

Aqiqi Bakhshayeshi

Ten Decades of Ulama's Struggle



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TEN DECADES OF ULAMA'S STRUGGLE

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Islamic Propagation Organization

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Publisher's Note:

This book recounts the lives of some of the Ulama of Iran committed to the inspired and noble cause of Islam. It is first and foremost dedicated to their memory and to the spirit in which they lived and worked to finally attain the supreme status of martyrdom. The biographies contained herein give an account of the political and social struggles of the Ulama in the cause of Islam and should be a source of inspiration to all Muslim nations and oppressed masses of the world. It is an account of their undaunting and continued struggle, devotion and self-sacrifice to save their nations from the shackles of oppression and the moral quagmire into which they have fallen for too long now.

A number of books have been written on Islam and the savants of Islam by scholars for several years now and Western orientalist in particular have done a good deal of research and study pertaining to this subject. Their valuable efforts have unfortunately failed to generate the inspiration required for a vital regeneration of Islam and there are many reasons for this of which two stand out in particular.

First, their knowledge, information and understanding of the culture and theology of Islam have been bounded by their own points of view, a point that applies in particular to orientalist whose very consciousness has been formed through their grounding in a Western theological mould. Hence they fail to appreciate the deeper subtleties of Islamic thought and the depth and spirituality of Islam reflected in the lives of Muslim divines. To be able to appreciate and present impartially the truths of Islam in its multifaceted dimensions one has to live Islam and imbibe its very spirit. And this brings us to the second reason, namely that this lack of understanding in depth has led to

distortions in presentation. These in many cases are due to a misunderstanding of facts, of the failure to see Islam in its entirety, but in other cases—and this is indeed most unforgiveable—due to a deliberate attempt to distort the religion and even conceal the real truths presented by Islam. Both these have been dangerous trends and have done more disservice than service to Islam as a religion.

A still more pernicious and dangerous trend than the simple distortions in books, is the use which Western and Eastern colonialists have made of these to keep the liberating and rejuvenating influences of Islam suppressed, because their assertion would have led to a liberation of Muslim peoples from the colonialist and exploitative shackles imposed upon them. A free and virile Islam poses the greatest challenge to oppression of every kind and its message of liberation for individual and society runs counter to the very credo of a colonialism that tries to subject both the minds and spirits of those it brings under its domination. No better way to do this than by corrupting, diluting and distorting the inner spirit of the religion. No wonder too that the so-called spiritual leaders of Muslims in colonialist countries have been called into service to do this work for their masters. Islam devalued to the status of a mere superstition with its challenging political and social meaning left out was an acceptable compromise to those who wished to keep the movement of Islam in check and so-called spiritual leaders who preached this brand of Islam were encouraged by them. Islam all in all was converted into a vapid and colourless religion devoid of real content in a challenging modern world where the power factor counts in domination and exploitation, particularly in the case of Muslims, of their rich material resources and their richer spiritual heritage.

With the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the world and particularly the arrogant power wielders began to realize that Islam was a force that could not be fettered and the ceaseless progress of this revolution, throwing to the winds the servile dependence on both East and West, proved this beyond a doubt. The Islamic Revolution of Iran began to make the voice of Islam heard once again and the leaders of the oppressed masses were quick to rally to the call.

Be they Muslim, or non-Muslim, readers of this book cannot fail to be impressed by the depth of inspiration that caused the Ulama, who have been in the vanguard of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, to give up their very lives in martyrdom for the sake of an enduring and eternal cause, the cause of Islam. By doing this they have not only challenged the very roots of world dominating imperialisms, but have also unlocked the treasures of a great tradition that is Islam, from a treasure chest which these colonialists and imperialists have secured away to gather dust in the backrooms of the civilizations of the world.

The world of Islam is now awake consequent to its jolting by the

Islamic Revolution in Iran, but imperialisms too which are ever watchful and alert to the stirrings of this once sleeping giant, are doing all in their power to keep it rested and powerless to move. Still, no amount of filibustering, no show of force and none of the old temptations and allurements of a way of life alien to the great symphony of Islam can stop the movement which each day today gathers momentum on its way. With perseverance, self-sacrifice and Divine help all the intrigues to frustrate Islam can only come to nought and this has been shown no better than in Iran where the Ulama have stood forth as the leaders and directors of the movement.

The lives of the Ulama described in this book and the ways of their martyrdom bespeak the nobility of such tragic ends. It is hoped that the spiritual message that is reflected in their martyrdoms will find a responsive chord in the hearts of all Muslims and that they will realize that nothing can withhold the great spiritual message of Islam from breaking forth as the beacon of a future victory for the world: "Victory comes from Allah only, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise." (Holy Quran 3:126)

International Relations Department
Islamic Propagation Organization

CHAPTER ONE

MIRZA SHIRAZI, CHAMPION OF KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION

Looking at the struggles of the Ulama in the past century, the first name that strikes us is that of Ayatollah Mirza Muhammad Hassan Shirazi, an authority imitated by the world Shi'as, a man who lived under the despotic rule of Nasser-al-Din-Shah of the Qajar dynasty. Not only was this champion of knowledge, this chaste personality, a social and political leader, a pioneer and founder of the last century, but he was also the driving force behind the deprived people's struggles against internal despotism and external colonisation in Iran.

Thus, the awakening of Iranian Muslims at the beginning of the present Islamic century (14th century Hijra) in connection with western colonisation and the Superpowers of the time, especially Britain and Russia, is indebted to the efforts and alertness of this well informed, crusading A'lem.

His revolutionary step in boycotting the tobacco concession to Britain by Iran, which concession would have brought Iran into line with British colonies, was not only a crushing blow to British colonisation, but it gave fresh impetus to the struggles against the self-centered, despotic Qajar dynasty until the constitutional movement became successful and the tyrannical Qajar regime was overthrown.

Mirza Shirazi, a distinguished disciple of the late Sheikh Murtaza Ansari, founded and perfected jurisprudential principles in the last century, succeeding the late Saheb Jawaher as an authority to be imitated by the world Shi'as. Having completed his studies at Najaf, the renown centre of Shi'a learning, and having attained the exalted position of Mojtahed (an expert in Islamic Jurisprudence), he settled down in the town of Samerah.

With remarkable foresight and planning, he soon established a centre of learning for the Shi'a and Sunni brethren which became a very fruitful centre in the world of Islam, training distinguished pupils who would later become the torch-bearers of knowledge and virtue and banner-carriers of crusade and combat in Islamic nations.

Among his most notable revolutionary services to the nation was his boycott of the tobacco concession at the height of the selfishness and unpatriotic ignorance of Nasser-al-Din Shah and his courtiers, which, according to the testimony of history, broke the back of the colonising powers.

In those black days, the unbearable tyranny of European colonisers in Islamic and oriental countries had reached such a point that the property assets, underground resources and natural wealth of these countries including Iran were divided among the powerful governments, paying only a trifling sum as hush-money to the kings, rulers and governors of the time.

With the extension and unfair influence of foreign colonisation in the Muslim eastern lands, Syyed Jamal-al-Din Assadabadi was one of the first to sense this coming danger and the harm it might cause to Islam and the Muslims. He took it seriously, directing all efforts at combating it. One of his moves was to write moving and inciting letters to religious leaders of Iran and other countries, exposing the criminal and fearful consequences of western colonisation in the world of Islam and appealing for their help.

Syyed Jamal-al-Din's Letter

The letter that Syyed Jamal wrote to the exalted Shi'a authority, the late Mirza Shirazi, was decisive. For a better understanding and a more careful scrutiny of its content, we should turn back to the time when the tobacco concession was given to Britain, and give a brief explanation of it.

On the third visit of Nasser-al-Din-Shah to Europe, which visit was planned and arranged by Britain, with the collaboration of Amin-al-Sultan and the courtiers, his chancellor, Zellollah received some proposals from Britain concerning the granting of several new concessions, the most important of which was that of the tobacco

concession by Iran.

Nasser-al-Din-Shah who had undertaken this trip to Europe for revelry and pleasure was in great need of money to prolong his pleasure trip. Thus, he was highly tempted into receiving glittering English sovereigns and it did not take him long to submit to the British demands. In short, his courtiers including the puppet, unpatriotic chancellor, were promised bribes, and they persuaded the king to accept the British proposals so that in return, he could receive the money he so much needed for his stay.

To the selfish and ignorant Shah, it made no difference whether his country's tobacco be in Iranian hands or monopolized by foreigners. His limited vision and short-sightedness prevented him from foreseeing the designs behind this plot. He failed to realise that the real goal in securing this concession was not just to enable Britain to monopolize the tobacco market in Iran for profits, but rather to use this concession as a bridge or entry for a greater British domination in Iran, which could eventually be made one of its colonies.

Typical of its policy, the British government, having once secured the Shah's assent, did not sign the agreement itself, but rather did so in the name of one of its nationals by the name of Major Talbot, resulting in the establishment of the private company called Regie. The British government in such cases did not involve itself, but preferred to make one of its nationals party to an agreement so that it could avoid being charged with plotting and abuse. But whenever the interests of such individuals or private companies and in reality its own interests were endangered, all at once, the British parliament and government would mobilize to redress the rights of that individual or the so-called private company, interfering directly in the country's affairs, using pressure and even armed assaults and igniting bloody clashes.

In this way, Major Talbot entered the scene, and soon after the Shah's return to Iran from Europe, he secretly arrived in Tehran and hiding in the British legation so as not to be seen unnecessarily, he continued his daily negotiations about the concession by offering gifts and shockingly huge bribes to the Shah, the chancellor and a few influential personalities and courtiers.

Within a short time, the said agreement was concluded as follows between the Iranian government and Major Talbot:

"The Decree of Tobacco Monopoly"

"We grant the right of purchase, production and sale of tobacco inside and outside the sovereign states of Iran to Major Talbot and his partners for fifty years as from the date of signing this monopoly, under the following conditions. Shab."

"The following conditions" which were drawn up in fifteen articles and signed on 20 March 1840, completely severed the hand of

the Iranian people and government from the tobacco crop of Iran, and placed it wholly at the disposal of Britain under colonising and exploitative conditions, so that the Iranian farmer was forced to sell his crop at a very low price to the Regie' Company and then buy it back at an exorbitant rate imposed by the company even on condition that this company was willing to sell it to the Iranians.

All these privileges were granted to Britain in return for a trifling annual sum of fifteen thousand English pounds and a quarter of the net profit of the company to be paid into the government treasury, which in fact meant into the pocket of the Shah of Iran.

This concession gave Britain many other facilities like control over the farmers and access to provincial governors for whatever information about agricultural conditions in Iran. This latter concession brought agriculture completely under the bloody claws of imperialism and resulted in further colonisation and exploitation. The Iranian farmers were thus denied the right of sale and purchase of tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, and snuff, except with the written permit of the grantee. The company was also exempted from payment of custom duties and taxes on the imports of necessary equipment and tools, a privilege which opened Iranian custom frontiers uncontestedly to the British, allowing them to import whatever they wished including even arms and munitions to shed the blood of innocent Iranians. The company was also given wide freedom in fixing the price of tobacco, and also the option of selecting an arbitrator whose decision about the price would be final. Obviously, such a person would automatically be a British puppet, or a corrupt man who will be pressurized by them to make decisions which would harm the interests of the Iranian farmers and which would be to their own advantage.

The Iranian government had agreed not to increase custom duties and taxes on tobacco, cigars, cigarettes and snuff for a period of fifty years, and to severely punish anyone who sold these commodities without the company's permission. The company was also allowed to transfer the concession to anyone else, whenever it wished, and in case of dispute between the Iranian government and the British company, the U.S. or German or Austrian minister residing in Tehran could act as arbitrator, and his decision would be acceptable to both parties.

It was following such an imposed, shameful, suffocating, colonialistic agreement that the British began their task, bringing in their colonising forces disguised as the company's staff, and settled each group in a town or province of Iran, dominating not only the farmers but also other citizens as well as provincial governors by Nasser-al-Din-Shah's order and decree. The streets of every town and city was soon infested by waves of foreigners, making an exhibition of their power. As says a writer: "Iran became a truly European market, especially

Tehran where huge crowds of foreigners could be seen everywhere, whether it be in houses, shops, markets or alleys.

The tobacco issue was not the only thing that enraged the nation after the government announced the deal. Indeed, the acts and conduct of the British subjects and company employees further roused this dislike and outrage. No sooner had they reached Iran that they bought a costly garden for the company's headquarters, located in the best part of the city at that time, which is now occupied by the treasury and Bank Melli buildings in Ferdowsi avenue. Like a military fortress, it was fortified all around with a large and strong building in the centre to impress and frighten the people."

Their acts were however not confined to this. As per their colonial habits, they started treating the Iranians as colonial slaves, making obvious their real, wicked motive. The words of Sheikh Reza Zanjani, as quoted below, unveil this Machiavellian motive:

"In short, this foreign crowd, after arriving in Iran and scattering about the country, settling down in different parts, all at once and without waste of time, held the rein of the poor Muslims' affairs and sowed their seeds."

He adds: "Each one of these foreigners hired a number of Muslim men and women to work for him, especially the women, as highly paid servants and baby-sitters. Thus, in every street, a Muslim woman could be seen carrying a foreign baby, or followed by a child running behind her and calling her 'Mama'. Obviously these oppressed Iranians were poor, otherwise they would not have submitted to such humiliation."

The British were ready to go to any length for the inroad of their colonising forces in the garment of the company's staff. Backed by the Iranian government, they started beating the Iranians harshly, disregarding national and religious sentiments, insulting the people's beliefs and resorting to ruthless violence.

Sheikh Reza also writes: "Opposite the railway station of Shah-Abd-al-Azim, (presently called Rey) before a Muslim crowd, a foreigner who should have paid tribute to Muslims but for the negligence of the government, gave a Muslim such a box on the ear that the poor man went deaf for some time. That foreigner, still not satisfied, began abusing that fellow before everybody, saying that he could take his complaint to any 'bastard' he liked. The poor Muslim who knew what the foreigner's position was, however dared not do so."

Through the shameful conduct of these seemingly company staff, Great Britain aimed at exploiting the concession to make of Iran what it made of India and turn it into a colony. Rudeness and shamelessness reached such a peak that even the Shah's brother, Abbas-Mirza Molk-Ara, regarded the whole thing cynically and was aware of what was happening behind the scene. In his notes, he writes:

"The British came to Iran acting like a power which had conquered the country, sending agents to all parts, and hiring horsemen at high wages to carry out their orders and equipping them with modern weapons and fine horses. The company acted as an absolute authority and unconditionally. Finding no resistance and obstacles on their way, they enhanced their bullying, as if the government was in-existent. Everyday, orders were issued by government officials (who were bribed by the company) to the provincial governors to do their utmost in helping the company's agents and promoting their affairs."

Gradually, the people's anger, roused by the shameful behaviour of the company's staff, especially as the despotic rule of the Qajar dynasty had made itself felt even more, was moving towards a climax. Thus, the British colonisers through their actions, added fire to the gun-powder barrel.

Uprisings in Tabriz and Shiraz

Popular outrage manifested itself at first in the two cities of Shiraz and Tabriz, and enraged crowds closed the city gates to the company and government agents. Though in Tabriz the latter proved no match for the outraged masses and were forced to surrender, in Shiraz, the problem took a different form owing to the power of the government there. When the people gathered to protest against the admission of the company officials and sought help from the combative ulama of their city, the government pressurized the latter. So, when the governor of Shiraz asked the central government for instructions concerning the riot which had started in the city, the central authorities ignoring the wrath of the masses, made the stupid decision of ordering the exile of the great fighting and Muslim A'lem, Sayyed Ali Akbar Fal-Assiri, who was a most popular religious leader of Shiraz. A few days later, this A'lem was taken by surprise outside the city, and on the governor's order, was kidnapped secretly and exiled to Iraq via the southern parts of Iran and Basrah.

It was thus that the first confrontation between despotism and colonization and the informed Ulama in the last century took place, and the first A'lem exile was banished from Shiraz.

But the government and its agents were quite mistaken in supposing that this banishment would remedy the situation. In fact, the result proved to be quite the reverse. The exile of Sayyed Ali-Akbar Fal-Assiri did not only fail to frighten people into submission, but it rather inflamed their rage which spread through the gates of Shiraz to other towns and even to the capital.

After the banishment of Sayyed-Fal-Assiri, the Shiraz inhabitants, contrary to the government's expectation that they would be tamed

and return home, and that the city would become once more tranquil, became even more furious and continued the movement with even greater zeal gathering in the holy shrine of Shah-Cheragh and shouting so loudly as to make the authorities tremble with fear.

These riots were aimed at preventing the British agents from plundering the wealth and disgracing the honour of the Iranians in the garment of the company's staff. But the outcome was quite the opposite. Not only were the crowds scattered by bullets, wounding and killing many, but the next day, in spite of this treacherous pogrom of defenceless people, the governor of Shiraz informed the company's agents that now they could enter Shiraz without the slightest fear of the city dwellers.

The company's agents who had until that day remained outside the city for fear of the Shirazi inhabitants, and waiting for official permission to enter, now did so in relief. But from the streets beyond, shouts could still be heard, encouraging neighbours, friends and others to leave their houses and join the crowd at the holy shrine of Shah-Cheragh.

When this news reached the frightened authorities, they tried to find a way to check the probable danger of this riot, and thought of employing force and violence to scatter the crowd with the aid of their soldiers. Sheikh Mohammad Reza Zanjani writes in his book:

"The government of Shiraz has found no way to quell this riot except by using its wild and bloodthirsty horsemen of Baharloo tribe to scatter the crowd by shooting. These savage riders suddenly attacked the Muslim crowd and killed a number of them."

Meanwhile, the government's agents were welcomed most ceremoniously.

The Tabriz Uprising

In Tabriz, the people were successful since they had already expressed their opposition to the tobacco concession agreement in telegrams to Nasser-al-Din-Shah and now they closed the city gates to the company's agents, and then rushed towards the palace of the crown prince who resided at Tabriz at that time, and started demonstrating.

Nasser-al-Din-Shah was very frightened of the Tabriz movement. In those days, whenever the slightest cry was heard from any quarter, it was attributed to foreign intrigue and interference. No one believed that the Iranians had reached that state of alertness and maturity to raise objections and start movements without foreign guidance or incitement. So, whenever there occurred an uproar in the northern parts, it was blamed upon the Russians, while any move made in the south was attributed to the British. But concerning the riot in Shiraz,

it was out of place to consider it due to British interference, since this time the people had risen up against the British themselves. That is why the authorities at Shiraz attributed this riot to Fal-Assiri and banished him. But in the case of Tabriz, as Nasser-al-Din-Shah thought that the Russians were behind it, he was frightened, and to appease the Russians, he asked the company's agents to exempt Tabriz since it was a zone of Russian influence, and to abstain from entering the city.

The Isfahan Uprising

At about the same time, the residents of Isfahan started a rebellion which was so intense that the late Agha-Najafi issued an order prohibiting the use, buying and selling of narcotics, and his followers obeyed him.

The people of Isfahan led by their religious Ulama stood up against the government and dutifully carried out the order of their religious authority, Agha-Najafi. The company's task was thus disturbed, and the administrators of the program were perplexed. The company asked the central government for instructions and the authorities sent a telegram to Agha-Najafi, warning him to abstain from opposing the British company. On the other hand, the authorities at Shiraz were instructed to keep the people quiet and compel the Ulama to issue decrees for the consumption of tobacco, and in case of refusal, to suppress them by force.

In this connection, Zell-al-Sultan, son of Nasser-al-Din-Shah began to negotiate with the Isfahan's Ulama, but without success. The latter kept on affirming their opposition to the concession and to the admission of British agents to Iran. The local government was instructed by the central authorities to molest the Ulama, who fell victim to such severe repression that they were compelled to flee the city.

One of the most respected and well-known A'lem of Isfahan, Agha-Monir al-Din whose life was threatened, was compelled to leave the city at night to escape the vigilance of government agents and go straight to Samerah in Iraq to join Mirza Shirazi, the high religious authority of the Shi'as.

Setting Property Ablaze

The people of Isfahan persisted in their resistance and following the verdict of their beloved A'lem, they successfully prevented the sale and purchase of tobacco. Some merchants and wholesale dealers even divided their stock of tobacco amongst the poor instead of selling it. A famous merchant who was not willing to deal with the British company, tricked the company very effectively. When the company

realized that this man was not prepared to sell his stock to the company, it sent its officials to confiscate his tobacco stock. But this self-sacrificing merchant asked for twenty-four hours' respite to place it at their disposal. The same night, with kerosene, he set fire to his stock consisting of twelve thousand bags of tobacco in order to keep his faith and religious conviction intact.

Browne's Statement

Edward Browne, the famous Orientalist writes about this merchant: "The magnanimity, patriotism, knowledge and faith of this self-sacrificing merchant are indescribable. With striking coolness, constancy and without any affectation, he set fire to a considerable capital to prove his opposition to monopoly and to fight against foreign influence in Iran, and to show that this company is opposed to Iranian interests, and that all Muslims consider it incumbent upon them to carry out the order of their religious leaders.

The Tehran Uprising

In Tehran, the people's uprising took a different form. If, in far and near towns, the people heard more than they saw of what ensued from the tobacco concession, in Tehran they saw everything and felt it close at hand. Here the Iranians were directly faced with large numbers of Englishmen who walked around, insulting them. They were close witnesses to the rude, despotic policy of the Shah, his threats of shelling the people, and the use of force by Amin-al-Sultan. These gave them a greater awareness of what was happening behind the scenes, and this awareness encouraged them to give a more zealous form to their movement.

What was worthy of notice in Tehran as in other towns was the leadership of the Ulama and their role in giving shape to the Islamic uprising and movement. In Tehran, the residence of Mirza Hassan Ashtiani, a popular and respected Ulama, became the meeting place of the people, witnessing their zeal and wrathful excitement. From the very first day that they gathered there to express their rage at the granting of monopoly to the foreigners Mirza Ashtiani repeatedly contacted the Shah and Amin-al-Sultan, discussing the abrogation of this concession. But no notice was taken of his proposals, and when everyone realized that Nasser-al-Din-Shah and Amin-al-Sultan would not budge and had no intention of satisfying the people's demands, their only alternative was to appeal in writing to the great Shi'a authority, Mirza Shirazi. Thus the religious leaders of Tehran, after mutual consultation and advice of Mirza Ashtiani and the late Sayyed

Ali-Akbar Tafreshi, wrote a letter addressed to Mirza Shirazi requesting a solution.

This letter soon reached Mirza Shirazi at Samerah. Moreover Sayyed Ali-Akbar Fal-Assiri who had been exiled to Samerah by the Shiraz authorities, and Monir al-Din, an Isfahan A'lem who had left that town owing to the pressure of Zell al-Sultan joined Mirza Shirazi. So did a number of Ulama and others who had been treated unjustly during these events.

All these people were warmly welcomed by Mirza Shirazi. It was enough for this exalted Shi'a authority to realise the seriousness of the situation in Tehran and other towns. Meanwhile he received numerous letters complaining about conditions in Iran, and asking for a remedy. It was in these conditions that Sayyed Jamal's letter arrived.

Sayyed Jamal-al-Din Assad-Abadi's Letter

Sayyed Jamal, that great fighter and reformer, wrote a long and eloquent letter to Mirza Shirazi and gave it to Fal-Assiri in Basrah to deliver to that great religious leader.

The following is a summary of the letter which was written in Arabic originally:

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Beneficent. O, Leader of Religion! Bright light of the Imam's rays! Center of Faith! Eloquent tongue of the Creed! Reverend Haj Mirza Hassan Shirazi, may God preserve the realm of Islam with him, and may his presence destroy the wicked plots of mean infidels.

This letter conveys the humble request of the Islamic nation to the threshold of its exalted leaders.....

O leader of religion! God has set up the throne of your rule in people's hearts and intellects in order to reinforce the pillar of justice, and illuminate the direct path. But in return for this greatness, superiority and sovereignty over the hearts and intellects that God has granted you, you have also been entrusted with the duty to maintain and defend the world of Islam to the extent that in time of need, even in the tradition of former leaders, you may receive the blessing of martyrdom, too.....This distressed nation of Islam has turned its eyes to you in every calamity, and considers its happiness, liberation and salvation to be in your hand. In such a case, if you leave the nation to itself, and heed it not, their thoughts will be confused, their hearts trembling, and the foundation of their faith weakened. For, if the religious leaders and sages neglect their duties, and show weakness in enjoining good and forbidding evil, the masses of people will indulge in doubt and suspicion and deviate from the direct path.

Difficulties of the Iranian Nation

"The Iranian nation is now facing many difficulties and hardships which have empowered the infidels to dominate the Islamic nation, hardships which have enabled a handful of faithless foreigners to encroach over the rights of Muslims. But in such a situation, the Muslim nation, whose all hope is on you, see that you are silent and do not hasten to their aid inspite of the great responsibility which is entrusted to you.

These people are justified in asking each other why the Reverend Ayatollah has kept silent over these happenings, and how is it that he has disregarded the faith and the believers and abandoned the Muslim nation helplessly to infidels, to let the latter do as they wished to them.

Truth must be told. You are the Shi'a chief, and you have breathed life into the body of each member of this Ummah. No one can rise except under your protection to save this nation, and this nation has confidence in no one but you.

O, great leader of religion! Nasser-al-Din-Shah of Iran is an indolent and malevolent man whose mind is weak, and he has adopted violence and maltreatment towards the people. Being incapable of managing the country and protecting public interests, he has entrusted the rein of affairs to a mean, wicked and malevolent fellow who is the enemy of Islam. He abuses God's prophets publicly, and he neither obeys the injunctions of religion, nor respects its leaders. He slanders the Ulama and levels obscene accusations at virtuous people. He insults the descendants of the Prophet and treats preachers badly. Since his return from Europe, he has abandoned all shame and decency, assuming perversity, drinking recklessly, befriending infidels and acting hostilely towards the good Muslim people. Of course, these are his private concerns, but what he has done publicly to the Muslims' detriment, is to sell a great part of the country and its revenue to the enemies of the nation, and religion, an account of which follows:

- 1) The mines and roads leading to them and from them to important points in the country.
- 2) The caravanserais by paved roads in the whole country including the fields and gardens alongside them.
- 3) The river Karoun and all the rest homes on both its banks up to its source, as well as the pastures.
- 4) The Ahwaz-Tehran road and whatever there was on either side of it, including buildings, rest homes, orchards and fields.
- 5) Tobacco and whatever connected to it, such as plantations, guards' huts, dwellings of those in charge of transport and sale agents anywhere and everywhere.
- 6) Gathering grapes for wine-making, handing over the country's

shops and factories to the enemies to satisfy this need.

7) Soap, candle, sugar and the factories concerned.

8) The bank, if you know what it is. It means handing over the financial affairs of the nation wholesale to the enemies of Islam, enslaving the Muslims and giving the infidels dominion and lordship over them.

Even then, this foolish traitor has offered a futile excuse to satisfy the nation about his futile deeds, saying: "These are temporary agreements lasting no more than 200 years." O, God what evidence is better than this to defame traitors?

He has given the other half of the country as hush-money to the Russian government, including Mordabe Rasht, and Anzali way as far as Khorassan, as well as all the houses, rest homes, and gardens alongside it. But the Russian government, offended with this gift, has refused it, since it is waiting for this agreement to be annulled, and if this is not done, it intends to make Khorassan its colony and lay hands on Azarbaijan and Mazandaran.

Yes, this is the first consequence of this fool's rule. In short, this wicked man has put the country on auction, selling the houses of Muhammad in Islamic lands to foreigners, and owing to his mean and base nature, he is prepared to sell at a trifling price.

End of the Letter

"And now, O leader of religion! If you do not hasten to help the nation and do not unite all and with your power do not snatch the country out of the clutches of these sinful ones, before long, this Islamic land will be under foreign control and influence. If this opportunity is lost and these agreements are enforced in your life-time, you will not leave behind a good name in history and to humanity. You know well that religious leaders of Iran are deeply grieved and are only waiting for a word from you.

How can it be permissible for a person who has been granted such a power by God, to leave this nation and country in such a state? You have a great influence on them because of your ability and effective words, and you can unite their dispersed hearts, and eliminate all differences. The scattered forces of the people will gradually get together through you, and a word from you will unite all. Therefore, everything depends on you and you will be responsible before God and the people."

Jamal-al-Din al-Hosseini:

With salutations to you and God's blessing.

A Practical Answer

At last Mirza Shirazi after learning what was happening in Iran, began to take steps in opposing the tobacco concession. At that time, seventeen months had passed since the agreement was signed allowing the British to bring their influence and domination over Iran, and now on 19th Zihejj'a 1308 of the Hijrah, Mirza Shirazi sent a telegram to Nasser-al-Din-Shah through his regent, Kamran al-Saltanah. In this telegram, the great Shi'a authority respectfully requested Nasser-al-Din-Shah to comply with the following:

Firstly, to take immediate steps for the abrogation of the tobacco concession which in several respects was contrary to the explicit text of the holy Quran and Divine honour, humiliating to government independence, disrupting order in the country and causing distress to the nation.

Secondly the Ulama who had been treated unjustly and disrespectfully in these proceedings, especially the Reverend Haj Sayyed Ali-Akbar Fal-Assiri, "may God Almighty preserve him," who has taken refuge at this holy place of Samerah, should receive the royal favour as amends for the affront committed to him.

Ignoring the Telegram

After receiving the telegram, Nasser-al-Din Shah paid no attention to it, and did not even allow anyone but himself, Amin al-Sultan and a few of those close to him to know about it. The policy of the Shah and Amin al-Sultan was to diminish people's excitement and frenzy by procrastination and by leaving the telegram unanswered, thinking that people would gradually become indifferent enough to yield to what had been done, and stop complaining. But they could no longer be tricked and did not give up. Everyday they showed a greater zeal and interest, and wrote more and more moving letters to Mirza Shirazi about conditions in Iran and British oppression there, requesting him to take a more serious step to save the people from this corrupt regime.

