

Sayyidah Nafisa bint al-Ḥasan al-Anwar (as): A Model of Female Scholarship, Spiritual Authority, and Wilāyah in Early Islam at Misr

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This article is dedicated to my beloved children, Mufaddal and Fatima. May Allah guide and help them at every stage of their lives through the Wasilah of Sayyidah Nafisa (as). Aameen.

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Abstract: This paper examines the historical and spiritual legacy of Sayyidah Nafisa bint al-Ḥasan al-Anwar (as), a direct descendant of Rasulullah (S), as one of the most distinguished female figures of Islamic scholarship and purity. Born in Makkah in 145 AH, raised in Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and later settled in al-Qahirah, Miṣr, Sayyidah Nafisa emerged as a revered Professor, Mufassir, and Muttaqi person whose life embodied the ideal of Qur'an, Taqwā and Zuhd. Her lineage through Al Imām al-Ḥasan (as) and her Talim under the Imāms of Ahl al-Bayt (as) positioned her as both a transmitter of 'ilm and a living reflection of Nabawi Akhlaq. Drawing upon classical Arabic sources such as Ibn Khallikān's Wafayāt al-A'yān, al-Maqrīzī's al-Khiṭaṭ al-Maqrīziyyah, al-Shabrawī's Nūr al-Absār, and Sufi biographical works like Tārīkh al-Awliyā' al-Miṣriyyīn, as well as Shī'ī compilations including Shaykh 'Abbās al-Qummī's Muntahā al-Āmāl and Dhābiḥullāh al-Maḥallātī's Rayāḥīn al-Sharī'ah, this study situates her within the broader context of early Islamic female scholarship and sainthood. It investigates her educational influence, particularly her association with Muhammad bin Idris al-Shāfi'ī, founder of Sunni Shafai'i Madhab made her role as a moral guide and healer, and her continued veneration in the religious life of Misr. The analysis demonstrates that Sayyidah Nafisa (as) transcended conventional gender boundaries by exercising Wilāyah, spiritual authority rooted in proximity to the Divine, through Talim, Tafsir of Qur'ān, and service to the community. Her life represents a blend of Fiqh, 'ibādah, and Rahmah (social compassion), illustrating the inseparability of scholarship and spirituality in the tradition of Ahl al-Bayt (as). Ultimately, this research contributes to the discourse on gender and sanctity in Islam by highlighting enduring example of Sayyidah Nafisah as a scholar-saint whose intellectual and spiritual legacy bridges Sunni and Shī'ī traditions. Her Shrine in Al Muizziyyah al-Qahirah remains a living testament to the timeless influence of righteous women in preserving and transmitting the Nūr al-Nubuwwah.

Keywords: Sayyidah Nafisa; Ahl al-Bayt; Female Scholarship in Islam; Wilāyah; Barakah; al-Qahirah Saints; Shāfi'ī Tradition; Ruhaniyyah; Women in Islamic History; Piety and Taqwa; Hagiography of Misr.

1). Introduction of Sayyidah

Sayyidah Nafisa (as) was born in Makkah al-Mukarramah on the 11th of Rabi' al-Awwal, in the year 145 AH. She was the noble daughter of al-Hasan al-Anwar ibn "Shaikh al-Shuyūkh" Zayd al-Ablaj ibn al-Imām al-Hasan ibn Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (as). Her father, a man of great virtue and learning, was appointed Governor of Madīnah al-Munawwarah in the year 150 AH. Accompanying him at the tender age of five, Sayyidah Nafisa (as) grew up in the radiant environment of Madīnah, illuminated by the presence of the descendants of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). From a young age, she memorized the Qur'an and studied science of Fiqh in depth, displaying exceptional intelligence and spiritual insight. Renowned for her erudition, she began conducting Asbāq in Tafsir of Qur'an even in her youth. Her father, Zayd al-Ablaj, was known for openly praising the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), thereby increasing their followers and admirers throughout the lands. His popularity alarmed the tyrannical 'Abbāsīd ruler, Abū Ja'far al-Mansūr (La'anatullāh), who imprisoned him for five years. He passed away during his journey for Ḥajj and was buried in Makkah. Sayyidah Nafisa (as) received her Ta'lim from the divine spring of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), those purified by the Āyah al-Taṭhīr:

