

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

<u>Home</u> > <u>Eternal Manifestations</u>: 80 Stories from the life of Allama Tabatabai (ra) > <u>Allamah as a Student</u> > Story n. 6

Allamah as a Student

Story n. 1

Allamah Tabataba'i narrates an account of the early days of his studies in the following manner:

In the early days of my studies, when I was occupied with studying Sarf and Nahw, I did not have a deep desire to continue my studies. As a result however much I studied I did not fully understand [the material]. I passed four years in this manner. Then one day Divine favor grabbed a hold of me and changed me and I felt a sense of infatuation and restlessness in relation to gaining knowledge, such that from that day onwards until my studies came to a completion approximately 18 years later, I never once felt tired or reluctant when it came to learning and thinking, and I completely forgot both the beauty and the unsightliness of the world.

I ended all dealings I had with those who were not part of the scholarly and academic tradition. I satisfied myself with the least possible amount of time for eating, sleeping and other necessities of life, and spent the rest of my time in my studies. It was very common, especially in spring and summer, for me to study from night until dawn. I would always study the following day's lesson from before. If a problem arose I would solve it even if it meant exerting myself to the utmost degree, so that when I would attend class I would be aware of what the teacher presented. I would never take an issue or a problem to the teacher.

'Allamah Tabataba'i

Story n. 2

Allamah Tabataba'i describes his entrance into Najaf and the beginning of his studies in the following manner:

When I left Tabriz for Najaf with the intention of continuing my studies of Islamic sciences, I was unaware of the situation in Najaf. I didn't know where to go and what to do. On the way there I was in constant thought of what I should study and whose student I should become, and what path and route I

should choose so that I might become the source of Divine pleasure and acceptance. When I reached the entrance of the holy city of Najaf, I turned towards the dome and court of Amir ul-Muminin and said:

"O Ali! I have come in your presence so that I might continue my studies, but I do not know which path to take, and what program to choose. I want you to guide me to that in which there is goodness and moral soundness."

I [then] rented a place, and took up residence there. In those same first few days, before I had participated in any study sessions, I was sitting at home and thinking about the future when suddenly somebody knocked on the door. I opened the door, and saw that it was one of the prominent scholars. I greeted him, and he entered the house. He sat in the room and wished me well. His luminous face was striking and attractive. With complete pleasantness and sincerity he sat talking and I had a chance to get to know him better. During the conversation he recited poetry for me, and said something along the lines of:

"It is beneficial for someone who comes to Najaf with the intention of studying that in addition to increasing his intellect, he does not ignore self-purification."

After telling me this he left. In that session I had become enamored with his manners and his Islamic behavior. The precise and effective words of that saintly scholar left such an effect on my heart that I realized my plan for the future. During the time when I was in Najaf, I never left the presence of that pious scholar, participating in his classes of Akhlaq and benefiting from his company. That great intellectual was none other than Ayatullah Hajj Sayyid Mirza Ali Agha Qadhi – may God be pleased with him.

'Allamah Tabataba'i

Story n. 3

(Narrated by 'Allamah) ...One day I was standing in the madrasa when suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder and heard this sentence:

"O son! If you want this world then pray the Night Prayer (*Namaze ShablSalatul Layl*), and if you want the Hereafter then pray the Night Prayer."

These words had such a profound effect on me that from that day onwards until I moved to Iran five years later, I spent day and night in his presence. Not for a moment did I withhold from being in his blessed presence, and we kept in touch at all times until the end of his life. Throughout this time he used to give me prescribed instructions (*dasturat*). He was none other than the late Ayatullah Hajj Sayyid Mirza Ali Agha Qadhi Tabrizi.

'Allamah Tabataba'i

Story n. 4

'Allamah Tabataba'i was so devoted to this teacher of his (Ayatullah Sayyid Qadhi) that when a friend offered him a bottle of perfume out of sincerity and affection, he replied:

"From the time of the death of the late Qadhi to this day, I haven't worn perfume and haven't felt like making myself sweet-smelling".

Story n. 5

One of 'Allamah Tabataba'i's eminent teachers in Najaf was the great Ayatullah Hajj Sayyid Mirza Ali Agha Qadhi Tabrizi, a Gnostic of great dignity, a jurist of elevated status, and one who enjoyed spiritual disclosures (*mukashafat*).

Ayatullah Hasanzadeh Amuli

He, Sayyid Mirza Ali Aqa, was the son of Mirza Husayn Tabataba'i Tabrizi Qadhi. He was a pious, moral, learned scholar and a jurist (*mujtahid*), whose friendship and acquaintance I had for tens of years. I saw him thus: That he had steadfastness and forbearance when it came to the path and method of akhlaq, and that his behavior was noble and magnanimous...

From among the memorable sayings of the late Qadhi is the following:

"It is befitting if an individual spends half of his life searching for *insane kamil* (one of the special friends (*awliya*) of God)".

'Allamah Shaykh Aghabuzurg Tehrani

There are numerous accounts of the spiritual disclosures (*mukashafat*) of the late Qadhi. For example, he used to prepare the hearts of his students for accepting inspirations from the unseen (*ilhamate–ghayb*) by providing them with directives according to Islamic Law. He used to have a room in Masjide Kufa and Masjide Sahla, where he would occasionally spend the night alone.

It is sufficient to narrate this one sentence from 'Allamah Tabataba'i, who was himself such a great scholar and commentator, about his teacher the late Qadhi, in order to understand Sayyid Qadhi's position:

"Whatever I may have, I received it from the late Qadhi, for it is either that which I learnt from him and gained from his presence, or it is that which I attained from this path which I also learnt from the late Qadhi".

'Allamah Tabataba'i

Story n. 6

One of 'Allamah Tabataba'i's admirable characteristics was his acknowledgement of the efforts and work of men who contributed to the culture of pure Islam (Shi'ism), even if his own views were not in accordance with their views.

'Allamah often highly praised his late teacher Ayatullah Hajj Mirza Ali Qadhi Tabataba'i and repeatedly used to say *whatever we might have, it is from the late Qadhi*.

'Allamah Tabataba'i used to often mention the name of Bu Ali Sina (Avicenna) and recognized him to be stronger in the art of intellectual proof (*burhan*) and philosophical reasoning (*istidlal*) than Mulla Sadra, even though he greatly favored Mulla Sadra and his philosophical style and ability to change Greek philosophy, as well as his views of the doctrine of the fundamentality of existence (*asalatul wujud*) and unity and gradation (*wahdat wa tashkik*) in existence (*wujud*).

'Allamah Tabataba'i was of the opinion that Mulla Sadra brought philosophy out from antiquity and breathed a new soul and spirit into the subject. As a result of this Mulla Sadra is known as the one who brought Islamic philosophy back to life. (*zindekunandeye falsafe*)

'Allamah Tabataba'i considered Bu 'Ali, Farabi, KHajja Nasruddin Tusi, Bahmanyar, Ibn Rushd, and Ibn Turke a few of the most outstanding and eminent philosophers.

Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/eternal-manifestations-80-stories-life-allama-tabatabai-ra-ahmad-luqmani/allamah-student#comment-0