

## Biography Of Ayatollah Sanaeei

His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Saanei was born to a clerical family in Neekabad, Isfahan Province in 1316 Hegira (1937). His father, the late Hojat-ul-Islam Sheikh Mohammad Ali Saanei, acclaimed for his piety and quality of virtue, was a cleric.

His grandfather, Ayatollah Hajj Mulla Yusef had been among the devout and highly respected clerics of his own time. Hajj Mulla Yusef was tutored in divine philosophy by the well-known Iranian philosopher, Jahangir Khan, and in jurisprudence, he had been among the pupils of Grand Ayatollah Mirza Habibullah Rashti. Hajj Mulla Yusef was a disciple and propagator of the great Mirza-ye-Shirazi, the man who led the "tobacco movement" in opposition to the monopolistic concession, which the government of his time had granted to a British firm. His grandfather, an ardent advocate of Shirazi's views, was known for his love of freedom and objection to social injustice. He never hesitated to stand up against the way people were treated in the hands of some feudal landlords and other agents of oppression.

Encouraged by his father to devote his life to the pursuit of seminary studies, the young Saanei entered the Isfahan Seminary in the year 1325 Hegira (1946). While being in Isfahan, he attended the lectures and tutorial sessions held by seminarians there. And upon the completion of the preliminary studies in divinity, he entered the Qom Seminary in the year 1330 Hegira (1951).

Sheikh Saanei as an industrious student of canonical principles (Kharij) and a keen learner of the intensive and conclusive research works of Imam Khomeini, actively and successively attended the seminary sessions held by His Eminence for several years, which according to Mr. Saanei himself "led to the perception of the principles rather than mere knowing and learning them."

Apart from Imam Khomeini's classes, Ayatollah Saanei also attended the courses given by such illustrious seminarians as Grand Ayatollah Boroujerdi, Grand Ayatollah Mohaqeq Damad and Grand Ayatollah Araki (May God give rest to their souls).

The combination of his inborn God given gift and devotion to learning enabled Sheikh Saanei at the age of 22 to reach to the rank of Ijtihad (the authority to deduce independently the religious laws) in the year

1338 (1959).

In the year 1354 Hegira (1975), he began his formal career as a lecturer in divinity. He offered courses on the Book of Zakat at the Haghani (the Twain Martyrs) School of Divinity. His lectures, compiled by two of his pupils at the School, are extant as a proof of his command of the subject and the clarity of his teaching.

When he began to teach the Kharij (an advance level at seminary school, equivalent to post graduate studies at any given university independent of any text or prescribed text) courses, a number of seminary students and lecturers attended his classes, among whom are a number of the most distinguished seminary researchers and Mujtahids (Islamic Jurisprudents) of our time who are active either at the seminaries or in governmental agencies having important roles in the affairs of the Islamic Republic.

He died in Qom, on the 12th of September 2020, at 82 years.

## **Man And Human Rights Viewed From Grand Ayatollah Saanei's Perspective**

From the Islamic point of view, men irrespective of status color, race, and doctrine are all equal in that they are all human. In Islam, the spirit of freedom seeking, justice, equality, and human rights are predominant. Islam places value on all human beings, and in this respect, there is no difference between Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, etc.

## **Some of the Grand Ayatollah Saanei's Jurisprudential Views**

1. Masculinity is not a condition for being a religious authority
2. Masculinity is not a condition for occupying any ruling and governmental position.
3. Masculinity is not a condition for serving as a judge.
4. Man and women are equal in blood vengeance and retaliation for wounds
5. Man and woman are equal in blood money and compensation for injury.
6. If a man does not have any heirs other than his wife, the wife will inherit his entire legacy after his death.
7. When a man dies, his wife will inherit from all his property.
8. It is not forbidden for a woman to leave the house and go out without his permission as long as it does

not threaten the man's dignity and provided that it does not violate his right of enjoyment and pleasure from his wife.

9. It is not necessary for a woman to obtain her husband's permission for making a vow as long as the vow concerns the woman herself or if she is financially independent and possesses her own property; however, this will only be the case if her vow does not violate the husband's right of enjoyment and pleasure from his wife.

10. The authority to divorce is in the hands of the husband but if a woman forgoes her dowry in return for getting divorced, it will be obligatory for the husband to divorce her.

11. Temporary marriage pertains to special circumstances and it is not considered as parallel to permanent marriage.

12. The life and property of a non-Muslim are respected just as those of a Muslim.

13. Muslims and non-Muslims are equal in compensation and blood money.

14. Muslims and non-Muslims are equal in retaliation.

15. Just as fathers, mothers are also exempted from retaliation for murdering their children unless it is committed for personal purposes such as enmity, greed for possessions and power, or preventing them from revealing their crimes and betrayals etc. where the general rule for retaliation will apply to both mothers and fathers.

16. In the absence of a father, the mother will be the guardian of the children and their property and she takes precedence over their paternal grandfather in this regard.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.al-islam.org/essence-thoughts-yousef-saanei/biography-ayatollah-sanaei>