

The Mevlid Or Nativity Poem By Süleyman Çelebi

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Turkish word *mevlid* [from the Arabic *mawlid*] has several meanings referring to birth, but in its most common Islamic usage the word is employed for a gathering or celebration commemorating the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, at which poetic panegyrics addressed to the Prophet are recited. From the scholarly account of Ateş,¹ it appears that the Fatimid rulers of Egypt originated the custom of arranging annual ceremonies to commemorate the birthday of the Prophet in the Islamic month of Rabi‘ al Awwal. According to Schimmel,² the first comprehensive work dealing with the Prophet's birth was written by Ibn Dihya of Andalusia. At the present time in Islamic countries, however, a mevlid may accompany or form part of any suitable occasion of remembrance or religious devotion.

The catalogue of poems and songs recited in praise of the Prophet Muhammad in various Muslim countries is very extensive, and goes back to the time of the Prophet himself. A number of the *Sahaba* [Companions of the Prophet] were poets and their *divans* [poetic collections] are extant, in which items extolling the Prophet are found. Among these may be mentioned Hissan b. Thabit, Abdullah b. Rawaha, Ali b. Abi Talib [later the Caliph Ali] and Ka‘b bin Zuhayr. In particular, Ka‘b bin Zuhayr composed a *qasida* [laudatory poem] on the occasion of his acceptance of Islam and received, in token of Prophetic appreciation, a mantle from the Prophet himself. Many centuries later, the most famous poem in Arabic that may be considered a mevlid, composed by al Buseiri,³ was also given the title of the Ode of the Mantle [*Qasida Burdah*]. The mantle referred to in the poem is not that given to Ka‘b. According to popular tradition, al Buseiri had an attack of paralysis which affected his arms. He composed the poem addressed to the Prophet, who appeared to him in a dream and

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placed his mantle on the poet's afflicted limbs. When al Buseiri awoke, his arms were completely healed.

The Qasida Burdah [sometimes also referred to as *Burdah al Madih* (The Praised Mantle)] has extensively been commented upon in Arabic, and also translated into all major languages. Kâtip Çelebi⁴, in particular, refers to the fact that it has been translated several times into Turkish. Over the centuries, mevlids and other compositions in praise of the Holy Prophet have continued to be produced in languages as diverse as Turkish, Urdu and Malay, and have become established as a separate *genre* in the religious literature and languages of the ummah.⁵

Among many Mevlid texts written in Turkish, the *Vesiletün Necat* [The Means of Deliverance] or, more commonly, the *Mevlid* by Süleyman Çelebi⁶ is, in Turkey, considered the foremost Islamic Nativity Poem. It has retained its religious appeal and popularity in Turkey for over six hundred years, and has claim to be considered as the very best devotional work in Turkish literature.

The author of the Mevlid, Süleyman Çelebi, was born into an aristocratic family in the then Ottoman capital of Bursa. His exact date of birth is not known; however, it is conjectured that he was born around 1350 A.D., and received an excellent education in the capital city. The Mevlid is the sole known or surviving work of Süleyman Çelebi; in one of its verses he gives the date of its completion as the year 812 Hijri which is equivalent to 1409 A.D. Süleyman Çelebi was appointed the Imam of the famous Ulu Cami [Grand Mosque], built on the orders of the Sultan Bayezid I, after the consecration of the mosque in 1400 A.D. Süleyman Çelebi died in Bursa and his tomb is in the Çekirge area of Bursa. His tombstone gives the date of his death as 1421 A.D.⁷

Süleyman Çelebi's Mevlid has been translated into a dozen languages over the years, from English and German to Albanian and Swahili. Although the basic mevlid text is by Çelebi, there have been dozens of variations of the mevlid in both length and content over the centuries. There are numerous scholarly studies of the mevlid, for which reference may be made not only to the text of Ateş, but also to the later publications of Timurtaş⁸ and Pekolçay⁹. Timurtaş has compiled both the historical and the newer, abridged texts, and his book is one of the publications of the

Turkish Ministry of Education. To these may be added the limited verse collection that forms part of the mevlid as recited in Turkish mosques on feast days. Records of such recitation are now available in the form of videotapes or compact discs.

2. TRANSLATIONS OF THE MEVLID INTO ENGLISH

The condensed or abridged portion of the Mevlid, often chanted at meetings and religious gatherings, has been translated by Elias John Wilkinson Gibb¹⁰ to match the original, which is generally in the form of rhyming couplets, a poetical form borrowed by Çelebi from Persian literary tradition. Gibb calls the Mevlid the Nativity Hymn or the Prophet's Birth Song.¹¹ Gibb's description of the Mevlid and his accompanying translations apparently form the first English rendering of part of Süleyman Çelebi's Mevlid. Gibb refers to the popularity and inimitable eloquence of the Mevlid, with its 'unapproachable simplicity'.

In an introductory essay to the sixth and final volume of Gibb's work on Ottoman poetry, Halil Halid¹² refers to an occasion [in the concluding years of the 19th century] when Gibb, having translated several verses of the Mevlid and never having been outside Western Europe in his life, expressed a wish to hear how the Mevlid was actually recited, whereupon Halil Halid one day took the Imam of the Ottoman Embassy in London to Gibb's study. After a stirringly impressive recitation of part of the Mevlid by the Imam, writes Halid, the traditional offerings of sweets and sherbet were replaced by a formal English afternoon tea.

A competent translation of the 263 couplets found in one mevlid text was made by F. Lyman MacCallum¹³ and published in 1943 under the title of *The Mevlidi Sherif*¹⁴. MacCallum also gives useful incidental data relating to mevlid recital in Turkey over the centuries and to the life of Süleyman Çelebi.

In her book, which has the subtitle 'The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety', Schimmel has also given extensive information about mevlid ceremonies in the Islamic world and has translated a few dozen couplets of Celebi's Mevlid. Tapper¹⁵ has also treated the frequent mevlid gatherings by women in Turkey from a sociological viewpoint. For an account of the Turkish traditions related to mevlid recitation, reference may be made to Çağatay¹⁶.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE PRESENT VERSION

The function of the present article is to provide a simple readable rendering into English of the 732 couplets¹⁷ of the complete 'original and classical' Mevlid text as given in the version by Timurtaş. For elucidation of meaning, the annotated texts by Aymutlu¹⁸ and Vassaf¹⁹ have been consulted in addition to those of Ateş, Timurtaş and Pekolcay. Much ancillary information on the mevlid and its author, textual variations, imitations, etc., may be found in the above-cited sources. Thus, Pekolcay has included a total of 768 couplets in her texts by including some couplets found in 11 different manuscripts.

3.1 COMPONENTS OF SÜLEYMAN ÇELEBİ'S MEVLİD

In common with the sub-category of versified panegyrics which deal with the Holy Prophet's birth at somewhat greater length than with other aspects of his life, Süleyman Çelebi's Mevlid is divided into the following sections and sub-sections:

- An Invocation in Arabic and a Supplication
- An request for prayer by the poet and an apology for the book
- A statement on the reason for the Creation of the World
- On the creation of Adam and the transportation of Muhammad's light over the generations
- An explanation of the signs preceding the Prophet's birth
- Observations at the time of the birth of the Prophet
- In praise of Allah's Apostle
- The miracles of Allah's Apostle
- The Night-Journey of the Prophet
- The migration to Medina of the Prophet
- Some attributes of the Prophet
- On the passing away of the Prophet
- On the illness of the Prophet
- A statement on the death of Allah's Apostle
- Conclusion of the Book

The Mevlid also contains a few additional poetic components that have information supplementary to the main narration, and carry the title *Fasl* in the original text. *Fasl* may be rendered as Chapter or Section or Canto; in the present translation, the title Section has been used. The general plan of the Mevlid outlined above differs in minor fashion from text to text.

Between certain parts of the poem, interspersed exhortatory lines like epigraphs, sometimes representing sayings of the Prophet, are also to be found, and these are rendered in italics in the translation.

3.2 TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT OF SÜLEYMAN ÇELEBİ'S MEVLİD

The translation of the text below includes all headings or subheadings whether in Turkish or, as in some cases, in Arabic. In particular, frequent reference is made in the text of the Mevlid to the *Asma' ul husna*, i.e. the 99 Names or Attributes of Allah. In order to ensure consistency in the translation, a list of the 99 attributes, with a simple one word English rendering for each attribute when possible, has been prepared and is given in Appendix 1.

This translation of the complete text of the Mevlid is primarily intended to provide a complement to the translations of Gibb and MacCallum which deal with relatively smaller parts of the full text. To provide an introduction to these translations, the versions given by Gibb, MacCallum and the present author for the first 6 couplets of the Mevlid are given in Appendix 2.

Here it also needs to be pointed out that Süleyman Çelebi's Mevlid is a devotional poem *par excellence* and, as such, for purposes of emphasis or colourful representation, Çelebi employs images, conceits, quotations and metaphors that may not always be in strict accordance or in total consonance with serious and scholarly Islamic theology. Analysts of the Mevlid point out that not all the *hadith* [sayings of the Prophet] utilized by Süleyman Çelebi are among the *sahih* [fully authenticated] prophetic utterances.

4. THE TEXT [IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION] OF THE MEVLİD

4.1 INVOCATION [in Arabic; given below in translation]

This is the Mevlid Book of the Prophet (Peace be upon Him)

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
Praise be to Allah, who made Muhammad the cause of all Creation, the noblest among all men, the dearest among all who have been born, highest

among Prophets because of his power of intercession and having been awarded the pool of *Kawthar*,²⁰ who to exalt him and to rub the nose of jealous Satan in the dirt has placed Muhammad's name side by side with His own.²¹ Loved, desired and lauded in Allah's presence is Muhammad. The angels of the Lord are his helpers, assistants and soldiers. The trees, the earth and the rocks have spoken to him. Those who love him shall be loved and accepted both in the world and the hereafter; those who are his enemies shall be driven from Allah's gates and repulsed. Praise be to Allah who has enabled us to become the community of Muhammad, who fulfilled all his commitments.

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the One, without partner, the Incomparable, Whose Nature is sanctified and exempt from all extensions and restrictions of Time. He is the One, Allah, desired, worshipped and turned to by all. He is the Great, the Forgiver, All-loving to His servants.

I bear witness that Muhammad, with his excellent character and generosity, the Intercessor whose intercession on the promised Last Day will be accepted by all, is Allah's servant, messenger, beloved and friend. May Allah grant prayers and peace to him and, till the day of gathering when eternal ranks are granted, to the happiest of the happy – his family and companions.

SUPPLICATION

1 First of all, let us make mention of Allah's name -
Which his slaves in starting any work should proclaim;

The name of Allah, who first of all remembers -
To him, all work easy, Allah himself renders;

If the name of Allah does each action precede -
Then productive it will be, and always succeed;

Said the Prophet [on whom be peace]: All work that is started without taking the name of Allah will not reach a satisfactory conclusion.

With every breath of yours, do Allah's name repeat-
With Allah's name will become every work complete;

5 If from the tongue with love 'Allah', just once, is said,
Like leaves in autumn falling, will all sins be shed;

Who so repeats the Pure Name will purity gain,
Who repeats 'Allah' will all his desires attain;

So, with love, come, let us the name of 'Allah' cry,
With inner pain and flowing tears let us all sigh!

Maybe that King will send His blessings in showers,
That Bountiful and Merciful, Kind Lord of ours;

Omniscient, All-Knowing; of Sins, Repealer;
The Maker, The Relenting; of Faults, Concealer;

10 Eternal, Judge, Recorder; of thanks, Receiver;
Granter of favours, Rich; of Light, the Releaser;

True of word, Magnificent, of Majestic State,
Sustainer, Eternal, whose Glory remains great;

Supreme, Dominant, Changeless, Great beyond compare,
The Author, the Builder, the Giver, the Aware;

The Good, Evolver, the Righteous, the Creator,
The Distresser, Giver, the Invigilator;

Endless, Forgiving, Judge, the Truth, the Sapient,
The Carer, All Present, the Desired, the Clement;

15 Faithful, Granter of favours, Helper, One implored,
The Sovereign, Generous; Sultan and Overlord;

Collector, Compeller, Beginner, Restorer,
Caretaker, Bestower, Provider, Governor;

The Guide, Faultless, Beneficent, Merciful One,
Withholder, Giver; Almighty, Second to none;

The Abaser, Raiser, Mighty, of Beauty pure,
The Closer, Expander, Ruler and Guarantor;

The First, the Last, Most Exalted, the All-Knowing,
Manifest, Hidden, the Firm and Everlasting;

20 The One, Discerning, the Loving, the Pardoner,
The Ruler, Glorious, the Friend and Responder;

Creator, Provider, Shaper, Worthy of Praise,
Comprehender, the Proof, Guide, Witness of our Days;

Exalter, Life-giver, Slayer and Scatterer,
Fate-giver, Sufficer, Overseer and Helper;

The Honourer, Destroyer and Compassionate,
The Just, the Maintainer and the Considerate;

He is Allah, the Everliving, Sacred One,
The Deathless Master, for whom slumber there is none;

25 He is One, the great Sovereign always at his peak,
Without compare, with no equal, also Unique;

He is One, on His Unity there is no doubt,
But on this subject many speak wrongly about;

Being to Nothingness, Naught to Life, He changes;
Whatever happens in the World, He arranges;

When the Universe was not there, He was present,
From the first, he was Forceful and Self-existent;

He was, though of men and angels there was no sign,
Nor were heaven and earth, moon, sun and the skies nine,²²

30 With His Art He brought them all into existence,
And they confirmed His Unity with reverence;

That Mighty Lord, using His power limitless,
Made His Creation the true proof for His Oneness;

In short, fret not, the guiding words are said and done;
He is One; and apart from Him, God there is none!
Till Doomsday to this discourse, if your ears you lend,
Many Doomsdays may well pass but this will not end;

If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;²³

4.2 A REQUEST FOR PRAYER BY THE POET AND AN APOLOGY FOR THE BOOK

35 So, valued listeners, commence we our speech thus,
To ensure a bequest is left to you by us;

I say that all who, by that legacy abide,
Their souls will find it smelling just like musk inside;

May Almighty Allah bless anyone out there,
Who remembers me and then offers a prayer;

Whoever wishes such a prayer to recite,
May grant a *Fatiha*²⁴ to this slave of poor plight;

On him may Allah bestow many favours great,
Who will the rewards of the *Fatiha* donate;

40 May that man leave this world with faith intact and whole,
Who due to this book makes a prayer for my soul;

Furthermore, to whomsoever this book does reach,
Should not reproach us for all its faults, we beseech!

