



The Library of Ayatollah Marashi Najafi



Ayatollah Sayyid Shahab al-Din al-Hosseini Marashi Najafi, the founder of one of the most remarkable and rare libraries of its kind in the Islamic world was born in July 2, 1897 in Najaf (Present day Iraq). Since his days in Najaf, Ayatollah Mar'ashi was greatly concerned about the loss of Islamic intellectual heritage. He was quite saddened to find out that many rare books and manuscripts were in possession of British colonial officials.

With the miniscule income he received as a student, Ayatollah Mar'ashi began purchasing as many books as he could. When he ran out of money, he offered to

do Qadha fasts and prayers for diseased individuals. He began working nights at a factory. He only ate once a day. He even sold most of his clothes and household items. Whatever money he raised, he used it to purchase books and manuscripts. Over time, this grew into a huge collection.



His father was a well-respected jurist who taught in the Najaf seminary, and it was under his tutelage that he began his religious education. He later traveled to Samarra and Kadhmiyya for higher education. During a trip to the shrine of Imam Ridha (peace be upon him) in Mash'had, Iran he decided to relocate to



Qom, Iran and finish his higher education under Shaikh Abdul Karim Hairi. In addition to theology and jurisprudence, he also studied mathematics, astronomy, and medicine from a vast range of scholars.

In Qom, he emerged as one of the leading scholars of the seminary. Soon after he started teaching, he was declared a Religious Authority (*Marja Taqleed*) by several other teachers of the seminary. Over a period of 67 years of continuous teaching, he trained such notable jurists and scholars as Shaikh Murad Mutahhari, Shaikh Ibrahim Amini, Shaikh Hussain Mazaheri, Sayyid Ali Qadhi Tababatai, and Sayyid Murad Askari. He also led prayers in the shrine of Lady Masooma Qom (peace be upon her) for over half a century. His lectures every day was attended by hundreds of Ulama and Tullab (seminary students).

After a short time the leading Ulama and professors of the Islamic seminary of Qom declared him as the Grand Marja (religious leader) of the Muslims in the world. Millions of the Muslims in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait, U.A.E, Bahrain, Pakistan, India, Turkey, Tanzania, Kenya, Zanzibar and the eastern provinces of Saudi Arabia followed his rulings in Islamic jurisprudence.

He wrote outstanding books in almost all the Islamic sciences. most of them were written in Arabic and they are as follows:

- * *Molhaqat al Ahqaaq* * *Al Hashiyah Ala al-Orwat al-Wothqa* * *Minhaj al-Momineen*
- * *Taqrirat al-Qusas* * *Tabaaqat al-Nassabeen*
- * *Al-Hashiyah Ala Kifayah al-Usul* * *Al-Hashiyah Ala Al-Rasail*
- * *Al Mashhahed WalMazarat* * *Aayan al-Marashieen*
- * *Al-Moawal Fee Amr al-Motawal* * *Ulama al-Sada'at*
- * *Masareh al-Afkar Wa al-Hashiyah Ala Taqrirat al Shaykh al-Murtuza al-Ansari*
- * *Al-Fawa'id al-Rijaliyah* * *Kashf al-Irtiyab* * *Al Mujdi Fi Hayat Saheb al-Mujdi* * *Raf al-Ghashiyah An Wajh al-Hashiyah*
- * *Al-Rad Ala Moddae'i al-Tahreef* * *Taliqah Ala Omdat al-Taleb*
- * *Mushajjarat Aal Rasool Allah al-Akram*
- * *Rehlah Isfahan, Shiraz, Samarrah Wa Azarbaijan.*

When he moved to Qom, he brought his books with him and

housed them within his residential quarters, which soon became a favorite destination for the seminary students and researchers! As his collection kept growing, a small piece of land was purchased, and in 1394 AH, the library was officially inaugurated with over 1500 rare manuscripts, many of which dated back over a thousand years.

On 20 DhiHijjah, 1410 AH (1989), Ayatollah Marashi laid the foundation stone of the new Ayatollah Marashi Library. When construction finally ended, the seven-story structure occupied a total area of 21,000 square meters. Today it houses over 70,000 volumes, including ancient calligraphies of the Qur'an, centuries-old compendiums on jurisprudence, formerly lost works of exegesis, rare letters and documents, and microfilms of over 13,000 rare manuscripts now unavailable, as well as foreign periodicals, Urdu, Persian, and Turkish

books, and ancient maps and astronomical charts. The library is open to the public, and any seminary student or researcher is welcome to freely utilize its resources for no charge.

In 1989, the supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Imam Khomeini issued a decree ordering that the library be built on a property about 16,000 square feet (1,500 m²). At present both the old and the new buildings of the grand library occupies a total area of 21,000 sq. meters. Ayatollah Marashi Najafi laid the first

stone of the foundation of the new Library. In respect to its kind and nature of the books presented, the Library is the first of its kind in Iran and third in the Islamic World.

