling people and showing them the straight path, the Prophet’s blessed presence in Medina was a spring season of blossoming flowers of love, dignity and fraternity all around. The Companions would imbue their words with love and devotion and earn his favors, bliss, blessings and largesse. The world witnessed a flash flood of Naat overflowing the whole of society.”⁵⁸

We need to ponder how the minor girls gathered in Quba to offer their warmest poetic welcome on the arrival of the Prophet there: *طلع البدر علينا* is a famous Naat song that we recite in our Naat programs even today. That is a great manifestation of Medina’s love psyche for the Beloved Messenger of Allah ﷺ displayed in most spectacular manner on the very first day of his blissful arrival. It proves that the Naat sentiment had germinated in the Medina mind-set even before the venerable Prophet blessed

⁵⁷ *Muslim*, al-Sahih, Bk. Asceticism, Ch. Denying eulogy, p. 414.

⁵⁸ Dr Ishaq Qureshi, *Allama Yusuf b, Ismael al-Nabhani—a Na’t poet of great literary caliber*, Na’t Rang 25.

that soil with the holy and heavenly touch of his consecrated feet.

It is this tradition of Naat poetry that has reached our times and the ripe minds charged with sincere and fervent love for the holy Messenger ﷺ have conceived it and disseminated its thought and throb to the entire community of seekers of the Prophetic love, the world over.

The poet Companions, after the departure of the Messenger of Allah, maintained their devotional poetry standards and kept it from eulogistic tone and tenor.

THE HOLY PROPHET'S NAAT GATHERINGS

As has been described, Naat was a pleasant literary creative feature of the Muslims's life in the Prophetic era. It was sporadic in Mecca but prolific and profuse in Medina owing to peculiar socio political oppression and brutal hostility of disbelievers in Mecca but the establishment of Muslim state in Medina under the most produdent and merciful control of Allah's Messenger and the legislation of Mithaq-e-Medina. The Muakhat package eliminated the Muslims's economic inequality, disparity and scarcity. They rose into a strong military might that would not only dauntelessly defend their independence and freedom but would also provide protection to the weaker neighbouring tribes. The Muslims grew in number and the devotees of Allah's beloved Messenger would learn from him knowledge, wisdom, application of Islamic law in practical life and love and devotion stormed them into an invincible force of peace, love, justice and firm followership of the Holy Prophet.

Ardent love of the Holy Prophet was the prevalent sentiment throbbing in all the hearts, men, women, old, youth, adult, children, everyone of every age group, male or female. The sentiment whenever and wherever was manifested was articulated in the form of poetic praise and devotion of Allah's beloved Messenger.

Allah's Messenger observed this love culture that would find

expression in his praise and adoration. He expressed his great liking for the sentiment and would form special gatherings in order for participants to remember the most esteemed Prophet ﷺ. In these gatherings odes and hymns were recited in praise of the Prophet ﷺ, and peace and blessings were invoked upon his blessed person. People attended these gatherings with great reverence and enthusiasm. They illuminated their minds and souls with glorified descriptions of the beloved of Allah. Such assemblies were especially organized pertaining to *Mawlid al-Nabī* by the beloved Prophet himself.

Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه narrates that the Companions asked the Prophet ﷺ:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَتَى وَجَبَتْ لَكَ النَّبُوءَةُ؟

O Messenger of Allah, when was prophethood bestowed upon you?

This was an unusual enquiry, because who amongst the noble Companions did not know that the Holy Prophet ﷺ declared his prophethood at the age of 40? Hence, it is evident that the noble Companions were not asking about the moment the Prophet ﷺ received prophecy, but they were asking about the inception of his spiritual existence when Allah bestowed on him the cloak of prophecy. Thus, the Holy Prophet ﷺ replied:

أَدَمُ بَيْنَ الرُّوحِ وَالْجَسَدِ.

(I was a prophet, when the creation of) Ādam was between the spirit and the body.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Narrated by al-Tirmidhī in *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Manāqib* [The Book of Virtuous Merits], chapter: ‘The Excellent Merits of the Prophet’, 5:585 §3609; Ibn Mustafād in *Kitāb al-qadr*, p.27 §14 has stated that the narrators are reliable; Tamām al-Rāzī in *Kitāb al-fawā'id*, 1:241 §581; Ibn Ḥibbān in *Kitāb al-thiqāt*, 1:47; al-Lālakā’ī in *I’tiqād Ahl*

The meaning of this hadith is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was bestowed prophecy at the time when Ādam's creation had not been completed yet. In this way, the beloved Prophet ﷺ explained his creation prior to his birth to the noble Companions.