Let the reader forgive its shortcomings with grace,
And to relate to no one its faults, in any case;

Like its poet, this work too, suffers from defects,
Not a couplet is present, but some flaw affects;

If they wish to search for expression imperfect,
No instance will be found that is without defect;

45 Though what is lacking is discerned by the perfect,
But one who is perfect may well its faults neglect;

Persons whose own works contain shortcomings and doubt,
Are those who the defects of all others seek out;
Someone who, away from all faults and defects, stays
At defects of others he bothers not to gaze;

Please be kind, and the book's faults under covers place,
This is the duty of a possessor of grace;

Thus have I openly my shortcomings confessed,
May my readers be clement, is what I request;

50 Where, in the text, confusion exists, or mistake,
Persons of learning may please their improvements make;

If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

4.3 A STATEMENT FOR THE REASON OF THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

First we mentioned Him, who is first of all to stay,
To something earlier no brain has found a way;

The First of all firsts, without any doubt is He;
The Last of all lasts, and the Eternal is He;

Pure above representation, He is the Truth,
Absolute Lord of the world is He, in good sooth;

55 Though richer than all of these things He does remain,
For Him there is no little or much, loss or gain;

From nothing He created all things at their best,
And in them has rendered His power manifest;

Were this world not present, then nothing would He lose,
With its presence, to Him, no benefit accrues;

Once 'Be !' said He, and the world into being came,
If He said 'Be not !' it would end even in name;

Whatever exists in the earth and in the sky,
All came into place because His commands apply;

60 All creation is totally at His command,
All movements stem from Him, even in specks of sand;

All that exists, evident or hidden within,
Whether ground and sky, heaven and earth, man and jinn;²⁵

All these came into being when he gave a sign,
Were they no more, naught would He lose, that Lord Divine!

Were they not present, still He Himself would exist,
To whatever He said: 'Be !' at once would subsist!

What, in creating all, is His purpose and gain,
Listen with passion and the objective attain;

**A STATEMENT ON THE CREATION OF THE SOUL OF
MUHAMMAD**

Peace be upon him !

65 Now that you know the Pre-eminence of the Lord,
Listen carefully to the statement I record;

What was the very first creation of the Lord,
First rank in creation to what did He accord?

Who became the starting point for all creation?
The Lord saves who listens with love and elation;

The soul of Mustafa²⁶ was the first He designed,
This soul was loved by the Omnipotent and Kind;

*The Prophet - prayers and peace be upon him - said: My soul is the first
thing created by Allah the Exalted.*

For many thousands of years He nurtured this soul,
Understand these words, and fall into wonder whole!

70 To Him, Mustafa became a cherished creature,
To cure suffering became Mustafa's feature;

Whatever type of happiness exists, by far,
Good nature and attractive habits as there are;

To him the Lord gave, in a state of perfection,
Qualities, better than others in collection;

Had Muhammad not been created at all, why,
In that case there would then have been no earth or sky!

With him came to be all, hidden or apparent,
In the heavens and earth, ground and sky, inherent;

75 Listen, O Friend ! For had Muhammad not been born,
There would have been no month or day, no night or morn!

Had Muhammad's entry to this world not been planned,
The Prophethood crown would not have reached Adam's hand;

And because the Prophet made his intercession,
The Lord granted Adam pardon²⁷ without question;

Due to him did Noah founder not, but touch earth,
Thus his miracles appeared even before birth;

Without having died, did Jesus to Heaven rise,
To join the ummah of the Prophet in the skies;

80 And furthermore the staff Moses held in his hand,
In his honour became a serpent to command;

As Abraham was to become his ancestor,
A garden²⁸ replaced fire, thanks to the Creator!

All Prophets through kindness and the sake of his name,
Got intercession as they his forbears became;

They appealed to the Lord for sake of unity,
That they should all join Muhammad's community;

So that their power and respect should find increase,
Also, their nearness to the Lord would not decrease;

85 Therefore know all of you, that to the world, in sum,
Another like Mustafa came not, nor will come!

Said Allah the Exalted: Of all those born is Mustafa the most beautiful

Sultan is he, doubtless, of Prophets great and small,
Like a soul within the soul he is for them all;

Though they themselves are also Messengers no less,
But Ahmed²⁹ is both elevated and faultless;

For he is best suited to this great position,
Those who realize this not are short of vision;

Because of him, all the world reached prosperity,
The world, due to him, was steeped in Divine Mercy;

90 This creation happened for him in any case,
Moon, stars, earth, sky, Heaven and Hell all took their place;

*Said Allah the Exalted and Auspicious: Had you not been, I would not have made the skies*³⁰

Abraham reached the Lord through Muhammad's succour,
Muhammad filled the world with glory and splendour;

With him light all over the world propagated,
For him was Heaven with *houris*³¹ populated;

He received the Qur'an that good from bad divides,
For him was sent Gabriel³² who all Prophets guides;

With him the true path did all humanity find,
Whether saint or prophet or any other kind;

95 Without him no one the correct direction found,
The path of the Almighty for which they were bound;

Whoso reached him also attained to God on high,
Witnessed the true Divine proximity thereby;

He it is who the purpose is of every thing,
A guide for the world and, of all messengers, king!

Thus is Muhammad the cause of what surrounds you,
Strive hard to seek his approval for yourself too;

Follow his path; join his community therefore,
So that the Lord's mercy may be for you in store;

100 But he who joined not this community in truth,
Could not approach the mercy of the Lord, in sooth;

You must hold fast and fulfil what he demanded,
For as food for the soul is what he commanded;

Till Doomsday to this discourse, if your ears you lend,
Many Doomsdays may well pass but this will not end;

If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

**A STATEMENT ON THE CREATION OF ADAM [Peace be upon
Him] AND THE TRANSFER OF THE LIGHT OF MUHAMMAD
[Peace be upon Him]
OVER THE GENERATIONS**

It was the Lord Almighty's own wish and His aim,
His Kingliness to the Universe to proclaim;

105 The Lord God was like a secret treasure concealed,
It was His wish for that treasure to be revealed;

*Said Allah the Exalted and Auspicious: I was a secret treasure, I wished to
be revealed, and therefore produced all Creation*

His secret treasure revealed He to one and all,
Created countless species at his beck and call;

To this visible world came Mustafa in sight,
And then with him the world woke up to true delight;

Thus what Muhammad represents now you have seen,
And before he came to this world where he had been;

Though he was the Last Prophet, which is truly said,
But of all, in significance, he was ahead!

110 In Prophethood he, all rank and precedence, wins,
Therefore, in a sense, everything with him begins;

This world and creation exist with all their laws,
They came into existence, and he is the cause;

O you of pure faith, therefore your ears to me lend,
And let me tell you everything from start to end!

Let us proclaim how then was born that noble son,
Noble as well as gracious and elegant one;

A complete account of the truth therefore expound,
So that the path back to Adam is clearly found;

115 Hence you will learn when you arrive at Ahmed's name,
The list of his parents and ancestors of fame;

And how his light over generations was sent,
By whom it was transferred and just how it then went;

Thus will you learn the truth of the propitious birth,
And know about the Prophet's ancestors of worth;

Open therefore your inner ear to this discourse,
So that I may my words with pleasantness endorse;

SECTION

When the Lord God brought about Adam's creation,
For this world, Adam served as a decoration;

120 The angels honoured Adam, and bowed down to him,
And the Lord Himself was most generous to him;

The Lord stamped Mustafa's light on Adam's forehead,
And said: Know, this light is from my well-beloved;

On Adam's forehead that light found itself a base,
And for a long period remained that light in place;

The light was then transferred to the forehead of Eve,
The light stayed with her and for years it did not leave;

Then was born Seth³³ and so the light on him rested,
On his forehead the bright light was manifested;

125 When Enos in his mother's womb heavily weighed,
The same light passed to him and there with him it stayed;

Cainan, the son of Enos, was born next in line,
On his brow the light of Ahmed did brightly shine;

Mahalaleel the light of the Prophet received,
On the forehead of Jared it was next perceived;

This procession of the light next to Enoch led,
And then it shifted to Methuselah's forehead;

To Lamech and Noah, Shem and Arphax had went,
This light which was then to Eber and Peleg sent;

130 To Rea and Serug and Nahor it came as well,
And the day Terah was born the light on him fell;

Abraham and Ishmael in turn got the light,
And it would take me too long all others to cite;

My background statement to this length I did expand,
To help you observe and at once to understand;

Whosoever is wise, will my meaning surmise,
Who understands my speech will himself become wise;

Speech becomes long; then let me just the purpose state,
That clear to you may become the meanings innate;

135 Over male and female generations that light,
Crossed directly with its own splendour and its might;

It progressed in this manner and no break occurred,
Till finally the light to Mustafa transferred;

After many years that light returned to its patch,
When on Muhammad's brow it did itself attach;

When that 'Mercy for the peoples'³⁴ arrived, with grace,
At once the light settled into its final place;

After coming to the Prophet, the light stayed still,
At its destination, its mission to fulfil;

140 Till Doomsday to this discourse, if your ears you lend,
Many Doomsdays may well pass but this will not end;

If from Hell-fire you wish to fly away with wings,
On the 'Garden of Purity'³⁵ invoke blessings!

4.4. THE BIRTH OF THE PROPHET

Muhammad's mother Amina, lady of worth,
That 'mother of pearl' to her unique 'pearl' gave birth;

Because, from Abdullah, heavy with child was she,
And the time of birth guessed in weeks and days could be;

As the time for Muhammad's birth closer became,
Many signs foretelling this did themselves proclaim;

145 The portents that within old books in secret lay,
Were observed to be fulfilled in the light of day;

These events were observed by people all around,
And passed on by them to others who might be found;

What lady Amina with her own eyes perceived,
And, during that special night, the grace she received,

These glad tidings, passed down by narrators of old,
We wrote them down, and now these to you shall be told;

Listen then, so we may a thousandth part convey,
And, like parrots, consume the sweets that come our way;

150 Let us work to rebuild our religion's domain,
Let the souls of our listeners all joy regain;

If he who is listening, with love should take part,
A rose garden of mercy will bloom in his heart;

Within him the nightingale of guidance will sing,
And the cypress tree of joy to his soul will cling;

From the direction of Mustafa, without doubt,
The scent of intercession will always flow out;

Whoever listens to these words of mine with love,
The Lord will shower him with mercy from above;

155 This work is then the account of Mustafa's birth,
Treat it not as commonplace talk but give it worth;

Preserve the sanctity of this work with great care,
For this will become the source of your success rare;

Whoever gives honour to the account here told,
Mustafa will doubtless honour him multifold;

And Mustafa will his intercessor remain,
This intercession will be like a cure for pain;

If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

PRAISE TO THE PROPHET [Peace be upon Him]

160 To the heart's domain a journey I effected,
Many sacks of sugar from there I collected;

Let us open one sugar bundle at leisure,
Well before you taste it, your soul may find pleasure;

So pleasant in taste is this sugar on its own,
That when compared to it, sugar is like a stone;

When of this spiritual sugar you partake,
You will say the world should no other sugar make;

Hence teach and help the parrot this sugar to eat,
Also make the nightingale repeat these words sweet;

165 Even if the sweetness of these words be forgot,
Let them both accept and honour these words a lot;

Let them aloud the Birth Song of Mustafa read,
In ecstasy forever let them sing indeed!

If you love the Divine, then all attention pay,
Try to understand the meaning of what I say;

For our religion, a supporting column is
This Birth Song of Muhammad – so forget not this!

Shame it would be if to it one kept one's ears sealed,
Nor tried to understand its deep meaning concealed;

170 Listen therefore to how that Messenger was born,
The noble one who did nobility adorn;

The one whose speech was sweet and whose body was pure,
Of prophets and holy men, the leader for sure;

Carrier of good news, the warner, beacon of light,
That leader, luminous one and worker upright;

Merciful, conversor with Allah, most gentle,
Intercessor, faultless, of faith fundamental;

The one fair of face and purest of heart by far,
Is Murtaza³⁶ and Mujtaba³⁷ and Mustafa;

175 The commander, forbidded, kinsman, acceptor,
The guardian, the mentor, thanksgiver, protector;

He is the guide, the guided, the chosen, the friend,
The one, the Glorious did create and commend;

That beloved, valued one, of worthy descent,
Renouncer of sin, healer, preacher eloquent;

Taha, Yasin³⁸ and Amin³⁹ he is all, indeed,
'Mercy for the peoples'⁴⁰ he was also decreed;

Muhammad is he, and also Mahmud⁴¹ is he,
He was born the object of Creation to be

180 Loved by the Almighty, of all people is he
Always mentioned and praised in the Qur'an is he

In his honour, how much can poor Süleyman⁴² sing
Who is praised by the Possessor of everything

When the Lord Almighty to him does offer praise
His high and kingly status you cannot appraise!

