



# A CONCLUSIVE EVALUATION OF AR- RUSAFI'S POETICAL WRITINGS

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## ABSTRACT

In terms of poetic works, the great Arabic poets are usually divided into two categories. Poly-theme poets make up the first group, while mono-theme poets make up the second. The poet under study is a typical example of the first group (Ar-Rusafi). He was a specialist poet who wrote a lot of socially conscious and instructive poetry. After failing the final exam, he diligently and discreetly studied until success came his way since he loved learning. He was the first poet to accurately capture Iraqis' sense of identity and political aspirations. The purpose of this essay is to present some of Rusafi's Arabic-poetical works. His early years, schooling, and professional life are covered in the biographical accounts that open the book.

An effort is made to look into his literary endeavours that were expressed in poetry style. This paper's content is compared to the poet's lyrical lines in a critical analysis. After that, one can check at how his works were evaluated. The report concludes with a conclusion and a few recommendations. It is true that the west was aware of Shawqi before it was aware of Rusafi, but this was because European orientalists had touch with Egypt before they had contact with the rest of the Arabic-speaking world.

*Key Words: Ar- Rusafi, Shawqi, Orientalists, Arabic-Speaking World, Lyrical Lines, Endeavours, Discreetly, Diligently, Evaluation, Writings, Arabic, Poly-Theme, Mono-Theme, Conscious, Instructive, Conclusive.*

## Introduction

The status of Ar-Rusafi in Iraq is comparable to that of Ahmad Shawqi in Egypt. He was the first poet to accurately capture Iraqis' sense of nationalism and aspirations in terms of politics. After failing in the yearly test for the fourth-year class Rusafi left the institution and briefly attended a private school before enrolling as a student of Mahmud al-Shukri al-Alusi, a then-famous scholar, where he spent roughly twelve years studying Arabic literature and Islamic studies. He taught Arabic literature in the Madrasah al-Wa'izun after receiving his degree since he loved to

teach, and these lectures were later collected and published in 1915 as "*Nafhut al-Tibfil Khitabat wal-Khatib.*" Rusafi came to see that no country could advance in the world until it had an ideal in front of it, and that no country could ever become great on all fronts unless education was made accessible to all citizens and women were allowed to march with their male counterparts.

## Biography of Ar- Rusafi

His full name was Ma'ruf Ar- Rusafi. He was born in 1875 A.D. to the Jabbarah clan of the respectable Kurdites, who could trace their ancestry back to Ali b. Abi Talib, the fourth orthodox Caliph, and who had originally resided at Kirkuk in contemporary Kurdistan. His father moved to Baghdad in the latter half of the 19th century in quest of work, and he settled down in Rusafah, where our poet was born and raised.

## His Education

Ma'ruf Ar- Rusafi attended al- Rashidiyah al-'Askariyah for higher education in one of the Baghdad's primary schools, where he studied for four years. But as bad fate would have it, he failed to pass yearly examination in the fourth year class. Unable to handle his failure, he left the institution and briefly attended a private school before enrolling as a student under Mahmud al-Shukri al- Alusi studying Arabic literature and Islamic sciences for almost twelve years.

## His Career

Due to his financial situation, he was forced to work as a teacher in order to maintain his further education. While still sitting at the feet of his beloved master, al- Alusi, he was appointed professor of Mandli, Baghdad, following a competitive examination held by the local government, finishing first among the eleven successful candidates in his group. When he was about to start the job, the Director of Public Instruction in Baghdad offered him a job as an Arabic literary teacher at the local I'dadiyah al-Rasamiyah Institution for an equal salary. Al-Rusafi, on the other hand, accepted the latter, which he held with conspicuous success until the establishment of the 'Uthmanite Democratic Regime. The reputation of ar-Rusafi as a scholar grew day by day. The owner of the renowned Turkish Journal "Iqdam" hired him to edit the publications of Arabic edition.

