

"RAFIUDDIN RAAZ, A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE THOUGHT IN ROSHNI KE KHUDO KHAAL (NA‘TIYA MUSADDAS)

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Abstract:

The *naat* collection “*Roshni Ke Khud o khal*” transcends mere poetic expression to offer an intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic exploration of the life and character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The title itself symbolizes the divine light embodied by the Prophet, serving as a timeless beacon of guidance and morality. This work is a masterful fusion of creativity and scholarship, presenting the Seerah through the classical *musaddas* form with profound eloquence and artistic finesse. Positioned alongside the monumental contributions of Urdu *naat* poets such as Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali and Hafeez Jalandhari, this collection stands out for its comprehensive portrayal of prophetic virtues and historical realities. It successfully meets the formidable challenge of capturing the multifaceted dimensions of the Prophet’s life in a poetic form that resonates deeply with both the intellect and the heart, thereby enriching Urdu *naat* literature with its unique voice and vision.

The Tradition of Naat in Urdu Literature

The tradition of *naat* in Urdu literature holds a long and profound history, which has been resplendent with its unique grandeur from the early days of Islam to the present time. *Naat*, which refers to the poetic praise of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), is essentially an artistic expression of his virtues, character, attributes, and excellence.

The origin of *naat*-writing in Urdu can be traced back to the period when the influences of Arabic and Persian literature began to shape the language and culture of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. Early *naat* poets expressed their love and devotion to the Prophet (PBUH) in a manner that not only touched hearts but also enriched the literary tradition itself.

Urdu *naat* is characterised by a rich use of Persian and Arabic vocabulary, which enhances its spiritual and literary impact. The tradition encompasses a wide range of themes, including the birth of the Prophet, his life and character, moral virtues, miracles, hardships, migration (*Hijrat*), battles (*Jihad*), and his universal mercy (*Rahmat-ul-lil-Alameen*). The depth of emotion, beauty of expression, eloquence, and the intensity of devotion make *naat* a unique poetic form.

One of the notable aspects of *naat* in Urdu literature is its immense popularity at the grassroots level. *Naat* recitation has become a cherished part of religious gatherings, such as *milad* ceremonies, celebrations of the Prophet’s birth, and other religious events. It has not only given religious and spiritual color to poetry but has also connected literature with the common people’s language and emotions.

Overall, the tradition of *naat* in Urdu literature reflects a beautiful blend of love for the Prophet, deep devotion, and literary excellence. Through eloquent expression, it keeps the love of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) alive in the hearts of believers. This tradition continues today, with new poets contributing fresh styles and expressions, keeping this luminous and respected literary legacy alive in Urdu literature.

Naat is a genre of literature in which emotions of love and devotion manifest with such depth that they become a heartfelt cry rising from the core of every sensitive and spiritually attuned poet. In *naat*, the passion and fervor inspired by love for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) embellish the expression of affection and reverence with the beauty of words. As a result, a deeply touching and captivating composition comes into being—one that stirs the hearts of both listeners and readers alike.

Just as the art of naat poetry in Arabic and Persian languages reached profound intellectual and artistic heights, Urdu naat poetry has likewise established a magnificent and enduring tradition. The domain of Urdu naat is deeply imbued with the love and devotion for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, while simultaneously upholding the highest standards of poetic form and stylistic excellence. Within this rich literary heritage, numerous works not only present fresh blossoms of heartfelt reverence but also introduce innovative perspectives at both the intellectual and aesthetic levels.

In this particular *musaddas*, from the very opening lines, such an emotional tone is vividly present that each word echoes with the heartbeat of the poet, highlighting the reality and intensity of love for the Prophet (PBUH). The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the greatest personality in human history—unparalleled in every way. No one has ever equaled his virtues, nor will anyone ever match them until the end of time. Among all the prophets, he stands unique, and his life is a fountain of guidance and enlightenment. The rays of wisdom and insight that emanate from his blessed being are manifestations of divine light and mercy.

Among these distinguished contributions, the naat collection “*Roshni Ke Khudkhalaal*” (Contours of Light) by Rafiuddin Raaz occupies a place of great honor. Rafiuddin Raaz, a poet of remarkable eloquence and mastery of language, has carved a unique niche for himself in Urdu naat poetry through his distinctive style. “*Roshni Ke Khudkhalaal*” is his inaugural naat compilation, crafted entirely in the classical *musaddas* form. First published in 2005, this remarkable work encompasses 23 chapters and 406 stanzas, spanning a substantial 254 pages. It stands as a testament to the seamless blend of spiritual devotion and poetic artistry.