Till Doomsday to this discourse, if your ears you lend,
Many Doomsdays may well pass but this will not end;

If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

**A STATEMENT ON THE MANIFESTATIONS OCCURRING AT
THE BIRTH OF MUHAMMAD [Peace be upon Him]**

185 The night when took place the birth of the best of men,
To many strange sights his mother was witness then;

Whatever appeared at the time before her eyes,
And what happened, she narrated in its true guise;

It was the month of Rabi al Awwal⁴³, all write,
The date was the twelfth of the month, a Monday night;

And his birth was announced to the population,
Listen to what she said, O you of high station!

That beloved mother said: 'At the beginning,
Saw I a strange light as if the sun was spinning;

190 Lightning flashed suddenly from my house on that night,
It reached the skies and with it the world became bright;

From the heavens descended angels row on row,
Like the Ka`ba, round and round my house they did go;

In the air, suspended, a mattress was then laid,
Spread by an angel, its cloth was of gold brocade;

Attached it was then from three posts fixed separate,
Spaced away from each other as I shall narrate;

Two of these posts were fixed in the east and the west,
And the third on the roof of the Ka `ba⁴⁴ did rest;

195 I understood that for the best of men, in sum,
The time of arrival into the world had come;

When to me this impending birth thus became known,
And while I was sitting in my own home alone,

Suddenly the front wall parted, and from the rear,
Three *houris* emerged and before me did appear;

They approached me with joy and next to me they stayed,
News of Mustafa's birth to each other conveyed;

Then companies of *houris* appeared in my sight,
The radiance of their faces filled my house with light;

200 They said that since the world was created no one,
At all has arrived here who could be like your son;

A beautiful treasure like your son, o mother,
Has not been granted by the Lord to another!

Great lady, a mighty treasure you have attained,
You will give birth to one with good nature ingrained;

He shall be a master of mysteries divine,
Of knowledge of God's Oneness he shall be a mine;

For his love the firmament revolves in its place,
And all men and angels desire to see his face;

205 This night is the very one which that lord of right,
Renders gracious with all his spiritual light;

He changes the world into heaven on this night,
And Allah rains mercy on all things with His might;

A BEAUTIFUL POEM OF VENERATION

To this astonishing power let your ears turn,
And a lesson from Allah's power you may learn;

The Almighty put His creation to the test,
And ordered all, that night, to look their very best;

Orders passed to Ridwan⁴⁵, Keeper of Heaven's gate,
Let all mansions and people start to decorate;

210 Because the Prophet's birth on that one night would fall,
The mercy of the Lord would be on people all;

Residents of Heaven, female and male, to go
And shower gifts, their welcome in order to show;

The Lord commanded Angel Gabriel that night
To ensure the massive gates of Hell were shut tight;

All the beasts and birds that night were informed again
To keep their eyes wide open and alert remain;

Said the Lady Amina: As the time came near,
To bring to the world the Lord's gift that was so dear,

215 I asked for water to drink as I felt thirsty,
Full of sherbet a goblet was handed to me;

The liquid juice was colder and whiter than snow,
And compared to sugar it had sweetness much more;

Then bathed in bright light was my whole body, I found,
And the purity of that light did me surround;

Suddenly from behind a large white bird did spring,
And actively stroked my back with its outspread wing,

Then in this manner was the King of Prophets born,
He who did the world with so much honour adorn;

220 His mother saw no water nor blood, felt no pain,
Of not a bit of discomfort did she complain;

All filled with sounds of joy were the earth and the sky,
Darkness went, and light did the whole world beautify;

The beasts and birds and trees and stones were moved to speech,
Exalting Muhammad they uttered something each;

To each other they proclaimed that he is the one
Of fortunate arrival, with face like the sun;

He is the king whose name masses of people great,
Dutifully five times each day⁴⁶ will all await;

225 He is the unique one whom the Lord will commend,
To him a crown of honour and a robe will send;

He is the one – if close to him you find a place,
Doubtless from the Almighty you would receive grace;

The one whose soul was the Messenger of the Lord,
Before the creation of Adam had occurred;

All the other Prophets – as a delegation –
Asked the Lord if they could join his congregation;

He is the special pearl, to calculate whose price,
In this world is impossible and imprecise;

230 Whoever loves him, from the Almighty will find,
Mercy and high position and blessings combined!

SECTION

As the Harbinger of Good News to this world came,
The rejoicing of the world turned into acclaim;

The city of Mecca was all submerged in light,
Its brilliance on each man and woman did alight;

When the Lady Amina saw all these sights, well,
She lost her strength and had a little fainting spell;

After a time when she her consciousness regained,
She observed that none of the *houris* had remained;

235 Also she did not find Mustafa in the room,
Her feelings were upset and resulted in gloom;

The *houris* might have carried the baby away
She thought, and then to perplexity fell a prey;

But in a corner of the room when she glanced round,
Her gentle little baby she suddenly found!

Directly towards the Ka'ba her infant faced,
Bent in the position of prayer he was placed;

His head was bowed, but his raised finger was a sign,
Sounds came from his lips – praising the presence Divine!

240 Cut was his navel cord; his eyes with kohl were lined,
Fully circumcised was he, also they did find;

On his body some sprinkling of salt⁴⁷ could be seen,
Found wrapped in a soft white woollen cloth it had been;

Lady Amina wished her own baby to hold,
In her hands this special infant son to behold;

From above came a call to her to stop and wait;
An imposing command that shook both wall and gate!

All the gifts of all the Prophets were then instilled,
Into the infant as the Lord ordered and willed;

245 And the voice ordered that for three full days and nights,
The infant be kept away from all peoples' sights;

A group of people came into the room, and they
Probably wished to take the moon-faced boy away;

Lifting him, to go out of the room they started,
But, full of respect, brought him back and departed;

Think not this just an instance of respect retold,
History shows he got respect a thousand-fold;

Till Doomsday to this discourse, if your ears you lend,
Many Doomsdays may well pass but this will not end;

250 If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

SECTION

All the denizens of the Seven Heavens came,
To visit Ahmed and his presence to acclaim;

No angels remained either on earth or in space,
Who did not visit to look at Muhammad's face;

And all the *houris* who in the Eighth Heaven⁴⁸ stay,
To see the splendour of this new king made their way;

Each *houris* held a plate, made of light, in her hand,
That had been fashioned at the Almighty's command;

255 Loaded with the most priceless jewels was each plate,
For sprinkling on the Prophet's head to celebrate;

They came and sprinkled jewels on his head all round,
They observed his moonlike face and remained spellbound;

Ending their visit, the *houris* and Ridwan too,
And all the angels to their positions withdrew;

Many others were fortunate enough to call,
To visit this infant so beloved of all;

They were able to recognize with full accord,
That he was to be a Messenger of the Lord!

SECTION

260 When into the world the kingly infant entered,
Many signs relating to this event occurred;

All idols were suspended upside down that night,
Even Satan himself was locked and bound up tight;

All the unbelievers succumbed to groans and moans,
In despair they banged their heads against rocks and stones;

Furthermore, many churches collapsed to the ground,
Trapping the priests who within them were to be found;

The main arch of the palace of the Persian king,
Collapsed and left all helpless courtiers wondering;

265 In Iran the Saveh⁴⁹ Lake dried at a fast rate,
All the water it contained did evaporate;

The Zoroastrians' fire which had remained ablaze,
Over many centuries and all nights and days;

Those unfavoured people used to worship the fire,
All at once, like a candle snuffed, it did expire;

And the night did so many other signs attend,
To talk of which would this narration much extend;

Of the birth of Mustafa, the world came to know,
With light and happiness was the whole world aglow;

270 That lord of perfection, with time, began to grow,
Their beauty from him did the sun and moon borrow;

When that prince of men the age of fourteen attained,
All, the habit of swearing by his head, maintained;

The surrounding Arabs, young and old, great and small,
Knowledge and decency gained from him one and all;

They saw no person similar to him at all,
And his gentle conduct did everyone enthrall;

His miraculous acts impressed the old and young,
His name and his fame were repeated on each tongue;

275 To the Prophet's birth we have drawn your attention,
For your ears, now his miracles let us mention!

Till Doomsday to this discourse, if your ears you lend,
Many Doomsdays may well pass but this will not end;

If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

IN PRAISE OF THE PROPHET⁵⁰

All heard the deeds and performance of Mustafa,
And all was bright with the radiance of Mustafa;

Muhammad's good teachings found a place in the soul,
In peoples' hearts bloomed the flowers of Mustafa;

280 Rooted in Faith's garden was the Unity⁵¹ tree,
Watered by the hidden wisdom of Mustafa;

Inspiration's nightingale in Truth's garden sang,
Blessings submerged the rose garden of Mustafa;

Fragrant became the minds, hearts and souls of all, when
To them spread the musk of the words of Mustafa;

Jewels of daily use lost their place and value,
As pearls emerged from the wise lips of Mustafa;

Collapsed the market place of unbelief and pride,
When on the scene came the new wares of Mustafa;

285 Brightly burned the lamp of faith, whose flames then destroyed
All Infidels and enemies of Mustafa

Süleyman has no good deeds to show for himself,
He places all his hopes in help from Mustafa;

Repeat with devotion the name of Mustafa,
Your soul will light up with the name of Mustafa;

**4.5. AN ACCOUNT OF THE MIRACLES OF THE PROPHET
[May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon Him]**

Once again has overflowed the sea of my heart,
Its treasures to go elsewhere have now to depart;

The breeze of divine love has caused the waves to surge,
Pearls of wisdom in droves have been made to emerge;

290 With your heart's eyes if you can see these pearls all whole,
No doubt you will pin them to the ears of your soul;

These pearls, the miracles of Mustafa comprise,
To health and joy in heart and soul they will give rise;

Let me say that if you listen with devotion,
If you are a good man, listen with emotion;

With joy the story of these miracles capture,
Till your mind and soul can reach a state of rapture;

Though that pure prophet was only of light composed,
In all his limbs a trove of miracles reposed;

295 Allah granted special miracles to his care,
Which all other prophets did not possess or share;

The auspicious body of this prophet was found,
Unlike others to cast no shadow on the ground;

As his body from head to foot of light was made,
Clear it is that light cannot co-exist with shade;

Darkness causes the shadow to fall to the ground,
What shade could come from one who did with light abound?

He himself was all light embodied, without doubt,
And only those who were blind did not find this out;

300 During daytime, above his fortunate head, stayed
A small patch of cloud that provided him with shade;

That cloud followed the Prophet wherever he led,
To protect him from the hot sun above his head;

Allah assigned the cloud to be a bodyguard,
And thus did the Lord show for Ahmed his regard;

What hopeful miracles were present in his eyes
Let me describe them so as to help you surmise

Gifted he was that he could at the same time find,
What was in front of him, also what lay behind;

305 Listen to the powers of his auspicious nose,
Appreciate the miracles that I disclose;

When Gabriel, carrying a revelation,
To come to the world left his celestial station;

Gabriel's fragrance the Prophet would feel and know,
And readiness for the revelation would show;

And his ears also their own miracles possessed,
So appreciate the gifts with which he was blessed;

From a distance all sounds would be caught by his ear,
As clearly as if to him they were very near;

310 When fast asleep, he retained his hearing powers,
Just as sharply as during his waking hours;

And when he moved his lips, this prophet bright as noon,
In their orbits shifted then the sun and the moon;

O friend! If a needle fell and got lost at night,
It would be found because his teeth gave off such light!

Sweet of speech, if he asked a lizard 'Who am I?'
The response would be: 'God's own Prophet are you, why?'

To walk on dark nights both the young and old would start,
Their way lit by illumination from his heart;

315 He had the birthmark of Prophethood on his back,
And with it summoned all to change to the Lord's track;

And when at times a gentle breeze played with his hair,
The sweet smell of ambergris and musk filled the air;

Against the pagans he threw some dust in a fight,
In consequence of which all of them lost their sight;

Twelve thousand unbelievers fled in disarray,
They either went stone-blind or just wasted away;⁵²

320 When Allah's chosen prophet his finger pointed,
The moon in the sky into two parts disjointed;

His finger nails did the look of white pearls convey,
The ladies of the house never threw them away;

Into the cave of Hira⁵³ a step he did take,
And the very mountain with his entry did shake;

'O mountain, stay calm!' – thus to the mountain spoke he,
The mountain stopped shaking and settled quietly;

To rock his cradle the moon came down from the skies,
A sight witnessed by the rich and poor with their eyes;

325 From his finger tips he could cause water to flow,
Drunk by all those persons to whom he did bestow;

A lamb laced with poison was brought to him to eat;
Came a voice from the lamb: 'Prophet! Taste not the meat!

Poisoned am I – poison was added to my meat,
Those men wished you ill – to deceive you and to cheat!'

That mighty Lord planted a date palm in the ground,
In an hour the sapling loaded with fruit was found;

Said one pebble in his palm to another one,
'Were you not stone, you would quiver with emotion!'

330 Trees did bow down to him out of respectfulness,
His righteous message thus to confirm and witness;

When the camel blamed his owner for his own plight,
Mustafa helped the camel and set matters right;

Many blind persons their sight through his help did reach,
To many dumb persons gave he the gift of speech;

The wolves and birds and stones and trees gave him full praise,
Allah's Messenger, Prophet, they called him always;

Many miracles were from him to emanate,
None would be able their number to calculate;

335 We have said a few words about his miracles,
Zealous one! Now hear his Night Journey chronicles!

For the sake of Muhammad's miracles, bestow
Blessings, O Allah, on all of us Tomorrow⁵⁴ !