Ar-Rusafi, therefore, travelled for Constantinople to start working at his new office, but while en route, he discovered that the directors had given up on the notion of publishing the Arabic edition. Following his disappointing trip to Salunika and other historical sites, Ar-Rusafi returned to Baghdad.

He had to sell some of his poetical writings in Beirut to cover the costs of the trip because he ran out of money on the way back to his house. After having it was edited by the late *Muhyiuddin al-Khayyat, Muhammad Jamal*, the owner of *al-Maktabatul-Ahliyah*, bought the manuscript and published it under the name "*Diwanur-Rusafi.*" The publication garnered positive reviews from a number of prestigious Arabic newspapers and magazines from Syria and Egypt, as well as from the general public. The poetry abilities of Ma'ruf ar-Rusafi were also commended by intellectuals like '*Abdul Qadir al-Maghribi* and Father *L. Cheikho al-Yasu'i*.

After a month, ar-Rusafi was employed as an Arabic tutor at the *Madrasah al-Mulkiyah al-'Aliyah* and the editor of the Constantinople-based Arabic periodical "*Sabilur-Rashad*." He made a second trip to the Turkish capital to start his new job, which he successfully completed for almost a year. He gave several lectures on Arabic literature when he was there in the *Madrasah al-Wa'izun*, which were later collected and published in 1915 as *Nafhut al-Tibfil Khitabatwal-Khatib*. Ma'ruf got married in this place, but sadly, all of his children passed away soon after birth.

He picked up the Turkish language, which he had only a passing familiarity with a child. He stayed in Stambul until the end of World War I. Rusafi returned to Syria once the peace was restored, but he was unable to find a suitable position there. However, he was given the opportunity to teach Arabic at the Teachers' Training College in Jerusalem, where he had no trouble.

He was appointed Vice-President of the *Lajnatut-Tarjamawat-Ta'rib* (The Committee on Translation and Transliteration) by the Ministry of Education in 1921, when the provisional government of Iraq was established, and was later named Minister of Education. Prior to World War 1, he was also elected to the Turkish Parliament and the Iraqi Parliament.

### **His Literary Activities**

In addition to being an educator, a journalist, and a politician, Rusafi wrote the following pieces of poetry and prose-

#### 1. *Diwanar-Rusafi* (vol. I):

- i. *Diwanar-Rusafi* (vol. 1): This collection contains all of his poems written up until 1910, when it was first published by al-Maktabatul-Ahliyah in Beirut. It is divided into four sections: Al- Kawniyat (cosmological poems),
- ii. *Ijtima'iyat* (social poems),
- iii. *The Tarikhiyat* (historical poems),
- iv. *Wasfiyat* (descriptive poems).

#### 2. *Diwanar-Rusafi* (vol. II):

In manuscript form still, it includes every poem he wrote from the time the first volume was published until his passing away.

In addition to the aforementioned Divan, the poet also possessed a collection of qasa'id and poem fragments that he did not publish since they featured harsh criticism of certain people as well as the government.

#### 3. *Riwayat al-Ru'ya*:

a novel by renowned Turkish author Namiq Kamal that has been translated into Arabic. This was his debut piece of literature, which was published in Baghdad in 1909.

#### 4 *Dafa 'al-Hujnah fi 'Irtidakh al-Luknah*

The poet included all the Arabic terms that could be discovered in Turkish in this pamphlet. In 1331/1912, Istanbul published it.

#### 5 *Nafhut al-Tibfil-Khitabatwal-Khatib:*

A selection of his talks on the Arabic art of speaking that was given in Istanbul under the sponsorship of the Madrasah al-Wa'izun.

#### 6 *Al-Anashid al-Madrasiyah:*

It includes his patriotic and literary songs that the school boys of Syria and Iraq have occasionally recited. Khalil Tutah, the principal of Darul-Mu'allimin in Quds, collected it in 1920.

7 Two portions of *Muhadrat al-Adab al-Arabi*: It includes speeches he gave to instructors at different Iraqi schools in 1921 and 1922.

