

An Autobiography

I, Muhammad Husayni Beheshti, was born on October 24th, 1928 in the Lumban district of the city of Isfahan.

My father was an *alem* and used to work in the city a few days each week. He would also spend one day a week serving as a congregational prayer leader in a nearby village and would attend to the welfare and affairs of its people.

I entered the primary school when I was 4 and very quickly learned writing, reading and the recitation of the Quran I became popular in the family as an intelligent lad. Later, I enrolled at the Servat Public School which became known as the 15th of Bahman School. When I took part in the entrance examinations, I qualified for the sixth grade, but because of my young age, it was just not possible. I was finally allowed to enter the fourth grade. My primary schooling was completed in this school. During this time, all sixth grade students took the examinations simultaneously, and I ranked second best in the whole city.

Then I registered at Sa'adi High School. I was there for the first and second year. At the outset of the second year, in September 1941, events took a different turn. Interest and enthusiasm for Islamic teachings was revived among the adult populace. The Sa'adi High School is located on the Imam Square, formerly known as the Shah Square. Every day we would walk the school's four or five kilometers' distance from our house.

Studying theology had always attracted me. My profound interest in it finally convinced me that I should terminate my secular education. In 1942 I entered the Sadr Theological School of Isfahan as a young '*tallabe*' (theology student.) from 1942 up to 1946. I completed courses in Arabic literature, logic, elementary theology and principles in Isfahan. The speed with which I passed my courses and the swift progress I made won me much respect in theological circles. This was also due to the fact that my mother's father, the late Haj Mir Muhammad Sadiq Mudarres Khatun Abadi had been among the distinguished Ulama.

He died when I was a year old. My professors who were his former pupils strongly believed that I could

be the successor of their master. In 1945, I got permission from my parents to spend the nights in school so I could become a full-fledged theological student. This way I would have more time to study. At the end of my introductory courses in theology, I decided to go to Qum to pursue my studies. I would like to mention that during the first and second years of high school, our foreign language course was French while English was a more prevalent foreign language in the country. Therefore, I decided to take a complete course in English. I became acquainted with the language through a relative.

In 1946, I went to Qum. I completed my courses in preliminary theology and other courses in about six months on arrival in Qum. At the beginning of the following years, 1947, we started the advanced courses. For the courses in jurisprudence and Usul (principles) I studied with our dear master, the late Ayatollah Mohaqiq Damad and also my magnanimous master and great teacher, our leader Imam Khomeini, and other great scholars.

During the six months I was completing my preliminary studies, I also studied other theology courses. Before going to Qum, I was also studying "The Logic and the Word", which was interrupted due to the lack of teachers of philosophy in Isfahan. I pursued my theology subjects and principles and proceeded with various studies and teachings. It was a usual tradition in these centers for capable theology students to teach while studying. I taught in Isfahan as well as Qum. When in Qum, I entered the Hujjatieh Theological School which the late Ayatollah Hujjat had founded.

In 1947, I decided to continue modern education. I was awarded a diploma in literature after successfully passing non-regular examination and joined the faculty of Islamic Theology and Culture of Tehran University. Through thick and thin, working and studying, I received my Bachelor's degree in 1951. Then I returned to Qum to continue my theological studies. At the same time, I also taught English at the Hakim Nizami High School in Qum. From 1951 till 1956 I was engaged in an intensive study of philosophical works and attended Allama Tabatabai's courses on Ali Sina (Ibn Sina) and the philosophy of Mulla Sadra.

On Thursday and Friday nights, I used to have constructive discourses with Martyr Mutahhari, Ayatollah Montazeri and other brothers. These weekend meetings continued for five years and precipitated the book, "The Method of Realism." During these years, we indulged in educational as well as social activities. With the late Mutahhari, Montazeri and about eighteen other brothers, we arranged a program according to which each one of us would go to the most remote villages to propagate the religion of Islam for two years. We went to these villages at our own expense. We ourselves, of course, did not have money of our own. The late Ayatollah Burujerdi provided us with an amount of 1000 Rials per person in 1947 and 1500 Rials each in 1948 through Imam Khomeini who was with him at that time.

The socio-political struggles of the oil nationalization movement under the leadership of Ayatollah Kashani and the late Dr. Musaddiq approached their peak in the years 1950 and 1951, while I was in Tehran. As a young robed enthusiast, I participated in demonstrations, gatherings and meetings. I went to Isfahan in the summer of 1952 during the Tir 30th (July 21st) events and actively took part in (Tir 26th)

general strikes.

After the Mordad 28th coup (1953), we arrived at the conclusion that we lacked a consistent program necessary for a successful movement. We decided to set up a cultural movement based on purely Islamic background.