Till Doomsday to this discourse, if your ears you lend,
Many Doomsdays may well pass but this will not end;

If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

**4.6. ON THE NIGHT JOURNEY OF THE PROPHET
[ON WHOM BE PEACE AND BLESSINGS!]**

The peacock of the mind its lovely wings has spread,
To show its beauty when it is in flight ahead;

340 It has entered the wide plains of the realms of thought,
Beauty to the garden of the soul it has brought;

It has flapped its wings of meaning, as it has sought
To enable study of the patterns of thought;

In the ocean of the heart it has searched around,
And, within, many strings of pure pearls it has found;

To the fair of Divine Love has come this treasure,
In the hope that its takers will find much pleasure;

So let us the containers of these pearls shatter,
And jewels of the Prophet's Night Journey scatter;

345 And if you listen to me with ears all intent,
I shall tell the account of Mustafa's ascent;

Hear then of the journey, all with miracles graced,
When on Mustafa's head a crown of bliss was placed;

How he travelled all over the skies and heavens,
And found himself later in the Divine Presence;

How the kindness of Allah was to him displayed,
How the table of blessings before him was laid;

The happiness that he found there was of such worth,
That no one has ever experienced it on Earth;

350 What he saw there no other eyes had seen, for sure;
What he achieved had never been achieved before;

Dear souls! Of all that he did see and hear and state,
A portion of this to you shall we now narrate:

The Prophet himself on the night of a Monday,
Came to Ummu Hani's⁵⁵ house his respects to pay;

While Mustafa was visiting, as was his aim,
With the steed Burak⁵⁶ the Angel Gabriel came;

Said Gabriel: Come, for time is of the essence;
O Muhammad! the Lord wants you in His Presence!

355 With face bright as the moon was Mustafa indeed,
And walked towards Gabriel who stood with the steed;

He mounted the steed Gabriel steadied below,
Towards the realms of Divinity they did go;

The angel Gabriel served in front as the guide,
Enabling Mustafa to observe far and wide;

During their travel many strange sights did they share,
They flew to Jerusalem and landed with care;

The spirits of earlier prophets were gathered there,
To welcome Mustafa and their love to declare;

360 A sound reached the spirits of the Prophets of old,
To gather ranks and follow Mustafa as told;

Ahmed served as imam⁵⁷ of the Prophets benign,
Who gathered behind him for prayers in a line;

In Aqsa⁵⁸ mosque two *rekats*⁵⁹ they prayed in accord,
Such was the command of the Self-Sufficient Lord;

After his prayers the Prophet then made a turn,
And he entered the Rock⁶⁰ by means of a cavern;

They saw a staircase of light that did upward span,
And this is where their journey to Heaven began;

365 The first stage of the Sky on this flight they espied,
A door opened to let the travellers inside;

All the denizens there turned out with emotion,
And welcomed Mustafa showing much devotion;

‘O Prophet Muhammad! Most welcome are you here!
O Lord of Intercession!⁶¹ To us you are dear!’

In all planes of Heaven Mustafa went to see,
Those who called them home welcomed him with amity;

They saluted him on the honour he had gained,
They said: ‘The crown of happiness you have attained’;

370 From all parts of Heaven angels to see him came,
‘Your journey is so propitious!’ all did proclaim;

These miracles vouchsafed to you, we can assure,
The Lord has not granted to anyone before;

All in Heaven, the Prophet saw, with emotion,
Were engaged in prayer and acts of devotion;

Some standing at prayer, others were prostrate found,
Some in ecstasy, with foreheads touching the ground;

Some their prayers later to the Prophet did send,
Morning and evening their prayers they did attend;

375 Some were exalting Allah, and taking His Name,
Others praised Him and some ‘He is One’ did proclaim;

In silent love of Allah some themselves did bear,
Lost in deep thought, of their surroundings unaware;

In this pose till Eternity would they remain,
Praying as long as they could attention maintain;

And Allah – who of supplications has no need,
Of the sum total of these devotions took heed;

The Lord, named as ‘Prayers’, these devotions complete,
And gave them for Mustafa’s ummah to repeat;

380 Whenever the believers offered these prayers,
Great merit, as for those in Heaven, would be theirs;

See how the Lord made his Prophet a receiver
Of blessings to be passed on to each believer;

At each stage of the Heavens he went to behold,
Ask for more help for your followers, he was told;

Whatever you may ask for, it will be obtained,
For in Heaven will all requests be entertained;

And to whichever plane of Heaven he did rise,
Unique and strange sights and things met the Prophet’s eyes;

385 When he saw the dome of the heavens and the Throne,
Through seventy thousand curtains he passed alone;

All that lay behind those veils he fully observed,
And clearly described it later as it deserved;

When he had all the heavenly stages explored,
Did he reach the presence of the Almighty Lord;

He had finally attained the Divine Presence,
And all that was revealed he saw with reverence;

The Almighty doubtlessly Mustafa addressed,
Without letters, words or sounds directly expressed;

390 Clear of aspect and size the Almighty he saw,
Indeed what I say here is true, without a flaw;

What he saw is beyond the reach of brain and thought,
And attempts to expound cannot but come to naught;

Having fulfilled what he set out with zeal to find,
He then returned to the world he had left behind;

And as to the fortunate status of that night,
What he had seen and heard on that auspicious flight;

He mentioned miraculous events in detail,
And told his hearers what this journey did entail;

395 When they heard all that he intended to convey,
Comfortable they felt and reassured were they;

With thanks, the Lord and, with peace, the Prophet we greet,
The account of his unique Ascent is complete;

After this summary of the Ascent, O friends,
Our attention to related events extends;

Till Doomsday to this discourse, if your ears you lend,
Many Doomsdays may well pass but this will not end;

If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

**ON THE MIGRATION OF THE PROPHET
[ON WHOM BE PEACE AND BLESSINGS!]**

400 Some time afterwards, that most auspicious of Men,
Took leave of Mecca at the Lord's command again;

From his city, Mecca, did the Prophet migrate,
Till he reached Medina where he did relocate;

There, duties as laid down by the Lord he proclaimed,
The requirements of prayer and worship he named;

The Almighty's commands to all he expounded,
The creed of Islam in perfection was founded;

Supreme he was, and in Medina he did stay,
In honour and glory, till his very last day;

405 To hear about his qualities pay attention,
That your soul, of goodness, may have comprehension;

4.7. ON SOME QUALITIES OF MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA [ON WHOM BE PEACE AND BLESSINGS!]

Once again on the steed of thought did the heart ride,
To search out all manner of meaning far and wide;

The mists that wrapped up meaning began to diverge,
Legions of soldiers within started to emerge;

With pleasure opened up the fortress of the heart
In droves, Ahmed's qualities to pour out did start;

Therefore, pay attention and you may then record,
How the Lord, great qualities to him, did award;

410 His morals were those that in the Qur'an find worth,
These had been given to him at his very birth;

This the Almighty in the Qur'an has expressed,
Saying 'Of greatness of nature you are possessed'⁶²;

With all persons, high moral character he showed,
So others also devotion on him bestowed;

He affirmed the Lord's presence and gained Divine Light,
His own person revealed the Lord's blessings and might;

A sea of wisdom and a mine of peace was he,
Happy qualities merged in him as all could see;

415 Auspicious his countenance and broad his forehead,
In beauty of person, even Joseph⁶³ he led;

Wrapped up in worship of the Lord he was always,
First among all men was he, deserving full praise;

His very dress had been, by the Lord God, ordained,
No enmity or rancour had his heart retained;

Only the Almighty his heart could penetrate,
For, his heart, the love of God did perpetuate;

Although in both Worlds⁶⁴ he was so high of station,
He made the welfare of the poor his vocation;

420 Of himself he observed: 'Poverty is my pride',
And in his inner self there was no haughty side;

Humble of heart, though in values lofty was he,
Sweet in speech, and pleasing in appearance was he;

His actions were pure, hypocrisy he hated,
And this, his station with the Lord elevated;

All desires of the self he did always dispel,
Into the sleep of the careless he never fell;

He showed no leaning towards anything unfair,
His favours and justice were limitless to share;

425 Though, by the Lord, as Prophet he was selected,
In the poorest man's cloak he walked unaffected;

Plain humility and thankfulness marked his style,
Simple food made from barley he would deem worthwhile;

When he spoke, it was soft in tone and with no haste,
Gentle he was, and ate what was before him placed;

On his tongue forever was the Almighty's name,
And thanks he expressed for whatever to him came;

In the fire of greed, he never did burn his soul,
From what the Lord made sinful, his eyes did control;

430 Withdrawing from the world was not favoured, said he;
And who loved the world much deceived himself, said he;

In all his lifetime no lie his lips ever passed,
Any falsehood on him never a shadow cast;

He did not hurt any person with word or deed,
Always, to the orders of the Lord, he paid heed;

With unique attributes he was a perfect King,
Closer to the Lord these qualities did him bring;

SECTION

O you who of the Prophet's flock to be do claim,
But waste all your time in pursuits that bring you blame;

435 Though yourself a member of the ummah you call,
Your actions seem to contradict this one and all;

The ummah is such that if one joins its pathway,
For the Lord, must be prepared, to give and obey;

Now therefore let us all reasonable become,
And decide what the ummah needs from us, in sum;

If you are of the ummah, its morals imbibe,
Prove you are a member, to its values subscribe;

Do not what Mustafa did never touch or do,
Do not sin and then suffer in repentance too;

440 Let goodness and meekness your occupation be,
Worry about what on Judgement Day you might see;

Try and think what baggage you will take with you there,
Feel its pain while you are in this world and can care;

Now, while the time and power you can still unite,
Lose not this opportunity; Fight the good fight!

With goodness and generosity win each heart,
Good conduct is what sets civilized Man apart;

Certainly your heart from conceit and envy save,
For envy drives the body to an early grave;

445 In script, the words 'conceit' and 'heathen' ⁶⁵ look alike,
And haughty persons often one as heathen strike;

Haughty people are often hypocrites also,
The Lord will not love them if such habits they show;

Against slander, conceit and pretence be on guard,
Getting closer to the Lord will then not be hard;

Be honest and faithful in all the work you do,
Become worthy of the Lord and his Prophet too;

For what each person does, the Almighty knows well,
Hence, to be worthy of the Lord, try to excel;

450 For the faults of others, not a single glance spare;
Their faults can only harm themselves – why should you care?

Let the shortcomings of others be their concern,
If you seek Heaven, then to your own defects turn;

Though your faults be thousand fold, your eye seeks them not,
Others' faults may be hair-thin but you miss them not;

In short, for their faults, do not others criticize,
Remember that you too have faults to minimize;

If you speak ill of others – then on the morrow,
They will speak ill of you and fill you with sorrow;

455 Speak ill once - and you, ten things against you will hear,
Hold your tongue and thus to the Almighty draw near;

Follow what Mustafa said – be pleasant and straight,
The road to the Almighty does not deviate;

Whoever listens to the words of Mustafa,
Is his companion and a part of his ummah;

REMORSE

Alas, to his rules I did not attention pay,
Nor followed the path he showed, even for a day;

My own delicate life, to the wild winds I threw,
Following base temptations was all I did do;

460 Of the value of life I was wholly bereft,
Now I do realize, but not much life is left;

My hair and beard are now white, but my heart is black,
To turn my heart to white, all effort do I lack;

I am the dark-faced creature to rebellion sworn,
No one more defiant than me has yet been born;

With every breath I have towards rebellion fled,
Nor have I, the straight and narrow path, tried to tread;

With each breath have I committed sins and foul play,
No sorrow for sins have I expressed any day;

465 Uncountable are all my sins, for they abound,
Look at my deeds: very crooked will they be found;

Fraudulent or hypocritical are my deeds,
Night or day makes little difference to my needs;

Even one step towards the Lord I cannot claim,
For succumbing to my flesh, I have not felt shame;

With the Lord's orders, my actions do not accord,
My deeds, of cheating and evil, are a record;

Not a day did I think that my death might be near,
Doubt and revolt did, to each act of mine, adhere;

470 The hereafter worried me not; I felt carefree,
I spared no thought about what might happen to me;

Now my days have come to an end and Death is near,
But still to greed and avarice my brain does veer;

Though many of my sad exploits I have stated,
Some hidden faults of mine I have not narrated;

It is deceptive to see me from the outside,
For I remember the acts I have tried to hide;

None can judge my condition from the outside though,
Only Allah, the Knower of Secrets, would know;

475 If my many faults have remained hidden from sight,
It is but due to the favours of the Lord's might;

If even one of my evil actions were known,
I would be stoned to death, and with no mercy shown;

But He who can all my innermost secrets trace,
All that I can hope for is that He shows me grace;

He it is who never His forgiveness restrains,
Who pardons my sins and His kindness on us rains;

ADMONITION

You should not do the things that I have done, beware,
For you will have the load of repentance to bear;

480 Spare no thought for my situation of ill-ease,
But do what you can the Almighty Lord to please;

The morals of Mustafa try to emulate,
Drift not into crooked paths; quit not the road straight;

The level of the true ummah, try to attain,
And then approval from the Lord on High obtain;

Lord! Help us genuine followers to become,
That Mustafa may us, as his ummah, welcome!