"Verily, Allah only desires to keep away from you every kind of impurity, O Ahl al-Bayt, and to purify you completely." [Qur'an 33:33]

Sayyidah Nafisa (as) would frequently visit the sacred resting place of her noble ancestor, Rasūlullāh (S). She regularly performed Ṣalāh behind her father in Masjid an-Nabawī from the age of six. Her father would lead her into the Rawdah al-Mubārakah where the blessed grave of Rasulullah (S) lies, and there he would address Rasulullah (S) directly:

"Yā Rasūlullāh, I am pleased with my daughter Nafisa!"

He continued this practice of Ziyārah until one day, Rasūlullāh (S) appeared to him in a dream, saying:

"O Ḥasan! I am pleased with your daughter Nafisa because you are pleased with her, and Allah is pleased with her because I am pleased with her."

The people of Madīnah deeply loved her for her piety and Taqwā. She observed Ṣawm during the days and spent her nights in Ibadah, known for her humility and Taqwa.

At sixteen, Sayyidah Nafisa (as) married her cousin, Ishāq al-Mu'taman, the son of Moula Abī 'Abdillāh al-Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (as). Allah blessed them with a son, al-Qāsim, and a daughter, Umm'e Kulthūm. Under the guidance of her father-in-law, Al Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (as), she further deepened her mastery of Fiqh and Qur'an sciences. At the age of forty-four, she migrated to Misr with her cousin Sakinah al-Madfūnah, where she eventually settled.

2). Alqāb (Titles) of Sayyidah

Due to her extraordinary Taqwa, 'ilm, and Karamah, Sayyidah Nafisa (as) was known by many Alqāb among the people. She was called "Nafīsat al-'ilm wal-Ma'arif" (the Rare Gem of Knowledge and Gnosis) for the vast learning she inherited from the Ahl al-Bayt (as). She was also known as "Nafīsat al-Ṭāhirah" (the Lady of Purity), "Nafīsat al-'Ābidah" (the Devout Worshipper), "Nafīsat al-Dārayn" (the Exceptional Lady in this World and the Hereafter), and "Ṣāhibat al-Karāmāt" (the Lady of Miracles).

Her other titles include “Sayyidat Ahl al-Fatwā” (the Leading Lady in issuing religious verdicts), “Umm al-‘Awājiz” (Mother of Elderly Women), and “Nafīsat al-Miṣriyyīn” (the Exalted Lady of the Misr) for the people of Misr held immense love and devotion for her, seeking her Du‘ā’ and Wasilah in every affair.

3). Ziyārah of Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl (as)

Whenever Sayyidah Nafisa (as) recited the Qur’an, she would offered Dua:

“O Allah! Make it easy for me to visit the grave of our master, Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl (as).”

She longed for this Ziyārah knowing that he was both the father of the Prophets and the spiritual forefather of her great-grandfather, Muhammad (S). She recalled that Rasulullah’s Da‘wah was in fulfilment of Ibrāhīm’s (as) Dua:

“And raise up in their midst a messenger from among them who shall recite unto them Thy revelations, and shall instruct them in the Scripture and in wisdom, and shall purify them. Truly, Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.” [Qur’an 2:129]

Years later, Allah fulfilled her heartfelt wish and granted her the honor of visiting the resting place of Ibrāhīm (as) in Falasteen. As she sat before the noble grave, she recited through tears:

“And when Ibrāhīm said: My Lord! Make this city secure, and save me and my sons from worshipping idols.” [Qur’an 14:35]

Immersed in the Tilawat of Qur’an, she felt a radiant, divine presence surrounding her and witnessed a vision of Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm (as) before her. Trembling with awe, she said:

“O my grandfather! My spirit has visited you many times; now I come in body as well, seeking your blessing and guidance so that I may continue my ‘ibādah until my final breath.”