«مَنْ أَنَا؟» — 'WHO AM I?'

Besides the Friday sermons, it was the Holy Prophet's practice to organise gatherings in which he discussed religious, moral, spiritual, educational, theological, political, social, cultural, legal, organisational and administrative issues with the noble Companions ﷺ. Apart from this, he would organise gatherings in which he would mention the excellence of his lineage and matchless nobility, and the incidents surrounding his blessed birth. Below, some narrations are mentioned, which quite clearly substantiate this point:

Muṭṭalib b. Abī Wadā'a ﷺ narrates:

جَاءَ الْعَبَّاسُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَكَانَهُ سَمِعَ شَيْئًا، فَقَامَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ، فَقَالَ: «مَنْ أَنَا؟» فَقَالُوا: أَنْتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ السَّلَامُ! قَالَ: «أَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ فِرْقَةً، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُمْ فِرْقَتَيْنِ فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ فِرْقَةً، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُمْ قَبَائِلَ فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ قَبِيلَةً، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُمْ بِيُوتًا فَجَعَلَنِي فِي خَيْرِهِمْ بَيْتًا وَخَيْرِهِمْ نَسَبًا.»

Al- 'Abbās came to Allah's Messenger ﷺ, for he seemed to have heard something (indecent from the unbelievers

al-Sunna, 1:422 §1403; al-Hākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 2:665 §4210; al-Bayhaqī in *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa wa ma'rifa ahwāl Ṣāhib al-Sharī'a* ﷺ, 2:130; al-Suyūṭī in *al-Durr al-manthūr fī al-tafsīr bi al-Ma'thūr*, 6:569; and Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-ṣīra al-Nabawiyya*, p.54 §53 has declared this hadith authentic.

and was in a rage and wanted to tell the Holy Prophet, or the Holy Prophet was already aware of it due to his prophetic knowledge) so the Prophet ﷺ stood on the pulpit and said: ‘Who am I?’ They said: ‘You are Allah’s Messenger. Peace be upon you!’ He said: ‘I am Muhammad, the son of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Allah created the creatures, so He put me among the best of them (the human beings). Then He divided them into two segments (the Arabs and the non-Arabs) and He put me among the best of them (the Arabs). Then He made them tribes and He put me among the best of them (the tribe of Quraysh). Then He made them households and He put me among the best of them as a household (Banū Hāshim), and the best of them in lineage. (So I am the most exalted of the entire creation, my lineage, my tribe, my household, and personal glory.)’⁶⁰

In this narration, there are several noteworthy points:

- i. Whenever the Holy Prophet ﷺ wished to make a critical point that he wished to emphasise to the Muslims, he would ascend to the pulpit and deliver his sermon. Otherwise, if the issue at hand was not of critical importance, then he would just inform those who were nearby as opposed to ascending the pulpit and delivering a sermon. In the narration above, the Holy Prophet ﷺ ascends to the pulpit; hence, this is an indication that the issue at hand was of

⁶⁰ Narrated by al-Tirmidhī in *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Da‘wāt* [The Book of Supplications], 5:543 §3532; al-Tirmidhī in *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Manāqib* [The Book of Excellent Merits], chapter: ‘The Prophet’s Excellent Merits’, 5:584 §3608 narrates the words ‘best of them in person’ in the place of the words ‘best of them in lineage’; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 1:210 §1788 has added the words, ‘I am the best of you in household and the best of you in person’; Ibid., 4:165; al-Haythamī in *Majma‘ al-zawā‘id wa manba‘ al-fawā‘id*, 8:216; and al-Bayhaqī in *Dalā‘il al-Nubuwwa wa ma‘rifat aḥwāl Ṣaḥīb al-Sharī‘a* ﷺ, 1:169.

critical importance.

ii. The most revered Prophet ﷺ asked the Companions, ‘Who am I?’ They all replied, ‘You are Allah’s Messenger. Peace be upon you!’ Although the reply of the Companions was based on truth, it was not the expected answer, as on this occasion the required answer was different. When he did not receive the answer that he was seeking, he himself replied: ‘I am Muhammad, the son of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib.’ This is a clear indication that he wanted to inform the noble Companions about the excellence of his sublimely noble lineage and blessed birth. This is a topic related directly to the subject of *Mawlid al-Nabī* ﷺ. Although the noble Companions were already aware of these facts, this statement with so much emphasis indicates that he wished to make his *mawlid* as one of his Sunnas.

iii. In the above mentioned hadith, he did not inform the noble Companions of any commandment of Allah or any topic on deeds and morality; rather, he told them about his blessed birth, and the superiority of his lineage. This is from the acts of *Mawlid al-Nabī*.

iv. The Holy Prophet ﷺ did not make mention of his *mawlid* on an individual level privately, but he held a congregation comprising the noble Companions, which is indicative that special arrangements were made for this gathering.