This time Mirza Shirazi sent Nasser-al-Din Shah another letter through the regent, Kamran Mirza, which unlike the former letter had a sharper and a more aggressive tone.

This letter, too, was answered with silence, and only a brief telegram was sent to Mirza Shirazi to the effect that the Shah has instructed Amin al-Sultan to send a reply which would prove that the government has never sold the independence, honour, and freedom of its subjects to others, but has always endeavoured and will do the same in future, to preserve the independence of the country, if God wills.

The text of the telegram showed that the answer to Mirza Shirazi's

letter was postponed to a later time which was not definite, and this was quite obvious to him.

Meanwhile, government agents exerted greater pressure on the people and did not hesitate even for a moment, to beat, insult and imprison them. All this was recounted in writing to Mirza in a painful and fiery language. The people and religious leaders of Isfahan, Shiraz and Tehran constantly asked Mirza to take his final step as soon as possible, when it was suddenly announced that he had already banned the consumption of tobacco, an act which was a bombshell, condemning the Shah and the royalists.

The text of Mirza's decree was brief, decisive and unhesitating like a firm rock:

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Beneficent. The consumption of tobacco in any form is equivalent to combat with Imam Mahdi, may God Hasten his appearance. Written by the humble Muhammad Hassan al-Hosseini."

People's Reaction

The moment this brief but final decree of prohibition reached Tehran, the news created an uproar in the city, like an explosion, and its report spread everywhere within two hours. Amin al-Sultan and Kamran Mirza, the regent, on hearing of it were so frightened that they tried to check its spread in Tehran. So, they sent government agents to the streets to tear up and destroy every copy of the decree. But the people had been roused and within a short time many handwritten copies of it were prepared by the literate and passed on. Preachers came into the streets to read the text aloud for the people. Thus in a short time, everyone knew of it and in all devotion telegraphed the text to other big and small towns, and before the day was over it became known to the whole country.

Sheikh Zanjani says in this connection:

"This strong decree which lent itself to general obedience impressed the hearts so deeply that all classes of people in the capital, men and women, literate and illiterate, rich and poor, casting differences aside, assembled in full obedience to it, and by Friday evening, no tobacco smoke rose in the whole country."

As a result of this verdict, tobacconists did not only close down their shops, and threw away tobacco packages, but even in the royal harem, no pipe, or hubble-bubble could be found, and the women there had ordered the eunuchs and servants to break the tops of these instruments (hookas) and heap up the pieces outside the royal bed-chamber.

Aniss al-Dowlah's Sharp Retort

That day, when Nasser-al-Din Shah entered the chamber of Aniss al-Dowlah, his queen and great favorite, he saw the maids under the queen's supervision loosening the silver tops of the hookas to hide them somewhere. Worried, the Shah asked her why is that so. She answered because hooka smoking had been banned. The Shah angrily asked who had forbidden it. She answered: "The same person who had declared me legitimate for you."

When Nasser-al-Din Shah realised that this ban had penetrated the depth of the people's minds and had further spread to his harem, that it could not be checked, fearing that further talk would not be wise and might mean disrespect to him by the queen, he left the chamber in silence, and from that day on, he dared not ask his servants for a nargileh.

Islamic Discipline

When the tobacco ban was respected with astonishing discipline by the people, government authorities trembled with fear, and Amin al-Sultan as the brain of the royal court, decided to break up this prohibition by rumours and lies. He was helped in this by government agents and they spread the rumour in the city that no such decree had been issued by Mirza and that the whole affair was made up.

On hearing these rumours, the people rushed to the telegraph office to make direct inquiries from Mirza himself. But when they reached the place, they found that the telegraph office was occupied by government agents as a precautionary measure, preventing every despatch of telegrams under false excuses, and thus preventing any direct contact with Mirza.

The Pseudo-Ulama

This controlling of telegram despatches was in itself sufficient evidence that all the rumours were false. But the matter assumed a different form, when Amin al-Sultan and the Regie company chiefs paid a large sum as bribe to some of the 'self-sold' pseudo-Ulama, asking them to issue a decree opposing that of Mirza's. Such mullas who were attached to the court (a usual practice in that period) spread the rumour in pulpits and other public places that the first decree was false and forged by a tobacco merchant called Malek-al-Tojjar, whose interests were at stake. To fan up this rumour, the government kidnapped this merchant and banished him to Qazvin to be kept hidden there by the officials, away from the people's sight.

But none of these plots proved effective since trusted and respected Ulama everywhere showed that the rumours spread by the government were mere fabrications.

Meanwhile, the government tried hard to win over some of the true and honest Ulama in order to abrogate the decree of prohibition, but their only answer was that the decree was issued by the great religious authority and only he could abrogate it. Therefore, the government, in revenge, resorted to severe repression of the Ulama, especially Mirza Ashtiani, the distinguished and respected Ulama of Tehran.

Meanwhile, the people reciprocated by sticking a notice on city walls declaring a crusade against the government and foreign residents of Iran.

The text of this ran as follows:

“According to the decree of the Reverend Hojjatoleslam Mirza, if the tobacco concession is not abrogated within forty eight hours, next Monday will be the day of crusade. People, get ready.”

In view of the prevailing atmosphere and people's readiness, this announcement spread so quickly in the city, causing so much excitement that many of the residents in Tehran secured firearms for themselves the same day, so that on the appointed day and hour, they would emerge from their houses, well-equipped.

Nasser-al-Din Shah, the regent, the government and its officials as well as the company's agents very quickly learnt of this announcement. But while the people cast away all hesitation and fear, feverishly preparing for fight, the royalists, trembling with fear, tried futilely to find a solution.

Matters reached such a height that the despotic, ignorant Shah, who had even refused to send a reply to the letter of the great Shi'a authority under various pretexts, and had resorted to many days' and weeks' delay, now appealed to the Ulama and in all haste wrote a letter to Mirza Ashtiani.

The Shah wrote this letter himself, apologizing for having maltreated him, expressing repentance, and asking for his help in quelling the public movement and riot. He concluded his imploring letter in his customary ignorant way by complaining of the pressure by the Ulama on him and on the government and ending with some warnings and threats.

The fear of Nasser-al-Din-Shah and the government was mainly due to their realisation that the people's uprising was gradually taking a different form. The question was no longer confined to the tobacco issue and the British company and its exploitation of the Iranians. The movement was on its way to protest against the despotism of the Shah, the court and government towards the nation and use it for its culmination.

Thus the government did not feel the atmosphere safe and secure, even for its own agents and servants, and in such a condition it naturally expressed its inability to safeguard the interests of the company's officials. When the company directors realised the incapacity of the government before public rage, they began to think of their own safety. It was on this matter that Sheikh Zanjani wrote in his historical book "The Europeans residing in the capital, fearing the Islamic nation and anxious about the first decree of the Reverend Ayatollah, in spite of the assurance given by the Ulama, fled in terror from the capital at night, some of them disguised in women's Islamic clothes which they had besought their Muslim employees to lend and those who remained behind hid themselves so completely that no sign of the Europeans was seen anywhere."

Diplomatic Manoeuvres

The seriousness of the situation resulted in protests to the British company which had caused this riot, by European ministers and diplomats in Iran who dared not appear in the streets now, asking for a solution to the problem.

As a result, Earnestin, the company director was compelled to refer to Amin al-Sultan asking him to quell the riot and either solve the tobacco problem, or pay the damages stipulated in the agreement and abrogate it.

Amin al-Sultan who had no wish to pay back the bribe he had received from the English for this agreement, although he had no confidence in his ability to quell the movement and riot, agreed and undertook to do so, hoping to resolve it with cunning and trickery.

The first alternative which came to his mind was to free himself somehow from the influence of the honest Ulama, and rely on self-sold pseudo-Ulama. So, he summoned one of the court mullas. This mulla (whose name is not mentioned by most historians, plays a sly role in this matter) as described in the book, "Tobacco Ban," "pays a visit on Amin al-Sultan's instruction to the British minister and company director, introducing himself as a religious leader of the first rank in Iran, and claiming that he can have the prohibition decree abrogated and quell the riot, on condition that the company director asks the Shah and Amin al-Sultan to banish from Tehran those who were opposed to him, including Mirza Ashtiani, and this turbaned court servant receives as reward for his labour three thousand tomans which was considered a large sum at that time.

The matter was at once reported to Amin al-Sultan by the company director and then to the Shah by the former. The Shah who, a few days before, had implored and threatened Mirza for help through

his letter, even though he was not so happy and even feared to comply with Amin al-Sultan's request, eventually gave his agreement in order to pacify the British. He wrote a letter himself to Kamran Mirza, the regent, asking him to put pressure on Mirza Ashtiani so that he climbs the pulpit and publicly smoke the hooka, threatening that otherwise he would be banished from the city.

On the other hand, to increase strict measures, Agha-Bala Khan Mo'in Nezam who was in charge of the city disciplinary affairs, was ordered to re-open by force the tea-houses which had been closed on account of the tobacco ban, and to break their doors open if necessary, and force in a number of people and make them smoke pipes and hubble-bubble publicly, ignoring the prohibition decree, and in case of refusal, to kill them.

These extreme orders, instead of frightening the people, encouraged them to take a firmer and more reckless stand against these violent measures. Moreover, Abdollah Khan, the governor, visited Mirza Ashtiani, to carry out the Shah's order. Mirza answered that as the tobacco ban had been issued by the great world Shi'a authority, no one had the right to abrogate it, and it would be impossible for him to act contrary to it; but he would comply with the second order and leave the city on condition of being given one day's respite (Monday 3rd Jamadi al-Sani 1309 of the Hijrah) to prepare himself for the journey.

But in this twenty-four hours' respite, everything was transformed, and before sunset of the same day, all the citizens had heard of the ultimatum and were extremely enraged. The news spread so quickly that everyone in various parts of the city talked about it, and the people prepared themselves for a valiant resistance against Mirza's banishment even at the price of self-sacrifice and bloodshed.

Amin al-Sultan, who had issued the order to the governor of Tehran for the banishment of Mirza, supposed that he could in this way silence the people, and peace would be restored in the city. But contrary to his supposition, it did not only fail to pacify the people but only resulted in a more violent uproar and a greater boldness. According to various historians: "The whole of Sunday night was spent by all people and classes discussing this banishment, and many decided to leave the city next day in the company of Mirza."

What was surprising and moving in this riot was the active and direct participation of the women of Tehran for the first time in a show of power of the oppressed. This magnificent display which was taking place for the first time in Iranian history, shook the foundation of the Shah's despotic rule, for, the women did not only take part in this movement, but they also acted as leaders in many quarters of Tehran and showed such ability that the men found it more effective in some

phases of the proceedings to let them lead.

Report on Public Sentiments, in Particular the Women's

Sheikh Zanjani who has been a participant in the events and an eye-witness to women's activities in them, and has written one of the most reliable historical books about them writes:

"On Monday morning, the 3rd of Jamdi al-Sania, at first, religious leaders and scholars of the capital, from every district, set off in groups for Sangelaj quarter where he (Mirza Ashtiani) resided. The number gradually increased. Most of the shops and markets were closed and people gathered in groups moving towards his house. By noon a large crowd had assembled there when many groups of women joined them. The first step taken by the women was to go to the markets and whenever they saw an open shop, had it closed. Soon, not a single shop could be found open. After that, they smothered their scarves with mud and with shouts and cries set off for the government citadel.

"The men, too, with shouts, tears and cries of 'Alas for Islam' followed the women's procession, and in such a frightening and grievous state, they gathered at the citadel square, a sight the like of which could not have been believed if it was not witnessed.

"These women who went ahead called the king 'Shah-baji' and 'moustached Shah-baji' and began to abuse him, using all kinds of obscene words and insults, and this was followed by general cries of 'O Ali', 'O Hossain', and once more the insults were repeated. Such an uproar frightened the government officials and especially the royal court.

"Nasser-al-Din-Shah ordered at once to guard the royal residence, and the guns were taken out and placed at various entrances of the building. Rifles were distributed to all the soldiers in the capital and they were told to be armed and ready for action and defence.

"The Regent emerged in anxiety hoping to pacify the insurgents and assure them of government favor. The women casting aside all decency, began showering brazen insults upon him, sparing no abuse, curses, charges, and damnations for those dead and alive of the authorities, thus satisfying their burning hearts. They shouted: "They are robbing us of our religion. They are banishing our Ulama so that Europeans act as clergymen in our marriage and foreigners perform burial rites for us."

"The Regent perplexed, tried to appease the women gently, saying: 'We will expel the foreigners, and will not let the Ulama leave the city. Be assured and abstain from making so much noise.'" But this was of no avail, and they continued with their insults.

In the Shah Mosque

“The women then returned from the citadel and went to the Shah Mosque, where as it happened, the Friday prayer Imam was on the pulpit busy preaching and threatening, hoping thereby to quell the riot. Hearing his words, the women rushed in and with shouts and cries, abused the Imam till they were exhausted, pulling him down from the pulpit in disgrace, and once more proceeded to the citadel. The crowd was so dense that the streets, markets and the citadel square were completely full of men and women, and the way was wholly blocked to passers-by, all the people shouting the slogans of ‘Alas for Islam’, ‘O Ali’, ‘O Hossain.’

“It can be imagined how frightened the officials and government authorities were, especially since the agent of the concession, to absolve himself from all accusation of being the cause of this dangerous tumult, had distracted the king from the real issue, and had presented this riot as an attempt and a demand by the Ulama for a republic, saying that these people have been seeking for many years an opportunity to incite people to rise up against the government and now they have used this tobacco issue as a pretext to promote their aim. So their sole purpose is to oppose the Shah himself and to overthrow kingship.”

Events Following Ashtiani's Banishment

Sheikh Zanjani writes about the events which followed the news of Mirza Ashtiani's banishment and the masses' efforts to prevent the execution of the Shah's unjust order:

“At this time, Abdollah Khan Vali, titled Mo'atamed al-Sultan, anxiously and with much difficulty found his way to the revered religious leader to deliver the Shah's message, saying:

‘His Majesty enquires what you desire, so that it would be carried out at once.’ He answered: “We demand nothing but the abrogation of the concession at home and abroad altogether, and putting an end to foreign interference.” Abdollah Khan hurriedly reported the message to the Shah who immediately wrote back to the Regent, and Abdollah Khan returned to show the letter to the religious leader.”

When Nasser-al-Din-Shah was informed that the crowd and its uproar was increasing and there was no way of controlling it, he yielded. But the people would not remain satisfied with this and demanded much more. Eventually when the Shah's letter to the Regent was shown to Mirza, he ordered it to be read to the people. The text of the letter follows:

“Regent! We had already cancelled the internal concession, and

now we cancel the external one. The people are not compelled to smoke Nargileh until order is given by Mirza Shirazi."

But it was too late now to retreat, and even reading such a letter did not abate the people's rage, especially as the women who had risen up for the first time to claim their human rights had been so successful in making the despotic Qajar King surrender and abrogate his previous orders. They were so intoxicated with the sweet taste of victory, won by the unity and solidarity of a general movement, that they had no intention of giving up.

It was in such an atmosphere that Abdollah Khan Vali, in great anxiety and distress, hastened to meet Mirza Ashtiani to hand him the written decree of Amin al-Sultan, the Chancellor, to the effect that the tobacco concession to foreigners had been annulled, and supposing that this decree would solve all the problems, he left Mirza and set off for his office. He had to pass through crowds of angry men and women, and in reaching the women who were shouting and making a frightful row, he lost patience and began to scold them. Hardly had he finished that the women rushed upon him and kicked and beat him with their fists to unconsciousness. Some minutes after, he and Majd al-Dowlah who had come to quell the uproar went to Mirza's house.

In order to conciliate the insurgents, Mo'atamed al-Sultan said that he had come to see if the religious leaders were safe and unhurt. But again, on his way, he was caught by an angry crowd of women and received many blows from them. So when he wanted to return from Mirza's house, he begged the latter to let an A'lem accompany him to the Shah's presence so that the king would hear the matters direct from Mirza's deputy.

Sheikh Zanjani again writes about this as follows:

"At last, although no one was inclined to perform this task, he insisted on taking Agha Ali Akbar, son of Agha Jamal with him and returned. So, this time, as a sign of respect to the Ulama, the people did not maltreat Abdollah Khan, and Majd al-Dowlah left them to talk with the Regent who had left the citadel intending to reach Mirza's house in order to quell the riot by a safe route. Suddenly, out of the crowd, a Sayyed emerged, sword in hand and followed by a number of others, rushed upon the Regent. On seeing this from a distance, he hastily tried to return to the citadel, but the crowd rushed on and nearing him, the Sayyed threw his sword at him. Nayebeh Mahmood, a servant of the Regent, parried the sword with his staff, preventing it from striking his master, who in great fear, slipped in the mud and fell down. His servants surrounded him at once and carried him to a saddleless horse so that he could be safely moved to the building. They then closed the gates and when the Regent was carried inside, he fell down unconscious.

"The insurgents outside began to throw stones and broke most of

the lamps and window panes of the building overlooking the street, and some of them boldly rushed in towards the private section of the building.”

The courtiers were frightened and were absolutely perplexed. At last, Mo'in Nezam, a hard-hearted and devoted courtier hurriedly went to the Turkish troops who had taken positions in the building and ordered them to shoot at the crowd. But these patriotic soldiers replied that they would not commit such a mean and disgraceful act, namely to shoot at defenceless men and women.

Mo'in Nezam who was more and more inflamed, despairing of the Turkish troops, turned to the Regent's private guards who were notorious for their wickedness and malice and were consequently nicknamed 'bastards', and ordered them to shoot, irrespective of women or children.

Sheikh Zanjani writes about this incident: "These 'bastards' suddenly opened fire on the whole crowd of men and women, old and young, and made these suffering people who had hopefully turned to the government, and had taken their grievances to the Shah's asking for his favour, a prey and target of their rifles. They dropped down like autumn leaves. The exact number of those who were killed and released from this life of misery was not clear. As soon as the people dispersed, they took steps to prevent the bodies from being carried outside since this would incite the people to a greater rebellion and mutiny.

"Though it is beyond the scope of this brief pamphlet to give the full details of the events, yet to give a picture of the chaos and terror which followed in the capital, I only mention that on witnessing the sorry conditions of the dead, the masses were so madden that no one showed the slightest fear of guns and bullets, and no one wished for anything but death and rushed upon the citadel."

This display of power for the first time by the women under the leadership of the progressive Ulama, a reckoning power which had been hidden before within the four walls of houses, opened the eyes of the men, especially those of the royal court. Though this exhibition resulted in the death of a few on that fateful Monday when Mirza Ashtiani was to be banished, yet it ended gloriously and left its effect on history, since not only did the order for the banishment of the exalted and well-known A'lem of Tehran lose its validity after this rebellion, but also, following the decree of the Shi'a religious authority, the people succeeded in obtaining the abrogation of the tobacco concession.

The Shah who was not in the least inclined to yield in this matter and for the same reason showed so much rude obstinacy, was eventually compelled to show submission in spite of the British claim for damages, and yield to the nation's demand.

The British had threatened that if the tobacco concession was

annuled, they would claim 50,000 pounds as damages, and now that the concession was abrogated, they made this claim formally and seriously. As Nasser-al-Din-Shah did not have the necessary fund to pay this heavy damage, he was forced to take a loan from the Shahanshahi Bank which was a British bank at an interest rate of six percent. Thus in addition to the losses caused by the tobacco ban and the closing of shops and markets, as well as the disturbances and deaths and their economic effects on the society and royal treasury, the country emerged from this perilous affair not only without obtaining any profit from this concession, but was also forced to pay damages for many years to come.

But anyhow, the abrogation of the concession was the only remaining alternative for saving our country and nation; since in view of the policy adopted by Britain for extending its colonies in various parts of the world, in Iran, too, after the concession, it was about to turn Iran into one of its numerous colonies. Had it not been for the alertness and awareness of the progressive and fighting Ulama, their opportune steps, the unsparing support of them by the deprived to the extent of self-sacrifice, Iran might in a short time, have been placed on the geographical map as a British colony, the number of which was considerable in those days.

In this way, the tobacco movement which was only a protest at first against British suppression and tyranny, garbed in the dress of the Regie company employees in Iran, gradually gave place to an extensive crusade against foreign colonisation and internal despotism, a conflict which took shape under the guidance and leadership of the progressive and fighting Ulama.

With the commencement of the movement, the root of British colonisation dried up, and with its continuation a few years later, the great constitutional movement was born with the purpose of burning away the root of internal despotism.



CHAPTER TWO

SAYYED JAMAL-AL-DIN ASSAD-ABADI

In the ups and downs of the Ulama's struggle against despotism and colonization, we come across many bright and wonderful names among which are those which are not only brilliant, but serve as a turning point in history and as a founder of a school of thought and pioneer of a new idea in our memories.

Sayyed Jamal-al-Din Assad-Abadi is one of these names. He is considered one of the most important and effective pioneers of the awakening in the east, in the darkest period of the deprived nations of this region. He is remembered as an indefatigable fighter for the Islamic renaissance of the last century and a most staunch supporter and founder of the unity of Islamic nations, and a true and capable combatant for the revival of the former greatness and glory of Islam and Islamic nations in our history.

It must be said here that many contradictory statements have been uttered about this prodigy of the east which have thrown the distinctive personality of this fighting, indefatigable and self-sacrificing A'lem into a mist of ambiguity and sometimes of accusation.

Now, ninety years have passed since Sayyed Jamal's death. Owing to his amazing personality, and his wholly venturesome spirit, his new and unheard of thoughts and views, which were hope-inspiring for the

deprived people, and fearful for the selfish agents of despotism and colonization, during this period that has passed since his death, many books, pamphlets, articles and reports have been written and published concerning his life and political ideas. The number of such written books and pamphlets which are in Persian, Arabic, Afghani, Turkish and English is more than hundreds, and if we include the short and long articles printed in newspapers and journals, the number goes beyond several thousands.

But it is surprising and unfortunate, that despite all these writings, his real character is not yet recognized and the ambiguity about this adventurous and amazing personality has not been removed.

A Fabulous Personality

A great number of historians and investigators have heartily praised him in their writings and have considered his services and activities most effective and useful in awakening the eastern nations, in planting the tree of freedom in their minds and watering it with steadfastness and self-sacrifice, thereby changing the course of history. But there are others too, especially in recent years, who have not only violently opposed him, but have also disgraced him with their baseless accusations and have tried to give a mysterious, complex and harmful picture of his revolutionary character.

There is no need to point out that it is quite natural to express such opinions about great historical, political, social and scientific personages, for, no figure can be found in history who had won such a wide reputation as Sayyed Jamal and had attracted public attention from a scientific, political, social and even literary viewpoint without becoming the target of the prejudiced, rancorous and the envious.

Nevertheless, what reveals to facts about such personalities is an impartial and unprejudiced survey of their thoughts, deeds, struggles and their impact on their contemporary society as well as the changes brought about in the existing conditions of their time and even after their death.

In these pages, an attempt is made to make use of undeniable evidence and documents which would be necessary for a proper understanding and to give a logical judgement about the course of the Ulama's struggle with despotism.

This crusading A'lem rose up in the darkest era of the life of eastern nations, at the time when the tyrannical domination of colonization was rampant in Islamic nations and at the height of conflicting international thoughts, and defended Islam and its authentic principles against various materialistic, political and philosophical schools of thought.

What gives a particular value and credit to Sayyed Jamal's struggles is the extent to which his thoughts were spread in all Islamic lands and his efforts for the welfare and salvation of world Muslims. From the very beginning of his struggle, he called upon all the followers of Islam to begin an unending and irreconcilable fight against world-devouring colonizers, and an infinite endeavour in the revival of the past greatness of Islam so that freedom, independence, honour and respect for world Muslims could be attained, in a way which would be worthy of the followers of this great religion.

The main contents of his ideas and views are reflected in the famous publication of *Orwat al Wothgha'* and his other valuable works. To understand these thoughts and ideas in the context of his humanistic, Islamic struggles and those who followed his way, and also to have a better picture of his co-thinkers, colleagues and devotees, the above sources provide adequate material to enable us to forsake seeking additional references. Nevertheless it would be fitting to begin with a brief glance at the views of opinions and, in a way, at the confessions of several great men of learning, famous orientalisks and impartial investigators concerning this man's personality and thoughts.

L. Steward's Opinion

L. Steward is one of those whose reliable book, in addition to being rendered into European languages, has been translated into Arabic by Prof. Ajaj. He writes:

"Sayyed Jamal-al-Din Assad-Abadi was the first man to notice with his clear sight and intelligent realism the dangerous influence and domination of the westerners in eastern lands and Islamic nations, and realized the extent of this danger and its ruinous consequences. Then, with a self-sacrificing spirit, he resolutely endeavoured to remove it. Tolerating onerous hardships in order to perform the mission which he felt was placed on his shoulder by his conscience, he began his long travels with the scanty means available at that time to Turkey, India, Paris, Cairo, Kabul and other lands for the sake of his lofty goals, and wherever he went, his heart-felt words impressed listeners' hearts and inspired them with his fiery thoughts. He quickly gathered deprived and oppressed Muslims round him and made them aware of the snare placed in their way by western policies and their serious and fearful consequences. Wherever he stepped, a wave of rage and uproar rose among the people, making the local authorities and rulers tremble with fear. Consequently, the oppressive rulers in each land and their agents opposed him violently. However, the greater the pressure by these tyrannical authorities, on him, the greater became his resistance and steadfastness.

“Sayyed Jamal-al-Din had no fear of the power or influence of any government, and was convinced that the powerful, colonizing western governments, however strong they might be, have to finally bow down to the wrath and clamour of Muslim peoples, on condition that Muslim nations put aside the small differences which were intensified by colonizers’ concoctions everyday, and assume the way of unity and alliance for their common goal which is the revival of Islamic greatness and annihilation of its enemies, and proceed in full harmony and concord. Nevertheless, he did not think any government was more dangerous than the colonizing British government for the Muslim nations of the east, and he believed that with unity and alliance, the Muslims could smash the hellish power of British colonization. In this way they could not only remove their greatest enemy, but also pave the way for the destruction of other enemies of Islam and Muslims. Consequently, no government feared the views and struggles of Sayyed Jamal as much as the British government. The Sayyed’s hatred of the British, and the latter’s fear of him, were in fact the basis and ground for their mutual fights which continued for many years.”

Razi’s View

Dr. Abdullah Razi, author of “The Complete History of Iran,” writes about Sayyed Jamal and his struggles:

“Sayyed Jamal’s fortitude and tolerance in the way of the propagation of true and progressive Islam, not an Islam of which tyrannical kings were patrons and colonizing western powers were propagators, showed him as a steadfast, thoughtful and original personality. He is undoubtedly one of the motivators of reform movements and Islamic struggles in the last hundred years who spoke realistically of the social sufferings of the Muslims and showed the remedy and ways for reforms. This great man, who is indeed a prodigy of the times, created a great revolution in Turkey, India and Egypt, the extension of whose influence manifested itself wonderfully in Iran. He sowed the seeds of a deep revolution in these countries and did his utmost to awaken the Islamic people. His words deeply influenced one and all and it was for this reason that he was placed in the first rank among the fighters of Muslims nations against colonization and despotism.”

Mohit Tabatabai’s View

Scholar Mohit Tabatabai writes in his book, “The Role of Sayyed Jamal-al-Din in Awakening the Eastern Nations”:

“Sayyed Jamal-al-Din, with his sharp tongue and pen, laid the

ground and main foundation for the acceptance of a constitutional government in Iran by the country's Ulama. His good intention and correct conjecture had not erred about the elements who could build up the constitution from the start of the tobacco revolt down to emigration to Qum and to the clerical support of the constitutionalists against the Bagh-e-Shah coup d'etat. His spirit was in all cases a guide for those who acted as leaders.

Martyred Scholar Mutahhari's View

The crusading scholar, the learned martyred A'lem and theologian, Ayatollah Murteza Mutahhari, who had spent all his life fighting despotism and colonization, and whose valuable researches have had a deep influence in awakening Muslim nations, particularly the deprived and oppressed people of Iran, and whose martyrdom at the beginning of the establishment of the Islamic Republic regime and historical transformation of Iran was the highest point of his historic struggle against colonization, writes concerning Sayyed Jamal:

"Sayyed Jamal's movement was both intellectual and social. He intended to create a notion in the Muslims' thoughts and bring a radical transformation in their life pattern. He did not stay in one town or one country or one continent, but spent his days in various places in Asia, Africa and Europe. In each country, he was in touch with different groups, and as it is written about him, he actually joined the army in some Islamic countries in order to win a greater influence on the people. His various travels made him acquainted with the spirits of the far and near lands and the nature of events and personalities of each country. His relatively long stay in Western lands enabled him to know the advanced world, its civilization and views of its leaders. He considered internal despotism and foreign colonization the most significant ills of the Islamic society, and therefore, began fighting these two most zealously, eventually losing his life in this way."

Sayyed Jamal-al-Din Hosseini was born in 1837. He followed his earlier studies of Arabic, philosophy and theology in his home-town, but because of his remarkable intelligence and adventurous spirit, he considered his birth place too restrictive for the attainment of his goals. For that reason, in his very youth, he set off for travel to India to continue his studies and see the world and its peoples.

His travel to the sub-continent of India coincided with the time when the English had thrust their poisonous sword of colonization and tyranny through the skin and flesh of the Indian nation, and had reached its bone. The oppressed nation of India could bear it no longer and had started a strong rebellion against British colonization. These two opposite currents, namely British oppression and aggression on

the one hand, and Indian resistance and the people's deadly and indefatigable struggle on the other hand, created scenes which were a manifestation of the violence, pressure and tyranny of the most powerful western government of the time upon the deprived Indian nation. He was deeply amazed and moved, feeling sorrow and regret on witnessing these scenes as a result of his fiery and sensitive disposition. He began to reflect over these matters and decided to investigate them through studies so as to understand the cause and root behind this European tyranny towards eastern nations. With this view in mind, after some time, he visited the Arab countries during which he made the pilgrimage to Mecca, an experience which transformed his spirit and opened his mental horizons. When during the pilgrimage ceremonies, he observed how hundreds of thousands of Muslims of different colour, race, language, culture and traditions, but of the same intention, faith and a single religious magnificence had gathered in the House of God from all parts of the world, exhibiting such a striking and glorious solidarity and collaboration, the idea of the unity of Islamic nations and world Muslims suddenly struck him. He saw that if this unity was achieved one day by the Muslims who had one goal and one thought, no power in the world could rise against it.