Then, from within the Hijāb Nūrāniyyah (veil of divine light), a voice emerged, the voice of Ibrāhīm (as):

“Glad tidings, my granddaughter! You are among those sanctified servants of your Lord. Recite Sūrah al-Muzzammil and meditate upon it, for therein Allah says: ‘O thou folded in garments! Stand to prayer by night, but not all night...’ [73:1]

Maintain balance in your ‘ibādah, for Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity.”

Her niece Zaynab bint Yaḥyā, who served Sayyidah Nafisa (as) throughout her life, narrated that Ibrāhīm (as) continued advising her to read from the Ayah:

“Thy Lord doth know that thou standest forth (to prayer) nigh two-thirds of the night...” [73:20]

He reminded her that Allah made the night Ibadah voluntary for the Ummah, for many servants labor by day for His sake, their work too is a form of ‘ibādah. Finally, Sayyidah Nafisa (as) submitted:

“O my grandfather, purify my soul until I meet Allah, and He is pleased with me.”

To this, Ibrāhīm (as) replied:

“Glad tidings, O granddaughter! Allah has accepted your Du‘ā’. I shall accompany you until we meet in al-Malā’ al-A‘lā.”

He concluded with the Ayah:

“And fear the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah; then every soul shall be paid what it has earned, and none shall be wronged.” [Qur’an 2:281]

4). Migration to al-Qāhirah

When Sayyidah Nafīsa (as) reached the age of forty-four, she migrated to al-Qāhirah. Her blessed arrival took place on the 26th of Ramaḍān in the year 193 AH. On her journey, she passed through the city of al-‘Arīsh, where news of her coming spread swiftly. The people, filled with love for the noble descendants of Rasūlullāh (S), rushed to greet her, seeking Barakah from her presence. Historians relate that men and women of Misr came forth in great numbers, some on horseback, others on camels and donkeys, and many on foot, waiting overnight in tents, reciting Kalimah and chanting Allāhhu Akbar. At dawn, they welcomed her with tears of joy and escorted her in a grand procession from al-‘Arīsh to al-Qāhirah, displaying immense reverence and devotion. One of the notable and virtuous merchants of al-Qāhirah, Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abdullāh al-Jaṣṣās, offered Sayyidah Nafīsa (as) his home as her residence. She stayed there for several months, during which time people came from every corner of Misr to visit her, to receive her Barakah, and to request her Du‘ā’.

Out of humility and concern for burdening her host, she later moved to a small dwelling of her own in the district of Khalaf, near the Masjid of Shajarat al-Durr on Khalīfah Street, the area now known as al-Ḥasaniyyah. The house belonged to a pious woman named Umm’e Hānī. Yet, her relocation did not lessen the crowds; in fact, they grew even larger. People, especially women, would gather in great numbers, longing simply to see her, touch her hand, or ask for her Du‘ā’. Realizing that the immense gatherings were preventing her from engaging in her daily Tilāwah and ‘ibādah, Sayyidah Nafīsa (as) contemplated returning to Madīnah al-Munawwarah. When word of her intended departure spread, the native of Misr were heartbroken. Thousands came to plead with her to stay, for they could not bear to lose the radiant presence of a descendant of Rasūlullāh (S). The Governor of Misr, al-Sirī ibn al-Ḥakam, was approached by the people, who begged him to intervene. He humbly went to meet her and said:

“O granddaughter of Rasūlullāh (S)! For the sake of this blessed land and its people who find comfort and guidance through you, I beseech you to remain among us.”

Sayyidah Nafīsa (as) replied gently:

“I am weak, and the continuous gatherings hinder my Ibadah. My home is small, and for a long time I did not go to Ziyarah of the grave of my grandfather Rasūlullāh (S).”

The Governor, deeply moved, responded:

“O noble Sayyidah, I will do all within my means to ease your burden. I own a state residence in the district of Darr as-Ṣabāḥ; I offer it to you as a Hibah (gift) purely for the sake of Allah, without seeking anything in return. Please accept it and remain among us.”

Sayyidah Nafīsa (as) bowed her head in contemplation for a long moment, absorbed in silent Dhikr. Then she said:

“I accept your offer, however, how shall I manage the multitude of visitors who gather each day?”

