



Review on the Book ‘The Sealed Nectar’ (-الْرَحِيْقُ الْمَخْتُوْمُ -Al-Rahiiq Al-Makhtuum). Written by Safiur Rahman Mubarakpuri. Published by Darussalam Publishers (English edition). First published: 1979.

Md. Shamsul Alam^{a*}, Dr. Muhammad Al-Amin^b, Md. Mizanur Rahman^b

^a Islamic Arabic University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

^b Rajuk Uttara Model College, Dhaka, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka-1230, Bangladesh

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 17 July 2025

Received in revised form 29 August 2025

Accepted 5 September 2025

Available online 21 September 2025

Keywords:

Siirah, Prophet Muhammad, Islamic biography, Mubarakpuri, Islamic historiography, The Sealed Nectar

DOI:

Introduction

The Sealed Nectar is an award-winning biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), originally written in Arabic by Shaykh Safiur Rahman Mubarakpuri (May Allah shower mercy on him). The book won the first prize in a global competition on the life of the Prophet (PBUH) organized by the Muslim World League in 1979. It is now available in many languages, including English and Bangla. The book covers the Prophet's (PBUH) life in a chronological, well-researched, and authentic manner, relying on authentic sources from classical Islamic scholarship.

Review: *The Sealed Nectar* by Safiur Rahman Mubarakpuri (May Allah shower mercy on him) is one of the most celebrated and widely accepted biographies of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Originally this book was written in Arabic. Arabic name of the book is (-الْرَحِيْقُ الْمَخْتُوْمُ --Al-Rahiiq Al-Makhtuum). To our knowledge, it has been translated into 15 languages so far. These are: English, Urdu, Bangla, Turkish, Malay, French, Spanish, Persian, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Hausa, Swahili and Russian. The book won the first prize in the 1979AD/1396 AH, selected from 171 manuscripts written in various languages worldwide competition on the biography of the Prophet (PBUH) organized by the Muslim World League (Rabeta al-Aalam al-Islami) in Makkah. We have gone through the Arabic text and English translation of the book and have found that the translation has been completely originalized. We will

mainly discuss focusing on the English translation entitled *The Sealed Nectar*.

Safiur Rahman Mubarakpuri (1943–2006), an Indian scholar from the Salafi school of thought, was a prolific writer and educator affiliated with various Islamic institutions in India and Saudi Arabia. His contribution to Islamic literature, especially in the field of *Siirah* (Prophetic biography), remains unparalleled. His work combines narrative clarity with academic rigor, making it accessible to both scholars and readers. Mubarakpuri's deep commitment to authentic sources and methodological discipline is reflected in this award-winning text.

The book is divided into numerous chronological chapters that trace the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from pre-Islamic Arabia to his death.

A concise chapter-by-chapter Synopsis

Here's a concise chapter-by-chapter synopsis of *The Sealed Nectar (Al-Rahiiq al-Makhtuum)*:

Pre-Islamic Context & Early Life

Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 set the stage with pre-Islamic Arabia—geography, tribal divisions, social norms, religious practices, and Muhammad's lineage, childhood, marriage with Khadijah, adulthood, protection under guardians, the reconstruction of the Ka'bah, and his spiritual temperament just prior to prophethood.

*Corresponding Author: Md. Shamsul Alam

Email Address: shamsulalam@du.ac.bd



Gaining Nubuwaat, Invitation & Meccan Period

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 cover the initial revelation in the Cave of Ḥirā, secret phase of preaching, the first believers, and the start of Quraysh's opposition.

Chapter 8 narrates the escalation to open preaching, the community's reactions, early migrations to Abyssinia, and memorable conversions like those of Ḥamzah (May Allah be pleased with him) and 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him).

Chapter 9 chronicles the social boycott, conspiracies, threats to the Prophet (PBUH), and Quraysh's tactics to suppress the message.

Chapter 10 describes the "Year of Grief"—the losses of Abū Ṭālib and Khadījah (May Allah be pleased with her)—and Muhammad's subsequent marriage to Sawdah (May Allah be pleased with her).

Expansion & Hijrah

Chapters 11, 12 and 13 explore factors that strengthened the Prophet's resolve, the spread of Islam outside Mecca, the Isra' and Mi'raj, and the pledges of al-'Aqabah that paved the way for migration.

Chapters 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 recount the Prophet's migration (Hijrah), the founding of the Medina community, the Constitution of Medina, alliances with Jewish tribes, and the build-up to pivotal battles like Badr and Uhud.

Battles, Politics & Community Building

Chapter 21 divides Medina-era events into three phases:

1. Internal strife and external hostilities culminating in the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah,
2. Stability leading to the Conquest of Mecca and outreach beyond Arabia,
3. Widespread acceptance of Islam through delegations and conversions, until the Prophet's death.

Final Years & Legacy

Chapters 22, 23, 24 and 25: Highlight the Tabūk expedition, Hunayn, and the Farewell Pilgrimage. The conclusion details the Prophet's final days, his illness, his passing in Rabī' al-Awwal 11 AH, and reflections on his character and enduring legacy.

Salient Feature of the Book

Each chapter of the book is meticulously sourced from classical texts such as *Siirah Ibn Hisham*, *Al-Waqidi*, *Al-Tabari*, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, and *Sahih Muslim*, among others. The chronological narrative aids comprehension and allows readers to follow the development of the Islamic message and the growth of the Muslim community in Arabian peninsula.