He continued his travel with this thought in mind. During this time, he learnt several languages, and gathered much knowledge and experience about the conditions of the eastern countries and especially Muslim nations, and then returned to Afghanistan. On his return there, however, he saw that conditions were so chaotic that it was hard for him to believe them at first. A number of the leaders were fighting one another and had caused much insecurity and massacre in their struggle for power. Sayyed Jamal, too, with that adventurous spirit of his, entered the field and joined the supporters of Amir Doost-Mohammad Khan Afghani. The Amir was soon victorious and in his government, chose Sayyed Jamal as adviser. But the conflict which continued between various groups enabled another group to seize power from the Amir, and so Sayyed Jamal found no place for himself in Afghanistan and left that country for another land.

This time he returned to India first, and after some time, he left for Constantinople, where he became acquainted with many Ottoman personalities and authorities. This constant association and contact, especially his lectures and discourses delivered in the presence of learned men and political, religious gatherings, gave him a high reputation as a well-informed man of learning, which reputation won the agreement of the Ottoman government to allow him to join the rank of theological teachers.

But soon, the Turkish religious authorities and then through their instigation, the Turkish political authorities, rose in opposition to him.

The reason for their opposition was his sharp ideas and revolutionary views which pleased neither the Ulama nor the government officials. Thus the influence of these two groups resulted in his banishment from that country.

In 1871, compelled to leave Turkey, he decided to go to Egypt where he started preaching. His lofty ideas and revolutionary beliefs soon won him a high reputation. Many zealous and freedom loving young Egyptians gathered round him. His matchless eloquence, his amazing courage, and his clear-sighted revolutionary thoughts won him many eager followers among young Egyptians who attended his class as disciples, all of whom would later become figures such as Sheikh Mohammad Abduh, the famous Islamic man of learning, and Muhammad Ahmad, the great political and religious leader, who were able with the aid of their followers to direct the revolution of Sudan against colonization.

His class in Egypt gradually became a gathering center for enlightened liberal youths and under his instruction, did their utmost in combatting colonization, and heartily endeavoured to awaken the Muslims and save them from colonization and win their freedom.

But in Egypt, too, he could not live in tranquility and peace. In his class and in the gathering of his followers as well as in other assemblies, he gave tongue to the criticism of the Khadiv of Egypt and to the interference of colonial powers in the internal affairs and destiny of the nation. The Khadiv was so enraged that he ordered the banishment of Sayyed and the confiscation of his property.

After his banishment from Egypt, he went to India once more where he stayed for some time and wrote a treatise, "Refutation of Nigeria", as an answer to those who opposed and denied religion, belief and God. This made him even more highly reputed. He then decided to make a trip to Europe.

He visited France and stayed in Paris; but again there was no peace and tranquility. He created much fervor and uproar everywhere, with his fiery words and revolutionary ideas; but his most important achievement in Paris was the publication of a paper, "Orwatol-Wothgha", which did not only win an extraordinary popularity at the time of its publication, but also its contents assumed a lasting value in contemporary history especially in the revolutionary history of Islamic nations, particularly Iran. In this newspaper, he used his sharp pen and eloquent and inspiring style to propagate his revolutionary views. The role played by this newspaper was mainly its persistent and stubborn effort in awakening the eastern nations especially the Muslims in winning freedom and being liberated from the fetters of ignorance which had enabled the colonizing powers to use their deadly claws to strangle Muslim nations.

Publication of Orwatol-Wothgha

When the Sayyed started the publication of his newspaper in Paris, his loyal disciple Sheikh Muhammad Abduh joined him to help in the publication of this newspaper which was published in Arabic. In addition to this activity which presented his revolutionary views, he also participated in various religious and learned circles and held discussions with various personalities especially those who had views opposed to Islam.

Debate with Renan

One of the people who, in spite of his learning, opposed the religion of Islam owing to his inadequate familiarity with its principles, was the Frenchman Ernest Renan. The Sayyed opened up a keen debate in his paper in answer to his claim that the retardation of the eastern nations was due to their religion. His reasonings were so strong that according to friends and enemies alike, the Sayyed had undeniably refuted whatever arguments Ernest Renan had put forth in his articles.

The Sayyed in one of his articles writes:

“Not only has the religion of Islam not caused retardation, but it is rather the only religion which clearly shows the way of progress and sublimity. It is a religion which guides its followers on the road to happiness and success. But those who consider their interests, position and power to lie in the ignorance, illiteracy and retardation of Muslim nations, have for several centuries tried by means of calculated schemes and careful plans of colonization to divert the followers of Islam from Islamic facts and truths. For they know well that only an ignorant and uneducated nation can be brought under the domination of colonization, whereas once this same nation is awakened and made aware, it will no longer be willing to submit to the yoke of colonization even for one day. It is these colonizers who reinforce the foundation of their rule by the expansion of ignorance and superstition and kindling the fire of dispersion and disunity. Otherwise the religion of Islam and Mohamadan creed is not only incompatible with superstition, fear and conservatism, but also invites and encourages its followers to always fight for the redress of rights, and is a crusade for freedom and liberality.”

The paper ‘Orwatol-Wothgha’ aroused much excitement in Islamic countries and won many eager readers. But most governments were opposed to it and this opposition went so far as to ban its entry into their countries. In Egypt and Turkey if this paper was found in someone’s house or office, he was meted a severe punishment, and if anyone was caught reading it, he was arrested and jailed. Nevertheless, in

spite of the danger which its readers faced, this paper reached its faithful readers in all parts of Islamic lands, even down to its last issue. Each issue was handed round and it is reported that the number of its readers was twenty times its printed number.

But this paper, whose fiery articles roused so much uproar in the world of Islam, lasted no more than a year, and the thoroughly adventurous life of the Sayyed did not allow the paper to have a longer duration.

Travels and Moves

What comprised most of Sayyed Jamal's adventurous life were his repeated and long travels. It was for this reason that during his life he was nicknamed "The Prodigy of the East". At that time, the scarcity of the means of transport and travel facilities as compared with modern times, made travel from an eastern point to a western one, long and difficult and sometimes a journey took several months and even over a year to complete. Yet, the Sayyed like one who had the quickest means, changed his places of residence so rapidly and went from one corner of the world to another that those who knew him were surprised how he managed to be in Tehran today, in Cairo the next week, in Paris ten days later, and in Ankara, Istanbul or Kabul a week after.

It was thus that after establishing his paper, the Sayyed entrusted the technical and administrative tasks of it to Sheikh Muhammad Abduh, and set off for his travels in order to collect material for his paper through his close contacts with various nations and study their problems, expectations, solutions and exchange views with the well-informed personalities of those countries.

In the course of these travels, he left for Iran via Arabia, Syria and Iraq. He was well-known in Iran where he had many zealous readers. So, as soon as he arrived, he was warmly welcomed by his eager readers and those acquainted with his views who wished to meet him. This welcome was so touching that it roused the government authorities to receive him even more warmly.

One of these men of rank was Zell-al-Sultan who acted as his host in Isfahan and gave him a warm reception. But no sooner had he sat at his host's rich and opulent table, that he began criticizing his host and gave him the sharpest and bitterest rebukes in the garb of advice. But as Zell al-Sultan knew that the Sayyed enjoyed a great popularity with the guests present, who had been invited by Zell-al-Sultan himself, and were deeply influenced by and attracted to him, not only did he not offer an answer to his criticisms, but accepted them in good humour, and promised to follow his wise counsel heartily.

Zell-al-Sultan was however an uncultivated and a born enemy of

art, culture and history, and had shown this hostility ever since he was entrusted with the governorship of the historical city of Isfahan, by the Shah. He was hostile to whatever belonged to the history, nationality, traditions and culture of this country and especially to the artistic treasures of Isfahan. It was on account of this hatred that one day he ordered the destruction of all the old historical buildings of Isfahan and in their place, the building of gardens, ponds and modern houses was encouraged. It was sometime after the demolition of the historical monuments that Sayyed Jamal arrived in Isfahan.

One day, when the Sayyed went sightseeing round the city, he noticed many ruins, and when he returned, he felt sad and angry, and spoke angrily to Zell-al-Sultan, saying: "In all the world, rulers, governors and kings preserve and repair ancient and historical buildings of the places they are ruling over. How do you allow yourself to demolish them?" As others were present there, Zell-al-Sultan kept silent at this rebuke, and later on when they were alone, he took out Nasser-al-Din Shah's letters to him and showed them to the Sayyed.

In these letters, the Shah had brazenly abused the Safavid kings and their monuments, and had ordered to destroy whatever remained of them. In addition to these letters, Zell-al-Sultan declared that the Shah's tyranny has not only caused the destruction of historical monuments, but also the ruin of the whole country, and the governors are innocent in bringing about such ruins.

What Sayyed Jamal heard from Zell-al-Sultan and others, as well as what he had seen for himself, gave him an exact picture of the despotic and selfish character of the Shah, and it was with this impression that he set out for Tehran.

In Tehran, Nasser-al-Din Shah at first gave a warm welcome to the Sayyed, but very soon after several meetings and discourses, this welcome gave place to coldness and indifference. The Shah had openly told his attendants that he disliked the sharp and bitter tongue of this man. This change of attitude became particularly noticeable when after a long discussion which was boring to the Shah, the Sayyed told him that the world was now moving towards freedom and liberality and the rule of one individual was coming to an end, and each nation should decide its own destiny. He continued that in many countries there was no longer a single individual called Shah, Sultan or Emperor acting as sovereign, but that they were all subject to law and every person had the right to recognize everything on its basis and demand it. He ended his remark by saying that Iran has no alternative but to follow this course and have a constitution drawn up by the people and let the nation's destiny be decided on by the people's assembly, not by the personal will of the Shah.

These words roused the Shah's anger and he turned bitter to

Sayyed Jamal. Hardly a few days had passed after the Sayyed's arrival in Iran when it was reported to the Shah that wherever the Sayyed meets the people in various gatherings, streets and markets, in his discourses he speaks of the crimes and corruption of despotism and the tyranny of governors and government agents, and of the advantages of freedom, democracy and constitutional government, rousing the people against existing conditions.

Thus the Shah was not only displeased with the Sayyed, but he also created a situation that made it impossible for him to stay any longer in Iran, and so he set off for Russia.

In Russia he resumed his activities and began writing his lucid and pounding articles which were printed in Moscow and Petersburg papers. These articles attracted the attention of Russian personalities and they showed a desire to meet him and even the Russian emperor who had heard of his reputation wished to see him.

In this meeting, the Tzar asked the Sayyed about his disagreement with the Shah. In reply, he talked about his suggestion to the Shah of setting up a constitution, a proposal that had resulted in the Shah's displeasure. Then he elaborated to the Tzar on the necessity of making the best use of the man-power of the whole country, especially workers and farmers and the resulting benefits. He said that if these millions of workers and farmers support kingship, it would be much better than if they oppose it, and this support may be obtained when their human rights are determined and observed according to the law.

Naturally such thoughts and words could not please the Tzar. Being an absolute ruler and emperor, he was enraged with the man who spoke of the nation's rights. But being soft hearted, he ordered the banishment of Sayyed from Russia with gentleness and kindness.

After his expulsion from Russia, he could no longer find a place in the east and in the Islamic countries. He was now a fiery revolutionary with many supporters, but a homeless wanderer. He was obliged to visit and stay in European countries, but here again he roused the attention of the people by his articles, speeches and discourses about the colonization and despotism ruling over the east.

Travel to Europe

In 1889, at the time the Sayyed wandered about in Europe, staying here and there, Nasser-al-Din Shah and his chancellor Mirza Ali-Atabak were visiting Europe, and in Austria they happened to meet the Sayyed. The Shah unexpectedly appeared to regret his former treatment of him, and now after witnessing the progress of the European countries and people's prosperity close at hand, he seemed to be in accord with the Sayyed's views and showed some willingness

to benefit from his advice and guidance in future in promoting people's welfare and the country's advance, Muhammad Hassan Khan Etemad al-Saltaneh who had accompanied the Shah invited the Sayyed to return to Iran and act as their adviser.

But this time, too, Sayyed Jamal faced many difficulties and problems in Tehran. Atabak who had promised him an all-round assistance, and relying on the Sayyed's honesty, had deceived him into accepting the mission to Russia to win their favour (in truth towards the chancellor himself), did not only withhold all assistance, but also showed severe hostility towards him. Even when the Sayyed asked for a meeting to discuss the current affairs of the country, he refused and showed so much delay that the Sayyed realized he had no intention of agreeing to a meeting.

As the Sayyed did not expect such a cold treatment after receiving the former warm welcome and invitation, he wrote a treatise on 'law' while he stayed in the house of Amin al-Zarb and sent it to the Shah. In this treatise, he reminded the Shah of the meeting in Europe and his promises, and once again spoke of the necessity of the establishment of a constitutional rule, freedom and democracy and observing the nations' rights.

When Nasser-al-Din Shah received this treatise, Atabak found an opportunity and pretext to warn him about the Sayyed's presence and his written and spoken words, and make him more cynical than ever of the acts of the revolutionary wanderer.

Moreover, the Shah received fresh news every day which made him more certain of the truth of Atabak's accusations. The reports showed that great religious leaders and enlightened and progressive men such as Mulla Hadi Najm-Abadi and Mirza Abol-Hassan Jelvah visited the house of Amin al-Zarb to meet the Sayyed who roused them with his fiery words against the Qajar sovereign. The report claimed that this group was in full readiness to take serious steps to awaken and incite the nation against the rulers' oppression.

The Shah panicked when the news reached him that Mirza Abol-Hassan Jelvah after an hour's talk with the Sayyed, had declared on leaving that house that he would put on a white shroud in readiness for the crusade against the anti-religious government and the Qajar king, the enemy of Islam.

Retirement and Seclusion

Both the Shah and his chancellor who in their meeting in Europe with the Sayyed had invited him to return to Iran, so much feared his acts and revolutionary views that to rid themselves once for all of his presence, they thought of a plot to murder him in the house of Amin

al-Zarb. But the Sayyed sensing the coming danger through his keen intelligence, fled his residence in time and took refuge in the holy shrine of Abdol-Azim. When the Shah and Atabak heard of this, they were so enraged at his timely escape that this did not prevent them from sending government agents there to arrest him. When they got there he was abed with high fever. They ruffled him out violently, and though hardly dressed for those frosty winter days, they took him to the Iraqi border. On the way, they insulted and treated him wickedly and finally left him over the frontier with little clothing and no money. His personal property including a large bag full of books, notes and plans of his articles which were left behind in his host's house were seized and taken to the Shah as evidence of his perversion and treason.

Although they found no sign or evidence of his perversion and treason among his property and documents, yet they spread the rumour that he is neither a Sayyed (descendant of the Prophet) nor a Muslim, but a deceitful and dangerous fellow who travels to Islamic lands in order to deviate and mislead people, and create riots and sedition. Therefore, to counter his deceitful acts and their influence on the people and to prevent him from disturbing peace and order, the Shah and the chancellor issued the order for his expulsion, under the lame excuse of saving Iranian Muslims from his dangerous presence.

After his banishment from Iran, Sayyed Jamal once more set off for Europe, and as far as he could, he published articles in the European press concerning the Shah's injustice and despotism as well as the tyranny of Atabak and their agents, thus disgracing them everywhere.

Some time later, Sultan Abd al-Hamid, the Ottoman ruler, who had heard of the Sayyed's fame, invited him to Constantinople. Although Sayyed Jamal had had a bitter experience of Nasser-al-Din Shah's and Atabak's invitation, and had no desire to accept the invitation of the Sultan, the latter was so persistent in his request that the Sayyed eventually gave in and left for the Ottoman court. Sultan Abd al-Hamid treated him warmly and showed him great respect since he had often told his courtiers that he preferred the Sayyed's friendship to his enmity, for, his enmity would prove very dangerous.

Again, his reason for treating the Sayyed well and tolerating his outspoken tongue and for pretending agreement to his views, was that he was aiming at becoming the caliph of the Islamic lands and hoped to assume the sole power there. So, when he saw Sayyed Jamal's effort to raise the banner of Islamic unity and speak of Muslim solidarity, he thought of him as a good and effective ally in attaining his goal. But when the Armenians rebelled in the Ottoman land, and the Sultan realized that the Sayyed secretly had a hand in it, he became so suspicious of him that some people believe that he had given order to poison and kill the Sayyed.

But however, before his growing suspicion Nasser-al-Din Shah and Atabak had done their best to encourage the Sultan to look upon the Sayyed with disfavour, and both of them asked the Ottoman ruler either to expel him from Turkey or allow the Shah's agents serving the Iranian minister in Istanbul to murder him.

But as the Sultan at that time had no reason to suspect the Sayyed and considered him a useful ally, and at the same time to please his neighbouring ruler, he decided that Jamal's stay in the Ottoman court will help check every possible damage to the Shah, and will also be to his interest since this way, the Sayyed's contact with Mirza Malkam will be automatically cut off in Europe and his instigating acts and writings will be checked from being reflected in the European press.

Despite these explanations, the Sayyed did not remain idle in the Ottoman court, and continued his revolutionary activities. It was there that he prepared the preliminaries for the abrogation of the tobacco concession and the ban on its consumption as the first heavy blow to despotism in Iran, with the aid of Mirza Agha Khan Bardsiri, Sheikh Ahmad Roohi and Khabir al-Molk, and eventually carried it out with the assistance of Mirza Shirazi, the great imitated Shi'a authority.

Instigator of the Assassination

At the time when the Sayyed resided in Turkey, Nasser-al-Din Shah was assassinated by Mirza Reza Kermani after 49 years of rule, and many people attributed the instigation of this assassination to the Sayyed in spite of his being far away from the scene.

It is true that Mirza Reza was a devoted follower of the Sayyed and had cherished his views in his heart for many years and believed in him. At the same time, he considered Atabak and the Regent as obstacles in the way of the establishment of constitution in Iran and was wholly opposed to the despotic rule of the Shah. But there is no evidence that Mirza Reza was sent directly by the Sayyed to assassinate Nasser-al-Din Shah.

Mirza Reza himself had suffered much in the Qajar reign and from the rulers. Both the Regent and Atabak had treated him very unjustly and had put him in jail and dungeon though he was innocent. It was, therefore, natural for him to rebel and prepare to uproot tyranny.

After being set free from prison and torture, Mirza Reza was so dissatisfied and rebellious that he was like a barrel of explosives waiting to be ignited. The spark was provided when he met Sayyed Jamal for whose ideas he felt a deep conviction and devotion. These ideas influenced him so much that he considered it the duty of every Iranian to act to the extent of his ability, against tyranny. After becoming acquainted with Sayyed Jamal, once while visiting the holy shrines in

Iraq, he changed his destination and set off for Turkey to benefit from a closer contact with him and his guidance. Influenced by his master for some time, he felt ready to carry out his revolutionary deed and set off for Tehran, and on the eve of the fifteenth anniversary of the Shah's reign, he shot the king in the shrine of Abd al-Azim.

After the Shah's assassination, he was arrested and jailed once again. This time, however, he was quiet and relaxed since, as he said, he had performed his religious, human, patriotic and national duty. During his trials, he denied having been given this mission by Sayyed Jamal or of even being incited by him. On all the occasions, he spoke proudly and respectfully of the Sayyed calling him the greatest man of the world, a learned, honest thinker and fighter who had had a deep influence on his life.

Sayyed Jamal took the assassination of Nasser al-Din Shah as a good omen and said gladly that the death of this king was the vanguard of the constitution for Iran, and would awaken the Iranians to endeavour to win freedom, and that after his assassination, no one would dare any longer bring misery upon the nation.

Though Sayyed Jamal died only a year after the assassination of the Shah and did not live long enough to see the beginning of the constitutional movement and the uprising of the people for freedom, the history of the east especially that of Iran will never forget the part he played in awakening the mind of the retarded nation and its bloody uprising for liberty. Historians are not however unanimous over the death of Sayyed Jamal, and there are different versions as to whether it was a planned murder or a natural death.

Root of Corruption

Sayyed Jamal paid attention to one fundamental point in his struggle against tyranny and corruption as the main cause and factor, and that was the rule of one individual and his domination over helpless, deprived, oppressed people. He wrote in one of the issues of his paper:

"They say that a country is preserved with magnificent palaces, lofty towers, a well-equipped army and modern weapons. I agree that they are important for a country, but a king or army and palaces cannot by themselves preserve the independence of a country. It is men of talent, competent individuals, responsible and committed personalities who can safeguard the survival and independence of the country. It is men of thought, judgement and learning who can effect reforms in various fields and provide welfare, security and tranquility, and not a king, his army or military hardware. Men of knowledge and virtue can exercise a sympathetic supervision over the events and relationships of a

realm and by means of kindness and commiseration, redress the rights of people and put back transgressors to public property in their places.”

The Position of the Iranian Ulama

Sayyed Jamal had realized the extent of the Iranian Ulama's spiritual influence and value among the people in the fight against oppression in a dark period, as the only source of hope and reliance. For this reason, he appreciated their position and sought their aid and influence in facing social and political difficulties. In his combats, he began by relying on the learned Ulama and this is clearly shown by the letters he wrote to the Shi'a leaders especially to Mirza Shirazi.

Mohit Tabataba'i's View

Scholar Mohit Tabataba'i writes in his survey on the life and thoughts of Sayyed Jamal:

“The Sayyed in his first visit to Europe, when he published his paper “Orwatol-Wothgha”, had realized the influence and importance of the Ulama. In a letter written at that time to an Iranian residing in Egypt named “Daghestani”, he explicitly says that the Iranian Ulama have not neglected their duties, and it is only government officials who have always caused distress, difficulty and retardation of the people and their country.

In order to show his particular spirit and point of view towards the combatant Ulama, we will quote a part of his letters. In a letter written on 25 December 1881 concerning the learned and alert Ulama of Iran, he writes:

“What you have supposed about Iranian Ulama is not fair and just, for, whenever there is no check and control over power, men of religion cannot prevent that dominating power from its operation. When did the Iranian government desire to build railways in the country and was faced with Ulama's resistance to prevent an action which would be useful for both the government and the country? When did the Iranian government wish to establish justice among people and set up courts of justice and parliament in order to base all decrees on laws and needs, and the Ulama rose in revolt against law and justice? When did the Iranian government intend to found new hospitals, asylums and nurseries, and the Ulama did not show approval of such measures or declared them to be wrong and destructive innovations?”

The movement that Sayyed Jamal started in the east by propagating his revolutionary ideas was an intellectual, social and universal movement. He never sat still till the end of his life, and never stayed for long in one town, one country or even one continent, and kept on

moving from one place to another, and very soon left for another land, resuming his revolutionary activities. One day he was in Asia, another day in Africa and then in Europe. Wherever he went, he contacted various groups in order to obtain a profound knowledge of their problems.

Sheikh Muhammad Abduh says of him: "It would not be an exaggeration to say that he comes next to prophets and impeccable leaders in rank with regards the powerful mind, the great intelligence and the penetrating vision granted to him by God.

Sayyed Muhammad Tabataba'i—Founder of the Constitution

In the history of anti-despotic struggles and Islamic movements of Iran, the constitutional movement assumes a special place. This was the first uprising and revolution by large masses of the nation which ended in their decisive victory and the shameful defeat of the monster of internal despotism and external colonization before the onrush of its crusaders, and proved its rightfulness, not only in the heart of history and revolutionary people, but also in the soul of the most black-hearted agents of tyranny and colonization.

In the constitutional movement, too, like other Islamic popular movements and uprisings, the role of the alert and fighting Ulama has been epoch-making and brilliant. Both before the revolution, when preliminary steps were taken to reinforce the root of the movement and during its spread, the Ulama have had the main role and have been in the first line.

Among the distinguished Ulama whose names have been a credit to the history of the revolution and awakening of the Iranians because of their endeavors and crusades, three brilliant and everlasting personalities stand out, namely, Ayatollah Mirza Shirazi who paved the way for this awakening of the people by his clear-sightedness and wisdom to join the wave of uprising. Then there are Sayyed Muhammad Tabataba'i and Sayyed Abdollah Behbahani, two alert, brave crusading Ulama, under whose names the banner of uprising for the constitution was raised.

The great historical epic of the constitution is a model of the resistance, steadfastness and dignity of the will of the great Iranian nation against internal selfishness and tyranny, and foreign profiteering and exploitation, manifesting its true nature in the personality of these two pioneering Ulama. This took place at a time when, to quote Jalal Al-e-Ahmad (the writer): "In those days the Ulama were the last stronghold which exhibited its power and strength, even though it ended in self-sacrifice, a painful topic which requires a lengthy description."

Speaking of the brilliant names of these two Ulama does not mean

confining the role of the Ulama to these two, since at the same time, great struggling and renowned men like Sheikh Fazlollah Noori, Sayyed Jamal Va'az Isfahani, Malek al-Motekallemin, Sheikh Muhammad Khiabani, Seghat al-Islam and other crusaders did not spare any effort in self-sacrifice and venturesomeness. We will survey and analyse their lives and thoughts in due time; but since these two great men come first chronologically, we will give a description of them first.

A Transition and Travel

According to historians, the constitutional revolution was a transition from absolute dictatorship to democracy and popular government, which transition was successfully based on the faith and self-sacrifice of the people, and on the decisiveness and courage of the religious leaders.

The Ulama of the time had mobilized their forces for uprooting despotism and colonization and always remembered the holy and divine pact about which Imam Ali had spoken: "God Almighty has taken a covenant from the learned men of religion never to submit to the tyranny of oppressors, nor yield to the voice of misery and abjectness of the oppressed, and to be ever ready to obey divine commands and injunctions." They were faithful to this divine covenant and courageously tried to uproot tyranny and injustice.

Pre-constitution Iran was burning in the tempestuous fever of despotism, and international colonisers had sunk their powerful claws into all the underground and surface resources of the country. Moreover these big powers interfered not only in the life of the nation but also more deeply in the lives of the authorities and even in the private life of the king. Such illegitimate interferences of European countries especially Britain and Russia had gone so far as to make Iran the battlefield of these two strong powers. Nasser-al-Din Shah writes in his diary: "I wish to travel to the north of the country, but the British minister objects, I want to travel to the south, but the Russian minister protests. Curse upon this kingship when a king has no right to go to the north and south of his own country."

In those days, owing to the incompetence and irresoluteness of the government and officials, the delegate and chief consul of the Belgian government, named 'Naz , even allowed himself to publicly insult the things the people held sacred and at night and dancing parties, to wear the garment of an A'lem, mimicking their bearing in his attempt at ridicule. He had copies made of such photos to distribute among people and thereby blemish the respect due to an A'lem.

In 1903, two years before the nation's uprising forced Mozaffar-al-Din Shah to sign the constitutional degree, the people could no longer

remain patient, and started a great uproar and wide demonstration led by these two exalted and fighting Ulama in order to awaken the incompetent Shah and his treacherous courtiers about the state of affairs. It was in this movement, that the co-operation and unity of word of the Ulama under the leadership of these two noble Sayyeds played a vital role in the history of Islamic movement. The late Sayyed Mohammad Tabataba'i and Sayyed Abdollah Behbahani are both the pioneers and founder of this anti-egoistic movement.

Ahmad Kasravi, the well-known historian of the constitutional movement, even though violently opposed to the Ulama, writes in this connection: "The constitutional movement was started by Messrs Tabataba'i and Behbahani and other Ulama, but the newspapers attributed it to people like Moshir-al-Dowleh."

The Spread of Conflicts

The two crusading Ulama enhanced their conflicts which entered a serious history-making phase when they came to the Shah-mosque to speak to a huge crowd about the weaknesses of dictatorial rule and the strongpoints of constitutional rule.

But on that day a number of court agents and the Shah's hirelings found their way there to disperse the crowd and as planned, began to abuse and beat the people, and even insulted the two Ulama. In the clash that ensued, many were beaten and wounded, and the people were forced to scatter.

On the 13th December of that year, the two crusading Ulama in protest left for the shrine of Abdol-Azim and took refuge there accompanied by a number of Ulama and merchants such as the late Haj Sheikh Murteza, custodian of the school of Khan Marvi, Sadr al-Ulama, Sayyed Jamal-al-Din Afje'i, Mirza Mostapha, son of Haj Mirza Muhammad Hassan Ashtiani, Sheikh Muhammad Sadegh Kashani, Sheikh Muhammad Reza Qumi and some merchants from Tehran's bazaar.

Their way was blocked by government agents resulting in clashes and shooting, but when Ein al-Dowlah, military governor of Tehran saw that all the people were closing their shops to join the rebellion, he ordered his men to stop their bullying and allow the group to proceed peacefully. But at the same time he ordered that if those who had closed their shops do not open them, their shops would be pillaged by government agents. A few ignored this order and suffered loss of their property.

The government agents, servile to foreigners and supported by Russian and British ministers tried to protect their masters' interests by inciting differences between Tabataba'i and Behbahani, aiming at

destroying the friendship that existed between them. They resorted sometimes to threat, sometimes to allurements, one day promising them money or position, and the next day threatening them with death. But they forgot that men of faith do not fear threat or death, are not deceived by riches, property or position, and do not deviate from the direct path by such tricks. Like Imam Ali says: "They are devout at night and valiant lions by day."

Public Commotion

The protesting residence of the two courageous Ulama at Rey, in view of their wide popularity, moved the whole nation. From the very first day of their departure, they were accompanied by a number of their supporters. After settling there, every day, fresh groups joined them, and the number increased so much that they felt strong enough to vanquish their opponents.

Even a number of young courtiers and aristocrats, Qajar princes and personalities who disagreed with the government and had therefore been in disfavour of the despotic Shah and his selfish courtiers, left for Rey to join the insurgents.