In January 2008, the number of manuscripts exceeded 75000 titles in more than 37000 volumes. Sixty five percent of the titles are in Arabic and the rest are, mostly, in Persian. There are also titles in Turkish, Urdu, Abyssinian, Cyrillic and Latin scripts. Every year 500 to 800 new titles are added to the library as either gift by donors or by being purchased.

Currently the oldest manuscript in the Library is part of the Holy Qur'an in old Kufic script from the early second century A.H, lunar calendar. There are also some samples from the 3rd and the 4th centuries A.H. The above mentioned manuscript

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consists of two parts of the Holy Qur'an in Kufic script, written by the well-known calligrapher, Ali-ibn-Hilal al-Baghdadi. So far 14000 manuscripts of the Library have been indexed. These indexes are published in 34 volumes.

Unfortunately, Ayatollah Mar'ashi did not survive to see the grand inauguration of his Library. Only a few weeks after laying the foundation stone, he suffered a heart attack and passed away in 1990.

Library is open from 7.30 A.M. till 8.30 P.M. continuously. Members are given three years membership cards by the secretariat free of charge. As an average, every day around 4000 members visit the library every day.

Ayatollah Marashi appointed his son

and guardian, Hujjat al-Islam Wal-Muslimin Dr. Sayyid Mahmud Marashi Najafi, as the President of the Library. As per his wishes, he was laid to rest at the entrance of the library, "so that the feet of the researchers of Islamic sciences step besides my grave."

In his last will and testament, he gave his son detailed advice on religious observances, good relations with close relatives, mercy to the poor and needy, and not wasting his time. He gave instructions regarding his own burial and grave, and enjoined his son if possible to use some of his wealth as Radd al-Madhaalim (money given to the poor as payment of possible unknown debts) on his father's behalf, in case he had any dues outstanding.

Highlights of the Last Will of Ayatollah Mar'ashi Najafi:

I advise my son:

"Always remain ready to serve the religion of Islam and strive in the defense of Truth. Today the religion of Islam is crying, "Is there a helper who will come to my aid? Is there a rescuer who will come to my rescue?" O my son, in this age there are very few who answer this plea from Islam, and may Allah reward the few that there are.

"Always ponder deeply over the verses of the Holy Qur'an and follow the advice and instructions contained therein. Visit the graves frequently and think, "where were these people yesterday, what were they, how were they, and where have they come today?"

Do not sit and indulge in vain and useless gatherings. There are few gatherings today where gossip, slander, and lies are not present; rather, they do not exist. Refrain from excessive attachment to this world.

"Maintain good relations with your close relatives, because by this act you will gain inspiration to do good deeds and earn blessings and an increase in your means and life-span.

"Always refrain from backbiting of the servants of Allah, and especially remain aloof from gossip about the scholars, because that is like eating poisoned dead meat.

"Remain engrossed in the learning of religious knowledge. Continue to progress in it every day, and remain busy in spreading it all the time.

"My son, make a habit of reciting the Quranic Sura (Chapter) of



Yaseen after morning prayers every day. After Dhuhr prayers, recite Sura Naba, after Asr prayers, recite Sura Asr, after Maghrib prayers, recite Sura Waqia, and after Isha prayers, recite Sura Muluk. In this practice are amazing gains. My teachers advised me to this, and I have seen its blessing more than once.

"Son, there is a memorable speech by Lady Fatima which she gave in the Mosque of the Prophet in front of the Ummah. Even the scholars and proficient linguists have failed to understand it fully. Think deeply about her words and try to understand them.

"Study the famous sermon of the Chief of the Believers and the Leader of the Oppressed called Shiqshiqiyah.

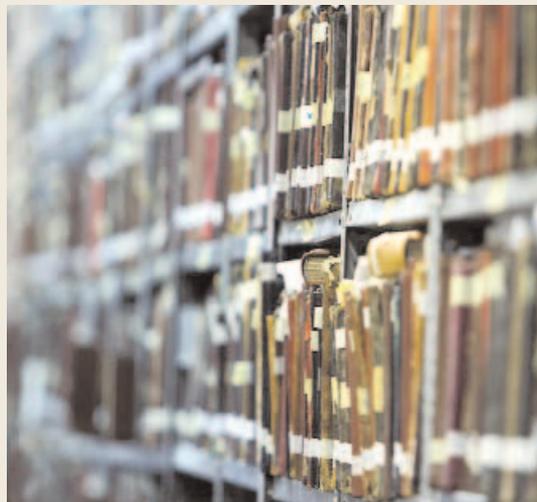
"Be gentle and merciful to the poor and needy, and especially take care of the Sadaat and students of Islam.

