

A Quick Look at Some Biographies of Professors of Grand Ayatullah Sheikh Bahjat

In this Chapter, we will cast a quick look at the life of some great professors who played a major role in building the scholarly life of the sheikh, his manners and spirituality. Ayatullah al-Mashkini says, "The professors of Sheikh Ayatullah Bahjat enjoy a lofty scholarly station and a great prominence which make us look at them as we look at the stars in the sky."

[Grand Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Agha Al-Qadi](#)

Al-Hajj Mirza Sayyid Ali Agha al-Qadi was born in the city of Tabriz on the 13th of the month of Thil-Hijja of 1282 A.H. Having finished his preparatory study, he was tutored by his father, the late Hajj Sayyid Husayn al-Qadi. Then he attended the lectures of the late Mirza Musa al-Tabrizi, author of the book titled *Hashiyat al-Rasaail*. He also attended the classes of Mirza Muhamamd Ali al-Qaraj Daghi and completed the classes in Arab and Persian literature of the famous poet Mirza Muhammad Taqi al-Tabrizi who is known as "Hujjatul Islam" and the one given the title "Nir". He quoted many poetic verses by him in both Arabic and Persian languages. Then he migrated to the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf and was honored to reside in it in 1308 A.H. when he was then 26 years old. In the city of Najaf, he was taught by these Ayatullahs: Fadil al-Sharabyani, Sheikh Muhammad Hasan al-Mamqani, Sheikh Shari'at, Akhund al-Khurasani and al-Hajj Mirza Husayn al-Khalili.

Sayyid al-Qadi was one of the most respected of the students of al-Hajj Mirza al-Khalili. He also studied in his presence the cultivation of manners. Sayyid al-Qadi was a Gnostic, a faqih, and a man of a great stature. He also had some miracles and revelations. Allama Sheikh Agha Buzurg al-Tehran wrote the following lines in his book *Tabaqat A'lam al-Shi'a* in his biography: "Sayyid Ali Agha Tabatabai Tabrizi al-Qadi, son of Mirza Husayn son of Mirza Ahmad son of Mirza Raheem, is a scholar, a *mujtahid*, a man of piety and asceticism. I befriended him and kept him company for scores of years, and I found stability in his style, youth in his nature and attributes, generosity in his own self and in his nature. He wrote an exegesis of the Qur'an which starts from the beginning of the Qur'an and ends with

the ninety-second verse of Surat al-An'am: 'Say: Allah, then leave them in their wading sporting'.

As for his father, he, too, wrote an exegesis of the Holy Qur'an, and their household was since antiquity a house of knowledge, virtue and piety. 'Allama Hasan Zadeh al-Amuli says the following in his regard: "Ayatullah Sayyid al-Qadi was one of the wonders of time." Then he says, "One of the powerful statements of the late al-Hajj Sayyid Ali al-Qadi is this: 'If one spends half his life looking for a perfect teacher, he does not make much of an achievement.'" Allama Hasan Zadeh quotes 'allama Tabatabai saying the following while detailing the biography of Sayyid Ali al-Qadi: "The Sayyid was an amazing man. He nurtured many students and was tutored by many professors. He had very strong revelations, let alone his testimonial and Gnostic perfections, conduct and moral behavior."

Grand Ayatullah al-Gharawi al-Isfahani

'Allama Sayyid Muhammad Husayn al-Isfahani, who is famous as al-Kampani, is one of the prominent *mutjahids* and great authorities of his time. Actually, he was a man of *fiqh* the like of whom is quite rare in all times.

The Sayyid was born in the city of al-Kadhimiyya on the second of Muharram of 1296 A.H. in the environments of a revered family known for its adherence to the creed and piety. His father, the late al-Hajj Muhammad Hasan, was a well known merchant in al-Kadhimiyya. He was given the title "al-Isfahani" because his ancestors were affiliated with the city of Isfahan. His father died when he was still a child, leaving him a huge fortune which he spent on the study of branches of knowledge and Islamic teachings as well as on achieving good manners.