The daily increase of the two beloved Ulama's followers soon brought dread and anxiety to the government authorities, so that Ein al-Dowlah, the inflexible dictatorial chancellor of the Qajar court, who had never shown any conciliation and compromise to anyone before, on realizing that he could not make a stand against them, decided on a direct confrontation so that they would be forced into submission. With this in mind, he despatched one of his rough and trusted commanders called Salar al-Dowlah with several hundred armed horsemen to Rey to intimidate and threaten the leaders. But the fearless Muslim combatants bravely faced the government's troops (which was commanded by aliens whose guards though ferocious towards their own nation, behaved abjectly towards the foreigners) and stood up firmly for liberty. In their shouts and cries they expressed their own privations and the dictatorial government's corruption, violently criticising its injustice and transgression over the people's rights.

Resolution of the Rey Emigrants

At last, this group drew up their demands in the form of an eight-point resolution with the advice and guidance of the two crusading Ulama, and sent it to the Shah via the Ottoman minister. These eight articles which later remained in history as the first written and organized demand for the establishment of a constitutional government were as follows:

- 1) The establishment of a 'house of justice' throughout Iran, in towns and villages.
- 2) Removing Ala-al-Dowleh from the governorship of Tehran.
- 3) Bringing back Haj Muhammad Reza (a fighting A'lem of the early years of the movement who had been exiled from Rafsanjan to Kerman).
- 4) Restoring the custody of the school of Khan to its original custodian.
- 5) Execution of Islamic laws throughout Iran.
- 6) Removal of M. Naz, the Belgian, as director of the customs and finances (a post in which he did nothing but molest people and waste public property).
- 7) A one-twentieth reduction of civil servants' salaries, since the past one year.
- 8) Removal of Askar from the management of carriage office and Qum-way transport (a man who had taken this monopoly from the government, had maltreated travellers, and with whom theological students and Ulama were particularly dissatisfied and of whom they had complained to the religious authorities in Tehran). This article was included by the leaders of the movement to conciliate the Qum Ulama.

The Ottoman minister carried this resolution, which had been drawn up by hundreds of Rey refugees, to the court and delivered it to the Shah. Typical of him, the Shah at first ignored it. But the insisting refugees and the long stay of the religious leaders at Rey worried him, and when it was reported to him that the situation was getting more and more serious, he was frightened and looked for a solution. His counsellors advised him to agree to the demands at once.

He did so, and even sent the royal carriage to Rey to bring back to Tehran the two religious leaders and other distinguished personalities with all due respect. His adviser even recommended the issue of a decree promising the establishment of the 'house of justice' and execution of Islamic laws.

Thus the Ulama led by the two Sayyeds ended their asylum and left for Tehran followed by all their companions.

Tabataba'i's Letter

The religious leaders, once in Tehran, however, waited long and in vain for the fulfillment of the Shah's promise. So, Sayyed Muhammad Tabataba'i after sometime wrote a letter in this connection to Ein al-Dowlah, the anti-constitution chancellor, the content of which reveals a love of the nation, freedom, independence, prosperity and honour of the country. The text of the letter is as follows:

"What has happened to all those promises and agreements? You

are well aware of the sorry state of this country and its nation, and of the danger which surrounds this zone. You know well that the only remedy is the establishment of the assembly and unity of the government and nation, as well as the alliance of the authorities with the Ulama. It is surprising that though you have diagnosed the disease and though the remedy is clear, you take no step. These reforms which are desired by the nation will soon be effected, but we wish them to be done by the hand of our king and Atabak, not through Russia, Britain or Ottoman. We have no wish to see it written on the pages of history that the government of Mozaffar-al-Din Shah was overthrown and Iran perished during his reign. Danger is close at hand, and time is short and this patient is dying. Is it proper to postpone treatment? I swear to God Almighty and to all prophets and imams that Iran will be lost with the slightest negligence. I apologize for being outspoken, since Iran is my home and my credit. My service is for Islam in this country, and my respect depends on this government.

“I see that this country is falling into the hands of foreigners and all my dignity and credit are being lost. As long as I breathe, I will endeavour to preserve this country, and even in case of need I will offer my life for its sake.

“Today all private motives should be laid aside and devotion shown for the sake of God.

“Time is short, the subject important, and fancies are out of place. I am prepared to forsake everything for this purpose, and lay aside dignity and credit, and if the execution of this task requires that I should act as doorkeeper or shoe-holder at your excellency's noble residence, I am ready for it. I beg you in the name of God and his Prophet not to let these people be enslaved by Russia, Britain and Ottoman. What has happened to the covenant? What about the Quran? Our agreement was the establishment of the assembly. Little of my life remains and nothing gives me pleasure now except taking this step and considering its fulfillment as my ultimate ideal, or offering my life for it, which is the source of salvation and honour for me and my morals. If this task is not performed, we will be cursed by the future generation in the same way that we criticise our predecessors.

“I implore you humbly to carry out this task (setting up the assembly). A delay of even one day will have the effect of a deadly poison. At present the evil of the Ottoman cannot be removed except by the establishment of this assembly and by unity of the government and nation, as well as the authorities and Ulama. Now, I will not cause further inconvenience.”

Another Letter to Mozaffar-al-Din Shah

Following his lofty goal which was the heart-felt desire of the alert nation of Iran and crusading Muslims, Sayyed Muhammad Tabataba'i wrote another letter addressed to Mozaffar-al-Din Shah in which he requested the fulfillment of this important task.

The text of the letter is as follows:

"To his Majesty, the holy sovereign. As your Majesty has personally permitted me to state matters directly without any intermediary, I ask your leave to give this inconvenience.

"Since on these days the way is blocked to your supplicants to bring their requests to your royal notice, therefore I take this means of informing your majesty that the country is in a sorry state, the subjects are distressed, the hands of transgression of the governors and officials are stretched over the property, honour and life of the subjects, and there is no limit to this oppression. They plunder any amount of the subjects' property they desire. They yield to all their powers of wrath and lust in committing whatever they wish including violence, mutilation and murder. Where have all these mansions, rich furniture, properties and wealth come from? They are all from the helpless subjects.

"Last year they carried away Quchani girls as compensation for the duty and the few pounds of wheat which the farmers could not pay, and also sold the Turkmans and Armenians of Ishq-abad, at a high price. Ten thousands Quchani subjects fled to the Russian territory because of oppression. Thousands of Iranians have migrated to other countries owing to the injustice of governors and officials, working there as porters and labourers and dying in misery and abjection. It is not possible to describe here all the injustice of the oppressors. All the facts are concealed from your Majesty and they do not allow the reports to reach you. This country will very soon be annexed to foreign lands. Your Majesty will not naturally agree to have it written in history that in the time of his rule, Iran perished, Islam was weakened and Muslims were humbled.

"Your Majesty, all these mischiefs can be remedied by an assembly of justice, namely an assembly consisting of all classes of people which can redress wrongs, in which a king and a beggar are equal. Your Majesty is well aware of the benefits of such an assembly. If it is established, all injustice will be removed; prosperity will replace ruin, foreign powers will stop coveting this country; Sistan and Baluchestan will not be seized by Britain; Russia will not occupy other places; Ottomans cannot encroach upon Iran. The state of bread and meat which are the staple food of the people is miserly and frightening, and most people are deprived of them. Your Majesty ordered to ameliorate this condition and some benevolent people were prepared to take the necessary steps. But unfortunately those who force bakers and butchers to pay them a large sum as bribe, do not allow this object of public

welfare to be realized. Your Majesty is also aware of the conditions of soldiers who protect the nation and government. Even their trifling wage is withheld from them.

“We spent thirty days of hardship in a corner of the shrine of Abdol-Azim until your royal decree was issued for the establishment of the desired assembly. We expressed our gratitude, celebrations and illuminations were arranged as thanksgiving. We are still waiting for the purport of the royal decree to take shape, but there is no sign of it as yet. There is an all round evasion and they explicitly say that this matter will not be carried out and that settling up an assembly is contrary to kingship. But they forget that a proper and everlasting kingship depends on an assembly, and without it kingship is meaningless and likely to decline.

“Your Majesty, do not let fifteen million people who are the kings’s children, be enslaved by the tyranny of one person. There are many things to speak of, but I will not inconvenience you further. I beg you to peruse my petition with care and before there is a break, find a remedy to prevent the country from being lost, and a handful of helpless subjects who are your Majesty’s children from being enslaved and becoming abject. The order of the highest requires obedience.

Muhammad-bin Sadeq al-Hosseini al-Tabataba’i”

Mozaffar-al-Din Shah’s Reply

After reading Tabataba’i’s letter, Mozaffar-al-Din Shah wrote him the following answer:

“The Reverend Sayyed Muhammad Mojtahed. We have read your letter, and we will advise Atabak to carry out your wishes. You too should not neglect your duty, pray for us, silence the rebels and rascals, quell the riot and rebellion, and not act in such a way as to enrage us against all.

Shah”

This letter with its dry tone and irrelevant expression and content which did not have the slightest connection with Tabataba’i’s letter, showed that the latter’s letter had not been delivered to the Shah, and that this answer had almost certainly been written by Ein al-Dowlah, the coarse, selfish and tyrannical chancellor, especially as the last phrase of it was violently threatening, while those who were familiar with the gentle character and temper of the aged Shah knew that especially because of his religious beliefs, he had a great respect for the Ulama and religious leaders. Thus, he could not have written such an answer.

The valiant Sayyed did not only refuse to withdraw from the arena at this dry and irrelevant reply, but showed an even greater resolution in his combat. Thenceforth, he did not only send fiery and inspiring

messages to the people of Iran in the remotest part of the country, encouraging all oppressed classes to rise up against tyranny and set up the assembly, but also gathered them round him several times a day in his house or outside, in congregations, and even in the streets and at the pulpit. By his moving and pounding words, he showed the way of liberation from injustice and servitude of governors, authorities, officials and foreign colonization, encouraged them to stand firm to their last moment without fearing death and honourable martyrdom.

Sayyed Abdollah Behbahani, the Valiant Crusader

In all these struggles, the close friend and co-fighter of Tabataba'i was Sayyed Abdollah Behbahani. He did not only deliver his crusading colleague's message to the people on a wide scale, but also took steadfast steps himself and called upon the deprived people to show more firmness and resistance in asserting their just claims.

The late Sayyed Behbahani was a few years younger than Tabataba'i, yet he was very experienced and more important still, he was a respected Shi'a religious authority who acted as a leader of a large number of fighting Muslims in the constitutional movement of Iran, and eventually gave his life in the combat against tyranny and tyrants, despotism and agents of exploitation and for the establishment of the constitution.

Brief Biography

The late great Islamic scholar Amini writes in his fine book, "Martyrs in the way of virtue" concerning this martyr for liberty and humanity:

"Sayyed Abdollah Behbahani, leader of the constitutional movement, son of Sayyed Esma'il, the great Shi'a authority and exalted leader and reformer belongs to a most distinguished family; a family which possesses a lofty position in learning and culture as well as a great reputation in the service rendered to the world of Islam. This chaste tree took root in Charifa, a village of Bahrain, and its branches spread to Najaf, Basrah, Khorramshahr, Bushehr, Shiraz, Tehran and Behbahan.

"He was born in the Hijrah year 1262 in Najaf, brought up by his father, and was educated under Imam Muhammad Shirazi, Ayatollah Kooch-Kamari and the great jurisprudent Sheikh Razi, and attained a high rank in jurisprudence. He was a religious authority of the first rank in Tehran and the only leader of the Muslims. During the Constitutional Revolution he suffered much, and in the period of 'Short Despotism' after the removal of obstacles returned to Iran, where he was warmly

welcomed by the residents of Tehran. He decided to get the constitutional law ratified in such a way as to abide by Islamic principles and remove all those articles and alterations which were in contravention with Islamic dictates.

"This fine decision and holy endeavour were not agreeable to the ambitious and debauchees. So, he was shot dead in his house in the middle of the night in the month of Sha'eban 1328. His body was taken to holy Najaf and buried by his father's grave in the eastern courtyard of the holy Shrine."

Thus the two crusading and learned Ulama played their constructive, critical and historical role in one of the greatest eastern movements, and built a firm foundation for constitutional government, persisting in their efforts until the decree was signed.



CHAPTER THREE

SHEIKH FAZLOLLAH NOORI: MARTYR OF WESTERNIZATION AND MODERNIZATION

He possessed a fine and impressive voice. Though for seven months he had been physically weakened by the wound of a bullet which had remained in his body, and though self-interested enemies and ignorant friends had joined hands to drag him to the gallows on charge of defending Islam, and though the rope which was to hang him threw the shadow of a fearful death within a few inches over his lean seventy-year old body, yet his voice was magnificent and frightening.

He took off his turban and held it towards the people who had with blind emotions gathered there and applauded ignorantly, and cried out in a ringing voice: "They have removed this turban from my head, and they will do the same with you."

This martyred crusader was Ayatullah Sheikh Fazlollah Noori who spoke at the gallows, and how correct and clear-sighted had been his prediction. Within a short time after his martyrdom, those simple-minded people, namely that ignorant majority who, like Mo'aviah's army in the battle with Imam Ali, had supposed that on that day they were removing an enemy of the people and a most stubborn opponent of man's caliphate on the earth, painfully realized that colonization's wicked plan had placed the death of Ayatollah Noori at the top of its

wicked goals, and were now removing the guardians of God's religion and protectors of Muhammad's faith one by one, and whereabouts to uproot Islam from amongst the people. For the enemy had often seen that it was only the power emerging from Islamic faith that could start a great torrent of self-sacrificing Muslims and destroy their wicked and and shameful schemes. Therefore they decided to block the way of the torrent at its source with calculated plots. Now they intended to abandon fighting with the Muslim nation and in its place take up the fight with the principle and essence of Islam, since they had fully realized that without the motivating and life-giving force of the committed and responsible Ulama a Muslim nation would not exist to bar the way to their wicked and destructive ambitions.

The heart-rending death of the crusading Ayatollah Noori was one of the most amazing events in the history of the Ulama's combats in the struggle of Iranian Muslims. How is it possible for a virtuous A'lem, a man of God and religion, who has spent a lifetime in guarding Islam and whose personality has been most constructive in originating the constitutional movement and bringing it to fruition, to be in such a short time, introduced as a stubborn opponent of that movement, and his life taken because of a sin he has not committed?

This is so amazing that a survey of it would be necessary in this series of historical and Islamic researches.

Beginning of Combat

It may not be fitting to fix a date for the commencement of a crusading A'lem's combats, since Islam is a religion of combat, and every Muslim is engaged in it during the whole of his life; a combat against oppression and whatever is earthly, worldly and anti-God. In such a case, how is it possible for such a religious authority who issues verdicts, a learned A'lem whose learning, virtue and chastity have not been doubted by friends and enemies, since he is superior to all others in Tehran with respect to those qualities, not to have fought against tyranny and earthly rule even for one day of his life? But to keep within the framework of history we are compelled to begin at a point when Ayatollah Noori made his struggles perfectly public.

He began this task before the constitutional movement and concurrent with the time when the two Ulama Tabataba'i and Behbahani, were in the first line of public struggle. He was not only one of the most stubborn supporters of the tobacco ban against foreign colonization in Iran, but was also an intermediary in the issue of the verdict of prohibition and related correspondence with the great imitated authority, Mirza Shirazi and fully trusted by this leader, and greatly respected by the people. In this matter, too, he was alongside

to Tehran.

But the goal for which the crusading Ulama had emigrated, namely the establishment of the Islamic rule of justice, was not such that it could be given up because of someone's intimidation or the Shah's request. The Ulama had had no desire to conciliate with the Shah by this emigration. Its goal had been proximity to God and fulfillment of divine decrees within the unfringeable framework of Islamic injunctions. So, their answer was short, unhesitating and firm. They gave the same unanimous answer that as long as the assembly (by which they meant an Islamic assembly) is not established and divine decrees are not carried out for a life of Islamic justice and equity and the proper management of the country and people's affairs and legislation of laws in accordance with Islamic religion, they will neither return from their emigration, nor abandon their combat.

In this way Mozaffar-al-Din Shah was left with no alternative but to submit to the legitimate demands of the Ulama who were the nation's spokesmen and concurrent with the dismissal of Ein al-Dowlah who stubbornly rejected the people's demands, he issued a decree for the establishment of a constitutional government and legislative assembly in 1324 of the Hijrah.

As we have no intention of narrating the events of the constitutional history here, we refer the reader to some historical sources on this topic and confine ourselves to the analysis of the matters behind the scene in the constitutional revolution, and the way of Ayatollah Noori's martyrdom.

A Glance at the Learned Martyr's Life

Before describing Ayatollah Noori's martyrdom and the events behind the scene, we should cast a glance at this learned and crusading A'lem of Islam.

The scholarly and virtuous life of this man has been described as follows by the learned scholar Sheikh Abdol-Hossain Amini the writer of 'Al-Ghadir' in his valuable work 'The Martyrs of Virtue':

"His father was Mowla Abbas Noori, a learned A'lem. When he died, a poet wrote an ode in his elegy in which he condoled his son Haj Sheikh Fazlollah Noori, and honoured the memory of his uncle, scholar Noori, and eulogised his teacher, Imam Mojaddad Shirazi.

"He was a leader of the Muslims and banner-bearer of learning and religion and the greatest scholar of Tehran. His words, discourses and writings showed deep knowledge. He was a nephew and son-in-law of Noori. Born in 1258 of the Hijrah, in his youth he left for Najaf where he studied under the mighty jurisprudent 'Sheikh Razi' for a time, and then he accompanied his uncle, scholar Noori, in the first caravan of

emigrants following Imam Mojadded Shirazi to Samerah in 1292, a caravan in which Mowla Fat'h Ali Soltan-Abadi (model of the devout and a fine example of morality and magnanimity, and a disciple of Sheikh Ansari) was present. Sheikh Fazlollah Noori benefited for long years from the class of this distinguished master, and wrote down his lectures. After the year 1300, he returned to Tehran as a spiritual and religious leader of the people, endeavouring in the propagation of Islamic teachings until a group of wicked men found him. He was an enemy of wickedness, deceit and atheism, an obstacle to their aims and interests and therefore they hanged him. He became a martyr at the hand of tyranny, a victim in the way of faith, God and combat with wrong. He was hanged at noon of 13th Rajab 1327 and his body was carried to the holy city of Qum."

Elsewhere in this book we read: "In Samerah he was an excellent disciple of Mirza Shirazi, the great crusading scholar, and on his return to Tehran in 1300, he decided to stay in the same city. From the very beginning, many people were attracted to him as an authority. His combat was always for the sake of God and exaltation of Islam and he acted according to his own judgement and experience as a religious expert. He avoided opportunism or moving with the current. That is why we see him as a pillar of the national Muslims against the colonizing British agreement (the Regie concession), and he played a worthy role in the people's revolutionary movement. Mirza Shirazi who issued the verdict of tobacco ban, kept continuous contact with him. In the constitutional revolution, and the Ulama and public uprising against the Qajar despotism, he was among the first to motivate the operation of the movement, and was a founder of the revolution."

Now the question is: What happened and why this virtuous and fighting A'lem was presented to the people as an anti-revolutionary element, to justify his being hanged in the name of opposition to public demands?

British Plot to Deviate the Constitution Movement

When the struggles of the Muslims led by well-informed Ulama bore fruit, and the Shah was forced to sign the decree for the constitution and formation of the assembly, British plotters once again despaired. They had already witnessed the power of Islam and its inspiring force in the nation in the brief but decisive verdict of Mirza Shirazi, concerning the tobacco concession which roused the whole nation's rage and protest, resulting as stated by all the historians of the constitution, in the defeat of internal despotism and foreign colonization inspite of all their might against the unity and solidarity ignited by the Ulama under the banner of Islam.

Now they saw once more that the Ulama had taken the leadership of the combat in hand, and had easily overthrown the installed and tyrannical chancellor of a cruel and blood-thirsty government, and compelled the Shah and his administration to agree to its demands.

British plotters aiming at damaging the unity and solidarity of the Ulama in Iran and weakening the Islamic front through initiating dispersion and differences among its combatants so as to remove all barriers of the life-giving and motivating teachings of Islam obstructing them, tried to penetrate the ranks of the revolution. They brought in a number of their hired and so-called enlightened and Europeanised supporters in order to impose through them on the nation what was needed for their own survival under the name of law.

In the heat and excitement of the victory of the revolution which occupied even the minds of many informed people who were sympathetic to the nation and religion, this foreign concoction went unnoticed. So it was obvious that the ordinary people, intoxicated with victory and remote from the center of realities, would content themselves with appearances, and would be ignorant of what was happening behind the scenes.

Thus deviations started from the very beginning, and the assembly ratified certain laws which were colourfully deceptive and inspired by European standards instead of adopting the life-giving decrees of Islam. In some cases, too, the assembly even ignored or opposed Islamic laws, while the majority of people were quite ignorant of the matter.

Here, too, the distinguished Ulama did not remain silent, and once more began to fight so fiercely and decisively that the assembly had to choose a committee to survey the approved laws and report their degree of compatibility with Islamic injunctions.

But this committee, which in addition to a number of parliamentary members, also comprised Reverends Sayyed Muhammad Tabataba'i, Sayyed Abdollah Behbahani and Sheikh Fazlollah Noori could only compile certain supplementary principles of the constitution and add them to the already approved laws, passing over the others in silence. But Noori clearly realized that foreign plotters had used their agents in Iran to prevent the laws from taking an Islamic hue, and knew that they were so powerful and influential that they mischievously infiltrated the assembly through their anti-revolutionary elements in the mask of extremist revolutionaries, whose mission was to create dispersion among true revolutionaries and even benevolent Ulama. Thus Noori could tolerate such a situation no more.

Therefore, to prevent religion from being harmed, that great A'lem found the solution in open and serious protests, and accompanied by a number of the Tehran Ulama and those from other towns, he emigrated to Rey and sought refuge in the Shrine of Abdol-Azim.

European Constitution or Religious Constitution

On the other hand, the plotters and their agents, far from being idle, were busy spreading rumours and constant accusations. Through calculated articles in the press, they created an atmosphere of pessimism and suspicion around Sheikh Noori. They claimed that he was opposed to rightful demands and to the revolution. They also refrained from publishing the answers and explanations given by him to such accusations, fearing that by so doing, people would come to know his real position and views in promoting Islam and the nation's welfare.

Bills

Therefore, following the writing of an opponent of his, Ahmad Kasravi, he published manifestoes called 'Bills' from his place of refuge and distributed them among the people through his companions. In those Bills he declared his viewpoints, but unfortunately they were not published on a wide enough scale due to inadequate funds, and secondly they were in most cases prevented by foreign agents from reaching the masses.

One of these Bills shows his Islamic standing quite lucidly, that he is not only not opposed to the constitution, but, is also a steadfast supporter and founder of it, except that his form of constitution must accord with Islamic criteria, not a European one suggested and dictated by foreigners.

This Bill says: 'O people! I never refute the assembly, and I have done more than anyone else to establish it. For, our great religious leaders who reside in holy cities and other countries, did not at first agree with the constitutional revolution, and it was I who convinced them of its legitimacy and won them over by my reasonings. You can ask the reverend gentlemen themselves the truth of this statement. I explicitly declare for you to hear and inform those who are absent that my wish is for a constitution which is desired by all Muslims, namely a constitution based on Islam, and avoiding a legislation which is contrary to the Quran and Muhammad's faith, and sacred creed of Ja'fari. This is what I want, and we and all the Muslims are unanimous about it. The difference lies between us and atheists who deny Islam and are its enemies, including Babi Mazdakis and pro-European naturalists.

"These are opposing me and the masses of people, and are doing their best day and night to misrepresent the matter to the Muslims and hinder them from realizing that the people and I are unanimous and have no differences. Do you not see clearly, o brethren, that since this

assembly was established, every type of liberal, naturalist and Babi has emerged in Tehran from behind the scenes engaging in debauchery, and robbery.

“Tell me what is the kinship between such people and this legislative assembly? May God be dissatisfied with anyone who has a thought other than reforming and improving this national assembly. May God’s wrath fall upon those who represent my ideas as contrary to truth, and hypocritically mislead the Muslims and prevent doubts from being removed, so that the Muslims may not hear our words, and make people suppose that such a man and other emigrants deny the principle of the National Consultative Assembly.”

Resisting Atheists

Even though the Bill quoted above so clearly shows the viewpoint of martyr Noori that no further analysis is required, proving that he never opposed the constitution and was himself a staunch founder and supporter of it, yet it would be necessary to explain what was happening in the assembly through well-informed enemies and ignorant friends and with British plotting to enrage this Divine scholar to such an extent that he continued his combat, not with the constitution, but with what was damaging to Islam in the name of the constitution.

It would be fitting to hear his own words in this connection: “O, brethren living in Tehran. O Muslims of those zones! I beg you in the name of God, pay heed to this inadequate statement, and affirm it if you see a sign of truth in it.”

“Suddenly there arrived more than eighty papers, night-notice and announcements from here and there full of injudicious words and blasphemies of all kinds and profligacies of all hues. Three years ago the paper *Habiol-Matin* of Calcutta had written: “The people spend millions on pilgrimage to the five holy shrines and bring back with them a handful of the soil; they spend much money on pilgrimage to Mecca, and bring back a little salt and bitter water called Zamzam.”

“In the paper ‘*Majless*’, No. 143, the religion of the Prophet was called old-fashioned, and the Prophet and Ali were named pupils of European statesmen and politicians of our time, and had declared that henceforth they would not listen to such old superstitions.

“The paper ‘*Sur-Israfil*’ has referred to the Prophet’s religion as a plaything, and the paper *Kowkab-Dorri* had called the ancestors stupid and foolish in their ideas and deeds. The paper ‘*Araq-Ajam*’ had spoken of the Consultative Assembly as second to Ka’aba and Beyt al-Atiq or even superior to them. A night-notice has called Imam Mahdi fanciful. The paper ‘*Nedaye-Vatan*’ has considered prostitution houses and wine-shops necessary to safeguard the municipality expenditure and

cost of repairs. The paper 'Tanbih' has drawn caricatures of Jafari religious leaders in the shape of animals, the paper 'Zesht-o-Ziba' has drawn the pictures of the Prophet and Muhammad-Ali Shah and has called the Prophet 'Legislator of Arabia'.

"Woe upon you Muslims who consider reading such papers as a measure of your understanding and advancement, and spend your family fund on them in order to do away with the Ulama and religious leaders. This has gone so far as if your religion and theirs is different. You have accused these Ulama who have been a vanguard to Islam for you in the prolonged absence of the Imam of thousand of defects and bribery, to be opponents of the assembly, even though this is an assembly some members of which bring infamy on others, and at night they gather together and engage in drinking and debauchery till morning, an assembly whose oppression is many times greater than that of despotic times, and is used as a guise for promising corrupt ideas and wicked deeds.

"O, men of Islam! Has not your Prophet (S) said that insulting a religious leader is an insult to him and to God? And rejecting such a person is rejecting the Prophet and God? Why do you misrepresent the rightful voice of the Ulama to the common people as something wrong, and devilishly fool the ignorant masses, and keep on concealing or altering the letters and telegrams of the Ulama leaders of holy Najaf and publishing them in a way to mislead them? Let all the people be united and keep this assembly in order by means of the Muhammadan Law."

Futurism and Prediction of Doom

Thus in view of the documents preserved in history, the existence of which even the enemies cannot deny or ignore, it is evident with what steadfastness and self-sacrifice Sheikh Noori, defended his Islamic convictions and did not even spare his own life to prevent damage done to Islam. It seems that he was far-sighted enough to predict the future, and see clearly that this institution which was created in the name of liberty and constitution, but had its root in imperialistic forces for the purpose of shaking the foundation of Islam and thereby attain its own wicked goal, would soon reach a stage when the Islamic land of Iran which had for centuries been proud of following the Shi'a creed and Prophet's household, would not only forget Islamic injunctions, but also no one would dare to speak of them or demand their fulfillment.

In order to understand the extent to which Sheikh Noori with his regard for future and his prediction of undesirable events which were going to destroy the Islamic foundation under the cover of liberalism and constitutionalism, expressed his views, we should glance at another

of his Bills which begins as follows:

“It is the purpose of Hojato-Islam , the revered Haj Sheikh Fazlollah and other emigrant refugees of the holy shrine including the exalted Ulama and others to declare that in the royal charter (meaning the decree issued by the Shah following the people’s uprising led by the Ulama, and known in history as ‘the constitution decree), it was written we issued the order for the establishment of the Islamic Consultative Assembly. But very soon after, the word ‘Islamic’ disappeared altogether in the events that took place.

“We all saw and see clearly that since the commencement of this assembly, a group of careless and faithless people who were known as Babis before and those who deny the divine religion and believe in nature, have risen and got moving, making pleas and warring with God’s servants.

“Other papers and night-notices were written mostly to abuse the exalted Ulama and taunt Islamic decrees, proposing changes in the religion, and altering its ramifications for the sake of improvement, and suggesting that those laws which were enacted thirteen centuries ago should be changed to suit present conditions such as having wine shops and prostitution houses, and girls’ schools, and such acts as using the pages of the holy Quran for making playing cards, and tearing up the leaves containing heavenly names in the premises of the national assembly, or saying that all nations irrespective of Muslims and infidels should be equal and their blood of similar value. Further, that all people should mingle and inter-marry.

“I ask you only about Tehran. How far has weakness of belief, debauchery and recklessness advanced since the name of freedom was adopted in this city? For many years two groups have appeared in Iran who devilishly tempt, deceive and rob people. One group is the Babi sect (from which was born the Baha’i sect later on, becoming gradually more strong), and the other is the group of Naturalists. As it happens, both groups have penetrated the assembly of us Muslims, checking Islam, intending to turn it into a Parisian parliament. That is why Hojato-Islam Haj Sheikh Fazlollah Noori has been treated unjustly by these ignorant men, since he is alert about these two groups of thieves, and stands firmly in cleansing the national assembly from these two wicked groups , and by God’s aid he will not fail, and will not spare his life and property.”