In 1954, I founded the Din wa Danesh High School (religion and knowledge) with the help of some friends. I was in charge of its affairs until the year 1963. I taught at the Theology Center and was able to form a new cultural movement by establishing ties with university students. This newly founded student theological center relation proved to be a blessed bond.

I spent the years from 1956 till 1959 studying philosophy and received my Ph.D. in the same field at the Faculty of Theology. In 1959, I conducted a series of discussions in Tehran to deliver the message of Islam to the young enthusiasts in a novel manner. The late Ayatollahs Mutahhari and Taleqani and other gentlemen participated in these sessions.

In 1960, we thought of reorganizing the Qum Theological Center. A program was prepared and a new plan for teaching the Islamic sciences in the center was ratified. This laid the groundwork for the establishment of model schools such as the "Montazarieh" school.

The year 1962 was the commencement period of the Islamic Revolution under the leadership of the Imam and the Ulama. I was active in the struggles. During the same years, we founded the Qum Student's Association in order to strengthen the ties between pupils, students and theology students. Our efforts proved to be a threat to the ruling regime and in 1963, the regime forced me to leave Qum. I came to Tehran and continued my work while keeping close contacts with the resistance groups. We established active and systematic relations with the United Groups Association.

Later, the Imam appointed a 5-member council to manage the group's politico-theological affairs, namely Mutahhari, Mulla'i and myself.

In 1964, I was preoccupied with the movement's programs in Tehran. Then came a request for an *alem* to be sent to Hamburg's mosque which was founded by the late Ayatollah Burujerdi. Ayatollah Haeri and Milani convinced me to go there. The situation was getting critical at the time. The regime had executed the members of the military wing of the United Groups Association who had assassinated the proposed premier, Hassan Ali Mansur. My name was included in the dossier; so friends in Qum considered it advisable to send me out of the country.

The Hamburg invitation was a timely one; friends thought it was exactly the right time for me to leave Iran. I most certainly preferred to stay and told my friends that I would face all difficulties which might arise. But in our meetings it was decided that it would be best if I leave the country. Through Ayatollah Khonsari, my friends procured my passport and soon I flew to Hamburg. Upon my arrival at Hamburg, I immediately felt the student's need for an organization. We embarked upon the establishment of a group

and with the efforts of a number of Muslim youths we formed the Union of the Persian speaking Students' Association. We also reorganized the Islamic center. I stayed in Hamburg for a span of more than five years. I performed the Hajj pilgrimage and afterwards, I went on a trip to Syria, Lebanon and Turkey with friends and our dear brother Mr. Sadr (Imam Musa Sadr.) In the year 1969, I visited the Imam during a trip to Iraq. I came back to Iran for a visit in 1970 and as expected, the regime prevented my return to Hamburg.

In 1976, we created the nucleus for organizational activities and in the years from 1977–78 the Militant Ulama Association was founded. This was designed as a political group to function as a widespread (or partially) clandestine organization. When the struggles reached their peak in 1979, we concentrated forces, and thanks to God, victory was attained through the all-out participation of the Ulama in their marches and struggles.

There is an important matter I overlooked which I would like to mention. In 1971 I set up some classes on the interpretation of the Quran which was held on Saturdays. The time was ripe for the assembling of active youth. About 400–500 people would attend the sessions. In connection with these activities and my ties with the opposition abroad, the SAVAK (Shah's notorious secret service) arrested me in 1976. I was detained in the central committee for several days and was eventually released. As a result, we could no longer hold those sessions on Quranic commentary.

My second arrest took place in 1978 and I was held for a few days and then freed. I persisted in my political activities until the time the Imam went to Paris. I visited him there and the central cadre of the Revolutionary Council was formed with the Imam's guidance and orders. Mutahhari, Hashemi Rafsanjani, Musavi Ardabili, Bahonar and myself formed the first Revolutionary Council. Mr. Mahdavi Kani, Mr. Khamenei, the late Ayatollah Taleqani, Engineer Bazargan, Dr. Sahabi and some others later joined the Council until the Imam returned to Iran.

A lot has already been written regarding the events from the time Imam Khomeini arrived up to the present, so I feel there is no need for me to talk about them.

To conclude, I would like to add that during my stay in Hamburg the sphere of my activities covered the whole of Germany, Austria and part of Switzerland and the United Kingdom. But we had connections with all countries and their people. I was the founder of the Hamburg Islamic Association and acted as its consultant.

The books I have written so far are as follows:

- 1. God from the Viewpoint of the Quran**
- 2. Bank and Financing in Islam**
- 3. What is Prayer?**

4. **The Triumphant Combatant**
5. **Knowledge of Religion**
6. **A New Class in Our Society**
7. **The Ulama in Islam and among Muslims**
8. **Which Ideology?**
9. **Ownership**

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/lectures-martyred-ayatollah-beheshti-sayyid-muhammad-husayni-beheshti/autobiography#comment-0>