Signs of intelligence and genius emanated from his face since his childhood. He completed his preparatory study in the city of al-Kadhimiyya, then he left it to be honored by residing in the city of knowledge and *ijtihad*, al-Najaf al-Ashraf, when he was no more than twenty years old. He studied *fiqh* and *Usul* at the hands of a band of prominent professors such as al-Hajj Agha Riḡa al-Hamadani, Sayyid al-Fisharki, and Akhund Mulla Kadhim al-Khurasani, and he attended lessons in philosophy and Gnosticism in the presence of the famous man of wisdom, al-Hajj Mirza Muhammad al-Istihbanati. He sat on the teaching chair in the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf shortly after having resided there due to his genius and general acquisition.

He left behind precious works dealing with *fiqh*, *Usul* and philosophy. We would like to point out to some of them:

- His comment on *Maq'ad Kifayat al-Usul fi 'Ilm al-Usul*
- His comment on *Al-Makasib fi 'Ilm al-Fiqh*
- A poem titled "the wise man's precious jewel" which deals with philosophy
- He also left a *diwan* in Arabic and Persian poetry.

He returned to the mercy of his Lord on the fifth of Dhul-Hijjah of 1361 A.H. at an age exceeding 65 and was buried in the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf beside the shrine of Imam Ali, peace be with him.

Grand Ayatullah al-Hajj Sheikh Muhammad Kadhim al-Shirazi

The mentor was born in 1290 A.H. in the city of Shiraz. He was honored by making the pilgrimage to the holy sites in Iraq in the company of his parents in 1300 A.H. and resided in the city of holy Karbala where he started learning Arabic. His parents returned to Shiraz two years later, but he remained in Karbala and kept himself busy with the elementary study. He returned to Shiraz fourteen years after his residence in Karbala.

He studied *al-Mutawwal* and *al-Ma`alim* in the presence of the perfect scholar, al-Hajj Sayyid Muhammad al-Kazruni who is well known for his skill in teaching *al-Mutawwal*. He returned to Karbala two years since his residence in Shiraz, then he went to Samarra in 1310 A.H. in order to continue his studies. He studied the *rasaail* and *makaasib* in the presence of the perfect scholar, Sheikh Hasan Ali al-Tehrani, who is famous for his knowledge and piety, and he attended the classes of the late Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Taqi al-Shirazi, and he regularly attended his classes till the day the mentor died.

He left Samarra for al-Kadhimiyya where he taught, then he migrated to the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf in order to establish a theological seminary. It is worth mentioning that he used to oversee the answers to most religious edicts of Ayatullah al-Isfahani.

In 1366, one year before his demise, he left the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf with the intention to make the pilgrimage to the shrine of Imam al-Riḍā, peace be with him. The theological seminary in holy Qum and its dignitaries, such as Ayatullah Burujardi, Hujjat, al-Faydh, al-Khunsari and al-Sadr, welcomed him. In 1367 he died and was buried in one of the chambers of the shrine of Imam Ali, peace be with him.

Grand Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Husayn al-Naeeni

Ayatullah al-Naeeni was one of the most famous religious authorities of his time, one of the greatest critics and verifiers in the sciences of *fiqh* and *Usul*, so much so that he was known as the *mujaddid* in the science of *Usul* and the one who excelled in it.

The *`Allama* was born in a family known for its knowledge and distinction on the 17th of Dhul-Qi'da of 1376 A.H. in the city of Naeen in the governorate of Isfahan. He completed his elementary study in his home town then migrated to the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf in order to continue his higher study in *fiqh* and *Usul*. He was taught by Grand Ayatullah al-Hajj Mirza Muhammad Hasan al-Shirazi the Senior and distinguished himself among his students. He also used to attend the classes of Ayatullah Akhund Muhammad Kadhim al-Khurasani in order to show his humbleness and respect for his status.

The *`Allama* stood out among the scholars of al-Najaf al-Ashraf due to the abundance of his knowledge

and to his acquisition of the sciences of mathematics, wisdom, philosophy, Gnosticism as well as skill in *fiqh* and *Usul*. He cultivated the science of *Usul*, coining anew in a new form distantly from difficulty and complexity, winning the admiration of those who were familiar with this art.

He also wrote books many of which were published including the following:

- ☞ a dissertation in what is doubtful to wear
- ☞ *Wasilat al-Najat*
- ☞ Reports in the science of *Usul* (which was printed several times)
- ☞ a dissertation in "there is no harm..."