The Governor suggested:

“Assign specific days, perhaps Saturdays and Wednesdays for the public to visit you, and reserve the remaining days exclusively for your ‘ibādah and Tilāwah.”

She accepted his wise counsel, moved to the new residence, and from then on received visitors only on the appointed days. The rest of the week, she remained in solitude and devotion, immersed in Ibadah and remembrance of her Rabb.

5). The Madrasah of Sayyidah Nafisa (as)

Sayyidah Nafisa (as) became a beacon of knowledge and spirituality in Misr. Her Madrasah (circle of learning) was frequented by the foremost scholars, jurists, and ascetics of her time. Among her notable students was the founder of the Shāfi'i Madhab, Muḥammad bin Idrīs al-Shāfi'i, who attended her Asbāq and studied 'ilm al-Hadīth under her guidance. Many other luminaries also benefited from her 'ilm and Du'ā', including 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd al-Miṣrī, Dhūn Nūn al-Miṣrī, al-Miṣrī al-Samarqandī, Abū Bakr al-Adfawī (author of al-Istiftāḥ fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān), and Abū al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, who composed ten volumes on the grammar of Qur'ān. When Muhammad bin Idrīs al-Shāfi'i migrated from Baghdād to Misr, five years after Sayyidah Nafisa's arrival, he often sought her Du'ā'. Whenever he fell ill, he would send a student to convey:

"Your cousin al-Shāfi'i is unwell and requests for your Dua."

She would raise her hands and make Du'ā', and by the time the messenger returned, al-Shāfi'i would already be healed, such was the Mustajāb al-Du'ā' she was. On one occasion, when al-Shāfi'i fell seriously ill, he again sent request to Sayyidah Nafisa (as) requesting her Dua. She replied:

"Tell him, may Allah make his meeting with Him the best of meetings and grant him nearness to His presence."

Upon hearing this message, al-Shāfi'i understood that his time had come. He prepared his will and requested that Sayyidah Nafisa (as) perform his Salāt al-Janāzah. He passed away at the end of Rajab, in the year 204 AH. His Janāzah was brought to her residence, where she led the women in Salaat, then instructed her student al-Buwayṭī to lead the public Salāt al-Janāzah. Thus, even in his final rites, al-Shāfi'i was honored through her Dua and Barakah.

6). The Meaning of Zuhd and Taqwā

Sayyidah Nafisa (as) embodied the essence of Zuhd and Taqwā. She performed the Ḥajj thirty times, most of them on foot. When asked why, she replied:

"I follow my grandfather al-Imām al-Ḥasan (as) in 'ibādah, for he said: 'I feel shy to meet my Rabb having never walked to His House.'"

Like Sayyid al-Shuhadā', Al Imām al-Ḥusayn (as), who also performed Ḥajj on foot, she saw in this act a symbol of humility and servitude before Allah. During Tawāf, she was heard Dua:

"O Allah, be pleased with me, for I see nothing that veils You from me."

Her niece Zaynab once described her life of Taqwa; saying:

"My aunt would eat very little. A small basket hung in her niche, and whenever she wished to eat, she would find sustenance placed there by Allah. She never consumed food except that provided by her husband or miraculously sent to her by Allah as Rizq."

The Governor of Misr once sent her 100,000 Dirhams as a gift, requested:

"Please accept this as a humble offering for the sake of Allah."

She accepted the money, only to distribute every Dirham among the poor before the day ended. Such was her generosity that she never kept for herself anything beyond necessity.

Her niece Zaynab also narrated:

"I served my aunt for forty years. I never saw her sleeping at night nor eating during the day, except on the days when Sawm is forbidden, the two Eids and the Days of Tashrīq (11th, 12th and 13th Dhul Hijjah al-Haram)."

Once, Zaynab implored her to take better care of her health, to which Sayyidah Nafīsa (as) replied:

"How can I rest before meeting my Rabb? Ahead of me lie barriers that only the successful (al-Fā'yzūn) shall cross."

