

## The Buried (Younger) One

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### Abstract:

Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti was an Egyptian writer known for his contributions to Egyptian Arabic literature. He wrote prose that often reflected the social and cultural issues of his time. "Al-Nazarat" (The Views) is a collection of essays written by Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti, an Egyptian writer, journalist, and intellectual who lived from 1876 to 1924. He was one of the prominent figures of the Nahda (Arab Renaissance) movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. "Al-Nazarat" was published in 1907 and is considered one of al-Manfaluti's most significant works. "Al-Nazarat" reflects the intellectual discourse of its time, addressing various social, political, and cultural issues in Egypt and the broader Arab world. Al-Manfaluti was known for his progressive ideas and advocacy for reform. In "Al-Nazarat," al-Manfaluti demonstrated his eloquent and persuasive writing style. His essays were influential in shaping public opinion during his time. "Al-Nazarat" had a significant impact on Arab intellectual and cultural circles. It sparked debates and discussions about the future of Arab societies and their place in the world.

**Key words:** Al-Nazarat, Arabic, Islamic Education, Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti, Egypt.

## Introduction

This work is a heartfelt and emotionally charged piece that deals into the grief and sorrow of a father who has lost his sons. The passage is a poignant reflection on the author's pain, loss, and contemplation of mortality, emphasizing the depth of his feelings and the complex interplay of fate, love, and human frailty. The lesson opens with a somber scene of the father having dusted his hands from the soil of his son's grave.

### The Buried (Younger) One

#### (Translated)

Now, I have dusted my hands from the soil of your grave, my son, and returned to my home like a defeated commander returning from the battlefield. I have nothing left but a tear I cannot shed and a sigh I cannot release. Allah, who decreed this misery in your fate, granted you to me before I even asked for you, and then He took you away from me before I could seek His pardon from you. He wanted to complete His decree and make me drink from the cup until its residues, depriving me even of a tear to shed or a sigh to heave. So, I find no solace in this or that, no matter how I try to distract myself from my current state. Praise be to Him, whether content or upset, and to Him belongs all praise, whether giving or taking away. I submit to Him in satisfaction with His decree and patience in enduring His affliction.

I saw you, my son, lying on your sickbed, and I became anxious, then afraid of your impending death, and it was as if I were being shown that life and death are matters of human affairs, actions performed by their own hands. So, I consulted the doctor about your condition, and he prescribed medicine for you,

assuring me of your recovery. I sat beside you, pouring drop by drop that yellowish liquid into your mouth, while fate was taking away bits and pieces of life from your sides until I looked and found you lifeless in my hands. The medicine bottle remained untouched. I realized that I had lost you and that the matter was in the hands of fate, not in the hands of medicine.

I will sleep soon, my son, on a bed similar to yours, and I will be treated just as you were treated. I expect that the last thing remaining in my memory at that moment about the affairs, stages, and events of life will be the profound regret I still suffer from the bitter doses I administered to you with my own hands, while you turned and rolled your body in pain and your face reddened, your limbs twitched, and tears welled in your eyes. You had no hand to push me away, nor a tongue to complain to me about the bitterness you tasted.

It was better for me and for you, my son, that I leave your fate to Allah, whether in your recovery or illness, in your life or death. I wish our last interaction before bidding farewell to this world wasn't those pains I inflicted upon you. Now, I believe I was a person helping to your fate, and that cup of death, held by destiny, was not any less bitter to you than the medicine bottle I held in my hands.

How life has become sterile after you, my son! How ugly do these creatures appear to me now, and how dark is the house I dwell in after your departure. In your presence, the sun shone brightly, illuminating everything around me. But today, I can hardly see anything more than what your eyes can perceive in the darkness of your grave.

People mourned and wept for you as they wished, grieving and distressing, until their tears were spent and their strength became weakened, and they retired to their beds to find some comfort. Yet, there remain only two watchful eyes in this dark night and silence- your father's tired eyes and another, which you know well.

The night has been so long that I am weary of it, but I do not ask Allah to dispel its darkness and bring daylight. For the grief I suffered for you, my son, leaves me with no strength to endure seeing any trace of your life. Let the night continue so that I do not witness the day. Indeed, I wish the day would shine forth; such is my weariness of this darkness.

Today, I buried you, my son, and before that, I buried your brother, and even before that, I buried your two other brothers. Every day, I receive a new guest, bidding farewell to another. Oh Allah, how my heart has endured what surpasses the endurance of other hearts and tolerated the calamities of fate! Each of you, my sons, has nestled in my heart, and this now-fragile liver has become torn, scattered in the corners of graves. Only a small part of it remains, which I do not think will endure forever, and I do not believe that time will abandon it, as it has taken away your sisters before.

Why did you leave, my sons, after you came? Why did you come if you knew you wouldn't stay? Had you not come, I wouldn't have mourned the loss of you from my hands, for I am not accustomed to stretching my sight to what is beyond my reach. If you had stayed after your arrival, I wouldn't have had to drink this bitter cup in your name. I would have been content with fate, and it could have cleared a path for me, turning its face away so I wouldn't see it, nor would it see

me, treating me neither with kindness nor cruelty, not approaching me with goodness or harm.

Neither good nor evil seems apparent to me. No smiles or frowns, no laughter or tears would change my mind. It is clear to me that you would not have mourned a blessing if it were not in your hands, nor would you have felt the bitterness of its loss if you had not tasted the sweetness of its presence. Fate had to follow the path of misery that it had declared before Allah, destined to befall me among His creations. When it failed to enter through the gate of greed, it entered through the gate of hope. It bestowed upon me a grant that brought me moments of joy in life. But then, it realized that the seed of hope it planted in my soul had grown and blossomed, and that I had savored the blessing it presented, only to be snatched away from me like a cold cup from a thirsty traveler. The arrow struck deep into my liver, and the deprivation of the blessing left me with nothing. If not for that, I would have attained nothing and found no way.

Oh, my sons, if Allah has destined for you to meet in a garden of paradise or by a flowing river of its waters or under the shade of its magnificent palaces, then remember me as I remember you. Stand together before your Lord as the worshipers stand in rows before Him and extend your little hands to Him as the needy extend theirs, and say to Him, "O Allah, You know that this poor man loved us, and we loved him. The days have separated us from him, and he continues to endure the miseries and afflictions of life that he can hardly bear. We still carry within ourselves the sadness and longing for him, which overshadow the happiness of being in Your presence, near Your hearing and sight. You are more merciful to us and him than to inflict severe punishment upon us. So, either take us to him or bring him to us. No, do not ask Him to bring us to him. Instead, ask

Him to bring him to us. The life I detest for myself, I do not desire for you. Perhaps Allah will answer your prayers in a way He did not answer mine, and this barrier between me and you will be lifted, and we shall meet again as we were.

## Conclusion

In summary, this work “al-dafeen al-sagheer”, is a deeply emotional reflection on the grief and loss experienced by a father who has buried many sons. It conveys a sense of acceptance of fate's decree, intertwined with the pain of their absence and the longing for reunion in the hereafter. The author grapples with the complexities of love, loss, and human vulnerability in the face of destiny.

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