In the books of hadith, biography and Prophetic virtues and merits, authored by great scholars like Imam al-Bukhārī, Imam Muslim, Imam al-Tirmidhī, al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, al-Qaṣṣallānī and al-Nabahānī, there are numerous narrations that have no relation to matters of the religion; rather, they are concerned with the Prophet’s birth, nobility, lineage, and his excellent virtues and merits.

I AM THE MOST EXALTED OF THE ENTIRE CREATION

‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib ﷺ narrates:

قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ قُرَيْشًا جَلَسُوا فَتَذَاكَرُوا أَحْسَابَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ، فَجَعَلُوا مِثْلَكَ مِثْلَ نَخْلَةٍ فِي كَبْوَةٍ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِهِمْ مِنْ خَيْرِ فِرْقِهِمْ وَخَيْرِ الْفِرْقَيْنِ، ثُمَّ تَخَيَّرَ الْقَبَائِلَ فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِ قَبِيلَةٍ، ثُمَّ تَخَيَّرَ الْبُيُوتَ فَجَعَلَنِي مِنْ خَيْرِ بُيُوتِهِمْ، فَأَنَا خَيْرُهُمْ نَفْسًا وَخَيْرُهُمْ بَيْتًا.»

I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, the Quraysh whilst mentioning their lineage said that your example is that of a date-palm tree on a mound (hillock).’ Hearing this, he replied: “Allah created His creation and He made me amongst the best of them, from the best of their groups and the better of the two groups. Then he made them tribes and He put me among the best of them (the tribe of Quraysh). Then He made them households and He put me among the best of them as a household (Banū Hāshim). So I am the most exalted of the entire creation in person and household.”⁶¹

In these gatherings there occurred remembrance of the Prophetic biography and virtues as well. The Prophet’s teaching and instructions, which are related to the fundamentals of the Shariah and upon which the pillars of *īmān* and *Islam* were established, are discussed. They were told how our obedience and love of Allah’s Messenger ﷺ could open up the doors to success,

⁶¹ Narrated by al-Tirmidhī in *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Manāqib* [The Book of Virtuous Merits], chapter: ‘The Excellent Merit of the Prophet’, 5:584 §3607; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥāba*, 2:937 §1803; and Abū Ya’lā in *al-Musnad*, 4:140 §1316.

and how it would help us strengthen our faith. Other similar matters were mentioned in light of the perfect Prophetic character, so that one could implant the essence of servitude within one's behaviour and resolve to change one's life for the better.

The description of the most gracious and perfect beauty of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been disclosed in a splendid and endearing manner in the Qur'ān, hadith and by the Companions. The beautiful and heart-touching descriptions about the glowing face and dark, fragrant tresses of the most gracious Prophet ﷺ bring intense pleasure to the listener. He was the embodiment of the most elegant beauty, and it was impossible to assess the extent of the exalted rank of his glorified appearance. The noble Companions used to experience a state of ecstasy by looking at the beauty of the most elegant Prophet ﷺ, and they felt humility when describing him. The truth is that it is beyond our scope to describe the perfection of the divinely bestowed beauty of the beloved Prophet ﷺ. Even the Arabs, who were famed for the eloquence and mastery of their linguistic skills, were unable to describe him as he deserved to be portrayed.

The whole month of *Rabi' al-awwal* is spent earnestly attempting to describe the matchless beauty of the most gracious Prophet ﷺ. Some spend their time making mention of his blessed fragrant tresses and glowing face. Some praise the gracious gaze of his sacred eyes, some send salutations to the beauty of his blessed ears and its unparalleled hearing, and others send salutations to his delicate lips which were like heavenly petals of a flower. Some speak about the miracles performed by his blessed hands. Some sing the melody of his sacred mouth and the blessings of his saliva. The description of these exclusive qualities of the Holy Prophet ﷺ brings the state of ecstasy and the distribution of the Prophetic blessings from his court. These are the states of gathering that bring the illumination of faith in one's heart and soul. These are the supplies for the Hereafter which are indispensable for a believer's eternal journey. The whole month of *Rabi' al-Awwal* is

spent earnestly attempting to describe the Prophet ﷺ.