Ayatullah Naeeni paid special attention particularly to cultivating himself, so he never abandoned the performance of the night prayer, nor was he ever heard articulating a bad word. He used to organize his precious time and not waste it at all. He used to spend his time in either a scientific research, or looking after the affairs of people, or in helping them with their needs. He was moderate with regard to what he ate or put on, and he was extremely cautious in faring with the public funds.

He never took advantage of the blessed "Imam's share" and other rights stated in the Shari'a for his own personal benefit. Rather, he used to meet his life's expenses from his own income. As regarding his political and social services, he wrote a book titled *Tanbeeh al-Umma wa Tanzeeh al-Milla* [notifying the nation and clearing the name of the creed] during the black dictatorial epoch in Iran. In it, he explained through logic and wisdom the norms of despotism and dictatorship, reminding the scholars and jurists of their religious duty towards the situation then.

He also explained in the book the limits of the powers of the ruler and the Islamic government, pointing out to the chapters of the admonishment by Imam Ali (AS) to Malik al-Ashtar. This book won the attention of the struggling authorities at the time; therefore, Ayatullah Akhund al-Khurasani and Ayatullah Sheikh Abdullah al-Mazandarani issued their authorization, supporting the revolution of the constitution and announcing its origins as being derived from the Islamic faith of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be with him and his progeny.

Ayatullah Naeeni and a group of his distinguished students were banished together with Ayatullah al-Isfahani and Ayatullah al-Khalisi to Iran because of their struggle to change the government in Iraq. Ayatullah Naeeni entered the city of Qum after a short stay in the cities of Kermanshah and Hamadan, and he was busy teaching and performing the congregational prayer service. He returned to al-Najaf al-Ashraf one year after his stay in the holy city of Qum. He joined his Lord on the 26th of Jumada I of 1358 A.H. after a lifetime of service, struggle and perseverance for nurturing a united generation that carries a Qur'anic message.

Grand Ayatullah Agha Diya ad-Deen al-Iraqi

Grand Ayatullah Agha Diya ad-Deen al-Iraqi was born in the city of Sultan-Abad (Persian Iraq, Arak) in

the year 1278 A.H. He completed his preparatory study in his home town then migrated to the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf in order to complete his study. He attended classes by great Ayatullahs such as Muhammad al-Fisharki, Akhund al-Khurasani, Sayyid Kadhim al-Yazdi and the mentor of the Shari'a, al-Isfahani.

Signs of his intelligence and genius were obvious during the first years of his study. He started teaching at an early age, and many students gathered round him because of his oratory and the ease of his explanation. He distinguished himself among great teachers following the demise of his professor, the late Akhund al-Khurasani. He studied *fiqh* and *Usul* for more than thirty years and many students were nurtured by him. Some of them became later on sources for *taqlid*. Among his works, one can point out to a book containing articles about *Usul*. Finally, this working scholar moved to the mercy of his Lord in the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf in the year 1361 A.H.

Grand Ayatullah Sayyid Abu al-Hasan al-Isfahani

Ayatullah Sayyid Abu al-Hasan al-Isfahani was born in the Madisa village, one of the villages of Lanjan district of the city of Isfahan. He completed his elementary study in the Nimarud School in Isfahan where he was taught by Mirza Abu al-Ma'ali al-Kalbasi, benefiting greatly from him. He migrated to Najaf al-Ashraf in 1307 A.H. in order to complete his study and attended classes by its great professors.

He earned the degree of *ijtihad* in the classes offered by Ayatullah Akhund al-Khurasani. He rose to distinction with Ayatullah Naeeni after the demise of the late Ayatullah Akhund al-Khurasani and Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi al-Shirazi. After the death of Ayatullah Naeeni, he became the only religious authority for most of Shiite lands. Imam al-Khomeini and another group of contemporary jurists commented on his scholarly dissertation (*risala*) due to its inclusion.

This great scholar joined his Lord on a Monday, the 9th of the month of Dhul-Hijja of 1365 A.H. in the city of al-Kadhimiyya. Addressing his holy body, Ayatullah Muhammad Husayn Kashifal-Ghita made these statements: "Congratulations to you the ascension to your Lord! How happy you have been alive and dead! Your life was joined with management and greatness, making people through it forget the past great ones, following the coming ones.

