

An Introduction to the Book: Nafasal Mahmoom

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Name of the book: Nafasul Mahmoom

Author: Raisul Mohaddisin Sheikh Abbas Qummi (May Allah raise his grades in Paradise).

Translator: Hujjatul Islam Allamah Syed Safdar Husain Najafi. (May Allah raise his grades in Paradise)

We introduce a book related to the event of Karbala, as we have been doing in previous years. Initially we are introducing the more famous books as there is a possibility that some of our brothers may not be in touch with these invaluable works. As we proceed, we aim to introduce the early works, which are seldom available in libraries and, if available, do not attract the attention of the visitors. Hopefully, the younger generation may take pains to make these books available to the masses.

The title of this year's book is 'Nafasul Mahmoom'. 'Nafas' means breath and 'mahmoom' means the grieving one ('Breath of the grieving one'). It is quite possible may be that the title refers to the famous tradition of Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.)

'The mournful sigh from grieving over the persecutions perpetrated unto us is glorification of Allah (tasbeeh) and to grieve for our affairs is worship.'
(*Usul al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p.226, *Behar al-Anwar* vol. 2, p.64.)

About the Author

The seal of traditionalists (Khaatamul Mohaddeseen) the great historian and researcher Sheikh Abbas Ibne Muhammad Reza Abul Qasim Qummi (r.a.) was born in the city of Qum after 1290 AH. After finishing his elementary education in Qum, he went to Najaf in 1316 A.H. to pursue higher religious subjects, apart from completion of basics like Muqaddamaat and principles of jurisprudence. In Najaf, he got the opportunity to attend the lectures of great scholars and remained under the tutelage of the esteemed teacher Mirza Husain Noori (r.a.) till the latter expired in 1320 A.H.

Al-Haaj Sheikh Abbas Qummi (r.a.) was the embodiment of abstinence and piety. He was second to none in the training of oneself, being aware of the religious laws, trying to follow the infallible Ahle Bait (a.s.) in worship, obedience, caution in speech, and keeping every aspect of oneself away from the prohibitions. He used to give lectures regarding advice and admonitions, the remembrance of Ahle Bait (a.s.) and conveying the traditions of the Holy Ahle Bait (a.s.).

During these lectures tears would flow from his eyes to the extent that they would moisten his beard.

The esteemed author of 'al-Zareeah', Sheikh Aqa Buzurg Tehrani (r.a.) says regarding Haaj Sheikh Abbas Qummi (r.a.): 'I have found him to be a role model, possessing great knowledge. He bore a quality that made everyone who came to know him, like him. His behavior was excellent and his demeanor very humble. His personality was noble and honorable and had the rare combination of knowledge and piety and strict abstinence. I stayed with him for a good period and was therefore close to him.'

Sheikh Abbas Qummi was always involved in teaching and training, and wrote extensively with such interest that nothing could deter him from continuing this good work. He has authored numerous works in Arabic and Persian, some of which are listed hereunder:

1. Safinatul Behar wa Madinatul Hekam wal Aasar
2. Al-Kuna wal Alqaab
3. Al-Fawaid Al-Razawiyyah fi Taraajame Olamaa Al-Jafariyah
4. Mafaateehul Jinan (which is unparalleled for its popularity in the Shia world)
5. Madinatul Ahbaab fil Maroofeen bil Kuna wal Alqab
6. Muntahal Aamaal fi tarikh al-Nabi wal Aal (this book is translated in Urdu as Ahsanul Maqal)
7. Tatammotul Muntaha fi Waqaae Ayyam al-Khulafa
8. Al-Anwarul Bahiyyah fi Tawaareekh al-Hojajil Ilahiyyah
9. Baytul Ahzan fi Masaeb Sayyidatin Niswan
10. Al-Ghayatul Quswa fi Tarjomate Urwatul Wusqa
11. Kohlul Basar fi Seerate Sayyadil Bashar
12. Manaazelul Aakherah
13. Nafasul Mahmoom (the summary of this book is presented in this article)
14. Hadiyatuz Zaeereen

Sheikh Abbas Qummi (r.a.) passed away in Najaf on Tuesday the 23rd of Zilhajj 1359 A.H. He was laid to rest in the courtyard of the holy shrine of Ameerul Momeneen (a.s.) in the same chamber as his teacher Mohaddise Noori (r.a.). May Allah shower his mercy on both of them.