In the first section of the *musaddas*, the collective condition of the pre-Islamic Arabian society, the Age of Ignorance (*Jahiliyyah*) is depicted in great detail and depth. The society in which the Prophet (PBUH) was born was deeply corrupt on religious, moral, political, and economic fronts. Religion was rooted in idolatry; people crafted idols with their own hands and then worshipped them. Idols like Lat, Manat, and Uzza were outward symbols, but in reality, the greater idols were human-like figures people who outwardly appeared human but were, in fact, strongholds of evil.

Aankh mein nafrat fazoon thi, khoon mein wehshat hua

Kheenche lete the saron se betiyon tak ki rida

Hurmat-e-hamshir kaisi, kaun si maa'n ki dua

Kaun sa rishta, kahan ki aabroo, kaisi qaba

Bint-e-Hawwa ko ridā-e-hurmat-e-hasti mili

Marhaba! Sall-e-Ala, aye aaina, aye roshni (1)

Despite possessing intellect, these individuals lacked awareness and discernment, and were incapable of recognising the truth. Morally, the society was steeped in sin and corruption. Hedonism, egotism, and tyranny reigned supreme. Women were considered worthless in every aspect mothers, daughters, sisters, and wives all faced humiliation, and they were deprived of their rights and dignity. The dishonouring of women reached such extremes that they were offered to guests, and their dignity was openly violated.

One of the horrifying customs was the killing of daughters; infanticide was common, and if not killed, girls were forced to live a life of slavery. Politically, the Arabian society was afflicted with intense tribal arrogance.

Ho rahi thein betiyan khud saakhta izzat ki nazar

Turra-e-dastaar se lipti hui azmat ki nazar

Nazar shohrat thi kahin, to thi kahin hurmat ki nazar

Aadamiyat ki ameen hotay huay wehshat ki nazar

Aap ne wehshi qabeelon ko nai tehzeeb di

Marhaba! Sall-e-Ala, aye aaina, aye roshni (2)

A person's status and prestige depended solely on the strength and influence of their tribe. Every individual and clan claimed superiority, and weakness was a source of shame. Every person was trapped in delusion and ego.

Economically too, the society suffered from poverty, bribery, theft, usury, and internal hatred, all of which led to social decay and collapse.

In the opening canto of the *musaddas*, the scenes of ignorance (*Jahiliyyah*) are portrayed in such a vivid and detailed manner that the reader can visualise that dark era. These stanzas reflect a vastness of thought and a beauty of

imagination, such that from the very beginning of the *naat*, all the manifestations of a world eagerly awaiting the blessed birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) come alive in the reader's mind.

The second canto focuses on the birth of the Prophet (PBUH), his childhood circumstances, events, and miracles. This section comprises 36 stanzas, and it acquaints the reader with the eager anticipation of his arrival and the glad tidings foretold by previous prophets.

Aadmi		azad	tha	ikhlaaq		ki	zanjeer	se
RooH	ki	duniya	thi	aari	'aql	ki	tanveer	se
Dosti	us	ki	thi	ya	ta'zeer	ya	taqseer	se
Khud	ko	ghaayal	kar	raha	tha	aap	apne teer	se
Aap	ne		fikr-e-barhana		ko		rida-e-'aql	di

Marhaba! Sall-e-Ala, aye aaina, aye roshni (3)

In this part, the poet beautifully expresses through verse the longing and deep yearning of thousands of years and diverse civilisations for the coming of the final Prophet. In this section of the *naat*-based *musaddas*, the sweetness of love for the Prophet (PBUH) and the warmth of devotion can be felt in every single word.

Subah aayi hai badal kar aaj pairahan naya
Shaakh par neeche naye hain, phool par joban naya
Naghma-e-ta'ir naya, kaliyan nai'n, kamshan naya
Rut nai'n, mausam naya, baarish nai'n, saawan naya
Partav-e-khurshid-e-no se ho gayi duniya nayi
Marhaba! Sall-e-Ala, aye aaina, aye roshni (4)

In the third canto, the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the declaration of his Prophethood are followed by detailed descriptions of the persecution and conspiracies he faced from his enemies. These stanzas present the trials and tribulations from a unique perspective, deepening the emotional intensity and spiritual impact of the *naat*.