You were also born twice: Once you earned experience and knowledge, and once you acted upon what you had earned!" He, may Allah have mercy on his soul, was characterized by good attributes and characteristics, and his pure soul inspired one to be firm and steadfast for the sake of the Adored One. He surpassed his peers in managing the affairs, in administration and knowledge, and he was generous, articulate, orator, making his classes the most busy and popular among those offered at Najaf al-Ashraf's theological seminary.

He participated in the struggle of the Muslim Iraqi people against colonialism and was banished to Iran together with some struggling scholars. He had honorable stands towards the incidents at the Guharshad Mosque in the holy city of Mashhad.

Grand Ayatullah Sheikh Murtaḡa al-Taleqani

Sheikh Murtaḡa al-Taleqani was born in 1280 A.H. in the city of Taleqan. He learned the Qur'an and Persian literature in the *katateeb* of the city then migrated to Tehran and from there to Isfahan so he could attend classes by its great scholars such as Ayatullah Abu al-Ma'ali al-Karbalai, the man of wisdom al-Qashqa'l Mulla Muhammad al-Kashi and others. He migrated to the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf and was tutored at the hands of its great scholars such as Akhund al-Khurasani, Sayyid Kadhim al-Yazdi, the mentor of the Shari'a al-Isfahani, Mirza Muhammad Taqi al-Shirazi and others.

He paid attention to nurturing himself and purifying his soul so he could fold the stages of perfection and reach the ultimate objective. The mentor, may Allah have mercy on him, abandoned the world and spent most of his time teaching the students and cultivating them. Many of them later on rose to distinction, becoming authorities and great scholars in our time. The mentor, may Allah have mercy on him, lived single all his life, and he was residing in the school of Sayyid al-Yazdi of the reliable niche in the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf till he died there in 1364 A.H.

The wise `Allama Sayyid Husayn Badkubah-Ay

The `Allama was born in 1293 A.H in the village of Dalan in the city of Badkubah. He was tutored at the hands of his father and completed the preparatory study and that of literature in his presence. He migrated to Tehran after the death of his father and resided at the Sadr School in that city. He studied mathematics and philosophy at the hands of the late Sayyid Abu al-Hasan Jalwah and the late Mirza Hashim al-Ashkuri. He also studied logic for seven years of continuous effort in the presence of his professors teaching this science.

He migrated to al-Najaf al-Ashraf and attended the classes of Grand Ayatullah Akhund al-Khurasani. This coincided with the first days of writing the *Kifaya* book. He also studied *fiqh* at the hands of Ayatullah Sheikh Muhammad Hasan al-Mamqani. Soon many virtuous scholars gathered round him to benefit from his views and theories. Finally, he moved to the mercy of his Lord in the eve of the 28th of the holy month of Shawwal of 1358 A.H. in the bath house of the sacred shrine and was buried in the neighborhood of his holy grandfather, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib, peace be with him.

Grand Ayatullah the authority Kuwah-Kamrah-Ay

The authority Ayatullah was a scholar who acted upon his knowledge, a perfect jurist, a virtuous traditionist, a skilled wise man, a precise man of *Usul*, a verifier of narrators of hadith, a man who acquired knowledge of what is rational and what is transmitted. He was born in the month of Sha'ban of 1310 A.H. in the city of Tabriz in a religious family known for its piety.

His revered lineage goes back to the most respected Sayyid Muhammad al-Masri who is nicknamed al-

Hijazi, one of the offspring of Ali al-Asghar son of Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn Zain al-Abidin, peace be with him. The authority Ayatullah enjoyed an exceptional intelligence and a swift roving intellect whereby he was able to complete his preparatory study at an astounding pace so he could study after it fiqh, *Usul*, mathematics, rationale, ancient and modern medicine as well as a generous amount of modern sciences such as physics and chemistry.

He completed the *Sutooh* stage in *fiqh* and *Usul* at the hands of his father, the late Sayyid Ali Kuwah-Kamrah-Ay. He migrated to al-Najaf al-Ashraf in 1330 when he was twenty years old. He attended classes of great professors such as the *'allama* al-Yazdi of Al-Urwah al-Wuthqa (the reliable niche), the mentor of the Shari'a al-Isfahani, Mirza Naeeni and Agha Diya ad-Deen al-Iraqi.

In 1349 A.H., he returned to the holy city of Qum and was one of the greatest of its scholars and senior professors of its seminary. He won the attention of Grand Ayatullah al-Haeri, founder of the theological seminary in Qum, who asked him to lead the congregational prayer service in his place during the late years of his holy life. He also taught in his place after his demise and continued to teach and answer requests for edicts. He looked after people's affairs till the last moment of his life despite his weakness and deteriorating health.