Charges of Understanding with the Court

It would be fitting here to point out that at the height of this martyred A’lem’s combats with anti-Islamic laws, and foreign agents and the wicked acts of self-sold traitors, and also after his death, a

number of people who had the mission to present his deeds as anti-religious, gave the easily-deceived and simple minded a wrong picture of him. They even pretended that he had reached agreement with Muhammad Ali Shah, to support his dictatorship under the guise of protecting religious injunctions, assuring the king that he would be victorious in this matter and would suppress lovers of freedom, and after sitting on the throne as an absolute monarch, Sheikh Noori, would be magnificently rewarded.

Without a doubt, those who have propagated such unjust charges intended to suggest to the people that Sheikh Noori was confident of his success in this matter and never supposed that his efforts would prove fruitless and that the Islamic assembly of an Islamic country would proceed as desired by the enemies of Islam. Even if he ever thought of defeat in this matter, he never imagined that supporters of democracy would take any step after their victory against supporters of religion, or that they would hang him. Otherwise he would never have stepped in a way in which there was little chance of success and much danger of death and destruction.

Such was the propaganda carried out both during his life and after his death. But now, that over seventy years have passed since this calamity, not only well-informed researchers and historians, but whoever possesses a certain degree of objectivity and relies on historical evidence in search for truth, can understand from this same Bill that the ideas and beliefs cherished in the depth of this martyr's soul were quite different from such propaganda and suggestions. Indeed, it is clearly stated in this same Bill that "in cleansing the national assembly from these two wicked sects (the Babis, naturalists and all the enemies of Islam), he stands firmly and by God's Will, he will not spare his life and property."

This shows that this martyr had not only abstained from attaching himself to the fragile power of the Shah's organization, but had also deliberately stepped in a way in which the danger of death was evident. Nevertheless he courageously declared that he was ready to sacrifice his life in defending Islam and the laws and decrees of this holy religion, without the slightest fear. This is the traditional way chosen by all martyrs in the way of God and faith at all times. In his manifestoes issued at the Shrine of Abdol-Azim, his place of refuge, and in Qum, he repeatedly declared about himself: "This devout old servant is like a settling sun and has no desire for life. I have seen what I should see in this world, but as long as I am alive, I will not show negligence in supporting Islam. I have prepared this half-alive body to offer to Islam. A constitution which comes out of the cooking pot of the British legation is of no use to us Iranians."

A Life Sacrificed for Islam

At last, he sacrificed his life in defence of Islam. He declared: "Whenever the honourable representatives (of the assembly) who speak of being religious and godly, abandon their opposition to the following four points:

1) That the word "legitimate" be added after the word 'constitution'.

2) That during the assembly's terms, there must be five religious scholars of the first rank to supervise legislation, to ratify certain laws and to ensure that these laws are in agreement with Islamic decrees.

3) Fixing the penances and execution of religious verdicts concerning the Babis, Baha'is, other atheists and enemies of Islam.

4) Amendment of the law pertaining to the press and publication, in the early form of which it was prohibited to publish deviating books and papers which were offensive to the holy religion, prophets and Imams.

Only then will no religious leader of Islam or Muslims oppose them, and the great National Consultative Assembly, too, will be truly worthy of the word 'sacred' and 'may God preserve its foundation.'

He was so insistent on these points that he attracted much public attention, and the enemies of Islam who intended to shake the foundation of Islam and its laws under the cover of seeking liberty and democracy, were obliged, even if it was for appearance's sake, to heed the demands of the refugees. Thus the second principle of the supplement to the constitutional law which had been first drafted by him was approved with slight changes, by which it was enacted that five members of the Ulama of the first rank were to act as supervisors and see that no laws are contrary to the holy religion, and this duty was to be a permanent one until the advent of the twelfth Imam.

Accumulated Grudges

Even this small success of Sheikh Noori in attaining his Islamic and rightful wishes roused such a hatred in the hearts of his opponents that at last after the capture of Tehran by the constitutionalists and deposal of Muhammad Ali Shah, they started suppressing any one who was not in their line of opinion, and needless to say, Sheikh Noori was one of the first in this group. So, seven months after being shot at and wounded, he was taken to the gallows since he had discovered the plots and hidden political games of the colonizers and how beyond the sacred movement of the Ulama and revolution of a Muslim nation, a mysterious band was at work. How anti-revolutionaries and dangerous pseudo-revolutionaries had not only pretended to be more revolu-

tionary but had also assumed more important posts. They were diverting the course of the revolution by means of calculated plans and knew well what the two above groups were up to, and what type of people were benefiting from the death of the Children of Islam and were engaged in plunder. He had found the root of all these deceits, namely the legations of colonizing countries. Therefore they looked upon him as very dangerous, and so, taking advantage of the narrow-minded, emotional masses, they suppressed his voice, and after a ceremonial and artificial trial, and in the presence of a large number of spectators, they hanged him on the birthday of Imam Ali (A), on 13th Rajab of 1327 of the Hijrah about sunset . His body was taken to Sanghelaj that night and secretly buried there, and after sometime, it was exhumed and taken to Qum and buried in the courtyard of Ma'sooma Shrine.'

Seventy Years After

On that day, many Muslims (victims of false propaganda) were happy to see a seemingly reactionary or pseudo-A'lem or anti-revolutionary hanged. But later on and very soon after the tempest and whirlwind subsided and the storms of feeling abated, they realized what they had done and what a great personality they had lost.

Thus once again, the book of the fruitful and venturesome life of a learned and fighting A'lem was washed with blood in the way of Islamic ideals, and the progeny of chastity and faith lost another prolific offspring for the sake of Islamic glory, so that future history might judge him with a more clear-sighted eye and realize the truth.

The Last Confession

The late Ahmad Jalal-Al-e-Ahmad who has rejected western culture and westernization, was the first of the so-called enlightened writers who has offered his confession on this question to the Islamic public conscience, saying:

"Clericalism which was the last stronghold of resistance against Europeans, retired within itself so quickly from the beginning of the constitution before the onrush of machinery and closed the outside door and stayed within its cocoon, waiting for the day of Resurrection. Clericalism withdrew step by step, and the religious leader who supported the faith and was hanged in the constitutional movement presented such a retreat. I agree with Dr. Tandar Kia who wrote: "The martyred Sheikh Noori was not hanged as a defender of the constitution, but as a defender of religion ." I add that he was killed as a defender of the Shi'a principle of Islam, and everyone waited for the verdict from Najaf

about his death at a time when the leader of westernised enlightened men was Malkan Khan, a Christian, and Taleb-off, a Caucasian. It was from that day on (day of Noori's death) that the brand of Westernization was placed on our foreheads. I consider the body of that exalted man on the gallows as a banner showing the domination of Westernization, raised after two centuries of struggle above the roof of this country."

This was the account of a man martyred by western agents, westernization and plotters against a democratic nation.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE SECOND MIRZA: CHAMPION CRUSADER AGAINST COLONIZATION

In the history of the struggles of the alert Ulama and Islamic movement in the last century within two close periods, twice we come across the names of Mirza Shirazi.

The first time, we meet the famous Mirza Shirazi, the great crusading A'lem and authority who set up the foundations of internal anti-despotic and anti-colonizing struggles by his prohibition of tobacco, leading to the 'Regie events' at the peak of Nasser al-Din Shah's tyrannical reign and the despotic rule of the Qajar dynasty.

The second time, we come across the name of Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi, known as the second Mirza, who in a long series of anti-despotic and anti-colonizing conflicts especially with Britain, won a lasting reputation, not only in our history, but also in the history of Europe and England.

Brief Biography

Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi was a distinguished and scholarly disciple of the first Mirza Shirazi's school of combat and crusade, who was trained at the theological centre of Samerah.

His social and political maturity began before the year 1300 of the Hijrah since the day when Iraq, our neighbour, was considered a British province of influence, when Britain had extended its domination over the east and Islamic countries in particular.

Iraq, owing to its strategic, natural and geographical position, was always coveted by foreigners, especially big colonizing powers, and international colonizing governments always looked treacherously and mischievously at this rich land having a fine climate. On the other hand, this country has always attracted Islamic centres of learning and religion owing to its special, cultural and religious position. Moreover, it has been a cradle of past civilizations and a center for spiritual and intellectual quest in the world of Islam. That is why it has for long been the capital of Islamic caliphate.

The Nezamieh university of Baghdad, the theological centre of Najaf, and the holy shrines of the true Islamic leaders each of which has been the source of inspiration to the crusaders in the way of truth and freedom, have been the factors which have always attracted interested individuals. So much so that today, most Iranians almost know every nook and corner of the towns, provinces and even the districts and streets of that country, and consider themselves a part of its destiny as they do of their own country. For them, it is a duty to drive out colonization from that land as well as their own land.

The Position of Najaf

Of the Iraqi towns, Najaf, Karbala, Kazemeyn, and Samerah assume a special spiritual position which other cities of the world as well as other cities of Iraq lack. And of the above towns, Najaf enjoys a special religious, social and political position unrivalled by others. It was there that the second Mirza and many great and select men of the world of Islam and the east obtained basic education. Its spiritual, cultural and historical record goes back to almost a thousand years, and even now, it is the training ground of noble crusaders in the way of human liberation and salvation from the fetters of colonization and despotism, of men who have for generations since hundreds of years ago, not only stood against oppression and never submitted to force and injustice, but also in many cases have raised the banner of revolution and independence.

Meanwhile, various great political and revolutionary movements which have had Najaf as their starting point, have devoted to themselves a chapter on the political history of the east and Islamic countries which may be called "the political movement of Iraq".

The writer of the book "Thowratol-Najaf" writes: "The holy Najaf was involved in a political national movement at the end of the

14th and beginning of the 20th centuries. The goal was to save Islam from deviations incited by colonizers, as well as liberating the Muslim nations from the destructive yoke of colonization and exploitation, and uprooting poverty, general illiteracy and universal diseases.

“The general position of Najaf was such that the news and reaction of all the important political changes and revolutions of Iran and Iraq were reflected in that city, producing various results and reactions.”

The verdicts and sharp telegrams which were constantly sent from Najaf to the dominant rulers of Turkey and Iran of those days, were an eloquent and perfect example of Najaf's position and its remarkable influence on public opinion.

For these reasons, the religious authority of the Muslims must be a liberal man who preserves and protects the law and uproots the agents of colonization, exploitation and despotism from Iran and Iraq.

In addition to Iran and neighbouring countries, over seventy percent of the Iraqis themselves would not embark on a revolutionary move without the green light from Najaf and from resident authorities of that city, especially when combat against the enemy of Islam and Muslims was concerned.

Thus for long years, Najaf was the centre of liberal free thinkers, politicians and revolutionaries of Iraq, Iran and Turkey.

Occupation by Foreign Forces

With this introduction, it must be said that in the first World War, Najaf which was occupied by foreign forces had become a centre of consultation for thoughtful leaders and armed tribal pioneers in defence of its existence, and a center of political and social gatherings. It was in the same line that in 1980 the revolution followed its course led by the great religious crusader and authority, the late Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi, named the second Mirza.

This man, with his dignity and faith, religious valour and Islamic alertness, especially in confronting anti-Islamic elements and anti-Quranic plots of the colonizing power of Britain and its hired local agents, chose his true posture, and seriously engaged in struggle and defence. Finally when matters reached a critical point he issued the order for the defence of Islam, and the important revolutionary verdict which shook Iraq.

View of Agha Bozorg Tehrani

The late Sheikh Agha Bozorg Tehrani writes in his book, ‘Tabaghat A’elam-e-Shi’a’ about the struggles of the second Mirza;

“Mirza Muhammad Taqi Ha’eri Shirazi, the leader of the Iraqi revolution and the first kindler of the flame of that movement, was one of the greatest religious scholars and authorities of his time. He was a most famous figure of learning, virtue, honour and courage. As he himself narrated to me, he was born in Shiraz and brought up in Karbala. He studied the basic branches of Islamic knowledge in the same holy land and rose very high as a scholar, of which he was worthy. Then accompanied by his friend Sayyed Muhammad Fesharaki Isfahani, with whom he held constant discussions, he left for Samerah with the first group of emigrants to join the classes of Mirza Shirazi, attaining a high position as a disciple of his. Very soon he became a pillar of discussion and research in this Islamic centre and rose to the rank of a distinguished teacher in the life-time of his master, and many of his master’s disciples attended his class. He continued this task until his exalted master died, and owing to his merit and learning, he was chosen as his successor and became an authority of imitation for the Shi’as.

From that day onward he performed his heavy duty of Shi’a leadership most faithfully, honestly and valiantly, and engaged in leading the uprising, issuing revolutionary verdicts, teaching and training other scholars who later played a significant part in the history of Islamic struggles.

The classes of the second Mirza was most popular for seekers of theological knowledge and human virtue and perfection owing to Mirza’s power of expression and analysis, his abundant knowledge and accomplishments, and his wide reputation. In his classes, in addition to his pupils and seekers of truth, many men of learning were present who were considered as distinguished scholars and experts in religious subjects, but felt that they should benefit from Mirza’s abundant knowledge.

Late Sadr’s View

Scholar Sayyed Hassan Sadr, writer of the book “Ta’esis-es-Shi’a le-Olum-el-Islam” writes in his ‘Takmale’:

“I was associated with him for twenty years, and during all this time, I never saw a blunder or default, or an undesirable and obscene conduct from him. For twelve years, we were ‘discussion’ companions and heard and benefited from his precise ideas, profound views and his scholarly and valuable reminders.”

What has given a greater worth and importance to the personality of the second Mirza and has placed him high among his contemporary scholars and religious authorities has been his feeling of responsibility and commitment before the significant events of the Muslims’ social life. He considered himself co-partner in the happenings of Muslim

nations in every part of the world, and never spared himself in the sacrifices which were necessary in the way of his responsibilities.

He had deeply realized that during his leadership no foreign agents and international agents should penetrate the lands of Islam and hamper the propagation of the prophets' teachings, or cause damage to their views and cultural authenticity especially with regards Islamic culture.

He believed that no one, no authority, no force and no foreign power has the right to pillage the Muslims' resources, trample on their interests, or destroy their economy. So, on realizing clearly that Britain, as a first-rate colonizing power of the world of that time, acts contrary to his views and beliefs, and does not abstain from the exploitation of Muslim nations, he raised the banner of combat against this powerful country and its black colonization, ready to sacrifice his life in the crusade for the defence of Islamic rights and values.

The second Mirza rendered meaningful the ideal of 'self-sacrifice' through using all his might and abilities in this struggle, and by even sacrificing his children.

In the very first days of the conflict, his eldest son, Reza, was arrested during the happenings in Iraq and became a captive of foreign hirelings. At that time, British colonization had forced the Iraqi nation to accept the representative of the British government, Sir Percy Cox, as head of the Iraqi government and obey his orders whatsoever.

With such suffocating pressure on the Iraqis, the second Mirza realized that British colonization forces were about to expand foreign domination over Islamic countries. Therefore, with the growing crisis caused by the expansion of western domination over the Islamic east, Mirza issued a verdict which shook the foundation of the colonizing British government, declaring that "the choice of non-Muslims as rulers is not permissible."

This verdict and, concurrent with it, his steadfast struggle and resistance left a deep impression on the suffering hearts of the exploited and enslaved Muslims, and awakened them to their social and political responsibilities. Above all, this verdict warned Islamic nations that their social, individual and political destiny should be determined by the Muslims themselves, and no foreign power, however strong and mighty, has the least right of interference.

The second Mirza did not confine his struggle against the most powerful colonizing force to the issue of his verdict, but at the same time, he also organized a secret circle, the members of which included such fighting and distinguished Ulama as Sheikh Mehdi Khalessi, Sayyed Hebat al-Din Shahrestani and Sayyed Abolqassem Kashani.

This group met secretly every day, and often several times a day in his presence, propagating and publishing the result of their discus-

sions and decisions among the Najaf Ulama and chiefs of Foraat tribes, guiding public opinion in promoting Islamic goals.

The second Mirza as a leader of anti-colonizing struggles of Muslims nations in general and Iraqi people in particular, has issued many decrees and verdicts and written many letters, two of which we will quote below.

A Moving Letter

In the first letter addressed to the people he writes:

“Your Iraqi brethren in Baghdad, Kazemeyn, Najaf, Karbala and other places have become united for engaging in peaceful demonstrations, and some of them have started them already. The demand of all the people is the legitimate rights of the Iraqi nation, the result of which is the independence of this country on the basis of a just Islamic government.”

“Therefore, it is the duty of all of you to send your deputies to Baghdad to claim these rights, to endeavour not to damage people’s security or create dispersion among yourselves.

“I recommend to respect all the views and opinions which exist among the people in this great crusade.”

The effect of this letter was astounding and beyond imagination. As soon as the copies were distributed among the people of Iraq, within a short time, groups of people from various cities and even villages of Iraq set off for Baghdad. The British did not believe that a verdict and a letter by a religious leader would create such an excitement and rouse so many thousands to move from the remotest parts of the country and start such a roaring wave. After two days, seeing the roaring torrent moving towards Baghdad and all the streets and avenues filled by them, the colonizing agents realized the dimension of the danger besieging them.

It was this realization that made the British resort to violence and take severe measures to check its consequences.

Funds for the Crusade

When the second Mirza saw that the Muslims were hardly equipped to face the strong forces of the British, especially financially and would be easily vanquished, he issued his next verdict to the Muslims, namely to pay their religious tax, ‘zakat’, on their wealth in order to provide the needed fund for the crusade.

Upon this verdict, well-to-do Muslims and even those who could just make both ends meet, proceeded in groups to hand over their taxes personally to the leader of the movement to be spent on the crusade

and in the way of God.

The Muslim crusaders who had so far firmly withstood British forces with empty hands and without adequate means, now that they were supported by the fund collected through the religious tax in accordance with Mirza's verdict, found a new spirit, and with this fund the leaders provided the combatants with the necessary equipment in the first place, and then provided the required support for their families' livelihood, since most of these crusaders belonged to lower classes with little income, and lacked enough savings for their family in their absence.

These steps removed many difficulties, and the crusaders found a strong morale to confront British forces.

British rulers and officials were amazed to see such collaboration and assistance in a nation which they thought to be retarded, exhibiting such alertness that in spite of hard living, they co-operate in times of need and are united against the common enemy.

As the crusading movement gathered momentum through the unity of the Iraqi nation, repression and violence from British agents became more sharp. But this in turn enhanced the resistance of the newly-risen Muslim nation of Iraq. The leader of the crusade now realized that the British were mobilizing all their forces to deal with the Muslims, and that it was very likely that soon, this trained army might destroy the unity and solidarity of the crusaders.

The Second Letter

Mirza Shirazi wrote his second letter addressed to the people of Iraq. This letter was like a stubborn flame kindling a great fire in the hearts and souls of the Muslims, by which to burn the British colonizers.

This letter contains the famous historical verdict of the second Mirza, spoken of as a 'moving and rousing verdict' by historians of eastern nations viewing the history of Islamic struggles and movements. It had a deep influence on the destiny of the Iraqi people and neighbouring countries, and frightened the colonizers to the extent that they saw themselves on the verge of annihilation.

This letter starts thus:

"It is obligatory for the people of Iraq to claim their rights. They must observe peace and security during their acts. But if the British government refuses to comply with their demands, the people may take up arms and fight the enemy."

The situation was transformed by this verdict. The suffering and oppressed people of Iraq who had until then been without a goal and plan, and did not know how to deal with western colonizers and what

front to form, now saw that there was no ambiguity and the goal was quite clear. The great authority and religious leader had explicitly permitted the Iraqi nation, both Shi'a and Sunni to form a united rank, and proceed beyond the line of pure defense and if necessary to assume the offensive.

The verdict and the united uprising of the Iraqi nation established the foundation of a great movement and the nucleus of Iraq's revolution.

Even though four months after the issue of this verdict, Mirza Shirazi passed away, yet this movement and revolution started by him did not only remain intact, but also, to prevent the least damage to its foundation, they preserved it even more eagerly even at the price of self-sacrifice, so that the British rulers in Iraq declared in fear and disbelief: "What kind of a people and nation are these Muslims who do not disperse even after their leader's death, and become more united?"

They could not understand that in an Islamic crusade, it is not only the leader himself that must be considered, but what is destiny-making is the power of leadership. In anti-tyranny movements, this power of leadership is not created with the birth of a leader to be destroyed by his death. It is a continuous and protracted power in the spiritual life of the Muslims throughout history, handed down from one generation to another.

Thus after the death of the second Mirza, other exalted religious authorities, especially his disciples who had imbibed his learning, virtue, moral and religious courage, assumed the leadership of Islamic movements and revolutions, offering their lives like Mirza in this way, and went ahead disregarding this earthly and mortal life.

Fellow-Fighters of the late Mirza

Among the great religious authorities who took part in the anti-colonization crusade, the following names stand out in the Islamic struggles of the Iraqi nation:

The late Sayyed Muhammad Tabataba'i, the eldest son of Ayatollah Sayyed Kazem Yazdi, Ayatollah Sayyed Mustafa Kashani and his prolific son Ayatollah Sayyed Abol-Qassem Kashani. Ayatollah Sayyed Muhammad Taqi Khawnsari, and Ayatollah Sheikh Mahdi Khalessi and his fine son, the late Ayatollah Sheikh Mahdi Khalessi-Zadeh.

Each of the above personalities played a significant and historical part in the leadership of the Islamic movement started by the second Mirza. They spent weeks and month in the mountainous parts of Iraq which were the Muslims crusaders' stronghold, around Basrah Mazira'a, in Harama' Gharna, Amara, Nasseriah, Koot and Qassibah, which is in

the suburb of Baghdad, in defence against the attacks of British forces, and in support of Islamic Iraq. This support was not only for an Islamic country, but for the stronghold of Islam. The leaders of Islamic nations had realized that if western colonizers win success in one stronghold and bring the people under their domination and exploitation, they will expand their occupation and proceed to impose their rule over other Islamic lands, and will consider no limit to weakening those lands and their peoples. Therefore, they were determined from the first to check the enemy's advance and prevent their domination over the political, social and individual lives of the Muslims.

The Martyrs of Virtue

In that bloody war, many of the first rate pioneer and progressive Ulama who had taken part in the fight in the battlefield, lost their lives. Among them was Ayatollah Yazdi. There were also other Ulama who, though not martyred in the field of battle, fell ill as a result of the hardships of the combats and later died. One of them was Ayatollah Sayyed Mustafa Kashani, father of Ayatollah Sayyed Abol-Qassem Kashani, the famous crusader of the time of the Pahlavis and a founder of the Islamic movement of Iran in the last forty years and a founder of the idea of Islamic government.

It is true that in that crusade the Islamic Ottoman realm (Turkey) suffered defeat at the hand of the First World War invaders and got divided by them. It is also true that at the same time, Syria and Lebanon became French mandates, and Palestine and Iraq were left under British domination. But the victory of the Muslims in that war was not an apparent one, it was a spiritual one. It was in those dark days of calamity that the political alertness of the Muslims increased and thenceforth, the Muslim nations of the east strived for their liberation and independence until they attained final victory.

Colonizers' Change of Tactics

Dowani', author of the valuable book, 'The Movement of Iranian Clergy,' writes in this connection:

"When the British witnessed the steadfastness of the Shi'a and Iranian religious leaders from the theological centres of Najaf and Karbala and the extraordinary zeal of the Muslims, they were compelled to forego, in appearance, the appointment of a non-Muslim governor for the Muslims of Iraq, and nominate a Muslim who would be acceptable to both the Shi'as and Sunnis.

"Their intention was to choose a puppet king who would safeguard the interests of his British masters over those of his nation

at all times. By this deceit they planned to restore peace in Iraq temporarily and after the revolution subsided, and the revolutionary forces dispersed, they could resume the execution of their wicked plots.

Consequently they chose Amir Feisal, as ruler of a descendant of Imam Hassan, a Hejazi resident of Mecca and of Sunni sect, and had for a time been chosen as king of Syria by the French.

After his mysterious death, Sultan Qazi succeeded him, and his wrong policy caused an upheaval in Iraq, and there occurred repeated riots and coup d'etats in most of which general Noori Sa'id had a hand.

In 1937, Sultan Qazi too, was killed in a car accident in suspicious circumstances and this time his little son, Feisal, succeeded him.

A year later Rashid Aali Gilani, the well-known nationalist-politician of Iraq was made prime minister. He began by carrying out a series of apparent reforms, but after a year, so many obstacles were placed in his way that his cabinet crumbled fearing the colonizers who were behind these machinations, Rashid Aali fled Iraq proceeding to Iran and after a time he left for Egypt as a political refugee.

After some time, the English negotiated with him and arranged for his return to Iraq in the company of Amir Abdollah, to hold the reign of affairs there on condition that priority is given to British interests.

Having borne many hardships before, he now felt mild enough to expect such an opportunity, and so he returned to Iraq with Amir Abdollah and set up an imposed government.

Once more, disturbances occurred in Iraq and chaos reigned everywhere, and the social and political life of the people came under the domination of colonizing forces.

Once more, the Muslim nations faced a crisis, and once more the combative and alert Ulama rallied to their help, awaking the people and defending their country and above all defending their religion and culture on which foreigners had placed their claws, and began an extensive struggle. One of these Ulama who played a significant part in these conflicts was the late Ayatollah Sayyed Abol-Hassan Esfahani who, like his predecessors, never spared even his life in liberating Islam from the clutches of foreigners.

In brief, Najaf, the Najaf's theological centre and its resident Ulama have played an effective part in all the Islamic movements and struggles particularly in this century, and most of these movements have started and taken shape there. That is why Najaf, according to Islamic historians, has always been like a thorn in the eye of western colonizers and particularly the British.

A western historian named Mess Bell writes as follows concerning the historic role of the fighting Ulama in promoting Islamic movements:

“Men of religion were the most effective and greatest promoters of

rebellion in Iraq, both during and after the war. It was this religious influence that forced the rulers to establish schools in order to weaken the position of religious centres of learning and attract the young to these modern schools which were managed in a western style. With such plots they intended to uproot all rebellions and movements in their own time and future."

Nevertheless, modern researchers believe that the Muslim nations showed by their authentic movements that Islam and Muslims are not deceived by such plots, and even if they lag behind their Islamic goals as a result of colonizers' plots, a warning event and an awakening blow are sufficient eventually to make them recover their Islamic perspicacity, reinforce their criteria heartily, and by offering their lives for the revival of Islam and its liberation from colonisers, show that in their view Islam and its noble teachings is the most exalted liberating school of thought. And this secret was revealed by Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi, known as the second Mirza, the great crusader and founder.

By his zealous endeavours, he produced a turning point in the history of Muslim nations' struggles. Even though his struggles began in Iraq and took root and bore fruit there, a tree which he irrigated with his life and soul, yet it became so flourishing that it threw its life-giving shadow over all Islamic lands, and his struggles awakened the whole world of Islam.



CHAPTER FIVE

MODARRESS: THE FAMOUS CRUSADER

Sayyed Hassan Modarress, is one of the most renowned crusaders of this era, a noble fighter who gave his life for the sake of his beliefs and faith, a man whose name in our contemporary history has a special importance and brilliance. This will become evident when we read the opinions of other great men of history about him.

Once Ayatollah Imam Khomeini, in a discourse at Masjed A'ezam of Qum said about Sayyed Hassan Modarress: "Do you think that the Islamic Ulama can become like the Christian clergy? It is impossible. The Shi'a clericalism is independent, and does not rely on anyone. You may say that it does, but you cannot find such a point of reliance. These independent Ulama who do not rely on anyone, these theological students who are content with thirty or forty tomans a month and work hard, cannot be supposed to support another country or government. They are independent in their thoughts and real human beings emerge from them. Sayyed Hassan Modarress emerges from them."

Modarress is not described thus only by the great Leader of the Islamic Revolution, but also by other politicians and statesmen.

A statesman like Dr. Mossadeq, leader of the national movement of Iran who was himself a model and an unsubmitting example for

crusaders in the time of both Pahlavis, speaks of Modarress as a disciple does of his master. Whenever he wished to speak of a courageous fighter, he mentioned the name of Modarress. Once in a session of Parliament, on 16th Esfand 1322 of the solar year, while speaking as a member of the fourteenth term of the assembly, criticising the work of the government of the time, he said:

“Was it not here that Modarress received a box in the ear? Was not Modarress’s death due to his sufferings in this society? Did he not taste martyrdom?”

These are the words uttered about Modarress long after he lost his life in the way of his belief, uttered at a time when he had departed this world, many years after his unrelenting struggle, leaving his name as an outstanding one in history. But even at a time when he was hardly known and had not yet stepped in the field of his historical crusades, as a newly-arrived and inexperienced young man, he had exhibited his peerless personality and his mettle in such a way that the great thinkers of that time have recognized his true worth and spoke of him with deep respect.

His Years of Study

During his study, in the cities of holy shrines, he showed his mettle so well that he won the attention of the late Mirza Shirazi, the great Shi’a religious authority and anti-colonization and anti-despotism leader in the dictatorial rule of Nasser-al-Din Shah. Indeed, the great master wrote about him: “This descendant of the Prophet of God possesses the chastity of his ancestors, and sometimes amazes me with his intelligence. He has outwitted his classmates within a short time, and attained the top rank in logic, jurisprudence and principles. His power of judgement is perfect, and at the height of honesty and virtue.”

Much research has been made about Modarress by historians and many books and treatises have been written concerning his life, views, convictions, struggles and his constructive influence in his own lifetime and in later generations on the younger politicians who were children or adolescents at the height of his struggles or not yet born.

One of these writers is the late Mahdi Bamdad, a contemporary author, whose researches of half a century about the great politicians and personalities of the last two hundred years were collected in a book entitled: “The history of Iranian Personalities.” In this book he gives noteworthy accounts of Modarress.