Mudaton ke baad is dharti pe aayi hai bahaar
Barg-e-gul par taazgi hai, ro'y-e-gul par hai nikhaar
Barh gaya hai ek ek shaakh-e-tamanna ka waqaar
Deedni hai aaj har soo chashm-e-nargis ka khumaar
Ab to yeh shaakh-e-gul-e-tar umr bhar itraayegi
Marhaba! Sall-e-Ala, aye aaina, aye roshni (5)

The fourth and fifth cantos narrate the stories of the Prophet's first migration and then his migration (Hijrah) to Madinah. The scenes of migration are portrayed with great emotional depth. Through this migration, Islam was granted a new life, and the example of brotherhood and unity established between the *Ansar* (Helpers) and *Muhajireen* (Emigrants) remains a shining chapter in history. Despite enemy sieges and plots to assassinate him, the Prophet (peace be upon him), following Allah's command, migrated to Madinah, where the people of Yathrib welcomed him with historic hospitality.

During his time in Madinah, the Prophet (PBUH) not only taught worship and matters of faith but also laid down the foundations of ethics, governance, and *jihad fi sabilillah* (striving in the path of God). When threats arose to the state of Madinah from the Quraysh polytheists, hypocrites, and some Jewish tribes, the Prophet (PBUH) commanded defensive battles, leading to several major expeditions such as Badr, Uhud, and Khandaq (the Trench). Throughout his life, the Prophet (PBUH) propagated Islam with unmatched wisdom, compassion, and justice.

In the sixth, seventh, and eighth cantos, the *musaddas* portrays scenes from the battlefield, the sacrifices of the devoted companions, and the progress of Islamic values and ethics. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) not only spread the light of divine guidance across the universe but also transformed a wild and ignorant nation into one that embraced love, compassion, kindness, and brotherhood. Every aspect of his life is a lesson in serving humanity and upholding the highest moral principles.

Saari jangoñ se alag ek jang thi sab se zyada wazeh
Is taraf ahl-e-wafa the, us taraf poor a jahan
Ek taraf tez talwar thi, doosri taraf waqt ka imtehan
Haan wahi sachchi mohabbat ki boli thi bepanah
Sochiye to asal mein yeh sab se badi jang thi
Marhaba Sall-e-Ala, aye aaina, aye roshni (6)

From the tenth to the eleventh cantos, the *musaddas* beautifully presents the Prophet's noble character, virtues, and boundless mercy. These stanzas artistically depict various dimensions of the Prophet's life, offering readers not only insight into his *seerah* (biography) but also introducing new dimensions of thought and emotion. The poem also details the achievements, virtues, and services of the *Khulafa-e-Rashideen* (Rightly Guided Caliphs) and the members of the Prophet's household (*Ahl al-Bayt*), offering valuable guidance and inspiration for the Muslim Ummah.

The most remarkable feature of this *naat*-based *musaddas* is its literary and artistic quality. Its expression of praise (*naat*) is unique, delivered in a style that is both simple and deeply meaningful. At the same time, it skillfully incorporates modern poetic techniques. The inclusion of a recurring *refrain* at the end of each stanza gives the poem a distinct identity and imparts a special tone and significance to each section. This technical device helps the *naat* resonate deeply with the reader's heart.

Aap ne hum ko bataya kya hain bachon ke huqooq
Haq padosi ka hai kya aur kya hain rishton ke huqooq
Kya taqaza kar rahe hain hum se apnon ke huqooq
Aaine par kis qadar hote hain chehron ke huqooq
Aap ne fikr-e-bashar ko zeest ki tafheem di
Marhaba sall-e-ala, aye aaina, aye roshni (7)

The *musaddas* also blends elements of the *ghazal* form, which makes the verses memorable and emotionally appealing without compromising their meaning. The vocabulary is rich and expansive, with a beautiful integration of words from Arabic, Urdu, Persian, and Hindi.

In terms of imagery as well, this *naat*-based *musaddas* stands out as truly unique. It not only presents beautiful depictions of chirping birds, the light of the sun, and the brilliance of radiance, but also offers creative and poetic images such as the dance of light, the songs of the sun, and the awakening of the mirror of the world. These are the heights of imagination rarely seen in Urdu poetry.