From Your boundless Mercy do not set us apart,
Of Mustafa's ummah allow us to be part;

485 Of his sterling qualities above you have heard,
Of his high moral behaviour many a word;

So therefore hold fast to whatever he has done,
That straight and with honour to the Lord you may run;

Till Doomsday to this discourse, if your ears you lend,
Many Doomsdays may well pass but this will not end;

If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

SECTION

[Deals with the duties of the Prophethood]

And now listen to what that man of purpose high,
Did, the orders of the Lord God to abide by;

490 That foremost of Messengers of the Lord on High,
For holy and pure men, the apple of the eye;

Of the ummah, he wasthe power and the weal,
For Allah had given him the Prophethood seal;

He conveyed the message given him, without doubt,
In religion a great order he brought about;

All to the service of the Lord he invited,
The right paths proclaimed by the Faith he highlighted;

As the sea of faith, waves began to generate,
People in droves to the true path did gravitate;

495 With true faith he illumined the World as a whole,
To perfection he built the realm of heart and soul;

He ensured that the ummah's affairs were all sound,
And he picked up those who had fallen to the ground;

His Prophethood mission to crowd she did proclaim,
They fathomed its truth, and his followers became;

Against those who disbelieved, a jihad⁶⁶ he waged,
When all men and jinn groups with the ummah engaged;

On the rebellious infidels, vengeance he wrought,
To establish the just rule of Islam he sought;

500 The Lord's commands he did into action translate,
From these orders he did not a jot deviate;

The Lord's commands he completed and realized,
Who obeys not will be contrite and criticized;

He did all that he had been ordained to perform,
If you have joined his ummah, you need to conform;

In the service of the Lord his life he did spend,
Only with his death came this service to an end;

A virtuous life he led, and wonders left behind,
But no relief from death can any human find;

**4.8. ON THE PASSING AWAY OF THE PROPHET
[ON WHOM BE PEACE AND BLESSINGS!]**

505 With words that burn inside let us begin again,
And let the heat of these words give this fire free rein;

So let the very hearts of hills and stones melt down,
As for the body, let its soul in sorrow drown!

Let the fever within you start fires on its own,
To create sparks, bang your heavy head against stone;

Let tears of blood like water flow down from your eyes,
Let the breast of steel be pierced and wounded likewise;

Even if this word reaches the ears of the seas,
It would heat the waters and make them steam with ease;

510 This is the news of Mustafa's passing away,
So when it reaches you let grief and tears hold sway;

Let your eyes exude water because of this pain,
Sacrifice your soul, and your love for him unchain;

Whoso hears this news and does not lament or ache,
Whose heart, with this distress, does not begin to break:

Far worse than tree or stone would he considered be,
To call him a man, no man would ever agree;

Express love for Mustafa if you do love him,
Who loves not Mustafa is but a rebel grim!

**ABOUT THE ILLNESS OF THE PROPHET
[ON WHOM BE PEACE AND BLESSINGS!]**

515 Listen therefore how that Pride of Creation fell,
Into illness and then he bade this world farewell;

When that trustworthy one in age reached sixty-three,
The stage approached for him nearer his Friend⁶⁷ to be;

It was then time for that sun-bright and moon-browed face,
To start his journey and leave the Earth in its place;

For the journey to the Hereafter with delight,
He prepared, and then the bird of his soul took flight;

Now listen to how he, of men the noble king,
Himself to the precincts of the Lord's court did bring;

520 Of the days of the week, it fell on a Wednesday,
In a happy month and on an important day;

To the house of his wife Maymunah⁶⁸ he had come,
While there, to a sudden illness did he succumb;

With time his illness progressed and did not decrease,
The people's pain and sorrow began to increase;

Mustafa remained ill, and weak his body turned,
That delicate body with a high fever burned;

The weaker he became the more he moved to pray,
He offered thanks to Allah throughout the whole day;

525 The illness increased apace and with it he strived,
But even of the strength to pray he was deprived;

All of a sudden it had approached prayer time,
For prayers the muezzins gave their call sublime;

The moment that fair faced one heard the prayer call,
He got up and performed his ablutions withal;

He decided to gather all his strength and go,
To the mosquito lead the prayers from the first row;

Alas no strength had he left even to stand straight,
Said he: Go and tell the muezzin what I state:

530 'I cannot join you, but let the prayers proceed,
Instead let Abu Bakr⁶⁹ the congregation lead;'

When the Companions of the Prophet these words heard,
With tears of sorrow the eyes of each one were blurred;

Towards the Sky a huge sigh welled up from their lips,
Causing the Sun and Moon to suffer an eclipse;

**THE ORDER GIVEN BY THE PROPHET
[ON WHOM BE PEACE AND BLESSINGS!]**

The Prophet asked Abu Bakr the prayers to lead,
To Mustafa's order he did gladly accede;

The diligent Abu Bakr to the niche⁷⁰ came near,
The Prophet's Companions stood behind in lines clear;

535 He said 'Allahu Akbar'⁷¹ and arms folded kept,
Then Abu Bakr could not control himself, and wept;

The Companions of the Prophet broke down as well,
And the mosque floor was moistened where all their tears fell;

They acutely the absence of the Prophet felt,
To each one, unhappiness was equally dealt;

Though they were not together with Mustafa, still,
It was as if not he, but they themselves were ill;

Abu Bakr himself could not overcome his tears,
He felt unable in prayer to lead his peers;

540 He turned to Omar⁷² and asked him to take his place,
'I feel uneasy' he said, 'you go, just in case';

The Prophet himself made enquiries and did ask,
To learn if Abu Bakr was equal to the task;

‘To lead the prayers to Abu Bakr I assign,
With my firm request to him, let him fall in line;’

Therefore to the prayer niche Abu Bakr returned,
The Companions stood behind, towards Mecca turned;

Not being present made Mustafa impatient feel,
Such parting from his Friends to him did not appeal;

545 Mustafa said: ‘Help me now to get to the door,
That my old Companions I may rejoin once more;

I want the occasion to see my friends again,
Who knows if another chance will ever obtain;

They too will be unable henceforth to meet me,
Or have the pleasant discussions that used to be;

At the mosque then let us all assemble and meet,
And to our hearts’ content let us each other greet;

Death will our togetherness forever revoke’,
He said, and his eyes were filled with tears when he spoke;

550 Because of these words, a flame within them took hold,
They wailed together and wept with tears uncontrolled;

They lent him their arms and supported him upright,
And thus they reached the mosque to everyone’s delight;

Then, though exerting himself, Mustafa took care,
And, with Abu Bakr leading, offered his prayer;

And when their prayers the Companions completed,
Prayers for Mustafa they also repeated;

They observed Mustafa in a state very frail,
On which they fell into sighs and began to wail;

555 They offered their arms to Mustafa once again,
And moved slowly so that the walk he could sustain;

There as well did Abu Bakr the group prayers lead,
Seventeen times in the Prophet's stead as agreed;

A thirteen day span did the Prophet's illness fill,
He, the Beloved, who healed all others, fell ill;

He claimed that so well had he his illness explored,
He knew its cure lay in his rejoining his Lord;

Gabriel arrived to visit him in this state,
The greetings of the Almighty Lord to relate;

560 'The Lord has after the Prophet's welfare enquired',
Said Gabriel, and asked what the Prophet desired;

'I worry about my ummah', the Prophet said,
'For a long time other wishes of mine have fled;

My hopes and worries for my flock have always been,
No pains for anything else have I borne or seen;

All the efforts of my day and night have been done,
To please the Lord that he may my ummah pardon!'

The arch angel to the Lord these wishes conveyed,
And with greetings from the Lord his appearance made;

565 'The Lord Almighty has been most gracious, said he;
The sins of your ummah are pardoned on your plea!'

Said the Prophet: 'This was all I wished, anyhow,
How utterly pleased and happy do I feel now!'

For during the many years of his Prophethood,
'My ummah, My ummah' always repeat he would;

Even in his last moments did his zeal remain,
Pardon for his ummah was all he wished to gain;

Messengers of the Lord, even on the Last Day,
Will all assemble and 'alas for myself' say;

570 While the Prophet Muhammad will keep on saying:
'O my ummah, O my ummah!' and be praying;

To beg the Almighty for Mercy, he will rise,
Saying: 'I need my flock to enter Paradise!

From my ummah though many sinners may be caught,
But compared to your Mercy their sins are as nought!

O Lord! Forgive the sins of this deficient flock,
As for me, in accordance with Your Will take stock!

If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

SECTION

575 What great joy and good tidings, what freedom from pain,
That we might Mustafa's intercession attain!

Who has a Prophet to intercede for his soul?
Who follows Mustafa is sure to reach his goal!

Then to the Prophet, Gabriel came into view,
And said: 'Greetings from the Lord have I brought to you!'

Gabriel's dress when he appeared was black and grim,
And when he observed this, the Prophet said to him:

'O brother! Why do I see you in this way clad?
Why have you chosen to wear this apparel sad?

580 With such garments I have never seen you before,
There must surely be some reason – pray tell me more!’

‘O honest one! The reason does on you depend,
This is the last time I shall to this world descend!

No more shall I convey divine revelation,
For today the Lord has ordered its cessation;

The denizens of the skies mourn for you today,
Draped in black, Humans and the Jinn are in dismay;

Soon after Gabriel, came the order divine,
And next to Gabriel, Azrael stood in line;

585 Azrael hailed the Prophet and with peace greeted,
The Prophet, Azrael, with politeness treated;

The Prophet asked: ‘Is a visit, your only goal,
Or are you here on duty to collect my soul?’

Replied the angel: ‘I do visit you, no doubt,
But “gather souls” is the Divine order about;

Yet, the Lord has ordered me to put haste aside,
And to act in accordance with what you decide;

Your soul only if you grant assent will I claim,
Or else return empty-handed the way I came’;

590 While Azrael to the Prophet made his own pleas,
And the latter kindly listened to him with ease;

Gabriel, ‘Peacock of Angels’, with deference,
Said: ‘O Muhammad, the Lord desires your presence!’

As soon as Gabriel had made this little speech,
The Prophet decided that Allah he must reach;

Because the Arch angel had expressed the Lord's Will,
With love, the Prophet wished, these orders to fulfil;

So he said to Azrael: Angel, now approach,
And carry out the Lord's command without reproach;

595 Finish then the work that you were sent here to do;
And the Prophet turned to his own Companions too,

Sage items of advice did he to them impart,
That the paths of their lives should be easy to chart;

He committed the whole ummah to Allah's care,
Much advice he gave to make the ummah aware;

The Auspicious of Men then his own Friends addressed,
Asked that his greetings to the ummah be expressed;

'Tell them not to leave the path I have shown them all,
And into worldly ways, let them not weakly fall!

600 For they are obliged, who followed me heart and soul,
Their acts according to my teachings to control;

To live their lives on the basis of what I taught,
To take the right path, to succumb to no onslaught;

Of the Lord's commandments let them never lose sight,
But till the time of their deaths to practise them right;

Let them always obey the Almighty, like me,
That tomorrow⁷³ I may their Intercessor be!

As the years of my life in this world I have spent,
They should follow my conduct and be diligent!'

605 He taught all things to his ummah in work and play,
To the Lord gave up his life in a pleasant way;

If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

**AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF THE PROPHET
[ON WHOM BE PEACE AND BLESSINGS!]**

Therefore, o you who love Mustafa, you should know,
That Mustafa's soul at once to the Lord did go;

That bird of heaven flew to its heavenly bourn,
As the large crowd below began to wail and mourn;

Burdened with grief, their collars of patience they tore,
And the dust of longing on their heads they did pour;

610 The crowd surrendered to emotion and lament
This sorrow in the wide world became prevalent;

The angels, animals, birds, humans and the jinn,
All ranks did for Mustafa full mourning begin;

Their moans, wails and lamentations were skyward bound,
And the flood of tears from their eyes wetted the ground;

All the residents of the earth and skies did weep,
The fire of sorrow within their souls they did keep;

With moans and groans, and with laments and piercing cries,
With distress and woe they filled the earth and the skies;

615 When the dome of the Sky all these moans and groans heard,
Its back was bent; it joined the sorrow undeterred;

Eclipsed were the moon and sun; changed colour, the skies;
Their pain, the people of the earth did realize;

With this great loss in life, Abu Bakr was appalled,
Oft, the names Mustafa and Murtaza, he called;

The Prophet's name Omar did frequently invoke,
Saying: 'Without the best of Men, we are but broke!'

An ocean of virtue was Osman⁷⁴ in his pain,
'Where is the King of All Prophets!' he asked in vain;

620 'O Mustafa!' cried out Ali⁷⁵ in his lament,
Without your beauty, from the world all goodness went!

With great longing did Hasan and Husayn proclaim:
'Our grandfather has left; in life we have no aim!

Who will now love us and embrace us as before?
Who will call us 'the light of my eyes' anymore?

O grandfather! Now into orphans we have turned;
All of us the fire of separation has burned!

Fatima⁷⁶ and Ayesha⁷⁷ came weeping in twain,
Begging the Almighty for mercy in their pain;

625 An uncle of the Prophet present at the time,
Wept, and in his honour composed these lines in rhyme:

**A POEM⁷⁸ BY AN UNCLE OF THE PROPHET
[ON WHOM BE PEACE AND BLESSINGS!]**

O Messenger of Allah! You were our real hope
You treated us kindly, and gave worry no scope;
Gentle you were to us, and generous also,
Let those who weep today for you make their tears flow;
For the Leader, I swear that ceaselessly I weep,
Entrusted to the earth of Medina to sleep;
O Prophet! Let my parents be a sacrifice,
To you, and let us all pay this ultimate price!
Patient and successful you were, and most benign,
Your duty fulfilled, this pure faith began to shine!
May Almighty Allah shower on you his peace,
Grant you High Heaven and your happiness increase!

SECTION

Man or woman, wealthy or poor, though they might be,
Each person was then caught up in the misery;

Some mourners wept copiously with their tears like rain,
While some others in their livers felt burning pain;

Some were baffled by this misery and cried out,
Some threw themselves on to the earth and rolled about;

It looked that, of their senses, some had taken leave,
In short, all were burning within and all did grieve;

630 To recount that sad day would one and all defy,
When laments and wails all penetrated the sky;

Human tears, in fact, in such quantities were shed,
It was like a river had overflowed its bed;

The sight looked as though people in their tears were drowned,
The hills and boulders as if seared with flame were found;

Since the Lord's creation of the seven-fold skies,
No such event of grief had been known to arise!