Another method is to mention the Prophet's excellent virtues and exceptionality (*faḍā'il wa khaṣā'is*). These are his exclusive and virtuous attributes that distinguish him from other prophets and the rest of mankind. He is the perfect sum of all of the commendable and miraculous qualities contained in all the other prophets. Allah ﷻ bestowed His Beloved Prophet ﷺ nobility and superiority over all others; He bestowed him the leadership of the first and last and of all the people of all ages that preceded or followed him. Allah bestowed him special proximity and invited him to draw near to His presence on the night of the Heavenly Ascension, permitting him to behold His sanctified vision.

In the Holy Qur'ān, it states that obedience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is obedience to Allah⁶²; the pleasure of the Prophet ﷺ is the pleasure of Allah⁶³; pledging allegiance to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is pledging allegiance to Allah⁶⁴; the Holy Prophet's action is Allah's action⁶⁵; the Holy Prophet's utterance is Allah's revelation⁶⁶; disobedience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is disobedience to Allah⁶⁷; opposition to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is opposition to Allah⁶⁸; and the Holy Prophet's bestowal is the bestowal of Allah⁶⁹. In addition to this, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is given unlimited and unprecedented virtues and merits in his worldly life and the life Hereafter.

Discourses on the Holy Prophet's beauty and conduct do take place indeed, but alongside these descriptions, there are numerous other virtues that enlighten the heart of a believer with deep love and passion for the most esteemed Prophet ﷺ. Some hadiths that

⁶² Qur'ān 4:80.

⁶³ Ibid., 9:62.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 48:10.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 8:17.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 53:3-4.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 4:14.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 9:63.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 9:59 and 74.

mention these excellent virtues and exceptionality are referenced below:

Anas b. Mālik relates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«أَنَا أَوْلَهُمْ خُرُوجًا، وَأَنَا قَائِدُهُمْ إِذَا وَفَدُوا، وَأَنَا خَطِيْبُهُمْ إِذَا أَنْصَتُوا، وَأَنَا مُشَفِّعُهُمْ إِذَا حَبَسُوا، وَأَنَا مُبَشِّرُهُمْ إِذَا أَيَسُوا. الْكَرَامَةُ وَالْمَفَاتِيحُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِيَدِي، وَأَنَا أَكْرَمُ وَلَدِ آدَمَ عَلَى رَبِّي، يَطُوفُ عَلَيَّ أَلْفُ خَادِمٍ كَأَنَّهُمْ بَيْضٌ مَكْنُونٌ أَوْ لَوْلُؤٌ مَثْوَرٌ.»

I am the first of them to come forth (from the enlightened grave). I will be their leader when they will go in congregation. I will be their spokesman when they will be quiet. I will be their intercessor when they will be checked, and I will be their bringer of glad tidings when they are in despair. Nobility and the keys of Paradise will be in my hands on that Day, for I am the noblest of the children of Ādam in the sight of my Lord. A thousand servants will circle round me (that Day) as if they are concealed eggs (hidden beauty) or scattered pearls.⁷⁰

This hadith makes mention of the Prophet’s status and his position on the Day of Judgment, and this too is related to the

⁷⁰ Narrated by al-Dārimī in *al-Sunan*, 1:39 §48; al-Tirmidhī in *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur’ān* [Interpretation of the Qur’ān], chapter: ‘From *Sūra Banī Isrā‘īl*’, 5:308 §3148; al-Tirmidhī in *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Manāqib* [The Book of Virtuous Merits], chapter: ‘The Excellent Merit of the Prophet’, 5:585 §3610; Abū Ya‘lā in *al-Mu‘jam*, p.147 §160; Qazwīnī in *al-Tadwīn fī akhbār Qazwīn*, 1:234–235; al-Daylamī in *al-Firdaws bi ma‘thūr al-Khiṭāb*, 1:47 §117; al-Baghawī in *Sharḥ al-Sunna*, 13:203 §3624; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī in *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, 10:3212 §18,189; al-Bayhaqī in *Dalā‘il al-Nubuwwa wa ma‘rifa aḥwāl Ṣāhib al-Shar‘a* ﷺ, 5:484; Abū Na‘īm in *Dalā‘il al-Nubuwwa*, 1:64–65 §24; al-Baghawī in *Mu‘ālim al-tanzīl*, 3:131; and al-Suyūfī in *al-Durr al-manthūr fī al-tafsīr bi al-ma‘thūr*, 8:376.

subject of *Mawlid al-Nabī* ﷺ.

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī relates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«أَنَا سَيِّدُ وَلَدِ آدَمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا فَخْرَ، وَبِيَدِي لِيَاءُ الْحَمْدِ وَلَا فَخْرَ، وَمَا مِنْ نَبِيٍّ يَوْمئِذٍ آدَمَ فَمَنْ سِوَاهُ إِلَّا تَحْتَ لِيَائِي، وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ مَنْ تَنْشَقُّ عَنْهُ الْأَرْضُ وَلَا فَخْرَ.»