7). Her Preparation for the Final Journey

Sensing the nearness of her departure from this world, Sayyidah Nafīsa (as) prepared her own grave within her home. She would descend into it daily, offering Nafilah Salaat within, reminding herself of the Hereafter. Al-Ajhūrī narrates:

"She completed the Qur'an many times while sitting inside her grave, dedicating the Thawāb to the souls of deceased believers."

Her noble act contradicts the bogus claim of those who reject īṣāl al-Thawāb, the gifting of Tilawah Qur'an to the deceased.

When her illness intensified, she wrote to her husband, Ishāq al-Mu'taman, who was then residing in Madīnah al-Munawwarah, asking him to come to Misr. He arrived with their children, al-Qāsim and Umm'e Kulthūm. At the beginning of Ramaḍān, 208 AH, her condition worsened. Her companions urged her to break her Sawm, for the sake of her health, which she refused and said with full determination:

"For thirty years, I have been beseeching Allah to allow me to meet Him while in Sawm and now you ask me to break it?"

Upon her passing, her husband intended to transport her blessed body to Madīnah al-Munawwarah for burial in Jannat al-Baqī'. However, the Governor and the people of Misr pleaded with him to bury her in al-Qahirah, saying:

"She belongs to the people who loved her most."

That night, Ishāq al-Mu'taman saw Rasūlullāh (S) in a dream, who instructed him:

"O Ishāq, bury your wife (Nafisa) in Misr, for Allah has decreed that her resting place shall be a sanctuary for the Zaireen of this land."

When she passed away, all of Misr was plunged into mourning. Men, women, and children poured from every village into al-Qahirah, their hearts burning with grief and love. Her funeral was unlike any Misr had ever witnessed, a sea of devotees weeping, calling upon Allah by His Asma al-Husna, and beseeching His Rahmah through the memory of His beloved servant.

Indeed, Sayyidah Nafīsa (as) remains a radiant light of 'ilm, Taqwā, and Barakah, a true daughter of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), and a living proof of the timeless purity of Nabawi household.

8). The Karamah of Sayyidah Nafisa (as)

Historians, saints, and scholars have recorded more than one hundred and fifty Karāmāh manifested through Sayyidah Nafisa (as). Among those who chronicled her extraordinary deeds was al-Ḥāfidh Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī, who enumerated several well-attested accounts that affirm her station among the Awliyāʾ Allāh.

i. Cure of Falij (Paralysis) through her Wuḍūʾ Water

When Sayyidah Nafisa (as) first settled in al-Qāhirah, there lived next door to her a non-Muslim family whose young daughter was afflicted with falij (paralysis) from the waist down. One day, the girl's mother brought her to Sayyidah Nafisa (as), requesting that she care for the child while she went to the market. During that time, the noble Sayyidah began her Wuḍūʾ, and some of the blessed water flowed across the floor towards the child. As the water touched her body, the girl felt a sudden stirring in her limbs. She took more of that Wuḍūʾ water and rubbed it upon her legs, and by the command of Allah the paralysis vanished.

The girl, overwhelmed with wonder, stood up and began to walk. When her mother returned, the child ran to embrace her. Seeing this miracle, the mother wept, crying out:

"That woman is truly holy, and her religion is the truth!"

She entered the house, kissed Sayyidah Nafisa's hands, and asked to be guided from darkness into light. The noble Sayyidah taught her the Kalimah Shahādah, and she accepted Islam.

When Ayyūb Abū Surrāyah, returned home and saw his daughter healed, he too was astonished. Upon learning the details, he raised his hands in Duʿāʾ:

"O Allah, You guide whom You will. Now I know that Islam is the true faith completing what we had before."

He went to the home of Sayyidah Nafisa (as) and said from behind a veil:

"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muḥammad (S) is His Rasul."

This single miracle led to the conversion of the entire family, and soon thereafter, their whole tribe entered Islam.

ii. The Prisoner Set Free

A Muslim man once came to Sayyidah Nafisa (as) weeping. His son, born of a Christian wife, had been captured while travelling abroad. Despite his mother's prayers, years had passed without news. One day she told her husband:

"I have heard of a saintly woman, Nafisa bint al-Ḥasan al-Anwar, whose Duʿāʾ is always accepted. Go and ask her to pray for our son."