Few, indeed, must have observed such a fiery pain,
And, no accounts of similar sorrow remain;

635 He who was touched by this pain of separation,
Felt as if his heart had suffered mutilation;

That fire of bereavement has never disappeared,
In our listeners' hearts that flame will have appeared;

Then they said: 'There are many duties to perform,
To the commands of the Lord we must all conform';

They washed his mortal remains, and much respect gave,
And they gently carried Mustafa to his grave;

They let the Messenger rest there for three whole days,
That human beings and spirits could pray in relays;

640 The souls of other Prophets on to the scene milled,
All space between Earth and Sky was with angels filled;

All stood in line to offer funeral prayers,
Some led the prayers, while some joined the ranks in pairs;

They prayed along with each other for three days through,
They offered a parting prayer and then withdrew;

The Friends of the Prophet gathered again with grace,
To lead Mustafa to his final resting place;

They completed all the required rites that remained,
To fulfil the commands that Allah had ordained;

645 They all came back with their hearts as heavy as lead,
'Lo! And unto Him we are returning'⁷⁹, they said;

Moreover they were worried, and of sorrow full,
In all hearts, the fire of longing did tug and pull;

Later to a house all of them returned, apace,
As the Prophet's Companions rallied in one place;

Alas, Mustafa, no more among them mingled,
And the fire of yearning in them was rekindled;

The cycle of wailing and grief began again,
From shedding floods of tears they just could not refrain;

650 So full of flames and penetrating were their sighs,
They would have caused blocks of iron to fluidize;

With the stones of longing did each one beat his head,
And profuse tears of blood did each one of them shed;

‘Where is our great Sultan?’ Aloud with pain they cried,
‘Where has he left us and gone?’ They asked, mystified;

‘What can we do, indeed, who are lost totally;
About our Master, whom can we ask? Weak are we!

If we cannot see his moon-like face and rejoice,
If we can, for a moment, no more hear his voice;

655 What is to befall us is very hard to state:
There is no cure if an illness will not abate!

O Lord! What we are doing, we but little know
For how long shall we suffer this burning pain so?

From within our company that phoenix took flight,
Leave us not without him, O Lord of Truth and Right!

Among men he was peerless; since he departed,
Life and strength are forbidden; we are downhearted!’

They kept on sighing and gazing at each other,
Each of them caught fire as it were from another;

660 In hopelessness were they enmeshed and all was bleak,
No heart among them all, but was wounded and weak;

That things could not go on this way, with time they saw,
That they do not return, who from the world withdraw!

And so they said to each other: ‘What can we do?
It is the Lord’s will – and we must be patient too!

Mustafa too had to leave this world’s commotion,
From this world let none expect faith or devotion!

Whoever enters this world will have to depart,
For our own exits, then, the journey we must chart;

665 To meet the Almighty Lord, pleasantly he left,
It is we who are forsaken, sad and bereft;

The soul that hidden lived within our souls was he,
For our pains and worrie she was the remedy;

What use is life to us without his presence dear?
Would not Death be preferred to the condition here?

Towards Mustafa, let us journey side by side,
Without him in this world, Life does all its joys hide!

Till Doomsday to this discourse, if your ears you lend,
Many Doomsdays may well pass but this will not end;

670 If salvation from Hell-fire you wish to attain,
Invoke blessings on the Prophet with love and pain;

4.9. CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK

This, then, is the state of the world – so learn this well,
If both knowledge and wisdom do within you dwell;

Think not that in this world somehow you will survive,
Let not imagination you, of sense, deprive!

Treasure the example of Mustafa and learn,
All leave this world when God commands it is their turn;

How or how long a person lives, it matters not,
Death, the termination of life, is each one's lot;

675 Hence, while alive, we must for the future prepare,
To do good works and face the Lord without despair;

In doing the Lord's duties, spend your time entire,
Be a slave to Him, and not to a base desire!

Follow the noble path that Mustafa outlined,
On the road to the Lord, put all your heart and mind!

As much as strength allows, be busy with prayer,
To waste not even an hour of your time, take care!

That, at the end, you have not to repent and grieve,
Let not your actions in life a bitter taste leave;

680 With the advice I am giving, be in accord,
If you wish to be a valued slave of the Lord;

For a person who is educated and wise,
The very thought of Death will make them realize!

We recognize that at the end die we all must,
And that our dust will, finally, merge into dust;

Still, can it be said that to the Lord we have turned?
Are not our actions the same as obedience spurned?

Do our actions conform more to the Lord's commands?
In the Hereafter will we be saved, or wring hands?

685 In this world we have not improved our lives or cared,
For the Last Trumpet we have not at all prepared!

The wishes of the Lord all our actions do breach,
Can we imagine what final fate we will reach?

Recall how our faces against the Lord we set,
So let us all weep and moan and groan in regret;

The traumatic thought of our death let us digest,
Let mercy from Allah be our unceasing quest!

We shall weep much in the Hereafter, it is clear,
So let us commence with a little weeping here!

690 Our weeping here may likely help us a good lot,
Weeping after death for a thousand years will not!

How weak we are, let us to the Almighty show,
And lend our eyes only to weeping more and more!

Let tears of blood flow like rivers from our own eyes,
So that even the hills and stones may join our cries!

Sigh with such power that, if a stone bars the way,
The sigh should cause it to melt and burn it away!

With a myriad longings and much pain, let us sigh,
We ruined our lives, as we did Allah defy!

695 All we earned from sin were faces blackened with shame;
How will we efface these stains and remove the blame?

O Lord, let Your help be our friend and guide, so we
May find our way back, and on the correct path be!

We have become the captives of our wishes base,
O Lord! Please save us from this prison of disgrace!

Yielding to passion, countless sins we committed;
Lord! What else might we do, if we are permitted!

Surrounded by our shame, and most confused are we,
We have all jumped headlong into a sinful sea!

700 If with Your kindness you do not save us from shame,
The earth and sky, and all will us outcasts proclaim!

We pray that Your help and kindness will on us rain
Blessings from You will make us happy once again!

Only a poor hapless lot of rebels are we,
Faulty in our worship as well as unworthy;

No action have we performed for You that would please,
Acts of rebellion, we have committed with ease!

We know all our actions, which we cannot ignore,
Now begging for mercy we have come to Your door;

705 Here we are at Your gate, deficient though we be,
With faces blackened by shame, and our hands empty;

Where can we go if we are rebuffed from Your gate?
Who else would offer us any help in our state?

True, our acts of rebellion are plenty, indeed;
But also true that our path can nowhere else lead;

Be merciful, or throw us into Hell to burn
Not a step back shall we take; we shall not return!

From the Divine threshold, we shall not raise our heads,
From here we shall not leave, even if torn to shreds!

710 What has to become of us, has to happen here,
We will not leave till death or life for us is clear!

Though His slaves may often, the flag of revolt raise,
But so is Allah, Kind and Forgiving always;

What was needed of us has brought us to this gate,
All-Sufficing! Do what is suited to Your State!

If, in your Mercy, you treat us generously,
Surely that will not lessen Your Might and Glory!

If we burned to ash because of Your displeasure,
To all You possess it would not add a measure;

715 You have given us much, why not make it complete,
Top it up with Mercy and Charity replete!

Also, Your blessings on poor Süleyman unload,
Let Faith be his guide, let Heaven be his abode!

Let him reach Your Presence with a clean and clear face
Not too distant from Mustafa, grant him a place!

O Acceptor⁸⁰! With Believers who merit praise,
Allow this poor scribe on Your Presence once to gaze;

For the love of Muhammad make it come about,
Whose name along with Your Name we always cry out!

720 From among the people of the world, him You chose;
'Mercy for the peoples' is how the world him knows!

For the sake of his honour, grant us honour too,
With Your grace, send us mercy as you always do!

From Your stores of mercy, grant us our shares full well,
Make us not just as candles to the fire of Hell!

To those, who are near to You, make us special too,
From all fears and dangers, let us be saved by You!

Accept and grant all our prayers, when said in need,
For the Prophet's sake, who happiness found indeed!

725 This is the mine of honey whose sweetness is famed,
And 'The Means of Deliverance' it has been named;

In addition, Eight hundred and twelve was the date,
When, Brother, in Bursa, this work did terminate!

'All praise and glory to the Lord!' Thus have I prayed,
For this book has achieved completion with His aid!

From the Lord, hundred thousand benedictions each
Morning and night the soul of Muhammad may reach;

To his kin and Companions may all blessings flow,
And then to the Helpers and well-wishers also;

730 May that Helper⁸¹, with the ummah, be satisfied
And shower mercy on its members far and wide;

May the Almighty to him show mercy and care,
Who remembers the Reciter with a prayer!

May the Lord God also to him much mercy show,
Who does a blessing on the poor Writer bestow!

5. SUMMING UP

The amount of literature, especially in Turkish, but also in other languages, that exists on all aspects of Süleyman Çelebi's Mevlid is enormous, and does not need to be dealt with here. Since the time of the Mevlid, there have been references made to it by many poets and writers. Thus, the famous 19th century poet Ziya Pasha⁸² has written about the Mevlid:

O Almighty! What burning pain, what sublime expression!
Though basic words are these in superficial impression,
Love and eloquence are within the poem collected,
An inimitable simplicity has been perfected!

Similarly, in one of the long poems of Mehmed Akif,⁸³ a character when asked if he is a poet, or perhaps a mevlid writer, responds thus:

Impossible to aspire, Süleyman the Dervish is very very high up, indeed!

A well-known Turkish writer and critic, Nihad Sâmi Banarlı, writes in an essay:⁸⁴

The Mevlid of Süleyman Çelebi for a period of five centuries has attained a huge interest and popularity in the Turco-Islamic world, something that no other such work has been able to approach. It has been loved and read a lot, and hand-written copies have passed from hand to hand in celebration and congratulation. It is a unique work.

The Mevlid has become such an organic part of the spiritual constitution of the Turks that parts of it are recited at births, deaths, weddings, religious festivals and even other occasions like the departures, from their homes, of groups of newly-conscripted soldiers to join their regiments.

APPENDIX 1

A SHORT NOTE ON THE *ASMA' UL HUSNA*

ALLAH⁸⁵ is the Greatest Name. Allah is uttered and invoked more frequently than any other name. A simple listing of the attributes of Allah – the *asma' ul husna*⁸⁶ – is given below along with a brief rendering of each attribute in English. It will be appreciated that in general such translations from Arabic to English are, in the interests of achieving completeness, often made in the form of a phrase or sentence. Thus, though the attribute *Ar-Rahmân* may be found translated in different sources as the Beneficent, the Compassionate, the Possessor of Mercy, etc., only the rendering ‘the Beneficent’ has been chosen here for simplicity and ease of translation. Similarly, *Al-Latîf* may be translated as the Bestower, the Gentle, the Subtle One or the Favourer as all such nuances of meaning are contained in the original. However, a first choice has been made here to select ‘the Gracious’ while realizing that other translations and even elaborate explanations will be required depending on the context.

The limited intention in this appendix has been to provide, if possible, a one-word translation for each Divine attribute for brevity as well as convenience. In several cases, after consulting dictionaries and other sources, another suitable and acceptable one-word translation has been added for a given name to provide a complementary or an alternative translation. However, an attempt has been made to ensure that the same one-word translation is not duplicated anywhere. Thus, *Al 'Alim* [Attribute No. 19] and *Al Khabîr* [Attribute No. 31] may be, and often are, rendered as ‘Aware’ but for reasons of clarity [and to facilitate back-translation] such duplicate translations have been avoided. The attempt is to provide each attribute with a unique one-word rendering in English, without prejudice to more elaborate or nuanced translations. It is hoped that the list given will be of use to students as well as scholars of the Qur’an. However, the objective of the present effort is not to initiate any standardization of the English translation of the Divine attributes or even to invite comparison with several other lists of translations that may be found in the literature.

Although there are many available translations into English of the *asma' ul husna*, two sources are deserving of especial mention, viz., Muhammad

Marmaduke Pickthall⁸⁷ and Edwin Arnold⁸⁸. Wherever possible, one-word renderings have been selected from Pickthall and Arnold, abbreviated as P and A, in the Table given below. Where these references do not provide one-word renderings, equivalent one-word renderings found in the literature have been used. These are indicated by O where O stands for other sources, including dictionaries and literary publications. Additional possible one-word translations based on Pickthall, Arnold or other sources, have been placed in the last three columns of the Table, but these are highly limited in number and, in a few cases, are duplicates of words already selected for the one-word list. In two cases [Attributes No. 84 and 85], it has not been possible to render the translation with one word because the original Arabic name itself was longer.

All attributes of Allah are in a state of superlative perfection in Eternity. The order followed in the present list is but one of the traditional and customary sequences of 99 attributes in the literature, and variants of this list are in existence. It should be noted that Allah is by no means circumscribed or restricted with these attributes, and no special significance attaches to the number 99 in this context. Thus, the Qur'an frequently uses the word *Rabb* meaning Lord, Owner, Provider, Master or Sovereign for Allah. It is important to point out that the attributes of Allah all need to be referred to within the Qur'an, i.e. no extra-Qur'anic attributes are possible.

In the transcription of the Arabic attributes, an attempt has been made to use a general orthography without many diacritical marks. However, a circumflex accent on a vowel indicates that it is a long vowel, and the left apostrophe ['] indicates the use of the Arabic letter 'ain [ع]. To facilitate translation and back-translation, the attributes have been presented in a self-explanatory tabular form below.