I will be the leader of the children of Ādam on the Day of Resurrection and that is no boast. The banner of praise will be in my hand and that is no boast. Ādam and all other Prophets will be under my banner (and that is no boast). I will be the first for whom the earth will split and that is no boast.⁷¹

Abū Hurayra narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«أَنَا أَوَّلُ مَنْ تَنْشَقُّ عَنْهُ الْأَرْضُ، فَأُكْسَى حُلَّةً مِنْ حُلَلِ الْجَنَّةِ، ثُمَّ أَقُومُ عَنْ يَمِينِ الْعَرْشِ، لَيْسَ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْخَلَائِقِ يَقُومُ ذَلِكَ الْمَقَامَ غَيْرِي.»

I will be the first for whom the earth will split. I will be clothed with a dressing of Paradise. Then, I will stand to the right of the ‘*Arsh*’ where none amongst creation will

⁷¹ Narrated by al-Tirmidhī in *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Manāqib* [The Book of Virtuous Merits], chapter: ‘The Excellent Merit of the Prophet’, 5:587 §3615; Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Faḍā’il* [The Book of Excellent Merits], chapter: ‘Superiority of Our Prophet over the Entire Creation’, 4:1782 §2278; Ibn Ḥibbān in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 14:398 §6478; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 1:281; Ibid., 3:2; Abū Ya‘lā in *al-Musnad*, 13:480 §7493; and al-Maqdisī in *al-Aḥādīth al-mukhtāra*, 9:455 §428.

stand except me.⁷²

These hadiths have been referenced here to show that no aspect of the Shariah (such as *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*), propagation of the teachings of Islam, or the Holy Prophet's biography and mighty character have been mentioned here. Rather, the ongoing theme that has been the subject of discussion is the Holy Prophet's virtues and exceptionality and his esteemed rank amongst the children of Ādam. In the books of excellent virtues and merits (*faḍā'il wa manāqib*), this is the theme which is contained, and this essentially is the subject matter of *Mawlid al-Nabī* ﷺ.

There are discourses on the prophecies and glad tidings that have been recorded in previous scriptures brought by other prophets regarding his arrival. Every prophet, from Ādam to 'Īsā ﷺ, has mentioned the imminent arrival of Allah's Final Messenger. And all of this comprises the subject matter of *Mawlid al-Nabī* ﷺ. Likewise, the participants are informed of the Prophet's passage through the pure loins of his ancestors as a light till he manifested himself in the womb of Sayyida Āmina and that he was born into this world as an orphan. They are informed that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent as a bounty and a great favour for mankind.

The mention of the most esteemed Prophet's birth and childhood, which he spent under the loving attention of Sayyida Āmina and Sayyida Ḥalīma Sa'diya, tugs at the strings of the hearts and souls of the participants. The most esteemed Prophet's miracles are described. The scenes of ecstasy (*wajd*) can only be imagined and observed—no one has the power to speak and write about them.

The *mawlid* gatherings are the most effective methods of rekindling the flame of faith in the heart of a believer. It is a source of strength, which, according to Iqbāl, is the power of immense

⁷² Narrated by al-Tirmidhī in *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Manāqib* [The Book of Virtuous Merits], chapter: 'The Excellent Merit of the Prophet', 5:585 §3611; and Ibn Kathīr in *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, 10:263.

love by which the radiance of the name ‘Muhammad ﷺ’ illuminates the horizons. This is the very aim and objective of *Mawlid al-Nabī* ﷺ. Iqbāl says:

قوت عشق سے ہر پست کو بالا کر دے
دہر میں اسم محمد ﷺ سے اجالا کر دے

With the strength of love turn every loss into success;
And light up the world with the name of Muhammad.⁷³

⁷³ Iqbāl, *Kulliyāt: Bāng-e-darā*, 1:207/207.

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THIS BOOKLET, NAAT PERCEPTION: A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERARY GENRE, STEMS FROM HIS READERS EAGERNESS TO UNDERSTAND AND CONNECT WITH NAAT ON A DEEPER LEVEL. PRODUCED IN COLLABORATION WITH NAAT RESEARCH CENTER INTERNATIONAL, THIS WORK OFFERS A CONCISE YET INSIGHTFUL EXPLORATION OF THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF NAAT, ITS CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE, AND ITS TIMELESS APPEAL.

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ISBN:978-969-8918-97-2



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