#### 8 *Kitab al-'Alatwal-'Adat:*

An introduction on *Ta'rib* and *Ishtiqaq* (Arabicization and derivation) of the names of various objects and equipment is included in this highly important scientific work.

#### 9 *Daf'ul-Miraq fi Lughatil-'Ammati min ahli al-'Iraq :*

A book that discuss the syntax, traits, proverbs, and phrases of the Iraqi dialect.

In addition to the works already mentioned, he gathered information for a substantial work on "The Muslims of today," but he was tragically unable to finish it because of his passing.

### **A Critical Examination of His Poetic Writings**

After mentioning his literary accomplishments, we'll provide a brief analysis of his poetry lines. The poet uses some inflammatory language in some of his lines in an effort to motivate the nation's youth. He does, however, think that such phrases are necessary to address the problem with asserting one's rights. How reasonable is that belief given what we know about the government's stance on such a critical question. His facial expressions are far too aggressive. This technique has the power to incite the populace against the legitimate authorities. It might ultimately result in the poet being imprisoned. People are said to consult poets as oracles before setting off any kind of adventure. Our poet needs to be tactful when requesting certain rights.

Additionally, he asserts that he is from the region around the Tigris River. The Arabic word for this type of phrase is *Fakhr*, which translates to "self-praise." Therefore, the assertion in this line is credible because the poet has supported it. His descriptions of natural events can leave his readers trying to figure out what he was trying to say.

## An examination of his literary works

It has been already provided the Arabic and English translations of a few of his lyrical lines. Now discussion will be on his poetical accomplishments. Rusafi promised to be a renowned national poet even when he was still a young boy. He committed the words of the ancient Arab poets to memory and afterwards started to compose his own poetry. The public was greatly struck by Rusafi's manner, raciness of phrase, and abundance of imagery when he delivered his qasa'id in Baghdad's literary circles. Rusafi quickly made a name for himself in the Arabic-speaking world by having his poetry published in the major Egyptian publications and journals, despite the fact that Turkish authoritarianism prohibited him from fully expressing his creative skill in Iraq due to his dependence on Turkey. His poetry combined a ferocious critique of the whims of the autocracy of the "Uthmanite Turks of Constantinople," symbolized by the authoritarian rule of the late Sultan 'Abdul Hamid Khan, with a call for the waking of the barbaric Arabs from their protracted sleep. The despotic government of the "Uthmanite Turks" was quickly replaced by democracy led by nationalist Turks as a result of the tireless efforts and unending sacrifices of Jamaluddin al-Afghani and his fellow workers. This allowed the poet to breathe in the atmosphere of liberty, to use his poetical genius for the regeneration of his oppressed countrymen, and to lift them out of the pit of despair in which they were mired.

Rusafi came to the realization that no country could advance in the world until it had an ideal in front of it, and that no country could ever become great on all fronts unless education was made accessible to all citizens and women were allowed to march with their male counterparts. The poet's sentiments are illustrated in the following verses:

*"Taqadum , 'ayuh'al arabi'u shutan Fa inna amamukal Ayish ar-raghida "*

"Ahead, O Arabs in the race of life!" And, indeed, a happy life awaits you."

*"Atiba ifidat alnisa' ka'nnaha Bad ilmatae wahunna fi ahdal saba"*

*"Sharaful mailijat an takun adiba Wa jamaluha fi nnas an tatahadhiban"*

"Are your women's hearts, while they are still young and impressionable, to be traded like products and chattels"?

The ability to read and write is what makes a woman noble, and culture and refinement are what make a woman lovely in the eyes of the public.

*"Ibnul madarisa nastaqda bihal amila Hataa nutawil fi banyaniha zahalan"*

"Build institutions and schools until they are larger than Saturn itself so that we can accomplish our goal."