NAME	CHOSEN ONE-WORD RENDERING [Based on P for Pickthall; A for Arnold; O for Other]	ADDITIONAL ONE-WORD TRANSLATIONS		
		PICKTHALL	ARNOLD	OTHER
1 Ar-Rahmân	The Beneficent	P		The Merciful
2 Ar-Rahîm	The Merciful	P		The Compassionate
3 Al-Malik	The Sovereign	O		
4 Al-Quddûs	The Holy	O		
5 As-Salâm	The Refuge	O	Peace	The Peace
6 Al-Mu'min	The Protector	O		The Faithful

7	Al-Muhaymin	The Guardian	P			
8	Al-Aziz	The Strong	A	The Majestic		The Potent
9	Al-Jabbâr	The Compeller	P			
10	Al-Mutakabbir	The Transcendental	O	The Superb, The Compeller	The Majestic	
11	Al-Khâliq	The Creator	P, A			
12	Al-Bârî'	The Artificer	A			The Evolver
13	Al-Musawwir	The Fashioner	P, A	The Shaper		
14	Al-Ghaffâr	The Forgiver	A	The Forgiving, The Pardoning		
15	Al-Qahhâr	The Dominant	P		The Almighty	
16	Al-Wahhâb	The Bestower	P, A			
17	Ar-Razzâq	The Sustainer	O		The Provider	
18	Al-Fattâh	The Opener	P, A			
19	Al-'Alîm	The Omniscient	O	The Aware	The All-Knower	
20	Al-Qâbid	The Restrictor	O	The Straightener	The Closer	The Imposer
21	Al-Bâsît	The Expander	O	The Enlarger	The Uncloser	
22	Al-Khâfid	The Abaser	P, A			
23	Ar-Rafî	The Exalter	P, A	The Raiser		
24	Al-Mu'izz	The Honourer	A			
25	Al-Mudhill	The Humiliator	O	The Abaser		
26	As-Samî	The Hearer	P			
27	Al-Basîr	The Seer	P			
28	Al-Hakam	The Judge	P			
29	Al-'Adl	The Just	O		The Equitable	
30	Al-Latif	The Gracious	A	The Subtle		
31	Al-Khabîr	The Aware	O	The Knower		
32	Al-Halîm	The Clement	P, A			
33	Al-'Azîm	The Magnificent	O	The Tremendous		
34	Al-Ghafûr	The Pardoner	A	The Forgiving		
35	Ash-Shakûr	The Appreciative	O	The Responsive	The Thankful	
36	Al-'Aliyy	The Exalted	A	The High The Sublime		
37	Al-Kabîr	The Great	P, A			
38	Al-Hafîz	The Preserver	A	The Guardian		
39	Al-Muqît	The Maintainer	A	The Overseer		
40	Al-Hasîb	The Reckoner	P, A			
41	Al-Jalîl	The Mighty	P			
42	Al-Karîm	The Bountiful	P, A			
43	Ar-Raqîb	The Watchful	A	The Watcher		
44	Al-Mujîb	The Acceptor	O			
45	Al-Wasî'	The All- Comprehending	A	The All-Knowing		The Limitless
46	Al-Hakîm	The Wise	P			
47	Al-Wadûd	The Loving	P, A			
48	Al-Majîd	The Majestic	O	The All-Glorious		
49	Al-Bâ'ith	The Resurrector	O	The Raiser		
50	Ash-Shahîd	The Witness	P, A			
51	Al-Haqq	The Truth	A	The Just		

52	Al-Wakīl	The Trustee	O	The Surety	The Guardian	
53	Al-Qawiyy	The Almighty	P, A	The Strong		
54	Al-Matīn	The Steadfast	O		The Firm	
55	Al-Walī	The Friend	P, A	The Supporter		
56	Al-Hamīd	The Praiseworthy	P, A			
57	Al-Muhsi	The Encompasser	O	The Surrounder		
58	Al-Mubdi	The Originator	O	The Producer	The Beginner	
59	Al-Mu'īd	The Restorer	A		The Re-producer	
60	Al-Muhyī	The Quickener	A			The Life-giver
61	Al-Mumīt	The Slayer	A	The Death-giver		
62	Al-Hayy	The Everliving	A	The Alive		
63	Al-Qayyūm	The Permanent	O	The Eternal	The Self-subsisting	
64	Al-Wājid	The Perceiving	O		The All-perceiving	
65	Al-Mājid	The Glorious	O			
66	Al-Wāhid	The One	P, A	The Absolute		
67	Al-Ahad	The Unique	O	The One		
68	As-Samad	The Independent	O	The Besought	The Eternal	
69	Al-Qādir	The Omnipotent	O	The Able	The Provident	
70	Al-Muqtadir	The Powerful	P		The All-powerful	
71	Al-Muqaddim	The Preceder	O		The Forewarner	
72	Al-Mu'akhhir	The Fulfiller	A			The Final
73	Al-Awwal	The First	P, A			
74	Al-Ākhir	The Last	P, A			
75	Az-Zāhir	The Apparent	O	The Outward	The Manifest	
76	Al-Bātin	The Concealed	O	The Inward	The Hidden	
77	Al-Wālī	The Ruler	O		The All-governing	
78	Al-Muta'ālī	The Eminent	O			
79	Al-Barr	The Good	A	The Benign		
80	At-Tawwāb	The Relenting	P, A			The Forgiving
81	Al-Muntaqim	The Avenger	P, A	The Requirer		
82	Al-Afuw	The Forgiving	O	The Clement		
83	Ar-Ra'ūf	The Indulgent	O	The Merciful	The Ever-Indulgent	
84	Mālik al-Mulk	The Lord of Sovereignty	O	The Owner of Sovereignty	The King of the Kingdom	
85	Dhul-Jalāli Wal-Ikrām	The Lord of Majesty and Eminence	O	The Lord of Might and Glory	The Lord of Splendid Power	
86	Al-Muqsit	The Equitable	A	The Just		
87	Al-Jām'ī	The Gatherer	P, A			
88	Al-Ghaniyy	The Rich	P	The Independent	The All-Sufficing	
89	Al-Mughnī	The Sufficer	A	The Preserver		
90	Al-Mānī	The Withholder	P, A			
91	Ad-Dārr	The Distresser	O	The Afflicter	The Harmful	
92	An-Nāfi	The Propitious	A	The Provider The Generous		The Benefactor
93	An-Nur	The Light	P, A			
94	Al-Hādī	The Guide	P, A			
95	Al-Badī	The Wonderful	O	The Originator		The Incomparable

96 Al-Bâqî	The Everlasting	O			
97 Al-Wâriṭh	The Inheritor	P, A			
98 Ar-Rashîd	The Unerring	A			The Guide
99 As-Sabûr	The Forbearing	O	The Endurer	The Patient	

Of the *asma' ul husna*, three are nouns: An-Nur, Al-Barr and Al-Afuw; the rest are adjectives. Names derived from the same root are treated as the same, e.g. Ghafur, Ghaffar and Ghafir; also Karim, Ikram and Mukarram. In the above Table, Al-Wahid is One [Cardinal number] and Al-Ahad is One [Ordinal number].

As might be expected, there is a huge volume of literature dealing with the *asma' ul husna* in the major languages of Muslim countries, such as Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu, some of which goes back many hundreds of years. There are explanatory poems dealing with the significance of each attribute, as well as lists mentioning in which *surah* of the Qur'an any particular attribute might be found. In a Turkish source titled *A Commentary on the Asma' ul Husna*,⁸⁹ there is even a list of the numerical *abjad*⁹⁰ value for each attribute, ranging from 13 to 1481.

APPENDIX 2

THE FIRST SIX COUPLETS OF THE MEVLİD IN THE ORIGINAL AND IN TRANSLATIONS BY E.J.W. GIBB, F. L. MACCALLUM AND THE PRESENT AUTHOR

COUPLETS 1-6 OF THE TURKISH ORIGINAL BY SÜLEYMAN ÇELEBİ

Allah adın zikr idelüm evvelâ
Vâcib oldur cümle işde her kula

Allah adın her kim ol evvel ana
Her işi âsân ide Allah ana
Allah adı olsa her işün öni
Hergiz ebter olmaya anun sonı
Her nefesde Allah adın di müdam
Allah adıyla olur her iş tamâm
Bir gez Allah dise ışk ile lisân
Dökülür cümle güneh misl-i hazân
İsm-i pâkin pâk olur zikr eyleyen
Her murâda irişür Allah diyen

ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY E.J.W. GIBB

First the name of God the Lord let us declare;
This behoveth every servant every where.
Whosoe'er doth first the name of God recite,
God will make for him his every business light.
Let the name of God begin each business then,
That the end there of be sorry not and vain.
Let the name of God with every breath be said,
In the name of God be each work finished.

If the tongue with love God's name do say,
All its sins will fall like autumn leaves away.
Pure becometh he who sayeth His pure name,
Whoso saith God's name attains his every aim.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY F. LYMAN MACCALLUM

Allah! This name invoke we in beginning,
For this is ever due from us, his servants.
Allah! The name which brings to all who call it,
God's present aid, the weight of labour light'ning.
Did Allah's name begin each fresh endeavour,
The end would ne'er fall short of full attainment.
With every breath repeat that name, unceasing;
In Allah's name see every task completed.
Who says: Allah! in language truly loving
Shall see his sins, like autumn leaves, removing.
The man is pure who on the pure name calleth;
Who cries: Allah! attains his every purpose.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY THE PRESENT AUTHOR

First of all, let us make mention of Allah's name -
Which his slaves in starting any work should proclaim;

The name of Allah, who first of all remembers -
To him, all tasks easy, Allah himself renders;

If the name of Allah does each action precede -
Then productive it will be, and always succeed;

With every breath of yours, Allah's name repeat-
With Allah's name becomes every work complete;

If from the tongue with love 'Allah', just once, is said,
Like leaves in autumn falling, will all sins be shed;

Whoso repeats the Pure Name will purity gain,
Who repeats 'Allah' will all his desires attain.

ENDNOTES

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- My thanks are due to my brother, Syed Munir Wasti, for his encouragement, and his comments on this essay.
- 1 Ahmed Ateş, *İslami Edebiyatta Mevlid*, Chapter 1 of *Vesiletin Necat - Mevlid*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1954), 208 pp. plus a photographic reproduction [in Ottoman Turkish script] of the Mevlid text used by him.
 - 2 Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger*, Reprinted in Pakistan (Lahore: Vanguard, 1987), pp. 151 *et seqq.*
 - 3 Muhammad b. Sa'id al Buseiri (1213 - 1294), poet and scholar, a native of Egypt.
 - 4 Kâtip Çelebi (1609 – 1657), also known as Haji Kalfa, was an Ottoman Turkish scholar and author of several books in Arabic and Turkish especially on history and geography. His best known work is *Kashf al-zunûn 'an asâmi al-kutub wa al-funûn* ("The Removal of Doubt from the Names of Books and the Sciences"), which is a large encyclopaedia in Arabic that lists about 10,000 writers and 15,000 published books in Arabic, Persian and Turkish.
 - 5 *Ummah* is the whole supranational community of Muslims regardless of their race, background or location in the world.
 - 6 Süleyman Çelebi (1351 – 1421), a native of Bursa, a poet and writer renowned for his celebrated *Mevlid*, the best known Turkish poem written in praise of the Prophet of Islam and also one of the earliest known long poems in Ottoman Turkish.
 - 7 Some authorities give the date of his death as 1422.
 - 8 F.K. Timurtaş, (Ed.) *Mevlid*, (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları 1990), 173 pp.
 - 9 N. Pekolcay, *Mevlid (Vesiletin Necat)*, (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1980), 176 pp. plus pages of the text of the Mevlid in Ottoman Turkish. Also by Pekolcay is the book *Mevlid (Vesiletü'n Necât) Süleyman Çelebi* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1997), 201 pp.
 - 10 E.J.W. Gibb (1857 – 1901), Famous Orientalist and author of the six volume work entitled *A History of Ottoman Poetry*. Gibb was a friend of both E.G. Browne (1862 - 1926), Sir Thomas Adams' Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge [who completed the later volumes after the death of Gibb], and Halil Halid (*q.v.*) who wrote an Introduction to Gibb's work.
 - 11 See E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, Vol. I, (Cambridge: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1984), pp. 232 – 248. This chapter deals with the life and work of Süleyman Çelebi.
 - 12 Halil Halid (1869 - 1931), Turkish thinker, diplomat and professor. He served briefly (1912 – 1913) in the Ottoman Assembly, and subsequently as Consul-General in Bombay. He is the author of several books, e.g. *The Diary of a Turk* and *The Crescent versus the Cross*, both published in England. See Syed Tanvir Wasti, 'Halil Halid – Anti-Imperialist Muslim Intellectual', *Middle Eastern Studies*, London, Vol. 29, No. 3, July 1993, pp. 559 – 579.
 - 13 F. Lyman MacCallum (1893 – 1955), a Canadian missionary born to missionary parents in Kahramanmaraş, Turkey, whose life has been the subject of the book entitled *Call to Istanbul* by Constance Padwick (London: Longmans, 1958).
 - 14 F. Lyman MacCallum, *The Mevlidi Sherif by Suleyman Chelebi*, (London: John Murray, 1943; reprinted, 1957), 41 pp.
 - 15 Nancy Tapper, "Gender and Religion in a Turkish Town", in *Women's Religious Experience*, Edited by Pat Holden, Croom Helm, (London, 1983), p.74 *et seqq.*