Nafasul Mahmoom: The Book

Sources of the book:

Sheikh Abbas Qummi (r.a.) has taken help of the following source books

S.No. Name of the book Author Year of death (Hijri)

1. Irshad al-Qulub Sheikh Mufid (r.a.) 213
2. Al-Luhuf ala Qatlil Tofoof Sayyid Ibne Taawoos (r.a.) 664

3. Tarikh-e-Tabari Muhammad Ibne. Jurair Tabari 310
4. Tarikh Kaamil Ibne Athir 630
5. Maqaatel al-Taalebeen Abul Faraj Isfahani 356
6. Murujuz Zahab Mas'oodi 346
7. Tazkerato Khawas al Ummah Sibte Ibne Jawzi 653
8. Mataleb al-So'l Ibne Talha Shafei 855
9. Kashful Ghummah
Bahauddin Erbeli 687
10. Al Eqdul Fareed
Shahabuddin Qurtubbi Andalusi 338
11. Al Ehtejaaj Sheikh Tabarsi (r.a.)
12. Kitabul Manaqib
Ibn Shahr Aashob Maazandaraani 588
13. Rawzatul Waaezeen Fattaal Nishapouri
14. Rawzatus Safa
Muhammad Ibn Khawandeh Shah 903

The book 'Nafasul Mahmoom, a book related to the event of Karbala' consists of an introduction, five sections and a conclusion:

(1) Introduction

The author starts with the narration of the birth of the Chief of the Martyrs- Imam Husain (a.s.) and brings it alongside the birth of Hazrat Yahya (a.s.). He has narrated one tradition from Seqatul Islam Kulayni (r.a.) that Imam Husain (a.s.) was brought to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to put his thumb in the mouth of Imam Husain (a.s.) who would suck on it to the extent that it would suffice him for the next two to three days (i.e. he would not feel the need for mother's milk). Then the blood and flesh of Imam Husain (a.s.) is made from that of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself.

'Fitrus sought the protection of his cradle, while we, after him, seek the protection of his grave.'

(The Ziyarat of Imam Husain (a.s.) on the day of his birth.

(Beharul Anwar, vol. 98 p.348; Iqbalul Aamal by Sayyid b. Tawoos (r.a.), vol.1, p. 689)

(2) Section One – Virtues and merits

This section is regarding the virtues of Imam Husain (a.s.) and the rewards for grieving over the difficulties he faced, about cursing the killers of Imam Husain (a.s.) and those who fought

him and a look at those traditions which revolve around Imam's (a.s.) martyrdom. This section consists of two chapters - 1st chapter is regarding a brief enumeration of the virtues of the Holy Imam (a.s.). In the 2nd chapter, the author brings forty traditions about mourning. Here we should specially consider the following narration of Rayyan b. Shabeeb: Imam Reza (a.s.) says "O son of Shabeeb! Whenever you feel like crying, then cry (mourn) for my grandfather Husain (b. Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.)) for he was slaughtered like sheep along with eighteen brave youths from his family, the likes of which were not to be found in the whole world. O son of Shabeeb! If you cry for Husain (a.s.) to the extent that tears flow over your cheeks, Allah will forgive each and every sin that you have committed, be it small or big, little or more.'

(2) Section Two- It contains 22 chapters.

1. The death of Muawiya Ibne Abi Sufyan.
2. The governor of Medina and Imam Husain (a.s.).
3. Imam (a.s.) bids farewell to the graves of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), his mother (s.a.) and his brother (a.s.).

Also the author has brought here the will of Imam Husain (a.s.) which he addressed to his brother Mohammed Hanafiyyah. Following is an excerpt from this will "...have you not read the Book revealed on my grandfather the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that declares, 'Wherever you are death will overtake you, even if you are in lofty towers.' (Surah Nisa: Verse 78).

Allah, Glorified be He has declared, 'Though a group of them, for whom martyrdom is necessary, will come out of their homes towards their places of rest (Surah Ale Imran: Verse153). If I remain unmoved, then through whom will this blatant and disgraced nation be tried? Who will occupy my grave at Karbala? That Karbala which Allah has chosen for me from the very day on which the earth was stretched out (Dahwul Arz1), and He has made it a refuge for my Shias so that it be a place of peace for them in this world and the next. (p. 105).