The man went and sought her Duʿāʾ. That very night, as they slept, a knock came at their door. To their astonishment, it was their son, freed and unharmed. When asked how he had escaped, he replied:

"As I sat in my cell in chains, I felt a spiritual presence and heard a voice say: 'Release him! Nafisa bint al-Ḥasan has interceded for him.' Then, in an instant, I found myself at our doorstep."

His mother went to thank Sayyidah Nafisa (as) the next morning, and there, she too accepted Islam.

iii. The Nile Fails to Flood

In the year 201 AH (816 CE), the Nile failed to overflow its banks, and the people of Misr feared famine. They came in distress to Sayyidah Nafisa (as) asking for Du‘ā’. She removed her blessed Burqā’ and said:

“Cast it into the Nile, and by Allah’s grace, it will rise.”

They did as instructed, and the river immediately began to swell and overflow, bringing relief to the land.

This miracle recalls the Qiṣṣah of Sayyidunā Yūsuf (as), whose shirt restored the sight of his father Ya‘qūb (as), a sign that through the Tabarruk of the pure, Allah manifests His Rahmah.

iv. The Stolen Wool and the Eagle

Al-Munāwī narrates on the authority of al-Azhārī in al-Kawākib al-Sayyārah that there was an old widow with four daughters who earned their living by spinning wool. One day, as she carried her spun wool to market, an eagle swooped down and snatched the bundle. The poor woman fainted from grief. When she recovered, the people advised her to seek Sayyidah Nafisa’s Wasilah. The noble Sayyidah offered Dua:

“O Allah, You Who are exalted in might and power, set aright the affairs of this servant of Yours. You are capable over all things.”

She told the woman to return home and await Rahmah of Allah. That very evening, sailors came to Sayyidah Nafisa’s door, saying:

“Our ship sprang a leak in the middle of the sea. Suddenly an eagle appeared carrying a red bundle of wool. It dropped the bundle into the hole, sealing it and saving us from drowning. Then a voice called out: ‘Go to Sayyidah Nafisa!’”

They offered 500 Dīnār in gratitude. Sayyidah Nafisa (as) wept and said:

“O Allah, how merciful You are to Your servants.”

She asked the old woman:

“How much do you earn each week?”

The woman replied:

“Twenty Dīnār.”

Sayyidah Nafisa (as) gave her the entire 500 Dīnār and sent her home rejoicing. This miracle spread widely, and many began to serve her cooking for the poor and distributing Sadaqah in her name.

v. Thieves Arrested in her Shrine

Even after her passing, Sayyidah Nafisa’s Karamah did not cease. In 683 AH, thieves broke into her Shrine and stole sixteen silver lamps. But as they attempted to flee, they found that the door had disappeared. When the caretaker arrived at dawn, he discovered them trapped inside with the stolen lamps in their hands. A similar event occurred in 1940 CE, when a man attempted to steal a Kashmiri Shahtush Shawl from her Shrine. As he tried to leave, he too could not find the exit and remained imprisoned until morning, when the people found him and brought him to justice.

vi. Restoration of Lost Eyesight

Abū al-'Izz al-Yamānī narrated:

"I was wealthy but arrogant. Then a sickness struck my eyes, and I became blind. I spent my fortune seeking a cure, but physicians told me it was impossible. Finally, I sought Sayyidah Nafīsa's Du'ā'. As I waited to see her, I fell asleep and saw her in a dream applying something to my eyes. When I awoke, my sight was fully restored."

vii. The Affair of 'Affān ibn Sulaymān

A righteous citizen of Misr named 'Affān ibn Sulaymān al-Miṣrī once discovered a treasure beneath his home. He used his newfound wealth to help the poor. Later, a dispute arose between him and the Governor, Taqīn ibn 'Abdullāh al-Ḥarbī, who unjustly confiscated his wealth. Affān fled to a pious man, al-Sharīf 'Alī ibn 'Abdullāh, who took him to the Shrine of Sayyidah Nafīsa (as). They recited Qur'ān and offered Dua through her Wasīlah. Both fell asleep and saw her in a dream, saying:

"Go to Taqīn. I have settled your affair."