Rusafi was an ardently nationalistic poet who, in contrast to many 'Abbasid poets, frequently referred to the Tigris in Baghdad and drew inspiration from its scenery, earning him the nickname 'Ibn Dijlah' as can be seen from the stanza that follows:

*"Ana ibn dajala marubuha adaba*

*Wa in ykual ma' minha laysa yaruni"*

Despite the fact that its water does not satisfy my thirst, I am the son of the Tigris, who made my literature famous.

The poetry of Rusafi can be divided into three categories: tragic, social, and narrative and he has had a significant impact on modern Arab poets in each of these categories. His sensitive personality and understanding of human nature, which are qualities that are crucial for a great tragedian, might be attributed to his success as a writer of tragedies.

It is impossible to overstate how valuable he is as a social poet. He was a social reformer who closely examined social issues with a critical eye and offered a cure for every social ill that was eroding society's foundations. Rusafi transformed his Arab compatriots' perspectives through his poetry. The moment his Diwan was published, Arab newspapers hailed him as the creator of a brand-new genre of poetry that had never before appeared in Arabic literature, saying the following about him:

*“Inaa ibnal rusafa mubtakir tariqatal nuzum Al iztimaye wa farisul mayidan fih”*

The son of Rusafah has undoubtedly written a revolutionary "socialistic poem," making him a hero in this branch of Arabic poetry.

His incredible storytelling strength is the most significant aspect of his poetry that distinguishes him as a great poet. It is evident from reading his poems, like *Ummul-Yatim (The Mother of the Orphan)*, *al-Yatimfil 'Id (The Orphan on the Occasion of 'Id Festival)*, and *al-Mutalaq (The Divorced Woman)*. The following quotes from his poetry serve as examples of Rusafi's unparalleled ability to describe natural things.

*“Tahtaz baina yadal maghib ka'nnaha Sabbu tamalmal fil firashil alila”*

Before vanishing, she trembles as if she were a lover who was throwing his bed around because they were in love.

*“Nazalat tajurru ilal ghurub nuyula Safra' tashbih ashiqan mutbulan”*

As she sets in the west, the sun pulls up her skirts and assumes the appearance of an emaciated lover.

*“Wa ghadat bi aqsal ufuq mithla alararati .atashasat fibdat safrat wa dhubulan”*

She appears in the distance like a parched wild narcissus, withered and yellow.

*“Qad ghadart kabadu sama' muniratan Tadnu qalilan lil ufule qalilan”*

She has moved gradually toward sunset after leaving the brightest part of the sky.

*“Sakhakat mashariquha bi wazhika bukratan Wa magharibuha dimaru aseelan”*

The location of her rising (The east where the sun rises) smiles in the morning and tears in blood in the evening when she sees your face.

## The Poems' Style

An in-depth analysis of Rusafi's literary creativity in creating this poem on a verse-by-verse basis is not essential given the size expected of an article. The style will therefore only be explored in its most important characteristics. Avoiding difficult language and intricate structures is a key aspect of Rusafi's style in his poems. Because he wrote for the general public, he tried to write in a style that harmoniously combined pleasant phrases with clear grammar. His ability to speak with sweetness and simplicity was impressive. Rusafi established himself in the community of contemporary poets by having his poetry read aloud in classrooms. Because these aspects frequently conceal the main ideas and genuine meaning, he avoided employing vulgar language, colloquial diction, odd and foreign terms (gharaib) meaning. His poetry was highly revered for its social and religious aspects in addition to its artistic excellence. It clarifies life's facets, friendships, and inspiration.

## Conclusion

In terms of their poetic works, the great Arabic poets are usually divided into two categories. Poly-theme poets make up the first group, while mono-theme poets make up the second. The poet under study is a typical example of the first group (Ar-Rusafi). He was a specialist poet who wrote a lot of socially conscious and instructive poetry. After failing the final exam, he diligently and discreetly studied until success came his way since he loved learning. He was the first poet to accurately capture Iraqis' sense of identity and political aspirations. The purpose of this essay is to present some of Rusafi's Arabic-poetical works. His early years, schooling, and professional life are covered in the biographical accounts that open the book.

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