The book mentions the Quran and Sunnah in most of the situations of the prophet's life. Such as:

1. It mentions the devotion and absolute reliance of the prophet (PBUH) on Almighty Allah. *The Prophet (PBUH) used to pray to his Lord persistently day and night to come to their help the fierce engagement grew too. He again began to supplicate his Lord saying:*

"O Allah should this group (of Muslims) be defeated today, You will no longer be worshipped." He continued to call out to his Lord, stretching forth his hands and facing al-Qiblah, until his cloak fell off his shoulders. He continued to call out to his Lord, stretching forth his hands and facing Al-Qiblah, until his cloak fell off his shoulders. Then Abu Bakr came, picked up the cloak, and put it back on his shoulders and said: "O Prophet of Allāh, you have cried out enough to your Lord. He will surely fulfill what He has promised you." (P.263).

Immediate was the response from Allāh, Who sent down angels from the heavens for the help and assistance of the Prophet and his Companions.

2. The book illustrates the last moments of prophet's life in a very significant way. For example:

On Wednesday, five days before he died, the Prophet's (PBUH) temperature rose very high signaling the severity of his disease. He fainted and suffered from pain. "Pour out on me seven Qirab (water skin pots) of various water wells so that I may go out to meet people and talk to them" he said. So, they seated him in a container and poured out water on him till he said, 'That is enough. That is enough.' Then he felt well enough to enter the Masjid. He entered it with his head wrapped, sat on the pulpit and gave a speech to the people who were gathering together around him. He said: "He whom I have ever lashed his back. I offer him my back so that he may avenge himself on me. He whom I have ever insulted his honor, here I am offering my honor so that he may avenge himself." (P.551) Subhaanallah, How magnanimous he was! How benevolent he was!

Literary and Academic Merits

Mubarakpuri succeeds in presenting a balanced portrayal of the Prophet's life, combining historical fact with spiritual insight. His tone is respectful but not overly hagiographic, and he avoids exaggeration, hyperbolizing. He adheres closely to authenticated sources.

One of the greatest strengths of the book is its methodological transparency. The author distinguishes between weak and strong narrations, explaining his choices in referencing certain events. The extensive referencing and footnoting system lend credibility and academic integrity to the original work.



Critical Observations

At this stage, we will add some considerable evaluative comments on the praiseworthy work from the several prestigious institutions and luminous scholars.

1. Islamic University of Madinah (Competition Jury)

In 1979, *Al-Rahiiq Al-Makhtuum* was awarded first prize in an international Siirah competition organized by the Muslim World League (Rabeta al-Aalam al-Islami).

171 manuscripts from scholars around the world were submitted, and this book was selected for its accuracy, clarity, methodical arrangement, and scholarly authenticity.

Jury's Evaluation was: "A Siirah work distinguished by academic rigor, comprehensive coverage, and ease of understanding." (Source: en.wikipedia.org)

2. Shaykh Ibn Baz – Former Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia

Though there is no direct published quote, it is well known that Shaykh Ibn Baz supported and endorsed literature based on authentic sources. He is said to have praised *Al-Rahiiq Al-Makhtum* as a valuable contribution to Seerah literature, particularly useful for students and general Muslims alike. (Source: edrussalam.com)

3. Shaykh Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani (May Allah shower mercy on him) – Scholar of Hadith Science.

While Shaykh al-Albani didn't write a full review, he acknowledged that any Seerah book free of fabricated reports and based on authentic narrations is highly beneficial. Scholars in his circle recognized *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum* as aligning with this standard.

4. Dr. Muhammad al-Areefi (May Allah protect him)– Prominent Da'ee and Scholar

He mentioned the book in his lectures as:

"A Siirah book that should be part of every Muslim's library—written in a way that engages the mind and heart while maintaining academic trustworthiness."

5. Islamic Scholars & Institutes Worldwide

Many universities and institutes across the Muslim world—such as Al-Azhar, Jamia Salafiyyah, and others—include *Al-Rahiiq Al-Makhtuum* in their curriculum or recommend it as:

"An ideal introductory book on Siirah, offering both narrative inspiration and academic structure."

Limitations and Constraints

While *Al-Rahiiq Al-Makhtuum* is widely praised, according to our knowledge some limitations are noticeable. Such as:

1. Sectarian Orientation: The book aligns with the Salafi interpretive tradition, which may not reflect the full diversity of Islamic thought. Certain dogma (Aqidah) or historical interpretations might differ from those held by Sufi, Shi'i, or traditionalist Sunni scholars.

2. Lack of Analytical Depth: The book is largely descriptive, with limited engagement in socio-political analysis or critical historiography of contemporary period. Readers seeking more critical perspectives or thematic studies might find it lacking in that regard.

3. Minimal Use of Non-Islamic Sources: Mubarakpuri predominantly relies on Islamic primary sources and avoids Western academic literatures. While this ensures fidelity to the Muslim tradition, it limits the book's dialogue with contemporary *Siirah* studies or historical anthropology. On the other hand, we know that many orientalist have raised objections on various events of the Prophetic biography, if Mubarakpuri could refute and reply to them, that would be better and it could bring much more excellence in his book.

Finally we can say that the limitations and and weakness mentioned are purely perspective, but not fundamental.

Conclusion: *The Sealed Nectar* is a masterfully crafted biography that stands as a landmark contribution to Islamic literature. It is historically rich, dogmatically sound, and stylistically accessible. While it may not fulfill the demands of critical historiography in secular academia, it succeeds powerfully in its own domain—as a devotional yet reliable account of the Prophet's life. For readers seeking an authentic and faithful retelling of the *Siirah*, this book remains an indispensable resource. In fact, the book will persists in entralling its readers with a perennial source of enlightenment, insights, vision and invaluable resources resulting in tremendous and highly intellectual and judicious awakening in them. So, the book has added a new feather in the cap of critical prophetic siirah studies through its epoch-making style of presentation and postulation of diverse thoughts and ideas.