On the level of language and expression, this *musaddas* is a fine blend of simplicity, elegance, fluency, and emotional appeal. The poet has narrated all the events related to the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in a clear and accessible style that holds the power to deeply move even the general reader. Its tone is highly refined, filled with reverence, and enriched with the subtlety and grace of *naatiya* consciousness. A notable critical appraisal comes from the renowned literary critic Gohar Malsiyani, who offers an insightful analysis of Rafiuddin Raaz's work. He writes:

"Rafiuddin Raaz has kindled such luminous lamps of love for the Prophet (peace be upon him) within the classical form of musaddas that they radiate the sweetness of innovative thought, the charm of modern stylistics, and the gentle glow of moonlit nights. His poetic experiment in the genre of naat stands apart from that of other poets. Each stanza reveals distinct aspects of the Prophet's biography and simultaneously blossoms into a garden of contemporary poetic expression." (8)

The rich use of literary techniques and stylistic devices further enhances the beauty of this *musaddas*. Compound expressions (*murakkabat*), similes, metaphors, and other rhetorical tools have been employed with great finesse. These elements not only embellish the verse but also deepen its meaning and significance. Through the use of well-chosen literary terms and figures of speech from *ilm-e-bayan* (the science of expression), this *naat musaddas* rises to the level of a true artistic masterpiece.

The *musaddas* presents information, historical facts, and the life events of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in a highly comprehensive, profound, and detailed manner. This not only instils in the reader a deep sense of love for the Prophet but also provides a rich understanding of the history, circumstances, and virtues of Islam. This *musaddas* is a unique scholarly and literary collection of its kind, holding a distinguished place in *naat* literature, and due to its artistic and literary excellence, it is an important addition to Urdu language and literature.

Jabr ki ik ik nishani khatam kar di aap ne
Jahilon ki hukmarani khatam kar di aap ne
Admi ki be-zabani khatam kar di aap ne
Woh riwayat, woh kahani khatam kar di aap ne
Aap ne aa kar ata ki zindagi ko zindagi
Marhaba sall-e-ala, aye aaina, aye roshni (9)

Overall, this *naat musaddas* not only expresses the profound depths of love for the Prophet (peace be upon him) but also serves as a historical document that acquaints the reader with past civilisations, the Prophet's biography, his great achievements, and the virtues of the *Khulafa-e-Rashideen* and *Ahl al-Bayt*. Its language is simple yet eloquent, unparalleled in artistic and meaningful expression. It exhibits a sublime blend of passion, literature, thought, and artistry, making it a source of pride and a guiding light for every connoisseur of literature, lover of poetry, and devotee of the Prophet.

Taking an overall view of the *naatiya musaddas*, it can be said that it is an unparalleled and profound expression of love and devotion, which presents the exalted personality, biography, and the dignity of Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) with utmost eloquence and eloquent expression. This *musaddas* beautifully captures the sweetness of love for the Prophet, a comprehensive portrait of various aspects of his life, and the historical, social, and ethical conditions of his time, all skillfully conveyed through poetic form.

This *naat* not only offers a spiritual experience but also imparts knowledge of Islamic history and the biography of the Holy Prophet. Its language is simple yet meaningful, allowing every reader to easily immerse themselves in feelings of love and reverence. It incorporates an excellent blend of literary arts such as similes, metaphors, and poetic techniques that embellish and enhance the impact of the verse.

The various chapters of the *musaddas* deeply portray scenes from the darkness of the pre-Islamic era to the light of Islam. The birth, prophethood, sufferings, migration, battles, and moral teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are narrated in such a way that the reader feels fully immersed in these events and emotions.

The greatest strength of this *naatiya musaddas* lies in its comprehensive nature—historical, religious, and literary—which makes it not only a masterpiece of poetry but also an authentic document beneficial and inspiring for readers of all eras. It conveys messages of love, faith, sacrifice, and guidance in a manner that softens hearts and refreshes the soul.

In summary, the *naatiya musaddas* is a voice of love for the Prophet that transcends the limits of time and place, keeping the lamp of devotion alive in the hearts of the faithful across all ages. It is a precious treasure of literature, exemplary not only in Urdu poetry but also in Islamic literary tradition.

1. Rafiuddin Raaz, *Roshni ke Khuda Khaal*, Rang Adab Publications, Karachi, February 2017, page 14.

2. Page 18

3. Page 22

4. Page 29

5. Page 30

6. Page 76

7. Page 27

8. Gohar Malsiyani, *Sukhan ka Charagh*, Rafiuddin Raaz, Rang Adab Publications, Karachi, January 2013, page 211.

9. Rafiuddin Raaz, *Roshni ke Khado Khaal – Na‘tiya Musaddas*, Rang Adab Publications, Karachi, February 2017, Page 203.