- 16 Neşet Çağatay, “İslam’da Mevlid Okuma Geleneği [The Tradition of Mavlid Recitations in Islam, particularly in Turkey]” in *Makale ve İncelemeler* [Articles and Studies], (Konya: Selçuk University), pp. 133 – 137 (Turkish text) and pp. 139 – 144 (English text).
- 17 The oldest surviving [handwritten] manuscript of Süleyman Çelebi’s Mevlid is described as having 732 couplets and dates from 1510 A.D. It is stored in the Aya Sofya Library in Istanbul.
- 18 A. Aymutlu, *Süleyman Çelebi ve Mevlid-i Şerif*, (Istanbul, 1958), 237 pp.
- 19 Hüseyin Vassaf, *Mevlid* [Editors: Cemal Kurnaz & Mustafa Tatcı], (Ankara, 1999), 128 pp.
- 20 *Kawthar* [Kevser in Turkish] is a pool or river flowing through Paradise – a spot where the Elect meet.
- 21 In the *Kalima Tayyiba* or affirmation of faith: There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet, and as in several Qur’anic verses mentioning Allah and the Prophet together.
- 22 Although the Qur’an refers to Seven Heavens, there are sundry traditions in Persian and Turkish literature related to *Nuh Sipih* [Nine Skies] and *Hasht Bihisht* [Eight Heavens]. Mention of the Eighth Heaven is possibly the result of a hadith that there are Eight Gates of Heaven. See also couplet No. 253 in the text.
- 23 The word ‘*dert*’, literally meaning pain, has been translated by Gibb as ‘fear’, by McCallum variously as ‘grief’ and ‘zeal’, and by Schimmel as [longing] pain. I have chosen to retain the most direct translation. The reference is to performing the prayer with aching repentance and mortification, i.e. with a deep and genuine awareness of one’s sinfulness.
- 24 The *Fatiha* (The Opening) is the first surah of the Qur’an; it is recited in all formal prayer and to invoke the blessings of Allah on the dead.
- 25 The Jinn in Islam are invisible beings created from a smokeless flame of fire. They were created by Allah before Mankind. They possess free will, and therefore some of them are believers and others disbelievers.
- 26 Mustafa is literally the Chosen or the Elect; it is a title of the Prophet Muhammad, whose other names include Ahmed [the most Praised].
- 27 According to Islamic tradition, Adam repented of the sins that had led to being expelled from the Garden of Eden, and was pardoned by the Almighty. There is no concept of the ‘original sin’ in Islam, and human beings are born sinless.
- 28 The reference is to the story of the patriarch Abraham in the Qur’an [See verses 60 – 69 of Surah 21 (The Prophets)]. Surah No. 14 of the Qur’an titled Ibrahim also has an account of Abraham.
- 29 A much used name for the Prophet of Islam is Ahmed. See Endnote 26.
- 30 This sentence is offered in the text as a Hadith [a confirmed statement of the Prophet] but authorities doubt its veracity.
- 31 A *houri* is a pure, beautiful woman who will accompany the faithful in Heaven.
- 32 Gabriel is the Archangel who is considered in Islam to have the responsibility of conveying the words of Allah to His Prophets. He is referred to as Cebrail [in Turkish] and Jibreel [in Arabic]. He is mentioned by name in the Holy Quran.
- 33 The English versions of the Turkish names have been taken from the Book of Genesis, Chapters 4 and 5 of the King James’s Bible. A list of these English and Turkish names [in the modern and the Ottoman scripts] are given below:

Seth → Şit → شَيْت
 Enos → Anûş or Enoş → أَنُوش
 Cainan → Kaynân → قَيْنَان
 Mahalaleel → Mehlâyîl → مَهْلَائِيل
 Jared → Yârid → يَارِد
 Enoch → Uhnûh → اِخْنُوخ
 Methuselah → Müteveşlah → مَتْوَشَلُح
 Lamech → Lemk → لَمَك
 Noah → Nûh → نُوح

- Shem → Sām → سام
 Arphaxhad → Arfaḥṣed or Erfahṣed → أرفحشد
 Rea → Erg → أرغ
 Serug → Sârûg → صاروغ
 Nahor → Nahûr → ناخور
 Terah → Târah → طارح
- 34 Verse 107 of Surah 21 (The Prophets) of the Qur'an is as follows [Pickthall's translation]:
 We sent thee not save as a mercy for the peoples.
- 35 The Garden of Purity is the translation of the expression *Rawza-yi Mutahhara* used for the mausoleum of the Prophet of Islam.
- 36 Murtaza [also Murtada] means 'one who is accepted or chosen; also one who pleases or satisfies'. It was used as one of the names of the Prophet.
- 37 Muḥtaba means the 'one selected out of many'.
- 38 Taha and Yasin are the names and also the first words of Surahs 62 and 36 of the Qur'an. Scholars assign several different meanings to these words, but Süleyman Çelebi treats them as names or attributes of the Prophet.
- 39 Amin means trustworthy and it was an attribute of the Prophet because of his fair dealings in trade and financial matters.
- 40 Refer to Endnote No. 34.
- 41 Mahmud means 'the praised' or 'praiseworthy', and is also used to refer to the Prophet.
- 42 Süleyman Çelebi refers to himself here.
- 43 Rabi 'al awwal [in Turkish, Rebiülevvel] is the third month of the 12 month lunar Islamic calendar.
- 44 The Ka 'ba is a cube-like building in Mecca which is the holiest shrine in Islam, and is located within the area of the al-Haram mosque. It was originally built by the prophet Abraham as a place of worship.
- 45 Ridwan [in Turkish Rıdvan and in Urdu Rizvan] is the name of the gate keeper of Paradise.
- 46 This is a reference to the five daily prayers offered by Muslims.
- 47 The sprinkling of some powdered salt on the body of a new born baby has survived to a limited extent in the Middle East to this day – as a protection against germs or even the Evil Eye.
- 48 Refer to Endnote No. 22.
- 49 There is a town in Iran called Saveh, about 100 kilometres southwest of Teheran, but some accounts mentioning this as one of the portents observed at the time of the Prophet's birth also refer to other locations for this lake.
- 50 The first couplet and all other even lines in this ghazal-like Turkish poem end with the word Mustafa.
- 51 *Tawhid* [Tevhid in Turkish], or Allah is One. The Unity of God is a cardinal belief in Islam.
- 52 The reference is to Surah 8 verse no. 17 describing incidents at the Battle of Badr where the Prophet threw a handful of dust [or sand] against the pagans. The verse in Pickthall's translation reads:
 Ye (Muslims) slew them not, but Allah slew them. And thou (Muhammad) threwest not when thou didst throw, but Allah threw, that He might test the believers by a fair test from Him. Lo! Allah is Hearer, Knower.
- 53 Hira is a cave in the Jabal al-Nur, a mountain near Mecca. It is the location of the first revelation received by the Prophet Muhammad.
- 54 "Tomorrow" is often used in Islamic poetry and general literature to refer to the Day of Judgment.
- 55 Also known as Hind, this lady [Ümmühâni in Turkish] was the daughter of the Prophet's uncle Abu Talib and was therefore the sister of Ali [later the 4th Caliph]. The Quranic verse in the Chapter called 'The Israelites' [Surah 17 No. 1] makes no reference to the lady or the house.
- 56 *Burak* is the name given to this steed of heavenly origin, whose name derives from the Arabic word for lightning [*barq*] because of its extraordinary speed.

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- 57 An *imam* is a Muslim who leads a congregation in prayers.
- 58 The Al Aqsa Mosque [The Farthest Shrine] in Jerusalem, opened in 705 A.D. is the third holiest place of worship in the Islamic world.
- 59 A *rekat* [or *rakat*] consists of each unit of the prescribed movements of bowing and prostration performed and words uttered during prayers to Allah.
- 60 This is the Rock that lies under the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The Rock is said to be the one on which the Prophet Abraham offered his son as a sacrifice to the Almighty.
- 61 Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad will intercede with Almighty Allah on the Day of Judgement for their sins to be forgiven.
- 62 This reference is to be found in verse 4 of the Surah 68 (The Pen) of the Qur'an.
- 63 The prophet Joseph [Yusuf in the Qur'an] was reputedly very handsome. His attractiveness has been mentioned in the Surah 12 (Yusuf) of the Qur'an.
- 64 Both Worlds implies the Present and the Hereafter.
- 65 A play upon the words *kibir* (meaning conceit or haughtiness) and *gebir* (meaning infidel).
- 66 Jihad is 'striving in the Way of Allah'. It may, though it usually does not, have military connotations.
- 67 The Friend is a name sometimes used for God, especially in Islamic mystical poetry. For a reference in English, see E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* [London: J M Dent & Sons, 1968], Chapter XXXI, p. 241, wherein it is stated: 'The Friend: a Persian expression for God.'
- 68 ...Maymunah bint al-Harith was a widow whom the Prophet married in 629 A.D. The Turkish form of the name is Meymüne.
- 69 Abu Bakr (573 – 634 A.D.) also called Al-Siddiq (The Upright / The Constant) was a senior companion of the Prophet Muhammad and also his father-in-law. After the death of the Prophet, he was chosen as the First Caliph of the Islamic domains.
- 70 The prayer niche, in the wall of the mosque facing Mecca, is called the *Mihrab*. It is a triangular or semicircular niche from where the Imam leads the formal prayers.
- 71 *Allahu Akbar* means 'Allah is the Greatest'. It is part of the *Adhan* [call to prayer from the minaret] as well as part of the offered prayer.
- 72 Omar [also spelled Umar] ibn al Khattab (579 – 644 A.D.) succeeded Abu Bakr as the second of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs in 634 A.D. He remained Caliph till his assassination in 644 A.D.
- 73 'Tomorrow' in Islamic poetry often refers to the Day of Judgement.
- 74 Osman [also spelled Uthman] ibn Affan (577 – 656 A.D.) was a Companion of the Prophet and also a son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. He succeeded Omar as the third of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs in 644 A.D. He remained Caliph till his assassination in 656 A.D.
- 75 Ali bin Abi Talib (599 – 661 A.D.) was the son-in-law of the Prophet and succeeded Osman as the last of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs in 656 A.D. He was assassinated in 661 A.D.
- 76 Fatima [also known as Fatima Zahra; in Turkish also Fatma] was the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his wife Khadija. She is said to have been born in the year 604 A.D. She married Ali bin Abi Talib [who later became the fourth Caliph]. Fatima died in 632 A.D., departing from the world very shortly after the Prophet himself.
- 77 Ayesha [also known as Aishah Siddiqa; in Turkish, Ayşe] was the daughter of the first Caliph Abu Bakr and a wife of the Prophet Muhammad. She is said to have lived between the years 614 and 678 A.D.
- 78 The poem [in its original Arabic] is usually part of the text of the Mevlid. It is conjectured that the poem was composed by Abbas, an uncle of the Prophet. However, a Turkish translation is usually read out when the Mevlid is being recited.
- 79 From the Qur'an:
Who say, when a misfortune striketh them: Lo! we are Allah's and lo! unto Him we are returning.
[Surah 2 (The Cow), verse 156, translation by Pickthall].
- 80 The Acceptor [Al-Mujib] is one of the names of Allah.

- 81 *Mu 'in* or Helper is one of the many attributes of Allah, and is often used in the Mevlid. See also Line 15 of the Mevlid.
- 82 Abdülhamid Ziyâeddin (1825 – 1880), known as Ziya Pasha, was an important poet and civil servant. His poetical works are discussed in S. Tanvir Wasti, *An Introduction to Late Ottoman Poetry*, (Berkeley: CSI International, 2012), Chapter 3.
- 83 ...Mehmed Akif Ersoy (1873 – 1936) was a major poet whose later life spanned the early years of the Turkish Republic, and whose words were selected for the Turkish National Anthem. His life and works are presented in S. Tanvir Wasti, *An Introduction to Late Ottoman Poetry*, (Berkeley: CSI International, 2012), Chapter 8.
- 84 Nihad Sâmî Banarlı, 'Mevlid'e Dâir' [About the Mevlid], in *Kitaplar ve Portreler* [Books and Portraits], (Istanbul: Kubbealti, 2014), pp. 80 – 85.
- 85 Allah is the *Ism-i Zat* [Essence]; all others are the *Ism-i Sifat* [Attributes].
From the Qur'an :
Say (unto mankind): Cry unto Allah, or cry unto the Beneficent, unto whichsoever ye cry (it is the same). His are the most beautiful names.
[Surah 17 (The Israelites), verse 110, translation by Pickthall].
- 86 Literally translated as "the most beautiful names".
- 87 Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall [Translator], *The Glorious Qur'an*, (first edition in 1930; several publishers).
- 88 Edwin Arnold, *Pearls of the Faith or Islam's Rosary, being the Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of Allah*, (New York: J.B. Alden, 1883), 202 pp.
- 89 Ibn Isa Saruhânî, *Esmâ-i Hüsnâ Şerhi* [The Annotated Beautiful Names; edited by Numan Külekçi], (Ankara: Akçag, undated), pp. 242.
- 90 The *Abjad* numerals are a system going back many centuries in which all 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet are assigned numerical values. Chronograms to commemorate a particular date are composed on the basis of the *abjad* numerical values.

Abstract

The article presents the *Mevlid* (from the Arabic *mawlid*), poetic panegyrics addressed to Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings) by Suleyman Celebi. Over the centuries, mevlids and other compositions in praise of the Holy Prophet have continued to be produced in languages as diverse as Turkish, Urdu and Malay and have become established as a separate genre in the religious literature and languages of the ummah. The author of the *Mevlid* was born around 1350 A.D., and received an excellent education. One of its verses gives the date of its completion as the year 812 Hijri which is equivalent to 1409 A.D. The *Mawlid* is considered in Turkish the foremost Islamic Nativity Poem. The *Mevlid* has become such an organic part of the spiritual constitution of the Turks that parts of it are recited at births, deaths, weddings, religious festivals and even other occasions like the departures, from their homes, of groups of newly-conscripted soldiers to join their regiments.

Keyword: Mevlid, mawlid, Suleyman Celebi, Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), poetic panegyrics