4. The journey from Mecca to Medina.
5. The departure of Hazrat Muslim Ibne Aqeel (a.s.).
6. The letter of Imam (a.s.) to the elite of Basra.
7. The arrival of Ibn Ziyad in Kufa.
8. The martyrdom of Hazrat Muslim Ibne Aqeel (a.s.) and Janabe Haani Ibne Urwah (r.a.).
9. The martyrdom of Meesame Tammar, Rushaid al-Hujari, Hujr Ibne Adi, Amr Ibne Hamaq, Kumail Ibne Ziyad al-Nakhaee (mercy of Allah be on all of them)
10. The martyrdom of the sons of Hazrat Muslim Ibne Aqeel (a.s.)
11. Imam (a.s.) decides to go to Iraq

12. The departure for Iraq, the letter of Amr b. Said (in which he tries to dissuade Imam (a.s.) from going to Iraq), Imam's (a.s.) letter to the people of Kufa, the meeting with Janabe Zuhair Ibne Qain (r.a.) and the report of the martyrdom of Hazrat Muslim Ibne Aqeel (a.s.). "When the news of the martyrdom of Hazrat Muslim Ibne Aqeel (a.s.) reached Imam (a.s.), he said "We have come from Allah and unto Him is the return. Mercy of Allah be on them both"(implying Hazrat Muslim and Hazrat Hani). He repeated these words a few times then we (i.e. the narrators, who were of Bani Asad) entreated the Imam (a.s.): We plead to you in the name of Allah to return from this very place with your family because your friends and Shias in Kufa are not obedient. We fear that people will rise against you in enmity. Imam (a.s.) glanced at the children of Aqeel and asked: What is your opinion now as Muslim has been martyred? They replied,

'By Allah! We shall not return till we either avenge the death of Muslim or taste what he has savored (i.e. martyrdom). Then Imam (a.s.) looked at us and said: Without them life is not agreeable."

13. Imam (a.s.) meets Hurr (r.a.) and his (a.s.) speech.

14. Imam (a.s.) meets Ubaidullah b. Hurr Jofi.

15. Imam's (a.s.) conversation with Amr Ibne Qays and his (a.s.) reaching Karbala.

16. Imam (a.s.) camps at Karbala, Umar Ibne Saad takes control of Karbala, selection of Habib Ibne Mazaahir (r.a.), the attempt of Yazid Ibne Haseen Hamdani to get water and Imam (a.s.) meets Umar Ibne Sa'd.

17. Shimr comes to Karbala and his misconduct.

18. The night of Aashoora, a ditch is dug around the camp and fire is lit in it, Imam (a.s.) consoles the ladies. It is narrated from Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.), "On the night of Ashoora, my father was readying the graves and Jaun (r.a.) the slave of Abu Zarr (r.a.) was in front of him. My father was saying, 'Woe to you, O time! For you are an unworthy friend; On many a dawn and dusk you have killed a friend and he, who claimed his right; Time will not accept change while the matter is with Allah, the Possessor of Majesty; And every living one will walk this very road.'

19. The day of Aashoora, Imam (a.s.) addresses the army of Ibn Sa'd and the people of Kufa. The last three chapters relate the intense battle on the day of Aashoora, the martyrdom of Imam (a.s.), his friends, supporters, near ones, family and children. While narrating the martyrdom of the infant Ali Asgar, the author quotes a couplet presenting the moment in a touching manner,

“As he was bowing down to kiss his child; the arrow kissed the child’s throat before he could”. The author writes relating the battle of Imam Husain (a.s.) “... He put to sword all those who came close to him (with such ferocity) that corpses piled up. Then he attacked the enemy tents and was saying, ‘Death is better than resorting to baseness and to suffer disgrace is better than entering the Fire of Hell.’ Although the fight was intense and the sound of clashing of swords filled the air, Imam (a.s.) had his objective in sight. He was clarifying his stand to the people and was reciting this battle cry, “I am Husain b. Ali (a.s.), I have vowed not to turn away from my enemies, I will protect my family (the family of my father) and I will leave this world following the religion of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).”