The Sayyid, may Allah have mercy on him, was a distinctive testimonial for the tradition transmitted from the Infallible Imams, peace be with them, which says [in describing a true believer], "He disobeys his desires, obedient to the command of his Lord, protecting himself, safeguarding his creed." He kept the secrets to himself, so much so that even the closest people to him did not know him as he should have. He, may Allah have mercy on him, was among those who won the honor of meeting the Imam of the Time, may Allah hasten his reappearance. And he was precise in utilizing his time, an avid reader of scholarly and juristic books, not abandoning research or study even on his wedding night. He left several books in various fields. We would like here to point to some of them:

1. Kitab al-Biya' [a book about real estate]
2. A collection of traditions and *Usul*
3. his commentary about the book titled *Al-Kifaya*
4. *Lawami' al-Anwar al-Gharawiyya fi Mursalat al-Athar al-Nabawiyya*
5. *Mustadrak al-Mustadrak*

The Sayyid predicted the hour of his death; so, he gathered some scholars of the seminary and requested some pure soil from the shrine of Imam al-Husayn which he put on his tongue and said, "The last of my ration from the world is the soil of al-Husayn." He consulted the Qur'an regarding his destiny, so the 14th verse of Chapter al-Ra'd [thunder] came up: "To Him belongs the call of the truth". He, therefore, said in an audible voice: "We belong to Allah, and to Him do we return," then his sacred soul

left his body.

Having come to know about his demise, Ayatullah Burujardi said, "Now my spine has been broken. The chamber may become a school of a mosque (after the example of the mosque and school of the Hujjatis)," and he instructed the chamber located beside the mosque to be a cemetery for himself and the members of his family. This will was inspired to him in a vision.

Grand Ayatullah Burujardi

Grand Ayatullah Burujardi belongs to a respectable family known for its knowledge and piety. He is one of the Sayyids who belong to the Infallible Imams, peace be with them. His lineage reaches Imam al-Hasan, the chosen one. The Sayyid was born in 1292 A.H. in the city of Burujard. He was taught by scholars of this city and finished a good deal of his preparatory study at the hand of his father.

He migrated to Isfahan in 1310 A.H. in order to continue his studies and acquire religious studies, and he was then eighteen years old. He was tutored by senior scholars of Isfahan such as the grand Ayatullahs and those bearing the title "Hujjatul-Islam" such as Abu al-Ma'ali al-Kalbasi, Sayyid Mir Muhammad Taqi al-Mudarrisi and Akhund Mulla Muhammad al-Kashi, Mirza Jehangir al-Qashqai. He also taught jurisprudence and *Usul* in his study in this city.

He migrated to al-Najaf al-Ashraf in 1318 A.H. eight years after having resided in Isfahan and his earning the degree of *ijtihād* in it, and he was then twenty-six years old. He benefited from attending classes by great Ayatullahs such as the Akhund al-Khurasani, author of *Al-Kifaya*, and *ʿallama* al-Yazdi, author of *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa*. He distinguished himself among the students of the late Akhund for he wrote commentaries about his book titled *Kifayat al-Usul*.

He returned to the city of Burujard in 1328 A.H. after a residence that lasted for ten years in the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf during which he earned the *ijtihād* degree which was awarded to him by the most distinguished of its scholars. During his stay in Burujard, which lasted more than 36 yers, he founded a theological seminary to teach the researches of *Kharij al-Fiqh* and *Usul* in this city. During this period, he was emulated as an authority for *taqleed* by most residents of the western and southern parts of Iran and some districts in the Khurasan governorates and other areas.

He resided in the city of Qum for few months after returning from making a pilgrimage to the shrine of Imam al-Riḍā, peace be with him, as insisted by Grand Ayatullah al-Haeri and a group of other men of virtue in the theological seminary. During that period, he studied the *Kharij al-Fiqh* and *Usul* researches then returned to his birthplace, the city of Burujard. He returned to holy Qum in the holy month of Muharram of 1364 A.H. after having become the greatest authority for the Shiites in the world. More than 1,200 men of virtue and prominent mujtahids used to attend his classes in the seminary.

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