When they went to him, he greeted them with honor and said:

"Sayyidah Nafīsa appeared to me in a dream and commanded me to restore Affān's wealth."

The Governor repented and spent the rest of his life in righteousness, saying:

"The native of Misr fear me, but I fear Affān ibn Sulaymān and his Du'ā' at the grave of Sayyidah Nafīsa."

9). Her Blessed Shrine - al-Mashhad al-Nafīsī

The first to build a Masjid and tomb over the grave of Sayyidah Nafīsa (as) was 'Ubaydullāh ibn Sirrī ibn al-Ḥakam, Governor of Misr. It was later rebuilt by Sayyidunā Badr al-Jamālī, Commander of the Fāṭimi forces, in 482 AH, and renovated again by Sulṭān Muḥammad ibn al-Qalāwūn in 740 AH. Prince 'Abd al-Raḥmān Katkhudā carried out further expansion in 773 AH. The Ministry of Religious Endowments restored it again in 1314 AH, giving the Shrine its present form. The ornate copper ḍarīḥ (enclosure) was installed in 1266 AH, while the current engraved door was donated by 'Alī Pasha, Governor of Misr, in 1170 AH.

Her Mashhad, like those of the other noble Sayyidaat of the Ahl al-Bayt, Sayyidah Zaynab bint 'Alī (as) and Sayyidah Ruqayyah (as) remains a sanctuary for Ziyārah and Du'ā', where Zayreen receive Barakah and their Hājāt are fulfilled. Sayyidah Nafīsa (as) is particularly renowned for curing ailments of the eyes, and even the Government of Misr established a Hospital for Eye Diseases near her Mashhad in al-Mu'izziyyah, al-Qāhirah. It is common for newlyweds of al-Qahirah to Ziyarah her Shrine after their Nikāḥ, seeking Barakah for a life of faith and harmony. Over her grave, her Nasab al-Nabawī wal-'Alawī is inscribed, beneath which are the words:

"Whosoever is afflicted with hardship, let him visit the grave of Sayyidah Nafīsa, recite Sūrah al-Fātiḥah (1), Sūrah al-A'lā (87), Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ (112), and the two Mu'awwidhatayn (113–114), intending Du'ā' through her for relief and Allah shall ease his difficulty."

A new Gold Maqsurah over the grave was inaugurated during the visit of the Sultan of the Dawoodi Bohras in June 2021. In the late summer of 2023, the Masjid underwent a renovation sponsored by the Dawoodi Bohras, culminating in a visit by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to

mark its completion. The interior had previously held a Mamluk aesthetic but that has been covered with Asian-styled marble. May Allah grant us all the honour to visit al-Mu'izziyyah al-Qāhirah for the Ziyārah of Ra's al-Imām al-Husayn ibn 'Alī (as), Sayyidah Zaynab (as), Sayyidah Ruqayyah (as), Sayyidah Nafīsa (as), and the rest of the Awliyā' buried therein. Āmīn bi-Hurmati Ṭā-Hā wa Āli Yāsīn.

10. Sharfuddin al-Busiri's Qasidah in praise of Sayyidah Nafisah

As the centuries passed, the Noor of Sayyidah Nafīsa (as) only grew brighter. Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Saeed al-Buseri (1211–1294), a Berber Muslim poet, known for his magnum opus, the Qasidah Burda, in praise of Rasulullah (S) is one of the most popular poets in the world. Al-Maqrizi mentions that he was from Morocco and settled in Misr, where he worked under the patronage of Ibn Hinna, the Vizier. Rasulullah (S) cured him while he was afflicted by paralysis by appearing to him in a dream and wrapping him in a mantle. He composed his famous Qasidah and up to the present time its verses are used as Tawidh. Following Qasidah was composed by him in the honour of Sayyidah Nafisa:

*Janābuki minhu tastafīdu al-fawā'idu
Wa lil-nās bi-l-iḥsāni minki 'awā'idu*

*Fa ṭubā liman yas'ā li-mashhadiki alladhī
Takādu ilā maghnāhu tas'ā al-mashāhidu*

*Idhā mā atāhu al-qāṣidūna tayassarāt
'Alayhim wa-in lam yas'alūki al-maqāsidu*

*Salīlatu khayri al-'ālamīna Nafīsātun
Samat biki a'rāqun wa ṭābat maḥāmidu*

*Laqad akrama al-Raḥmānu Miṣra bi-wajhiki
Fa aḍḥat lanā minki al-anwāru shāhidu*

*From your noble presence, blessings and gifts overflow,
And from your kindness, humanity reaps its share of goodness.*

*Glad tidings to the one who strives to reach your Shrine,
For even other sanctuaries yearn toward its grace.*

*When seekers come to you, their needs are eased,
Even before they utter what their hearts intend.*

*O noble descendant of the best of all creation, Nafīsa
Exalted are your roots, and pure are your praises.*

*Indeed, the Most Merciful has honored Misr with your face,
And your light remains a radiant proof among us.*

11. A Saintly Exemplar of Piety and Knowledge

Sayyidah Nafisa bint al-Ḥasan al-Anwar (as) occupies a distinguished place among the sanctified figures of early Islam whose memory continues to inspire seekers of spiritual truth. Her piety, scholarship, and compassion stand as enduring testimonies to the transformative power of Wilayah when embodied in human conduct. From her residence in al-Qāhirah emanated an enduring spiritual influence that nurtured the hearts of believers and contributed to the moral and intellectual fabric of the Muslim community. The life of Sayyidah Nafisa (as) exemplifies the principle that proximity to Allah is achieved not through lineage, gender, or worldly rank, but through sincerity, devotion, and the pursuit of knowledge. Her legacy reaffirms that sainthood transcends temporal boundaries and that the Ahl al-Bayt (as) remain perpetual sources of guidance and illumination for those seeking nearness to their Creator. Throughout Islamic history, Allah has provided both male and female exemplars who have embodied the Straight Path (al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm). Among these exemplars, Sayyidah Nafisa (as) stands as a model of spiritual discipline and theological insight. Her life was characterized by Jihād al-Nafs, constant 'ibādah, and the cultivation of Taqwā and Zuhd. She personified the moral and spiritual virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), serving as a living reflection of their ethical and intellectual legacy. Sayyidah Nafisa's profound sincerity and purity of intention rendered her a source of Barakah. She was not only a scholar and spiritual guide but also a figure associated with healing, compassion, and intercession. Through her prayers, the afflicted found relief, and the spiritually lost rediscovered their moral direction. Her presence in al-Mu'izziyyah al-Qāhirah became a focal point of devotion and reverence, exemplifying the affirmation of Qur'an:

*"Indeed, the friends of Allah, there is no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve."
(Sūrah Yūnus 10:62)*

Sayyidah Nafisa (as) lived and departed this world in a state of complete submission to her Rabb. Her life underscores that Wilāyah is attained through humility, 'ilm, sincerity, and steadfast love of Allah rather than through hereditary privilege. Her shrine in al-Qahirah continues to serve as a sanctuary for Du'ā, Shifā', and the fulfilment of spiritual needs, attesting to the enduring vitality of her legacy. Recognized as both 'Ālimah (scholar) and 'Ābidah (devotee), Faqīhah (jurist) and Murabbiyah (spiritual nurturer), Sayyidah Nafisa (as) represents the synthesis of intellect and piety characteristic of the early Muslim ascetic tradition. Her influence extended beyond her own era, shaping subsequent understandings of female scholarship and sainthood within the Islamic intellectual and spiritual heritage.

May Allah grant us the Tawfīq to emulate her virtues, uphold the love of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), and remain steadfast upon the Sirāt al-Mustaqīm. May Allah fulfil our Hajaat by her Wasilah soon. Āmīn, bi-ḥurmati Sayyidah Nafisa al-Ṭāhirah wa Jaddihā al-Muṣṭafā (S).

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