Though later, investigators and historians have criticised Bamdad’s book, claiming that some of the facts have been ignored, and though they have confessed that owing to the censorship and suppression

which existed in Iran at the time of the publication of his book, many matters, especially concerning the personalities who fought Reza Shah, could not be written, and though the same critics have even declared that justice has not been done to the biography of Modarress, his political struggles and his social and political services resulting in his martyrdom have received inadequate attention and scanty analysis. Yet what has been written by Bamdad about Modarress is documentary and reliable and cannot be passed over lightly.

Therefore, we, too, to give a glimpse of his life, services and struggles will quote parts of Bamdad's account of him below.

Bamdad's View

The late Bamdad writes:

"Sayyed Hassan Modarress, known as Modarress, son of Sayyed Isma'il was born in 1278 of the Hijrah in the village of Sarabah Kojouya (now named Modarress settlement) a dependency of Ardestan. His father and grandfather who were preachers were inhabitants of Zavarah, but he lived in Qumshah (later named Shahreza) and at the age of sixteen left for Isfahan to study there. He stayed there for thirteen years and during these years he studied under Mulla Abdul-Ali Harandi (died 1306) and Jahangir Khan Qashqa'i (died 1328).

In 1309 he left for the cities of holy shrines to continue his studies, where he remained for seven years benefiting from the classes of Mulla Muhammad Kazem Khorassani and Sayyed Muhammad Kazem Yazdi. In 1316 he returned from Iraq to Isfahan and in the school of Small Jadda, he taught jurisprudence and principles, and received the nickname of Modarress (teacher). During his stay in Isfahan, his opponents tried to kill him, and in the Big Jadda they fired four bullets at him but failed to kill him. Once more he left for holy Najaf to continue his studies.

"In Isfahan there took place government changes from despotism to constitution. In the second national assembly in 1328, he was nominated as candidate by the Najaf religious leaders in accordance with one of the articles of the constitution, to supervise the laws, and arrived in Tehran, presenting himself as a member of the Ulama group of the assembly. In 1332 he was elected by the people of Tehran as member in the third assembly and won a great reputation in the capital.

"In the month of Muhharam, 1334, in the First World War, accompanied by a number of personalities and members of the assembly, he emigrated for two years to Iraq, Syria and Turkey and in the same year in an emigrant cabinet formed under Reza Qoli Khan Mafi (Nezam Saltanah), Modarress was given the post of minister of justice, and after his return with other emigrants to Iran, he was chosen

member of parliament in its successive terms.

“Modarress lived a simple life without much care about food and clothes, being content with little. He was honest, intelligent, alert, and witty.

Since his childhood, he led a hard and humble life. His father was a religious man who cared nothing for worldly riches, and accustomed his family and children to his own ways, calling on them to be contented like himself, avoid greed and covetousness, and be ready to fight against injustice and oppression, unyielding to force and refusing to sell their human worth and honour for gold. They were encouraged to fight for truth and righteousness and in this battle forsake their own comfort and repose, and those of their family, and be even prepared to offer their lives.

In the School of Imam Ali

Modarress himself says: “My father taught us in childhood to be abstemious, and eat one meal a day, keep our clothes clean so as to do without new ones. He spoke of our chaste ancestors as our model, and told us to learn fortitude from our exalted grandfather, courage and abstemiousness from our chaste grandfather Imam Ali, and unrelenting resistance against tyranny from our martyred grandfather lord of the Martyrs, Imam Hossain.

“My father always said that he who has not accustomed himself to indulgence in food and sleep, and has not constantly cared for the furnace of his belly, never submits to force, and is never tempted and enslaved by gold and worldly riches. He spoke of our chaste grandfather Ali-ibn-Abi-Talib as an example, describing how in the last night before receiving his mortal wound, he was the guest of his own daughter Omm-e-Kolthum for breaking his fast, and when she put some salt and milk before him, he protested about being offered two dishes since he was not known to desire more than one. When she decided to remove the salt, the Imam told her he preferred that the milk be removed and the salt be left, so that the milk could be offered to a family which lacked proper and sufficient food. He said that the philosophy of fasting is that a Muslim should be content with one meal a day and offer the other meal to the needy. My father said that he who reaches this stage of contentment in food does not forsake his human honour and pride for the sake of better food. Another model for my father was the life and struggles of my exalted martyred grandfather, Imam Hossain to whom Yazid-ibn-Mo'aviah had promised abundant wealth and property and comfort in return for his allegiance. But the Imam ignored all those promises since he was struggling in the way of right and truth and in defence of his faith and views, and eventually offered his own chaste

blood and that of his family including his babies in this way.

We may well expect such a father who brings up his children in the wonderful school of our great religious leaders and exalted men of human history, to have a son like Sayyed Hassan Modarress emerge in that family.

All his life Modarress applied his father's advice and counsel, and never deviated from the path shown by him.

In a book which was secretly published in Tehran in 1976, in addition to Modarress's notes and writings, other articles were included concerning his life and struggles. An interesting part are the notes of one of Modarress's friends and former classmate. Concerning his arrival from Isfahan to Tehran, he writes:

"His friends and companions narrate that the noble Sayyed entered the capital on a hot summer day on a two wheeled cart drawn by a feeble horse, and arrived at the house of Imam Jom'ah of Kho'i. He was received kindly and respectfully, and a very sincere friendship soon developed between them. After a few days, he went out in search of a room to rent, and found two different rooms one at 30 rials and the other at 35 rials a month. Sayyed chose the cheaper one, and when asked for the reason, he answered: "What destroys resolution and independent thought is indigence, and I have no desire to be in need of material help by anyone. I must arrange my life in such a way as to be in no need, and not indebted to anyone, thus diminishing my moral strength." Then he added in an Isfahani accent: "Gentlemen, I am not one of those to receive secret bribes. I wish to have my sharp tongue free."

His Autobiography

In surveying the life, struggles and services of Modarress, the most valid writing at hand is a brief account by himself. Although this is in the form of an autobiography in which he does not speak of his combats, and only contains details of his birth, growth and normal life, yet it serves as a good opening, and we will quote it below:

My birth took place in about 1287 of the Hijrah and now I am at the age of sixty. (This was written by him around sixty years ago). My birth place was the village of Sarabah a dependency of Ardestan. My father was Isma'il and my grandfather Abdal-Baqi, of the Mir-Abedyn clan, most of whom now live in the same village. I am descended from the Tabataba'i branch of Sayyeds. The profession of my father and grandfather was preaching divine decrees, and my grandfather Abdal-Baqi was an ascetic, and they took me to Qumshah at the age of six to be brought up with themselves. I spent my adolescence with him and I was fourteen when my grandfather died. In accordance to his will I went to

Isfahan at the age of sixteen for study and my father died when I was twenty-one.

I stayed in Isfahan for about thirteen years and attended the classes of thirty masters during this period in the branches of Arabic, jurisprudence, principles and contemplative sciences, the most distinguished of whom was Mirza Abdol-Ali Harandi Nahwi who was about eighty and had written many books which unfortunately for the world, were banned. In contemplative sciences, my masters were the late Jahangir Khan Qashqa'i and Akhond Mulla Muhammad Kashani both of whom lived as ascetics in the Sadr school of Isfahan and died there.

"After the Tobacco issues, (the Regie company and tobacco ban), I visited the holy Shrines of Iraq and decided to stay in the holy Najaf to study under the late Haji Mirza Hassan Shirazi. I benefited from most of the exalted scholars of that time, but most of my studies were under the late Kazemeini, Khorassani and Yazdi.

"My stay in Najaf lasted about seven years, and then I returned to Isfahan. I began teaching jurisprudence and principles in a school in Isfahan called Small Jaddah, in the same way that I am teaching now in Sepah-Salar school, where I hope to spend the rest of my life, if God wills.

"After returning from Iraq, I had chosen discussion and teaching from among social activities until the situation necessarily changed in the revolution transforming despotism into constitution, when as the saying goes, 'the split was wider than the patch.' By the order of the religious authorities residing in Iraq and by the invitation of the second national assembly, I came to Tehran as a first rank parliamentary member ever since. I have seen whatever there is to see, and heard what there is to hear. During the years of the revolution at the time of World War I, for two years I with some other Iranians, emigrated, visiting Iraq, Syria and Istanbul, to describe the details of which requires more leisure. I was attacked twice, once in the Great Jaddah school of Isfahan in the middle of the day when four shots were fired at me, but they failed and I did not pursue them.

"The second time was when I was walking in a street next to the Sepah-Salar school at about sunrise to teach, when I was suddenly surrounded by about ten men who were firing a shower of shots at me, four of which were effective, three to my left arm, below and above the elbow, and one under the shoulder. They were truly good marksmen, and made no error in aiming at the heart, but by God's will, they failed, and the last shot hit my right elbow. There exists no power but God's. This autobiography was written by Modarress on 7th Rabi al-Thani 1346 (over half a century ago) in the first years of the publication of the paper Ettela'at, at the request of its editor, the original copy of which is still kept in the archive of this newspaper.

His Political Life

Although Modarress was a well-known figure of the time of the Qajar dynasty, and was in the rank of constitutional combatants and crusaders of the great Iranian movement against British colonization and Qajar despotism, yet his venturesome political life began in fact in the time of Reza Khan's rise to power.

At the time when the oppressed nation of Iran lost all patience with foreign and internal oppression, and started its first movement under the leadership of the first Mirza Shirazi, Modarress was a young man full of ardor who did not only have an active role in the preliminary phases of the constitutional movement, but also afterwards when the people's struggles for uprooting despotism and setting up the constitution entered a serious phase, he proved himself a fearless and effective crusader.

When the decree of the constitution was signed by Mozaffar-al-Din Shah, Modarress was a man of thirty-seven who had found the way of life and had taken effective steps in its direction. At the height of the struggle of the constitutionalists, he was in Isfahan where the crusaders were inspired by his fiery words, and he advanced in his course to the extent of finding his way to the 'house of the nation,' namely the second legislative assembly. However, he proved his real mettle in the tyrannical rule of Reza Shah, and registered his name in the contemporary history of Iran in the rank of the most brilliant personalities of this century.

At the height of Reza Khan's power who was in fact installed by the British, Modarress showed such courage and explicitness in opposing the Shah and his British supporters that according to his friends and fellow-fighters, he paralysed Reza Shah's rule and regime. It was his constant opposition that roused the hostility of Reza Shah and his followers towards Modarress, and this went so far that Reza Shah and his protectors thought Modarress must either change his ways and abandon the conflict, or lose his life in this process. It was obvious what course a fighter like Modarress would chose. He chose the way of the people.

Thus Modarress lost his life for the sake of his convictions and beliefs in preserving the Islamic criteria which were endangered by Reza Shah and his English protectors, and in the way of freedom, leaving behind the name of an honest seeker of truth and right.

In the years when the British colonial power brought Reza Khan into the political arena as a hired agent, and arranged for the suppression of liberals at the top of his program, Modarress rose up as a popular historical figure, and in the commandeered parliament which was told to dethrone the Qajars and vote for Reza Khan's kingship,

Modarress stood up to oppose this plan as a valiant man and to defend the truth.

Although it was a simple matter for colonial agents to curb opposition and silence opponents, yet Modarress's words echoed in the whole country and everyone heard them within a short time, encouraging their outcries, and creating an uproar from a wakeful nation in support of that voice. This message and his other words of combat penetrated the hearts of people during historical years showing that this nation never forgets its great children.

View of Ayatollah Taleqani

The valiant crusader, Ayatollah Sayyed Mahmood Taleqani speaks thus of Modarress:

“The late Sayyed Hassan Modarress opened the door of conflict with colonization, and showed that it is neither Russia nor Britain but the nation, this nation that must hold its destiny in its hand and find its way and go ahead.”

Membership in Parliament

It was first in 1332 that Modarress was elected to the parliament, when the First World War was burning the whole world, and plundering countries, especially Britain, were pillaging the wealth of the oppressed nation of Iran. It was at such a time that he rose up with an unparalleled faith and conviction against colonizers and was engaged in an unreconcilable crusade with Britain.

He continued his struggles until the question of the change of dynasty from the Qajars to Reza Khan was brought up, and he began to violently oppose the transfer of kingship to Pahlavi.

In the session of Saturday 14th Aban 1304 (of the Solar year), when this change of reign was being considered on the proposal of some members of the assembly, Modarress strongly opposed it, and as he had formed a small minority with Mossadeq and a few others, he resorted to a parliamentary manoeuvre in order to secure a suitable atmosphere in the attainment of his goal, to make up for the smallness of the number of his supporters.

In the same session, he rose in the heat of the discussion and said in a loud voice:

“I have a legal notification. Sir!” Tadayyon, the then president of the assembly looked at him with surprise and asked:

“On the basis of what article?”

As he could not remember the exact article, which would be in conformity with his reminder and view, he replied:

“On the basis of the fact that this proposal is contrary to the constitutional law.”

It is true that the self-sold members and agents did not allow Modarress to resume his remarks, but he rose from his seat and left the hall in protest against what was contrary to the nation's interests, and as he was passing by the members, he said loudly: “Even if you cast a hundred thousand votes in favour of it, it is contrary to the constitutional law all the same.”

With this sharp move which was heroic at a time when Reza Khan had gained much power with British support and used it in hellish ways, Modarress proved that a man is alive by his faith and belief and should stand by them to the extent of giving his life.

Because of his lasting struggle with Reza Khan, which was really a struggle with the fabulous power of British at that time, Modarress suffered much through him and several attempts were made on his life by hired agents. At last Reza Khan's plots and intrigues resulted in his exile to the remote town of Khaf near the Afghan border, where he was maltreated and tortured. After a time he was transferred to Kashmar, where he was murdered after much torture.

His Moral Characteristics

In addition to his brilliant qualities as a fighter, Modarress was at the same time a model for his contemporaries and future generations by his humility and modesty, which could serve as a lesson in human qualities for all, especially the young.

Bastani Parizi, a writer and historian has narrated a story about Modarress which serves as a lesson. He writes:

“It is narrated that during the First World War, when a provisional government was formed in Western Iran, which ended with the emigration of some of the cabinet members to Istanbul, at the time of the sudden departure for Turkey, as there was not enough space in the train, the Ottoman government as a sign of respect for the emigrants and especially Modarress, allotted a special carriage to them with several guards.

“Modarress had been orderly since his student days and looked after himself. On the way when the train stopped to give the passengers a rest, Modarress rose and prepared a hubble-bubble and some fresh tea. Amir Khizi (the narrator of the story) was an interpreter on this trip, and he carried some tea and hookas for the guards. Their officer was pleased, and thinking that Modarress was a teahouse-keeper by his looks, asked for another cup of tea. Modarress cheerfully offered him a cup. When they reached Istanbul the officer came forward to pay for the tea. Amir Khizi told him there was no need, but he insisted and said

that he didn't want to cause a loss to the old teahouse keeper.

When the train stopped, many people had come to welcome the emigrants and they respectfully took Modarress at the head of the group. The officer was watching the scene in amazement and asked Amir-Khizi about it, and the latter told him that this particular carriage of the train had been added in honour of that honourable old man.

"The officer on hearing this and seeing that magnificent reception, felt ashamed and turning to his friends said: "By God, next to Omar, we have not seen such an exalted gentleman."

Bastani Parizi adds that what was said in the parliament that Modarress is an Omar descending from Ali, might be a reference to this historical incident.

Earning a living

His humility as a student, and his effort in earning a living as a simple worker, was a lesson that Modarress had learnt in the school of his master Imam Ali-ibn-Abi-Taleb, a lesson that he remembered all his life.

Another story illustrates this point. To the people of Isfahan who came to him in groups to solve their problems or guide them he used to say: "I hope none of the family of Muhammad Reza Khan Sarhang Gazi (a noble ancestor of an Isfahani family) expect my help which I must grant, whereas I cannot do so even for my brother." When they asked him the reason for this remark, he answered:

"In my youth I left the village of Sarabah for Ardestan and thence to Isfahan to study. To earn a living, I had to go to villages on holidays and after changing my clothes I worked as a labourer or mason. One day I went to Gaz and a steward of Muhammad Reza Khan employed me as clay-maker, and told me to pull down the clay wall of a garden and receive two rials' wage by the evening.

I agreed and began to work. By noon a horseman came and stopped there and said: "My man, may God give you strength, stop pulling down the rest of the wall."

I told him: "I don't know you. Another man has ordered me to pull down this wall, and I must finish it." Then I gave another hard blow at the wall with my pick-axe. That man (I found out later that he was the owner) said: "My man, don't you understand? This is my garden, and I tell you to stop pulling down the wall."

I answered: "Well, you may be the owner, but I don't know you. My employer has given me this task, and it is he who can stop it, not anyone else."

The horseman was very angry and said: "The damn fellow wants me to show him the deed of ownership!"

I answered: "I am not to be damned" and added in Arabic: "He who has a claim must produce evidence, and he who denies can swear."

The horseman thought for a moment, looked down and whipping his horse he left.

I resumed my task when suddenly two riders came and took me to Muhammad Reza Khan's house. He turned to me and said: "Man, do you know why I did not punish you there for your obstinacy?"

"No. I don't know."

"Because no one has dared so far to stand facing me like this. I felt for the first time then that I am a weak creature, and after a moment's thought I guessed that you must not be a professional labourer. Tell me the truth. What is your trade?"

I answered: "My name is Mirza Hassan and I am fond of learning, and I go to the neighbourhood of Isfahan to earn a living."

"I untied a little parcel I had with me and showed him the robe and turban that I wore at school. He called one of his secretaries and told him to write a draft to a well-known merchant of Isfahan, containing this note: "As long as he (Sayyed Hassan Modarress is a student at the school, pay him three tomans a month personally at his room, and there is no need for a receipt." They brought some lunch and after partaking of it, I left for Isfahan.

"That is why I say I hope no relative of Muhammad Reza Khan Sarhang does require my help, for, I would have to comply with his request and cannot refuse it."

The life of Modarress is full of such stories of counsels. Although he could make use of the financial assistance which was usually granted to theological students at that time, he didn't consider work a disgrace, and insisted on earning a living by his own labour, showing that one should bear much hardship in the acquisition of knowledge.

End of It All

Modarress's end is most painful. When his struggles with British colonization and Reza Khan's tyranny reached a climax, the Shah and his advisers and masters decided to annihilate him.

He was exiled and imprisoned first, and after torturing this old crusader for some time, he was sent to a prison in Kashmar. From there he sent a message to his friends that his term of imprisonment would soon be over, and after being set free he would either make an end of him or lose his own life.

But this message reached Reza Shah and he ordered to get rid of Modarress. The order for his death was given in 1316, and police executioners murdered this valiant fighter in his prison. He did not find the chance to make an end of Reza Shah, but the struggles which he

had started were continued by others to annihilate Reza Shah's family and bring victory to the Islamic Revolution.



CHAPTER SIX

SHEIKH MUHAMMAD KHIABANI

In the history of the liberation movements of Iran, the name of Sheikh Muhammad Khiabani Tabrizi has been recorded as a brilliant, destiny-making one. He has been called 'the alert spirit' and the 'roaring epic' of Azarbayjan, who began in his very youth to fight tyranny and injustice. He was brought up in crusading Azarbayjan which was the land of valiant personalities and crusading champions. As an adolescent, he tasted the prevailing atmosphere of oppression, and realized with his sensitive mind that his home and realm of his ancestors were in the bloody claws of oppressors, colonization, exploitation, and internal despotism which had left nothing of life and freedom but a wounded and bloody phantom.

Since his childhood, Sheikh Muhammad had been brought up in a religious environment, and since his youth, he was an alert, enlightened and fearless A'lem who was indefatigable in his efforts at promoting human ideals in society. At the height of the constitutional struggles, he was a zealous youth who acted as a leader in this movement, and when the decree for the constitution was signed by Mozaffar al-Din Shah, he was only 27. He rose up in one of the darkest periods of Iranian history, and one of the most painful social and political eras of this

country, and saved Azarbayjan from the abyss of distress.

The well-known scholar, the late Kazem-Zadeh writes about Khiabani in his magazine 'Iranshahr': "He was a rare personality of recent time, an upright, intelligent and resolute man who taught the future generations a lesson by offering his head to save Iran."

Sheikh Muhammad was born in 1297 of the Hijrah (102 years before this account was written) in the village of Khamena, a dependency of Tabriz, and completed his elementary education there. He then studied jurisprudence and principles under the late Ayatollah Haj Mirza Abol-Hassan Agha Angaji who was a crusader himself and had spent over a year as an exile in Mashhad and Sanandaj and had soon attained a high reputation as a man of learning. As a distinguished disciple of Angaji, he was soon considered an authority, owing to his sharp intelligence. He learnt astronomy and mathematics under the late Mirza Abdal Ali, a well-known astronomer, and excelled other fellow students, revealing great talent in scholastic theology, philosophy and literature. Moreover, asceticism, chastity and such commendable qualities were manifest in his personality.

While still a young A'lem, he acted as the Imam of Congregational Prayers in the Jam'e Mosque of Tabriz, and in the Karim-Khan Mosque of 'Khiaban' district day and night, thereby winning a great reputation and respect of which he was fully worthy.

It was this very reputation, which in 1327, at the age of about thirty, led him to be elected to parliament by the people of Tabriz and come to Tehran.

When the Russian ultimatum was being considered in the assembly, Sheikh Muhammad with an admirable courage which amazed others, in a fiery speech opposed the ultimatum, and went so far in this opposition that he was eventually banished from Tehran so as to be rid of his violent criticisms.

It was from this stage onwards that his uprising known as 'the Khiabani Uprising' took birth, and thence, he never rested a moment in his combat against colonization and tyranny till his last breath.

The writer of the book 'From Saba to Nima', referring to the 'Khiabani Uprising,' writes: "After the overthrow of the despotic Tsarist regime of Russia in 1919, it was hoped that the British would respect the independence and integrity of Iran, but this was a vain hope. Britain was victorious in the war and was worried about events taking place in Russia, and no sooner had the Russians withdrawn from the Iranian territory, that the British quietly took their place and moved near the borders of Caucasus and Middle Asia. It came to an agreement with the government of Vothugh al-Dowlah, aiming at preserving its empire, and imposed the treaty on 9th August 1919 on Iran.

According to this treaty, the two important pillars of the country,

namely finance and the army were placed under the supervision of English advisers, and in this way the perfect domination of Britain over Iran was confirmed. But this treaty violently roused the protest and dissatisfaction of the people.

On 17th Farvardin 1299 of the Solar year, an armed uprising took place in Tabriz against the reactionary government of Vothugh al-Dowlah and British imperialists, spreading to other towns of Azarbayjan. The revolutionaries led by the valiant fighter, Sheikh Muhammad Khiabani, occupied government offices and took over control of Azarbayjan.

At first, Khiabani stood firmly against pressure by Tsarist Russians, and after the Russian Revolution, checked the infiltration of communism. He loved his homeland and had no desire for rank or wealth, and meanness and shortsightedness formed no part of his character.

The literary scholar, the late Professor Sa'id Nafisi writes in the introduction to his book 'The Uprising of Sheikh Muhammad Khiabani': "For many years, Khiabani was one of the most effective men in Iranian politics, deeply influencing the course of events in Tehran and Tabriz by his views. Not caring for personal benefits which could be his at the asking, he instead lived a simple and almost indigent life, and by the time he died he did not even have a humble saving."

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the province of Azarbayjan has always been a cradle of freedom and the nurturing land of valiant and devoted fighters. During all national struggles, the effective and constructive role of its people has been unforgettable. But the efforts and unsparing work of the crusading Ulama of this province have been of a different kind. These great men like Haj Mirza Hassan Agha, (a theologian), Imam of Friday prayers, Haj Mirza Mohsen, Haj Mirza Sadeq Agha and Seghatol-Islam and other lofty figures of this region whose names have been recorded in the history of constitutional struggles, have with the aid of the people, opened a new chapter in the crusade of the people.

Some historians of the constitutional and liberation movements have even written that the endeavours of such champions as Sattar Khan (known as the national leader) and Baqer Khan (known as the national lord), were inspired by the decrees of religious authorities and guidance of the Ulama. They believe that the role Khiabani played in these events has been so obvious and outstanding that even in a brief historical account, one cannot neglect to mention his name. Thus a description of his life and combats here would illustrate only a brief account of his acts and efforts.

One of the close friends of Khiabani, the late Badamchi writes about him in a letter to Kazem-Zadeh Iranshahr:

"In 1324 of the Hijrah, when the regime was changed (from despotic rule to constitutional monarchy), the late Khiabani defended freedom and constitution, rifle in hand, in trenches with crusaders, and whenever these crusaders showed the slightest weakness he encouraged them with fine words and breathed a new life into their despondent spirits. He was also a member of the provincial council, where he played an effective role in decision-making.

After the end of the so-called short despotic period of Muhammad Ali Mirza, Khiabani was elected a member of the second legislative assembly for Azarbaijan to defend the rights of the nation."

The talented Islamic writer, Muhammad Reza Hakimi, writes in his valuable book "The Awakeners of Qebela Lands" about Khiabani:

"Men of virtue and heralds of truth always possess a brave heart, a confident mind and a valiant spirit. Sheikh Muhammad Khiabani was an example of such learned and courageous men of Islam. He intended to create an Islamic power and by extending it throughout Iran, bring into existence an Islamic center free from and secure against every type of foreign agents.

"When he was arrested, he bravely and dignifiedly, refused to utter a single word to the Ottoman officers and to answer their questions. On his death-bed he remarked: 'An honourable death is better than a shameful life,' and threw his precious life into dangerous storms.

"In one of his discourses addressed to the young, he said: "Young people! Future hopes of the country! Remember that true glory is in sacrifice. Real honour belongs to one who offers his life for the sake of others' welfare, and in the arena of social conflicts does not turn his back to the assaults of times and is not vanquished by 'back-breaking' calamities."

He was a liberal crusader and devoted soldier of Islam, who called the nation to his ideas, and who respected truths and national realities, and had adopted freedom, nationalism, religion, justice and protection of human rights as his main goals in his struggles. He always desired to see the solidarity of groups and Islamic societies recovering its true meaning, so that Islamic models and values would replace false and deceptively artificial European values. He trusted neither the east, nor the west, neither Russia, nor Britain. He did not see the strength of the nation and his own effectiveness, and attainment of the goal in anything but through revolution and reliance on the power of the nation.

Ahmad Kasravi, the renown biographer, who has been usually critical of him and of the Ulama, admits that "Khiabani was not pro-Bolshevik and only followed his own ideas."

He was strongly opposed to the treaty of Vothugh al-Dowlah, and

as he had become highly respected and popular throughout Iran and particularly in Azarbayjan, the people of Azarbayjan joined him in opposing the treaty, disarming the military units which served foreign interests, eventually expelling from there, the officials of the central government.

This uprising which was heartily supported by the people of that province, was anti-colonization, but it failed before the plots and the hellish powers of the enemies, and the collaboration of internal traitors with foreigners and hypocrites. In the end, Sheikh Muhammad was killed in an encounter with the enemy forces. Thus, he started one of the greatest liberal movements, and provided a model of self-sacrifice in attaining national goals and ideals.

His ideas of reform and his exalted national and humanistic thoughts are reflected in his speeches, and eloquent discourses and recorded in history. Kazem-Zadeh Iranshahr has collected some of these discourses, a few lines from which we will quote below:

“Our uprising intends to set up a stable state, the permanence of which would not depend on special groups or persons, and would not lend itself to personal interpretation. We envisage this state in the form of a democratic government.”

“The changes which take place in the social life of a nation cannot correspond with the wishes and expectations of all, especially in a country where privileges have ruled for thousands of years. Consequently there appeared conservatives who try to change the atmosphere which has arisen against them.

“Submitting to injustice is a treason in itself, and remaining silent before tyranny is another one. Unity and co-operation in a nation and the inter-relations that originate from this brings power and courage, the same like mixing milk and sugar.”

“A matter which should not be regarded slightly is the defence of a nation’s rights. If you see a nation or a group of people not defending their rights, you may be sure that they are not aware of those rights. A civilized nation values its rights and preserves them in times of need.”

At last, in a clash between his forces and the army serving the foreign powers, Khiabani’s uprising was crushed and foreign and internal plots bore fruit, ending with his death on 29 Zihajjah, 1338 (about 68 years ago).



CHAPTER SEVEN

SAYYED JAMAL-AL-DIN VA'EZ AND MALEK-AL-MOTEKALLEMIN: TWO PREACHERS AND CRUSADING MARTYRS

In the people's movements and combats for freedom in the way of Islam, praise should be given to a most effective group, which included preachers, orators, elegy reciters and Islamic speakers, whose enlightening and instructive role has been decisive and 'destiny-making' in rousing waves of protests and cries for truth and right.

Those comprising this group, through their close contacts with the masses among whom they themselves lived, thereby providing a good opportunity for exchanging ideas were respected and trusted by the people. They thus played a decisive role in mobilizing the masses in whom lied the real and basic power of a society, towards a course necessitated by history, and in promoting their advance. Moreover, whenever the crusading, exalted Ulama willingly joined this group to offer their invaluable services, the result was an effective awareness among the masses and through which the preachers and orators who kept in constant contact with the latter incited them against everything that ought to be uprooted.

In the history of anti-despotic and liberal movements, two brilliant figures stand out for their honour and dignity, namely Sayyed Jamal al-

Din Va'ez Isfahani, and Malek al-Motekallemin Beheshti.

A brief glance at the lives, struggles, and constructive roles of these two in the history of Iranian movements, would be necessary for a historical study of the role of the Ulama in this century.

The sympathetic, late Dr. Ali Shari'ati writes about the preachers, orators and elegy reciters whom he calls 'the reminders' as follows:

"The fact that Shi'ism does not refer to the reminders of Ashura and (preachers) of the philosophy of revolution as 'preachers, orators, spokesmen, theological scholars and jurisprudents and has called them 'elegy reciters' is not accidental and without significance.

"The greatest mission of elegy reciters is to recite and remind people of oppression and speak and fight against those who interpret history in favour of the powerful, against historians, writers, missionaries and even the Ulama who owing to their attachment to a regime, do not expose trampled rights and turn a blind eye to calamities, massacres, and martyrdom of great men. They are forever prowling around palace-owners and tribute-collectors, whose spokesmen they are. The elegy reciters reveal the crimes committed constantly against deprived people and their rights, and speak of the great calamities of history.