(3) Section Three- It contains 14 chapters

1. The incidents after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.).
2. The tents are set afire.
3. The plundering of the tents.
4. The incidents of the evening of Ashoora. It is narrated, “Then the ladies were turned out from their tents and the tents were set on fire. They were walking with their heads uncovered, their veils snatched away, barefooted, crying and imprisoned. They were wailing, ‘We ask you by Allah to take us near the place where Husain (a.s.) is (lying) martyred’. Then, as they saw the martyrs they wailed aloud and began striking their faces in grief. The narrator says that I can not forget Janabe Zainab binte Ali (a.s.) lamenting over Husain (a.s.). With a grieved heart and a sorrowful voice, she was wailing, “O Muhammad (s.a.w.a.)! ... This is Husain (a.s.) lying in a pool of blood, his limbs cut off, while your daughters are prisoners. I complain to Allah, to Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.), to Ali Murtaza (a.s.), to Fatema Zahra (s.a.) and to Hamza (a.s.) - the chief of the martyrs. O Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) here lies Husain (a.s.) in the open dessert with strong winds blowing over him. The sons of the wretched have murdered him. Such devastating grief and distress has surrounded us as if my grandfather the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself has passed away today. O Allah! This is the progeny of your last Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who are being herded like captives.”
5. The Ahle Bait (a.s.) leave Karbala for Kufa.
6. The burial of Imam (a.s.) and the martyrs and the dream of Ibne Abbas and Umme Salmaa.
7. The Ahle Bait (a.s.) enter Kufa and the speeches of Janabe Zainab (s.a.), Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) and Fatema Sughra (s.a.) at Kufa, the tradition of Muslim Jassaas.
8. The Ahle Bait (a.s.) enter the court of Ibn Ziyad. Zayd Ibne Arqam and his conversation with Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.)

9. The martyrdom of Abdullah Ibne Afif and Awanah Ibne Hekam.
10. The news of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) reaches Medina and the speech of Ibne Zubair at Mecca.
11. The sacred heads of the martyrs are sent to Syria (Shaam).
12. The incidents of the journey to Syria.
13. The Ahle Bait's (a.s.) arrival in Syria, the report of Sahl Ibne Saad, the court of Yazid the accursed, the speech of Janabe Zainab (s.a.) in the court, Ibne Abbas' censure of Yazid the accursed, the speech of Imam Ali b. Husain (a.s.), the reply of the younger daughter of Imam Husain (a.s.).
14. The Ahle Haram (a.s.) return to Medina.

(4) Section Four

The events that came to pass due to the mourning and wailing of the creatures of the heavens and the earth. The angels complaining to Allah and reciting heartrending verses for Imam Husain (a.s.), the recitation of eulogies on the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) by the Jinn and the verses recited for him.

(5) Section Five

This section deals with the children of Imam (a.s.), his virtues and the atrocities committed on the holy grave of Imam (a.s.)

1. The wives and the children of Imam (a.s.)
2. The merits of the visitation (Ziyarat) of the chief of the martyrs - Imam Husain (a.s.). Sulaiman Ibne Khalid narrates that he heard from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that he said, "Everyday and every night, Allah looks towards the earth a hundred thousand times and forgives whomsoever He wishes and chastises whomsoever He wishes. He is particularly forgiving with the visitors of the holy grave of Imam Husain Ibne Ali (a.s.) and with those for whom the visitor will intercede on the Day of Qiyamat, whoever they may be." The narrator asked that if that person (the interceded one) is already worthy of hell fire? Imam (a.s.) affirmed, "Even if he is already worthy of hell fire provided he is not a Nasibi (one who bears malice against the Ahle Bait (a.s.)) and an enemy of the Ahle Bait (a.s.)."
3. The atrocities committed on the holy grave of Imam (a.s.)

(7) Conclusion:

The circumstances of the Tawwabeen (those Kufan Shias who repented for not joining Imam

(a.s.) in Karbala), the uprising of Mukhtar and his slaying the murderers of Imam Husain (a.s.). Let us pray to Allah to raise the grades of the venerable, blessed and the highly esteemed author of this priceless work al-Haaj Sheikh Abbas Qummi (r.a.) and also raise the ranks of the honored translator Allamah Syed Safdar Husain Najafi (r.a.). O Lord! Bless us with the opportunity to read this priceless book and try to follow the path shown by our Imam (a.s.). O Allah! Hasten the reappearance of the avenger of the blood of Husain (a.s.), the last hope of !Janabe Zahra (a.s.) Hazrat Baqiatullah Al-Azam (a.s.). Ameen