"Avail yourself of the blessings of visiting the Holy Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them). Reach the places where they are buried and after reciting salutations, repent and recite supplications - in these actions there are untold benefits.

"My son, regard your life's time as precious, and do not waste it on useless talks. Allah is strongly displeased with a young man who wastes his time.

"My son, always remain in a state of purity. By that act, the soul of a person remains content and is free from grief.

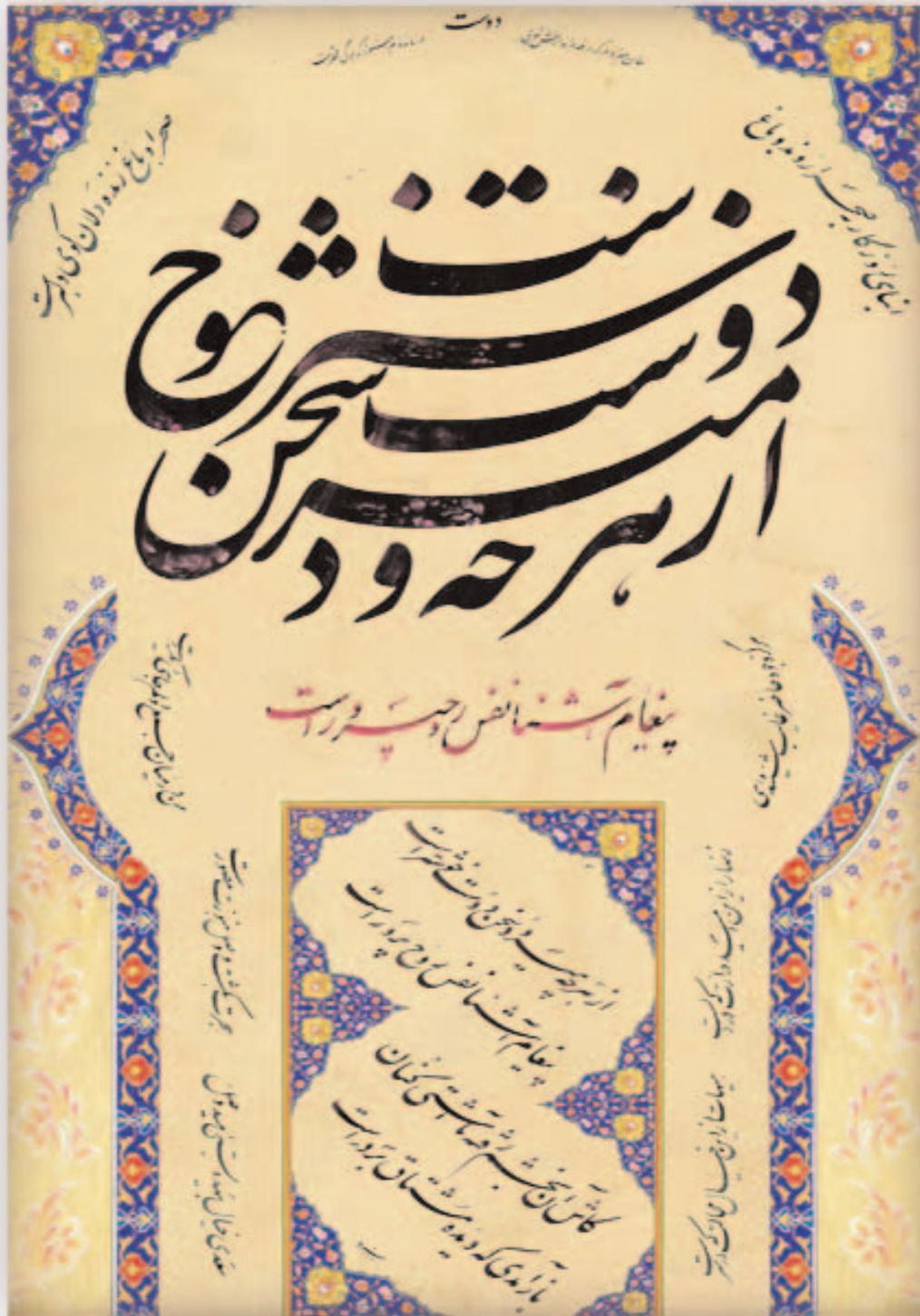
"My son, if possible, use some of your wealth as Radd al-Madhaalim on my behalf, in case I have any dues outstanding. ■





**Exterior and Interior views of the Parliament's Library
(Building No.2, Iranology section)**

Baharestan, Tehran



Nastaaligh Calligraphy by:
Ostad Mojtaba Sabzeh

Iran Parliament Museum
Baharestan, Tehran