"That is why Shi'ism has called those reminders of oppression 'elegy reciters,' so that they remind you here and there and at various times of what blood has been and is being shed in order to silence the voice of religion, schools (Maktab) and justice.

"Therefore, if you want me to believe that you are of us, when you speak of Muhammad, of Ali, of other Imams, of the Quran and of whatever else, you should make a digression to mention Karbala and leave the mark of Karbala on what you do and say to make me accept it as valid.

"I approve of a Muhammad whose mission is manifested in Ashura.

"I admit of a prophethood the message of which finds perfection in Ashura.

"My Quran is a Quran which is connected to Karbala.

"Ibrahim is a prophet who joins Hossain.

"Isma'il is an Isma'il who reaches Hossain.

"I do not accept anyone and anything without Hossain.

"I have already said that when Hossain emerges from circumambulation, and leaves the rank of the pilgrims and turns to another direction, what kind of a circumambulation would it be and what are you circling around? If you do not follow the way of Hossain and do not reach Karbala, you may as well circle round so often that you may get giddy!

"That is why the most fundamental propaganda of the Shi'ah is

elegy recitation and reminding people of what the regime tries to make them forget. So, when he speaks of God, the Prophet and the Quran, he ends it with Hossain and Karbala, even though the rule of tyranny, crime and force, too, pretends to speak of God, the Quran and the Prophet's traditions. Hossain is the border that separates truth from falsehood, and the executioner from the martyr, in a system where both the martyr and executioner have one book, one prophet and one religion."

Now after a glance at the fine words of the martyred teacher about Islamic preachers, orators and elegy-reciters, we turn to the lives of the two exalted Islamic preachers and the crusaders martyred in the national movement of Iran.

Sayyed Jamal al-Din Va'ez Isfahani

Sayyed Muhammad Ali Jamal-Zadeh, the famous writer, known as the founder of prose literature in the form of short story of the modern world style, writes about Sayyed Jamal al-Din:

"Sayyed Jamal al-Din is a perfect example of those who have proceeded along the hard way of success from the beginning to the end, step by step, with utmost love and zeal, without the least rest, regret or hesitation. This noble Sayyed is undoubtedly one of the rare prodigies who have performed wonderful deeds owing to the flames of their burning minds, high aspirations, steadfast and unalterable resolution, their iron faith, and have eventually lost their lives in the way of attaining their sacred goals.

The truth of this claim will become evident if one considers the facts that this son of a priest who became an orphan while he was still six to seven months old in the city of Hamadan and got separated from his few relatives who were scattered around the world in Jabal-Amel, Lebanon, Mesopotamia, Isfahan and other places in Iran and Arabia, and who in this world had no one to take care of him except a young, indigent, helpless and illiterate mother with no connection or aid. You should also imagine the same person at the age of forty-six in a corner of Amir Afkham Hamadani's prison in the town of Boroujerd waiting for death every moment, whereas his eloquent and penetrating words and thousands of his fiery discourses for a period of over twenty years have deeply influenced people in all parts of the country particularly the large gatherings in the capital. His activities and self-sacrifices in conjunction with his few colleagues and companions had overthrown brideless despots in this ancient land of Iran."

Jamal-Zadeh who is Sayyed Jamal's son and his descendant, throwing light on his father's personality writes:

"Sayyed Jamal al-Din Isfahani rose up all by himself at the height

of political and religious tyranny and spoke to the masses in their own language, thereby winning their love through his kindness, affection, and sincere sympathy. Like a patient and benevolent teacher, he guided his compatriots step by step towards enlightenment, and made them aware of their rights, thereby preparing the way for the revolution. Not content with that, he himself became a pioneer and organizer of that revolution, and at last gave up his life for it.

Sayyed Jamal, born about 1279 of the Hijrah in Hamadan, lost his father in babyhood, and his mother brought him to Tehran. He was sent to classes known at that time as 'Maktab' at the age of five, and two or three years later, when the child had learnt some reading and writing, she sent him to work in an iron chain-making workshop belonging to her sister's husband. But Sayyed Jamal was so eager to continue his studies that he cryingly and protestingly implored his mother, his aunt and her husband to allow him to continue his education. When he was fourteen, they sent him once more to Maktab. He was so fond of studying that not only did he not leave his books for a moment at school, but at home, too, he spent the remaining of his time with his books and notebooks. Even at night, helped by the dim light of an oil-lamp and the moon, he engaged himself in reading. This excessive love of reading weakened his eyesight even in his youth, and in the last years of his life, he lost the sight of one eye completely.

At 22, he was considered a learned man excelling others. At that time, as Isfahan was known as a center of learning and since his cousins and other relatives lived there, he set off with his mother for that city, and his relatives being mostly priests there and enjoying a good reputation, they encouraged him to follow the profession of preaching and oratorship like his ancestors.

He agreed and through his learning, his simple and sweet enunciation, his reliance on Quranic verses, traditions and reliable narrations and his use of attractive topics, he won the attention of the people and a great popularity in a short time, not only in Isfahan but also in other parts of the country

As he intended to stay in Isfahan among his friends and followers, he got married to Maryam, of the Seraj al-Molk family, and his son Sayyed Muhammad-Ali Jamal-Zadeh, the famous contemporary writer is the product of this marriage.

According to his son, "Sayyed Jamal's life is so mingled with the revolutionary events of the Iranian constitution that it is inseparable from it." In Isfahan owing to his beliefs, habits and thoughts as well as his combative anti-despotic spirit, he befriended liberal fighters who cherished the same ideas, one of whom was Haj Mirza Nassrollah Beheshti, entitled Malek al-Motekallemin, who was a renowned orator and an indefatigable crusader against despotism and later on, a

martyr in the constitutional movement. There were also Sheikh Ahmad Majdol-Islam Kermani and Sayyed Abdol-Vahhab Imami known as Ayatullah. The constant association of Sayyed Jamal with these enlightened crusaders presented this circle as a gathering of pioneers of freedom and fighters who created fear in the agents of despotism especially Masoud-Mirza Zel-al-Sultan, governor of Isfahan, who had stepped beyond his duty and authority as a governor and had built up for himself a royal court not less magnificent than that of the selfish Qajar king.

For this reason, the government's authorities, helped by its agents and pseudo-Ulama and self-sold priests, tried to check gatherings where preachings and discourses took place from being held. The repression was even more severe in the case of Sayyed Jamal, compelling him to leave Isfahan in the mourning months of Moharram and Safar, and stay in remote places, preventing him from gathering the people around him and influencing them with his words and enlightened ideas.

Thus, in those years, he was forced to travel to Shiraz three times, to Tabriz twice, and to Mashhad once in 1322 known as the 'cholera year.' In 1318, in his first visit to Shiraz, he was eulogised in an ode by Shoorida, the well-known poet of Shiraz beginning with these lines:

The Reverend Sayyed Jamal al-Din, whose pure thought
has made a mirror of the original beauty of meaning,
On a pulpit, he is like an ocean on a lofty firmament,
and in preaching, he is a celestial body in an infinite ocean.
I asked him what gift he has brought, and he said:
A world of knowledge as present, and a heaven of learning as gift.

In the same youthful years, in the 1320's, Sayyed Jamal, in co-operation with several crusading friends from Isfahan, wrote a treatise entitled "A True Dream," exposing the crimes and tragedies brought about by the corrupt Qajar dynasty, its unlimited tyranny, and the hypocrisy of the pseudo-Ulama of Isfahan, and secretly printed it in 80 pages with the aid of Mirza Hassan Khan Moshir-o-Dowlah, the copies of which were distributed in a short time.

The government and the self-sold pseudo-Ulama at once realized who the writer was from its style and contents, and readied themselves to oppose the progressive Ulama. Jamal-Zadeh writes in this connection: "The Isfahani pseudo-Ulama joined hands in order to supposedly uproot mischief" and "check infidelity and heresy," and "attacked people under the guise of killing Babis. These events took place in the months of Jamadi-el-Akhar and Rajab, 1321, when Sayyed Jamal had returned from Tabriz to Tehran on his way to Isfahan."

"The writer of these lines one day saw a large number of people in

the Shah square of Isfahan setting fire to two tall men dressed in robes, but with bare heads and feet, and damning them. They paid a small sum to a man who had a barrel of Kerosene and received a bowl-full and threw the Kerosene on the heads of those two. I ran weeping to my mother and told her about it. She sent me to the judge who was our neighbour in that district and a friend of my father and whose wife was related to Zell al-Sultan, to ask if it was advisable for my father to return to Isfahan on such an occasion. He sent my mother a message through his wife, saying: 'Today I was with the Prince and he had a pair of scissors with him, remarking that he was looking forward to the return of Sayyed Jamal, that 'Babi' Sayyed to Isfahan so that his flesh could be cut to pieces with those scissors.' My father decided to remain in Tehran thenceforth, and summoned his family to the capital."

In Tehran, Sayyed Jamal became a preacher at the former Shah Mosque, known today as the Imam Khomeini Mosque, and was soon able to find thousands of followers who were so devoted to him that they were ready to offer their lives in the way shown by him.

Edward Browne, the famous English orientalist writes in his book "The Iranian Revolution" about Sayyed Jamal Va'ez:

"Sayyed Jamal has a great influence among the common people, tradesmen and lower classes, since he used their language and had thereby won their affection. He related to them an incident revealing inhumanity and selfishness at its height saying that one night when the Shah was on a hunting expedition, it started snowing heavily accompanied by a violent wind, threatening to collapse the royal tent. To prevent this, several soldiers were sent out to hold the ropes firmly in their hands. Next morning their dead and frozen bodies were found, and he said: "This is the most sacred sacrifice for the person of the monarch!" "

At the height of the people's struggles in the constitutional movement, a time came when the crusading Ulama acted as the vanguard of the combats. Sayyed Jamal, too, began his crusade against the Shah and his governors and agents, as a result of which he fell in disfavour with the latter who decided to murder him while he was preaching by attacking the mosque and assassinate him in the confusion. But he was alert enough to escape, and he was carried away to his home by the two brave sons of Sayyed Mohammad Tabataba'i, namely Mirza Mohammad Sadeq and Mirza Abd-al-Mahdi.

Jamal-Zadeh writes in this connection: "Religious leaders went in a group, from the Shah mosque to the Shrine of Abdol-Azim to take refuge there, but as there was a physical danger for the Sayyed, he was hidden in Tehran in the house of Nezam-e-Islam Kermani, secretary of Sayyed Muhammad Tabataba'i, the principal of a school named 'Islam,' who later published the book, "The Awakening of Iranians." Govern-

ment officials tried hard to arrest Sayyed Jamal. So he was compelled to change his residence every night, and at last he found our own home safer in the district of Sayyed Nasser-al-Din, and came overnight and hid himself in an upper room. At that time, the people of Tehran showed much true devotion to him.

"The day was wonderful when the Ulama were returning from their place of refuge, and the Sayyed left the house to join them and return to Tehran together. The people encircled him, kissing his hands and praying for him and shouting 'Long live the Sayyed.'" When the carriage succumbed to the crowd's pressure, he was lifted up and carried a part of the way, while they sang:

"Our Sayyed and master has come,
The lord of the pulpit has come."

"As the mourning month of Muharram was approaching, and there was a fear of his making remarks on the pulpit which might ignite a riot, the Ulama and the government came to an understanding that he should leave Tehran for Qum. They sent him a carriage and a thousand tomans. Pretending to accept the offer, he took the receipt and tore it up and returned the money, saying that he wanted neither the carriage nor the money. The same day, he hired a carriage and left for Qum accompanied by myself and a servant named Mahdi."

Sayyed Jamal remained in Qum for some time and found many friends and staunch supporters there. His fiery words and illuminating discourses roused waves of protest everywhere against despotism and support of freedom. That is why government leaders always said: "Wherever Sayyed Jamal steps, tranquility is lost."

After the month of Muharram, those who had been fearing the danger of his remaining in Tehran during that month, were relieved that at least for a year until the next Muharram, they would be free from his inciting sermons. So they thought of his return to Tehran, and Mozaffar al-Din Shah sent him a telegram allowing his return to the capital. He was warmly welcomed by the people on his return, and began preaching in Sheikh Abdol-Hossain school known as the Turks' Mosque situated in the market of Pa-Chenar. His sermons were taken down in short-hand and published in a newspaper called "Al-Jamal", then sold to his supporters and the public in general.

His discourses were so inciting that when it was proposed to establish a national bank of Iran in 1325, and Sayyed Jamal asked for public contribution, one and all, including the rich and poor, offered their help and even the women dropped their gold rings and bracelets at the foot of the pulpit as their contribution towards the realization of this goal.

After Mozaffar-al-Din Shah's death and following the signing of the constitutional decree, he was succeeded by Muhammad-Ali Mirza, who began to oppose the constitution and constitutionalists, and once again Sayyed Jamal's life was endangered.

Muhammad-Ali Shah who knew Sayyed Jamal well, since the days the latter had made his tumultuous trips to Tabriz when Muhammad-Ali was still crown-prince, tried hard to win his support and obedience through promises, bribes and threats. However, failing in this, he decided to resort to violence.

Jamal-Zadeh writes about the last days of his father's combats: "On the day that the Parliament was bombarded, the Sayyed was there together with other pioneers of the constitution whose names are recorded in the history of Iran and will be always respected by every Iranian and those interested in Iranian history. He had said to Taghi-Zadeh: "You are younger than us and can still do much. So don't linger here to be killed." Eventually he sent him home. The Sayyed and others took refuge in the garden of Amin al-Dowlah which was behind the Parliament building. After coming out, as the others dispersed and as he could not run, he stood at a junction with his back to the wall, when the door of a house got opened and a woman came out. On recognizing him, she took him in. That house belonged to Etemad al-Dowlah, the Shah's uncle, and the woman was his wife. That night he was the guest of that benevolent and brave woman and her son, and the next day, disguised in different clothes and accompanied by one of her relatives by the name of Mirza Assadollah Khan, he left Tehran for Iraq via Qum and Hamadan.

At that time, the governor of Hamadan was Mozaffar al-Molk, an old and sincere friend of the Sayyed who hoped that he could help the latter cross the border and join his uncle Sayyed Isma'il Sadr Ameli who was a Shi'a authority in the city of holy shrines and was greatly respected there. But fate had something different in store for him. Eighteen days after leaving Tehran, a rumour spread that the Sayyed was arrested in Hamadan. He was staying in a house belonging to a baker in the tannery quarter when an officer of Mozaffar al-Molk, known as "Reza, the baldy", came and arrested him, taking him to the stables where he was kept for five days.

"One night, the governor's brother came there carrying a lamp and was full of apologies. He took the Sayyed to the governor's house, where the latter stayed for several days and was treated most kindly and respectfully. At that time, the governor and his household had left for Shurin and the Sayyed remained in Hamadan. One day, Hessam al-Molk, son of Amir Afkham, came to the Sayyed and showed him a telegram of the Shah to the effect that the Sayyed must be delivered to Amir Afkham in return of a receipt. The Sayyed was taken from there

to Shurin and lodged in the house of Sa'id Khan Agha Bashi Monir al-Dowlah, wife of Amir Afkham and sentinels were placed on the roof to keep watch. He was kept there for several weeks and the Sayyed was called to the women's private suite once or twice a week to preach.

"At last he was taken on a mule, with his legs tied to it, to Boroujerd and put in jail, and after some time, the date of which is not clear, he was killed there. It is said that he was given coffee and then strangled with a strap. His kins say that he was martyred on 26 Rajab which is the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Mussa-ibn-Ja'far but there is no certainty about this date."

In this way, another crusading A'lem carried his belief and conviction to such an extent that he lost his life without retreating even once in his course.

Malek al-Motekallemin: The Fearless Orator

Haj Mirza Nassrollah Beheshti, entitled Malek al-Motekallemin, a fellow-thinker and fellow-crusader of Sayyed Jamal Va'ez, was a famous orator and a fine preacher and fighter in the constitutional period. His role was decisive in awakening the nation during the constitutional movement, and his faith in the course he had adopted was so deep and unyielding that he did not only forsake comfort and repose for its sake, but also brought captivity to his family and children, and never spared himself or his kins in his struggle for freedom and redress of the human rights of his compatriots.

He became acquainted with Sayyed Jamal when the latter began his struggles on the pulpits of the mosques in Isfahan, and proceeded in the same course side by side with him.

Nezam al-Islam Kermani, author of the book "The Awakening of Iranians" who was for years a secretary of Sayyed Muhammad Tabataba'i, the great crusader of the constitution and a witness to the happenings of the time, while being an organizer of some of the revolutionary programs, one who had close acquaintance with the leaders and constitutionalists, wrote a book later on in the form of a diary, which is considered one of the most reliable documents and a source of the Iranian constitutional history. He writes as follows about Malek al-Motekallemin:

"Thursday 1st of Muharram 1325, the assembly is closed, and the people are mourning. The Reverends Sayyed Jamal al-Din Isfahani, Malek al-Motekallemin, and Sheikh Ali Zarandi spoke eloquently in their sermons, inciting people towards justice and rule of law." (Vol. 2, p. 86)

Elsewhere he writes:

"Wednesday 19th Safar 1325, the assembly is closed. On these

days, Sayyed Jamal al-Din Isfahani and Malek al-Motekallemin spoke strongly and openly on the pulpit against despots. (Vol. 2, P. 131)

"His logical speeches and orderly and reasoned exposures which awakened the people and made them aware of their social and human rights, rousing them to secure these rights through uprising and crusades, frightened tyrants and transgressors upon public rights, and made the malevolents and enemies of justice, spend sleepless nights."

Ahmad Kasrawi writes in his 'History of Iranian Constitution:'

"What was worse was that during these same days, various Tehran societies assembled in one place and after some discussion, wrote a letter to the Shah demanding the expulsion of Sa'd-al-Dowlah and Amir Bohador from the court, stating that if this demand was not met, the masses themselves would rise up. Moreover, these societies met everyday in the Sepah-Salar mosque, and Motekallemin and Sayyed Jamal delivered discourses condemning the Shah and his court, sending him messages in the name of the Iranian nation.' (Vol. 1, P. 503. 11th edition).

Although owing to his untiring combats for the establishment of the constitution and the overthrow of the Qajar tyrannical regime, Malek was hated by both Mozaffar al-Din Shah and his successor, Muhammad-Ali Shah, yet the latter's dislike and rancour dated from the time when he was still crown prince.

The above historian writes in the same book:

"Malek al-Motekallemin as the masses' spokesman could not avoid criticising Muhammad-Ali Mirza, though he did not go as far as defaming him. The Shah's hatred of him had another reason. Years before the constitutional movement, Malek had gone to Kurdestan and was for a time attached to Salar al-Dowlah's organization. Since Ein al-Dowlah as a chancellor was hostile to Muhammad-Ali Mirza as a crown prince and intended to get him replaced by another son of Mozaffar al-Din Shah, Salar al-Dowlah sent Malek to Tehran to promote this scheme. But when the constitutional movement started, Malek forgot his mission as Salar al-Dowlah's deputy. Nevertheless, he remained the target of the crown prince's rancours."

Thus Muhammad-Ali Shah was waiting for an opportunity to avenge himself, and he found it in the events of the Parliament's bombardment.

On Tuesday 23, Jamadi al-Awal 1326, the Parliament building was shelled on the Shah's order, and the two leaders of the movement, namely Tabataba'i and Behbahani were seized, and together with a large number of Ulama and crusaders, were imprisoned in Tehran's Bagh-e-Shah. Next day, according to a plan to suppress the leaders, Malek, the spokesman of right and justice, and Jahangir Khan, editor of the 'Soor-Israfil paper', were arrested and taken to Bagh-e-Shah.

The same author of the history of Iranian constitution continues:

"Another group including Mirza Jahangir Khan, Malek al-Motekallemin, Qazi Aradaghi and others accompanied by two Sayyeds went as far as Amin al-Dowlah park, but they had a grievous fate which we should narrate, and since we have had this account from Qazi's brother, Mirza Ali-Akbar Khan who accompanied him, we will quote his narration:

"He says: 'As my brother was among those who had taken refuge in the Parliament together with Mirza Jahangir Khan and Malek al-Motekallemin, I had to visit the Parliament several times a day to take his meals to him. When on the 2nd of Tir I was going there as usual, and got near the Parliament, the Cossacks stopped me and would not allow me to proceed. At the same time, Behbahani's carriage arrived and went on without being stopped by the Cossacks. I mingled with them and got to the Parliament.

"I stayed there with my brother and others until the battle started. When Behbahani and others went out, we all followed them. In the Amin al-Dowlah Park, they took us, namely Malek-al-Motekallemin, Mirza Jahangir Khan, my brother Ghazi, Muhammad Ali, son of Malek and myself to an upper room to stay in. Amin al-Dowlah came and treated us kindly, but when Behbahani came back after seeing him, he told us: "The reverend A'lem says that as the Shah wants to seize these people and some people have seen them entering this house, they may report it and soldiers may be sent to arrest them. So it would be better if they are sent elsewhere."

He then told a servant to take us to another place. The servant took us as far as the door, and pointed to a half-built house which he said would be safe. He then went back and closed the door on us. We proceeded to that house taking it for granted that it would be a safe hiding place. When we got there, we found it all open and without any shelter, so that we would be clearly visible to all. We realized that Amin al-Dowlah's purpose had been to send us away from his house. The house of Sayyed Hassan, editor of *Hablol-Matin* was nearby. We sent for him and when he came, on seeing our distress, he got very depressed and took us to his house.

"Feeling rather safe there, Malek, Mirza Jahangir and my brother tried to find a way out. Someone suggested: "Let us go to the British legation." My brother disagreed: "I refuse to go under the British flag." After much arguing it was finally settled that we would stay there till sunset, and when it got dark, we would leave one by one, cross the ditch and get to the Shrine of Abdol-Azim by a roundabout way, and take refuge there.

"Soon after, there was an uproar and we were told that the Cossacks had surrounded the house. Malek, Mirza Jahangir and my

brother said: "The Cossacks had come to seize us, so it is not right to let them rush into the house and frighten the women and children. So they rose and left the house. The head officer of the Cossacks was Amir Panja Qassem Agha. He ordered three Cossacks each to take one of the prisoners and ride double without hurting them, and put me and Muhammad Ali together with Haji Muhammad Taqi Bonakdar who had been arrested elsewhere, under the charge of several court servants.

They forced us to take off our clothes and shoes and made us walk ahead, followed by the Cossacks and took us in this way to the barracks.

"In Bagh-e-Shah, we were taken to a tent where were a number of the followers of the Reverends Behbahani and Tabataba'i. When darkness approached, someone came and took Malek, Mirza Jahangir and Qazi with them. We thought they were to be executed and we were extremely depressed. But in about three-quarters of an hour the three of them returned. The man who brought them back told the Cossacks: "The brigade commander has ordered that these prisoners are in his charge and no one must hurt them, and they should be treated kindly. These three must be kept apart from others.

"This message was opportune since before that, the Cossacks kept on abusing us. Now however, they behaved kindly towards us and offered us tobacco and cigarette rolls. They kept Malek, Mirza Jahangir and Ghazi away from the rest of us.

"After some time, a Cossack unit marched towards us, stopped, surrounded us, and ordered us to rise and move on. Most of us trembled with fear, thinking that they were going to kill us all in the dark. But they took us to a large room in a building and gave us some supper. They then chained the eight of us together and nailed the chains on the middle of the floor, telling us to sleep and warning us they would shoot us if we moved. We laid down, but what a terrible night we spent.

"The next night, they killed Malek and Mirza Jahangir Shirazi, the editor of the valiant paper and writer of pounding articles, in a most tragic manner.

Nazam al-Islam Kermani, author of 'The History of Awakening of Iranians' gives the following account of the tragic execution of these two:

"Malek al-Motekallemin was a fellow-fighter of Jahangir Khan, editor of the paper "Soor-Israfil." Chained together, they were repeatedly abused and beaten with rifles' stocks and chains. The foreigner, Paleknik who was in charge of city discipline visited them and turning to Malek, said: "What had I done to you to justify your abusing me on the pulpit?" Malek denied having done so and said he had nothing to do with him personally. Then he said he had three

requests to make:

1) "Our fate will be clear by tomorrow, so we will be your guests for one day only. Tell them to provide us with food, tea and pipe in proper time.

2) Instruct the Cossacks not to abuse us and watch their tongue.

3) Our bodies are sore and wounded, and our necks are painful, and the breeze hurts us. Arrange for some kind of shelter for us, or send us to some other place.

"Paleknik told an officer that no one was allowed to abuse or maltreat them, and we were to be provided with what we wanted and they changed our room.

"Next day, when the Cossacks came to take them to the gallows, they were asked to repent. Malek very courageously, worthy of a man of God, said that he was proud to die for his country and there was nothing to be repentant about.

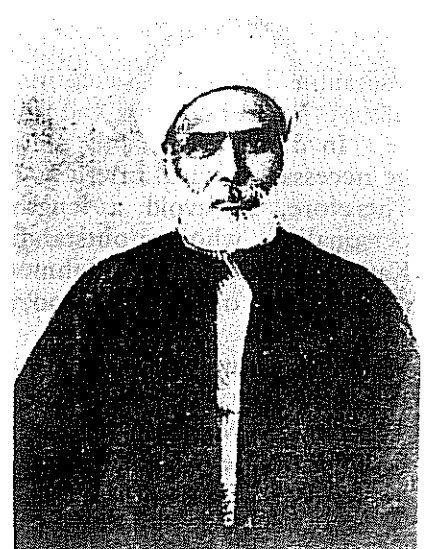
"When the executioners of the Qajar court put the rope round his neck, he said: "It is in the interest of the government and nation to keep me alive."

It is a true fact that the lives of learned men and valiant individuals, are those upon which a nation depends, but dictators and despots do not understand this, and to them, living entails violence and animalistic behaviours.

Malek was martyred on Wednesday 24 Jamadi-el-Awal. May God bless his soul.



Shaltut



Abduh

CHAPTER EIGHT

EXTENSION OF ULAMA'S COMBATS ELSEWHERE: BACKGROUNDS OF THE GREAT IRANIAN REVOLUTION

Though the Ulama's struggles took birth in Iran, yet they were not confined to Iranian borders; they spread to other Islamic lands, concurrent with the struggles of Iranian Muslims led by the Ulama which shook the foundation of internal despotism and foreign colonization. In other Islamic lands, especially in the Middle East, revolutionary movements were taking shape, in countries like Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Lybia, Tunis, Indonesia, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, advancing under the leadership of the Ulama and men of virtue, and establishing close connections with the movement in Iran.

The voice of freedom had echoed from Iran to other lands, awakening the people and showing them how to rise and stand against oppression and move forward unitedly.

Moreover, the revolutionary ideas of the religious leaders had directly or indirectly influenced the people and leaders of other lands deeply, and some of these leaders had even been closely associated with the Iranian movement leaders. One clear example is Sheikh Muhammad Abduh who had for many years been a disciple of Sayyed Jamal-al-Din Assad-Abadi, and when Sayyed Jamal-al-Din published his journal 'Orwatol-Wothgha' to propagate his revolutionary ideas, Sheikh

Muhammad Abduh assisted him by taking charge of the administrative side of that publication, and followed the same policy.

In discussing Islamic movements and Ulama's struggles, it would be necessary to deal briefly with the happenings in other Islamic lands. Therefore, to avoid a lengthy description, we have chosen three personalities who are outstanding, namely Sheikh Muhammad Abduh, Kawakebi and Sheikh Mahmood Shaltoot, all of whom enjoy some reputation in our country, too, as heroic figures.

Sheikh Muhammad Abduh

Sheikh Muhammad Abduh who had an important role as a founder of the modern culture and civilization of Egypt, was a disciple of Sayyed Jamal-al-Din Assad-Abadi, and owing to their common beliefs and ideas, he joined the rank of his friends and fellow-fighters. His deep interest in Islamic thoughts and culture inspired him to endeavour to apply Islamic teachings to the exigencies of his time and bridge these two. At that time, the mental rigidity of some of the Egyptian religious scholars did not only hamper all progress, but was also an obstacle to the progress of the Egyptian society. Sheikh Muhammad was resolved to remove this mental rigidity and encourage dynamism in authentic and constructive Islamic forces.

Therefore, in addition to benefiting from the progressive and modern ideas of Sayyed Jamal, he later on, even presented topics which had not been dealt with by the Sayyed himself. He wanted to prove to the world that Islam is powerful enough to serve as a base and guide for mankind in offering a perfect school of thought and a comprehensive ideology, and bring to humanity, worldly happiness and salvation.

The great philosopher and scholar and the first Ulama martyr of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Motahhari writes in his book 'Islamic Movements in the Last Hundred Years':

"Abduh disagreed with his teacher, Sayyed Jamal-al-Din, on two points: Firstly the Sayyed's thoughts were revolutionary, whereas Abduh was in favour of gradual reform. Secondly, the Sayyed gave topmost priority to his combats against despotism and colonization, believing that the 'mother of mischiefs' should be uprooted, where as Abduh gave priority to the religious education of society over political education and revolutionary movement."

Another point which may be added to Scholar Motahhari's writing is that the reason for the Sayyed's failure and even his mysterious death before he could see the result of his efforts and his revolutionary ideas in Iran and other Islamic lands, was that he always sought contact with rulers and kings in order to enlighten them about the need of respecting human rights and social freedom of the individuals under their

domination. Consequently, he often neglected the common people who are in fact the nucleus of movements and revolutions. This is the reason for his failure since a change effected from above by means of granting something does not attain its true goal, whereas the basis of public movement is a lasting and genuine one. Abduh differed from his teacher on this point, and instead of seeking rulers, he found his object among the masses.

Scholar Hamid Enayat in his book, "A Survey of the Arab Political Thought" writes in this connection:

"The results of Sayyed Jamal's efforts with regard their effects on the history of Muslim awakening, are very different from those of Abduh. Sayyed Jamal was essentially a man of effort and combat, whereas Abduh was a moderate in thought. Sayyed Jamal considered Muslims' freedom as the only way of getting them mentally active, whereas Abduh was more interested in the moral and religious education of Muslims. Sayyed Jamal had spread his efforts to almost the whole world, whereas Abduh had confined them to reforms in Egypt.

