

Book Introduction

About Nahj al Balagha

Seyyed Razi

Abol-hassan Mohammad Ibn Hossein Ibn Mowso known as Sharif Razi or Seyyed Razi is one of Shi'a famous scholars in the century of 4 Hijri. He was born in 395 Hijri in a well-known clergy family. His parents were both Sadat from Shi'a well known scholars. Seyyed Razi was 4 years younger than his brother, Seyyed Morteza –a great Shi'a's scholar. It is quoted that their mother took them together to Sheikh-e-Mofid's school for studying religious primes (Sheikh-e-Mofid accepted them after an impressive night-dream).

Finally, in 406 Hijri, Seyyed Razi died while he was 47 years old and known as a great master of Shi'a for political and social issues.

Just about his more or less short life, he met many prominent personalities of Islamic Sciences.

As for his Islamic Studies, he enjoyed elites who were fine experts in various issues such as syntax, decorum and Arabic, an important point strengthening his scientific skills like Arabic literature and eloquence. Among his tutor, there are some Sunni tutors. This points towards his liberal personality: gaining knowledge from every possible source, even not Shi'a sources. Per se many of Shi'a's notables are among his students and narrators.

In addition to his prominent scholar personality, Seyyed Razi had a great position among Shiite and was appointed to important governmental posts by Abbasi and Al-e-Bouyeh monarchs. The most recognized post for him was Alavian's overseer. It was both a political and

social position which has previously been acquired by his father and included supervision and administration of Shiite's affairs in the region.

At 380, Seyyed Razi was officially appointed to this post but the important point is that he gained the highest level of command at 403. He was the first Shiite who acquired the pose; not achieved after him. Appointed as the attorney general, the supervisor of Hajj arrangement and the caliph's representative in holy shrines, he served the Islamic society, especially Shiite.

He passed away at Moharram 406 and the majority of the people, aristocrats and then minister- Fakhrol Molk attended at his funeral. Seyyed Razi was buried in his home in Baghdad; and his brother who was badly influenced by his death, left the city for Mashhad.

About Nahj-al-Balagheh

One of the eternal works of Seyyed Razi is Nahj-al-Balagheh, the Shi'a undoubted Hadith source. In other words, whoever wants to study Shi'a Hadith and its progress from the beginning till now is obliged to quote from Ali's words and ascribe to Nahj-al-Balagheh.

The holy book of Nahj al Balagha includes sermons, letters, and superlative quotations of Imam Ali (AS) which has been declared in different social, political, and military situations, addressed various people and tribes. All followers and people who were fond of Imam Ali, as well as many Arabs, were attracted by His fluent language, in this way, the conditions for recording Imam's words were prepared. This process was so astir that many people were known as references' of Imam Ali's quotations.

In century 4 (Hijri), Seyyed Razi came to compile a resource book collecting the words of Imam Ali (A.S.). Since he was one of the contemporary fluent poets and was fond of eloquent prose of Imam, decided to compile a selection of all quotations in three parts: sermons, letters, and aphorism titled as *Nahj-al-Balagheh*. As he declares at the beginning of the book, the followers' maintain made him to carry out. So *Nahj al Balagha* is obviously a selection of Imam Ali's words and quotes which Seyyed Razi signified as more prominent. The evidence is his claim for the comparison of *Nahj-al-Balagheh's* sermons and other available sources'. It has also seen that for explaining a part, the narratives of *Nahj al Balagha* like Ibn Abi Alhadid have declared that section is a part of a long sermon, the main version of which is available in historical books. After Seyed Razi, however, many Islamic scientists decided to complete his work and provided books as for the complement of *Nahj-al-Balagheh*.

Nahj al Balagha compiled by Seyyed Razi includes 239 sermons, 79 letters, and 472 quotations. These sermons, letters, and quotations are of different subjects of political, social, ethical issues, as well as various fields like beliefs, disputation, and sermons. Most of them belong to Imam Ali's caliphate period and narrates the events and happenings of Islam outset.

Another significant point about Seyyed Razi work is that the book was a focus for all scholars and Islamic erudite from the very beginning. They were so wistful that acted to memorize the sermons. Some started paraphrasing *Nahj al Balagha* and many tried to translate it to other languages. Especially, its translation process was effectively followed up. Lately, Sheikh Agha Bozorg Tehrani has provided nearly 150 books as the

Nahj al Balagha's commentary and also translated it to many languages like Urdu, Gozorate, Turkish, Arabic, etc. Seyyed Abdo-zahra Hosseini khatib has also binged in 101 commentaries in a book Masader of Nahjol Balaghe va Asanideh. Alama Amini also mentioned about 20 Islamic scholars as well as 81 interpreters who have references to Nahj al Balagha. Finally Sheikh Hosseini Jom'e has provided nearly 210 commentaries of Nahj al Balagha's commentary from libraries of Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, etc.

Hence after Holy Quran, Nahj al Balagha is the only book that has attracted many Islamic scholars and researchers attentions. It's worthy to mention that two commentaries of Nahj al Balagha are more prominent, namely the commentary of Ibn Abi-hadid Mo'tazali (the Sunni scholar) and Ibn Meisam Bohrani (the Shi'a scholar).

Study of Nahj al Balagha Ascription to Imam Ali

From the first days of inscription, the most important issue about Nahj al Balagha was the reality of its contents' ascription to Imam Ali (AS). The origin of all doubts is that there are only six references mentioned by Seyyed Razi. The clime is that: "Although, it's impossible to prove that all sermons are unexceptionally worded by Imam Ali; based on Shi'a scholars, the book ascribes to Imam Ali by no doubt for the following reasons:

A) The content of most sermons, letters, and aphorism of Nahj al Balagha conforms by all people be familiar with Imam Ali as well as Shi'a fixed viewpoints of Imamate (leadership), predominance, and innocence of Ahle-beit.

B) All prominent scholars believe in Seyyes Razi's pietism and honesty.

C) Prior to the inscription of Nahj al Balagha, many of its sermons and letters have been used in different sources. The claim is obvious in the studies of late and contemporary researchers.

D) Mentioning the exact date of events in half of the 1st century may regarded as strong evidence for originality of Nahj al Balagha content.

E) Nahj al Balagha unique eloquence indicates proof for being worded by Imam Ali.

Sunni Scholars has also accepted the Ascription of Nahj al Balagha to Imam Ali, insofar as some of them like Ibn Abi-hadid, Sobhi Saleh, and Sheikh Mohammad Abdeh have provided commentaries, edited the content, and acted other services that are rare in Shi'a versions. Meanwhile, Ibn Abi-hadid's book has rejected the doubts in many cases and defended the originality and authenticity of the Nahj al Balagha by Seyyed Razi.