And because of these differences, we may say that the works of these two complemented each other, especially as both of them realized the importance of returning to the original source of religious thought and logical explanation of Divine injunctions, their harmony with the problems of the time, avoidance of dispersion, sectarianism, and despotism, all of which would check tyranny, if backed by the political and social intelligence and awareness of people and their vigilance over the state of affairs. In such a case, the black dragon of despotism would be fettered. This of course does not mean that we should leave the regime to itself; that regime will only be useful when people's political awareness is increased and Kawakebi, like Sayyed Jamal and unlike Abduh, gave priority to political activity and to elevating the Muslim political awareness over other aspects of reforms. Similarly, he attributed a similar importance to religious awakening. The revival of religious expertise and efforts for understanding the spirit and essence of Islamic faith beyond the dry rules and views of religious authorities who served the government, were combined to create the basic foundation of Sunni Modernism and give shape to their ideals.

Sheikh Abd-al-Rahman Kawakebi

Another crusader and reformer in the world of Islam and a founder of Islamic movements whose name has been recorded in history among progressive Ulama, is Sheikh Abdo-Rahman Kawakebi, a follower of Sayyed Jamal-al-Din.

Although Kawakebi was a Sunni, his view was similar to those of

Shi'a thinkers concerning the close relationship of religion and politics, and he considered Islam as a political religion. He believed that if the principle of Tawhid (Divine Unity) is understood properly and if the true meaning of the phrase 'there is no god but Allah' is realized, which means negating all power and domination in the case of all creatures and attributing it to God only, then the firmest stronghold against despotism would be theirs.

The above sacred phrase means that no one is worthy of reverence and humility but the unique God, and whatever humility shown in any other way except in obedience to God's command, is idolatry and atheism.

Kawakebi does not consider Islamic monotheism to consist only of mental, theoretical and devotional monotheism, he expands it to the sphere of action and external objectivity and demands a system of monotheistic justice.

Kawakebi was a descendant of Sheikh Safi-al-Din Ardebili, and a citizen of Syria. In spite of his short life of fifty years, he had a deep influence on Islamic thoughts and movements. He was familiar with both Persian and Turkish languages and has left his progressive thoughts of reform and anti-despotism in two valuable books, namely, "Tabaye-ol-Istebdad" (Natures of Despotism) which was translated into Persian in the early period of the constitutional movement in Iran, deeply influencing not only the Arab nations, but also awakening the Iranian minds and acquainting them with the basic principles and criteria of freedom. The other book is 'Omol-Ghowra' in which he presents his views on reform.

Scholar Motahhari speaks of him as follows in his book, 'Islamic Movements in the Last Hundred Years:'

"Kawakebi was an anti-despotic Islamic thinker who fought against the tyranny of Ottoman Turks who ruled over Syria."

Like Sayyed Jamal, Kawakebi considered political awareness a necessity for Muslims, and believed that a political regime, whether constitutional or otherwise, would not by itself be able to check despotism.

**Sheikh Shaltoot,
President of El-Azhar University**

Sheikh Mahmood Shaltoot, the exalted Mufti and the late president of the great Islamic university of El-Azhar, was a great religious crusader who greatly endeavoured to unite the Islamic world and its various Islamic creeds, turning differences into unity and co-operation, even to the extent of giving up his life.

It was he who for the first time issued his revolutionary historical

verdict of formally recognising the Jafari jurisprudence in the Sunni world, and with his freedom of logic and scholarly intelligence, gave preference in some cases to this jurisprudence over the views of Sunni authorities especially in family and personal matters. He took steps for printing the jurisprudential book, 'El-Mokhtassar-o-Naf'e', written by Gransang, the scholar from Helli, at the expense of the Egyptian Endowment Office, and placed it at the disposal of El-Azhar students of jurisprudence, in order to enable world Muslims to find the way of brotherhood and unity by means of a closer intellectual and cultural relationship and a deeper understanding. In this way they could recognize their political, economic and military powers in this world of plunder and confront world powers.

He was closely associated with the exalted leader of the Shi'a world, namely Ayatollah Haj-Agha Hossein Boroujerdi, and their envoys went back and forth, assisting to bring about true understanding between various Islamic sects.

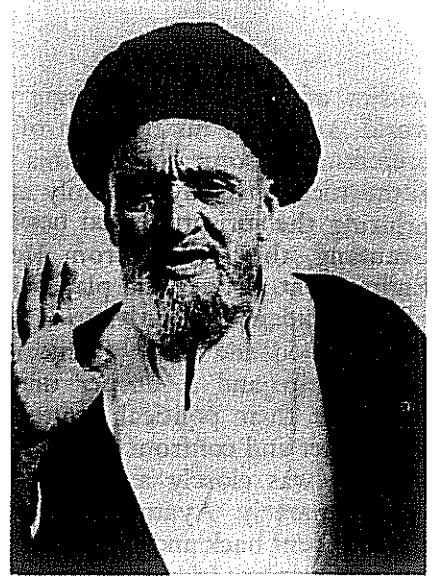
What gives Sheikh Shaltoot, the great Sunni thinker and crusader, a special importance in the Shi'ah world, in addition to his formal recognition of the principles of Jafari jurisprudence as based on a similar reasoning of Sunnism and his issuing of the historical and revolutionary verdict in that connection, is his effort at the establishment of 'Dar-e-Taghrib.'

This institution was a centre aiming at uniting the various Islamic sects and was based on the original idea of Ayatollah Qumi and supported by Ayatollah Haj-Agha Hossein Boroujerdi, and established by the valuable efforts of Sheikh Shaltoot. When Ayatollah Qumi proposed the establishment of a society to promote unity and solidarity among various Islamic sects for the purpose of bringing all world Muslims under the banner of brotherhood, equality and unity to stand against the enemies of Islam, it was Sheikh Shaltoot who endeavoured to set it up and strengthen it, using it as a turning point in the history of the followers of Islam.

His endeavour was in fact a great scholarly, and logical crusade against various classes of fanatics from Egypt and Sunnis from other lands; an endeavour which brought him much suffering.

The late Ayatollah Boroujerdi in his last days of life when he repeatedly fell into coma, once while regaining consciousness, the last words that he uttered (revealing the highest ideal) were: "Has the Reverend Qumi who was supposed to leave for Egypt to visit Sheikh el-Azhar gone to discuss the establishment of 'Dar-e-Taghrib'?"

This clearly reveals that this noble religious authority showed the same degree of deep interest in unity that Sheikh Mahmood Shaltoot had in carrying out the idea, as well as his scholarly and Islamic worth.



CHAPTER NINE

THE MOVEMENT OF THE CONTEMPORARY ULAMA

Not only has the colonizing and opportunist Europe never exhibited a human conduct based on human criteria and principles of mutual respect for human rights towards Islam and Muslims, but further, since the last two centuries, it has increased its unchivalrous pressure and force and has imposed its colonialistic and exploitative policy on Islamic countries.

European colonizers began through humiliation to pound upon national and religious personalities and ridiculing Islamic beliefs and ideology, charging them with error, and finally, through military and economic domination and dispatch of their military advisers, they tried to realize their anti-Islamic designs.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Gladstone, the British Prime Minister of Queen Victoria's time explicitly revealed this policy of attack and retreat. In a Parliamentary session in the House of Commons he held up a copy of the holy Quran and said: "As long as this book is the guide and leader of Muslims, it is impossible for our policy to be stable and lasting in their lands."

He concluded his lengthy speech which has a special place in the history of English Parliament with this warning: "The rapid advance of British influence in Iran and other Islamic lands is possible only if we

obliterate this book through carefully calculated preparations and programs, and neutralise its vestiges among the Muslims, otherwise we shall never be successful.”

The late Mir-Zadeh Eshqi, the fighting poet and true spokesman of the Iranian nation, has composed an ode against the 1919 treaty in which he makes a warning reference to this point, saying:

*What will it do in facing this blood-thirsty one?
The fellow who said the Quran should be obliterated,
Will soon carry out this word with the bayonet.
Woe upon this guest who has hardly come in when he
tries to drive out the host from the house. The story
of us and Britain is the story of the mouse and cat,
Once the mouse is caught by the cat, it is never let out of its
clutches.
Even if we were a lion, he is the cunning fox. And as
everyone knows, the fox cheats the lion.*

Next to Gladstone's statement, the old English statesman, a well-known military figure, General Allenby on capturing Beit-al-Moqadas in World War I, explicitly declared:

“Now the series of the wars of crusades have come to an end.”

These two documentary confessions together with tens and hundreds of other hidden and unpublished documents show very clearly the basis which governs the foreign policy of colonizing and expansionist countries in Islamic lands and unravel the plots designed by them.

They begin by weakening the foundation of people's beliefs and their religious bonds through condemning and disrespecting their religious values, humiliating exalted Ulama and scholarly personalities. Following these, they embark upon military assaults and economic exploitation, and by suppressing the Muslims, they aim at reinforcing their position.

One day, they put forth the idea of Islam without an Ulama, which is the same as a class without a teacher, or a hospital without a doctor. The next day, they present the progressive religion of Islam as the opium of society so that in future they may rob real brains, and seize our petrol, gas, copper and other mineral resources and products, and exploit us more by means of our own wealth. Nevertheless, the well-informed and fighting Ulama have constantly stood up against such plots and policies of foreign powers and their internal agents, and have never allowed the Muslim nation to yield to these plots.

In the contemporary period, with the policy adopted by Reza Shah on the recommendation of his British masters, many attempts were

made to remove the Ulama from the political, social and national scenes and neutralise their combats by means of calculated plots. But the Ulama never surrendered to these schemes, and during the fifty years of the despotic rule of the Pahlavi dynasty, they manifested brilliant examples of their firm and indefatigable struggles against foreign colonization and internal despotism.

These combats were sometimes open, such as those of Modarress, Ayatollah Kashani, and the most dazzling of all, the combats of Imam Khomeini. In other cases, the struggles took the form of laying the foundation and paving the way, and preserving the principles and criteria of Islam, and the infinite power of Shi'ism, promoting the unity and solidarity of the Muslim nations and keeping them alert until their uprising and movement were suitably shaped for a more comprehensive struggle. The example of this may be found in the efforts of Ayatollah Boroujerdi and other contemporary religious authorities who have acted as guardians of Islam.

Ayatollah Kashani

The open and hidden combats of the Ulama in our contemporary period begins with the name of Ayatollah Kashani, and the point we mentioned before about the efforts of colonizing powers in giving a wrong picture of national and religious personalities is true of this A'lem, too. Ayatollah Kashani has a brilliant record in the history of national and Islamic struggles of our time, and is considered a committed and progressive crusader who because of his untiring endeavours for reviving the thesis of Islamic government and his theoretical and practical contribution in this field, has met the same fate of being accused by the plotters of the east and west. It is, therefore, not surprising that we come across many contrary statements and judgements about him.

He was the first fighting A'lem who, in spite of all the misleading propaganda about the separation of religion from politics which was carried on in the time of Reza Shah and reinforced by foreign colonizers and in the height of assaults against the sacred dictates of Islam by western pillagers, broke the silence of several years and valiantly rose up. At a time when suppression had reached a climax, he stood up and laid the foundation for the national Islamic movement, and led the Islamic combatants and self-sacrificing devotees.

Since for many years, calculated attempts by British colonizers and the dictatorial British puppet, Reza Shah have been made to remove the Ulama from the field of politics, one of the aims of Ayatollah Kashani was to break down this barrier between religion and politics, and encourage the Ulama to involve themselves seriously in

political and social issues.

Gaining political maturity at a very young age in the Islamic land of Iraq, where he came to learn how to fight despotism and colonialism effectively, when he began his activities in Iran, he was so heartily supported by various classes of people that his every utterance to them was a verdict which, they considered their duty to carry. The despotic authorities, were well aware of this fact.

Ayatollah Kashani was born in 1303 of the Hijrah about a century ago in Tehran. In 1319, as a young adolescent of 16, he accompanied his father to Iraq and continued his studies at Najaf. He was a disciple of the late Akhund Mulla Muhammad-Kazem Khorassani and had won a lofty position among the pupils of that peerless teacher. He attained the rank of a theological expert by the age of 25, a fact which proved his authentic spiritual Islamic spirit and his religious thoughts.

In 1914, when World War I started and English soldiers attacked the region of Iraq, he took part in the fight, and with much effort and admirable self-sacrifice, supported by other crusading Ulama and the Iraqi nation, they were able to stop the advance of the invading forces at the Koor-el-Amara zone.

Among the defenders of the Islamic zone of Iraq, could be found outstanding figures such as Ayatollah Sayyed Mustafa Kashani, Ayatollah Sheikh-al-Shari'a Isfahani, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Damad, and Ayatollah Sayyed Muhammad Sa'id Hobuji, all Ulama and religious authorities of the first rank. Ayatollah Kashani showed a greater zeal as a young man than others and was in the first line of battle, facing many hardships but never yielding to the end of the war. The struggling Ulama ordered the nation of Iraq to mobilize, calling then to the front and leading them to fight foreign forces and defend the Islamic lands. The active part of Ulama in this fight roused the enthusiasm of the people encouraging them to enhance their efforts, and through extraordinary dynamism and guerilla operations, they crippled the powerful British army.

When the war ended, Ayatollah Kashani continued his struggles, this time against western colonizing powers which intended to strangle weak nations especially Islamic ones. With this goal in mind, he returned to Iran, and resumed his extensive combats against the western powers especially Britain which had expanded its sphere of influence and colonial operations in Iran. His active and untiring efforts in Iran, too, are noteworthy, and in one sense he may be considered as the fore-runner of anti-British colonization conflicts in Iran. A noted figure he was dreaded by foreign powers, was arrested and imprisoned by the English who had prepared extensive plans for purging their opponents when Iran was occupied by Allied forces. For two years he was kept prisoner in the towns of Arak, Rasht and Kermanshah (now called

Ghahreman-Shahr), during which period, he was maltreated all the time.

Once freed from the Allies' prison, he did not abandon his combat, and soon, he was once again arrested while Qavam-al-Saltaneh was Premier, and banished from Tehran, spending 18 months in exile in Qazvin. In 1327 of the solar year, when Sa'ed was prime minister, an attempt was made upon Muhammad Reza Shah at Tehran University, and when this attempt failed, Ayatollah Kashani was arrested and imprisoned for a time in the Fort of Falak-ul-Aflak and later banished to Lebanon.

As a believer in the idea of unity and a strong opponent of secularism, he considered the separation of religion and politics as a treacherous plot of western colonisers. Therefore, when he returned from his exile in Lebanon, he resumed his struggle in a more serious and extensive manner. This time, with the support of Dr. Muhammad Mossadeq, and his zealous followers, he laid the foundation for the victory of the Iranian national movement. While in exile in Lebanon, he had kept in touch with the Iranian people, and incited them by his messages and manifestoes to promote the Islamic movement. Thus, on his return to Iran, he was given such a warm welcome by the nation that even his enemies declared that this was a sign that he held the pulse of the national movement, and can lead it to victory. With careful planning, he led the greater part of the movement, due to which, it is often said that he was one of the initiators of the oil nationalization movement in Iran. But had he not fortified the foundation of the Islamic movement, then, it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to defeat the plundering Britain in this matter.

The national movement of Iran, started thirty years ago and crushed by an American coup d'etat about a quarter of a century ago, at a time when final victory was close at hand, bore witness to religion and politics joining hands to uproot internal despotism and foreign colonization. In that movement, the pillar of politics was reinforced by Dr. Mossadeq and that of religion by Ayatollah Kashani. The cooperation of these two which unfortunately did not last to the end and was disturbed through foreign concoctions and policies, was so strong in the beginning that even the most cynical enemies at home and abroad did not doubt its victory.

It was in this course that the Iranian national movement produced the great historical event of 30th Tir 1331, and for the first time it seriously proved to agents of despotism and colonization in a definite way, that the unity and solidarity of a nation can annihilate tyrannical forces, resulting in freedom and prosperity. In that event, the nation as an entity, forced the downfall of the Shah and his supporters and masters.

Qavam-al-Saltaneh, the Prime Minister and his foreign imposed cabinet was overthrown, and the political arena was left open for Dr. Mossadeq. This event was a turning point in the history of national and Islamic movement of Iran in which Ayatollah Kashani served as an important pole of attraction owing to the strong spiritual influence he exercised upon the people, who trusted him highly.

Ayatollah Kashani, like Sayyed Jamal-al-Din Assad-Abadi and many other outstanding figures of religion and politics, supported the idea of Muslim unity and thought of holding an Islamic Congress during the national movement. But although some preparations were made for it, the various crises which occurred in the country one after another, left no opportunity for its formation, and this lofty idea could not be realized.

The effect of Ayatollah Kashani's crusade was so pronounced on the despotic regime of the Shah, that the latter, his supporters and foreign masters did their best to remove him altogether. Even many years after Kashani's death, the Shah never stopped abusing him, and his hostility went so far as not to allow anyone to utter a word or write anything about this crusading A'lem. He even ordered his portrait removed from among those of former parliamentary presidents, hung in the Parliament building.

Despite the shameful American coup d'etat of 28 Mordad 1332, creating an atmosphere of suppression all over the country, and despite the establishment of a new government, and the fact that many politicians were either killed, imprisoned or driven out of the political arena, yet even in those fearful conditions, Ayatollah Kashani did not abandon his combats. When the usurping government of Zahedi, Prime Minister after the coup, began to renew political relations with Britain, again it was he who under the hardest conditions incited the Muslim nation against the oppressions of the foreign sponsored cabinet of Zahedi and the Shah's tyranny and roared loudly for freedom and justice.

In 1334, after the bloody success of the coup d'etat of 28th Mordad, brought about by the ruthless murder of innocent victims, the time had come to benefit from this military American victory. The power was now in the hands of Marshal Zahedi, an old servant of America, and the fugitive Shah was brought back to assume absolute power so that they could do what they liked through him, and take away what they wished beyond the frontiers. Now they expected to see the tangible results of their expenditure and human efforts.

So, they brought up the question of the "Consortium Oil Agreement" which was so drawn up as to counter the efforts and sacrifices of Mossadeq for nationalizing the oil industry and granting its benefits to the Iranian nation. This agreement went totally against all

the struggles and efforts towards nationalization of the oil industry, and further transferred all the oil profits of Iran to the pockets of American masters and imperialist and Zionist rulers. The alert nation of Iran had been awakened under Dr. Mossadeq's leadership, but this American military coup d'etat resulted into heavy repression of the people. Nevertheless, they knew that this agreement would suck their life-blood, nullifying their long-time struggles, handing over everything to the masters, but they did not know how to react and make a stand.

Once more, the Iranian nation found itself in need of the power and alert leadership of the crusading Ulama, and once more the latter hastened to support and aid these deprived and oppressed groups. Again, this time, Ayatollah Kashani, the untiring religious leader, rose up to perform his religious, historical, national and social duty and reveal the true nature of the 'Consortium Agreement', placing it before public judgement. He strongly condemned this agreement by warning declarations and manifestoes, exposing it as invalid to the whole world.

He went a step further, declaring that the Iranian nation would not remain silent before this agreement, and by securing the necessary power and by using its right of national sovereignty, which had been forcefully seized from it, it will punish all the traitors who had trampled upon national interests by signing this agreement. He persevered in his fight against this agreement for a whole year until 1335, when he was once more arrested on the Shah's order. This was the last time that Ayatollah Kashani was arrested and imprisoned. The Shah deciding to get rid of him while he was in prison, ordered his assassination and thus relieve all those who had been involved in a combat with him so long. By the time the Shah's executioners were about to carry out this order, the alert Ulama had realized what the plan was and warned the Shah that such an act would turn the whole country into a cemetery, since nothing would silence a nation which loses its political-religious leader.

The pressure of the Ulama and mobilization of public opinion as well as the extensive demonstrations of the masses and manifestoes and night-notices frightened the Shah into desisting from executing his plan. But by this time, Ayatollah Kashani was nearing his end, and he eventually died in Esfand of 1340. On his death, he had no worldly riches, except for a house in which he had been born and brought up and which he had inherited, and was full of over half a century's memories of his life and struggles, and where he breathed his last. This house had been mortgaged with a bank for ten thousand tomans. This is how great men and leaders live, a quiet and unceremonious life, without any luxury, but a spiritual life directed towards the ideal.

The Crusading Ground of the Contemporary Ulama in the Great Islamic Revolution of Iran

Our description of the Ulama's combats so far, was related to the crusades of patriotic Iranians and progressive Ulama against internal despotism and British exploitation in Iran which played a decisive role in Middle East politics for many years, from the time of Nasser-al-Din Shah's rule down to the shameful coup d'etat of 28th Mordad. The British influence in the Middle East which especially in the time of the Qajars had reached its height of tyranny and plunder, had several objectives, the most important of which was the plunder of the natural resources of Iran, and their destruction when they proved inaccessible to them. The final aim was to weaken the Iranian nation, making it dependent, and at the same time to preserve Britain's empirical position and its world strategy. Although this domination seeking and plundering power had put its bloody and plotting claws round the throat of the Middle East Muslim nations and especially Iran, and was rivalled by Russia, yet it acted as the sole forayer of the arena owing to the power it had obtained by colonizing and exploiting backward nations.

This state of affairs continued until World War I started. During that period, and after the war, which weakened many powerful countries and gave many small countries the opportunity to appear in the political arena of the world, Britain began to lose its position as the dominant world power, and there rose to power other strong rivals.

One of the most important of these, which proved to be economically and militarily as well as politically and culturally more extensive and scheming than Britain, was the United States of America. Even if Russia or Britain were content to pillage the wealth of the Middle East, and fill their pockets, this new colonizing power intended to interfere in all aspects of life, including military, political, social, cultural and even religious matters and to become the absolute dominant ruler that made its power felt in all directions throughout the world.

In addition to industrial and economic domination, America's policy was directed at brainwashing and at violation in the cultural, scientific, traditional and religious fields. Even though it apparently showed no open opposition to religion, yet in its colonial logic, that kind of religion found recognition that would show no dynamism, and preferred those religious leaders who confined themselves to prayer, devotion, and religious rites, similar to what church priests did without getting involved in governmental affairs and politics.

It was owing to such policies, external pressures and internal accord with them, that the constitutional law which had been the result of the sacrifices of freedom lovers in the despotic period of the Qajars,

came to be characterized by selfishness, tyranny and suppression during the constitutional period especially in the fifty-seven years' rule of the Pahlavis. It was repeatedly and wrongly altered in its principles and articles, to people's detriment, and replaced by anti-public and tyrannical amendments, ratified by commandeered parliaments. Thus the law which had been enacted at the price of the blood of thousands of crusaders, became so worthless and unreliable that it could no longer safeguard the people's legitimate demands and rights.

The constitutional law which was drawn up after the victory of the constitutional movement and ratified, included fundamental articles, the contents of which were intended to reduce the power of the sovereign and strengthen democratic principles and grant the nation sovereignty and the right to rule. But during the Pahlavi rule, when the bullying Reza Khan came to power by force and with British backing imposed himself on the nation, he ordered the establishment of a constituents' assembly which would ratify certain new articles in favour of himself and his masters and bring new amendments to the constitutional law.

Reza Khan's opprobrium and aspersion went so far that he forcefully compelled the Parliament to approve Article 27 of the supplementary constitutional law in the following form: "The enactment of the law is derived from His Majesty, the Shah, the Assembly and Senate, and each of them has the right to draw up a law."

Needless to say, the principle by which the King becomes the source and origin of the enactment of the law is contrary to the existence of both houses of Parliament. If a King had the right to enact laws, what need was there to shed all that blood for the constitution in the early constitutional movement.

Article 35 adds: "Kingship is a divine trust granted by the nation to the person of the Shah." But it is not explained that if kingship is heavenly and divine, what is the role of the nation in this connection? And if the nation has granted it, what connection does it have with a divine trust? Moreover, if the nation had really granted kingship to the person of the Shah, where was the sense for all those struggles, bloodshed, imprisonment, tortures, individual and collective massacres. Why were combats initiated against kingship?

In answer to this probable question, Article 36 gives a legal explanation:

"The kingship of Iran is granted on behalf of the Iranian nation by the constituents' assembly to the person of His Majesty Reza Shah Pahlavi, and will be instituted in his male descendant for successive generations."

Even if we supposingly accept this artificial principle that kingship is granted by the nation and the present generation has chosen a man

as the ruler of the country, the next question arises as to what crime has the next generation committed that it must accept an unseen and unrecognized and even unborn individual as its ruler, simply because this has been approved by its ancestors? What right has one generation to decide the destiny of the next or successive generations? Have the future generations and grandchildren of the present generation agreed beforehand in the time of Reza Shah to empower their ancestors to grant kingship on their behalf?

It can definitely be claimed that out of the seventy articles added as supplements to the constitutional law after the Pahlavi dynasty came into power, two-thirds of them were drawn up to safeguard the rights and privileges of kingship, and in view of the changes which had been made in the original constitutional law, it would have been more suitable to call it the 'Book of Kings' or 'Pahlavi Code,' rather than the constitutional law of a country which is Islamic and believes in a divine religion.

The slogan of the Ulama in the constitutional movement was the establishment of justice and equity, but afterwards and during half a century of Pahlavi despotism, their slogans were directed at the uprooting of tyranny and colonization. The following were some of what the nation and committed Ulama clamoured for:

- 1) Removal of savage despotism and its wild, man-devouring ways.
- 2) Severing the hands of colonization, and those of its manifest and hidden agents.
- 3) Creation of a perfect bond between religion and politics, and doing away with any demarcation between the two.
- 4) Neutralisation of governmental efforts at reviving the beliefs and culture of the pre-Islamic Achaemenid period by attempting a change in the calendar year and through misleading propaganda under the guise of the revival of ancient culture and traditions, intending actually to throw Islamic traditions and influence into oblivion, and destroy the anti-despotic and anti-colonial values of Islam which had created terror in the minds of the ruling classes.
- 5) Preservation of Islamic authenticity and identity, and its valuable culture, with the motto, 'neither east, nor west.'
- 6) Removal of class discriminations, and class gaps existing in government and administrative organizations.
- 7) The doing away with domineering non-Muslim elements over the nation in political, administrative and social organs.

The committed Ulama of Iran were deeply upset at seeing the extent of foreign and internal suppression and pressure, especially in connection with the competition of the east and west for financial, cultural and religious control, and the material and intellectual plunder of Iran and Iranians. Therefore it patiently awaited a suitable opportunity to

start an uprising which would not waste national effort and cause useless bloodshed, and to prepare the ground which would bring radical changes in existing conditions and awaken the Iranian nation. Moreover, with the nation's support and co-operation with the Ulama, at a time when the reign of terror, suppression, force and police pressure was the order, opposition movements emerged in the form of scattered groups in various parts of the country, revealing a certain degree of internal and intellectual revolutionary discipline. Even though those movements were suppressed at the very beginning and destroyed by the ruthless despots and foreign colonizers, yet their recurrence in various forms showed that even if one group was defeated, the spirit of uprising and movement would not be vanquished, and it would rise again and again, more optimistic and powerful than before.

This is in reality the revolutionary spirit which exhibits itself from time to time in one fresh group or another. A clear example of this may be seen in the Ulama's movements of Isfahan and Khorassan in the incidents of Gohar-Shad Mosque of Mashhad, which movements were suppressed by the police government backed by the CIA. Yet it was the very failure of these uprisings that sowed the seeds for revolution and awakening within the nation and society, preparing them for a greater dynamic effort, an example of which could be seen in the uprising of Dr. Muhammad Mossadeq and the unsparing support of the nation in his movement. With the establishment of the latter's national government in which he himself was a popular figure supported by the committed and progressive Ulama of the time, Iran was on its way to recover its political, economic, social and individual freedom, and step in a course leading to salvation, public welfare, universal happiness and freedom in all spheres. However, the shameful and treacherous coup d'etat of 28th Mordad 1332 which had been planned well in advance by the CIA forced the national hero once more out of office and his movement was left incomplete. Once more, the hireling Shah, brought back by imperialism, entered the arena of the colonizing policy of America.

The traitor Shah, unsparingly supported by America, in addition to its hellish police, military and political might, relied on the clever machinations of the CIA, and tried this time to violently curb all intellectual freedom, Islamic traditions, and to remove their perpetrators, imprisoning, torturing and murdering all the honest revolutionary and Islamic figures.

Ayatollah Boroujerdi

In those dark days, the leader of the Ulama and Shi'as was Ayatollah Boroujerdi. At that time, this exalted leader did not consider

the conditions ripe for an uprising, and in view of the influence of the colonizing powers, he knew that any movement would result in much bloodshed and suppression of the movement's forces. Thus, with fortitude and adopting a policy of non-direct interference in the country's affairs, apart from issuing occasional reminders concerning religious and other necessary matters to the government, he was able to preserve the Theological Center of Qum and to keep Islamic centres secure against damage from savage governmental assaults, and independent and free from political interference. In fact, he managed to organize the six thousand members of these centers into a well-trained unit in the course of history, ready for mobilization towards a probable explosion and revolution in the true center of Islamic jurisprudence, until the opportunity arose for them to perform their religious, national, revolutionary and historical obligations.

After the death of Ayatollah Boroujerdi, a great wave of religious sentiments was aroused in the people, and large groups of mourners assembled in support of the Ulama and religion, exhibiting an unprecedented fervor.

The government, taken by surprise, was at first a worried spectator at this display of power by the Ulama and the Muslim nation. Though the government itself appeared to participate in these ceremonies and even in some cases held such sessions, yet its real intention was to divert such moves from their true course. Eventually after Ayatollah Boroujerdi's death, Muhammad Reza Shah sent a telegram of condolence to Najaf in order to weaken the basis of religious authority in Iran. It is said that this act was intended as a first step to destroy the bases of religious authority in Iran.

Well-informed observers, especially the Ulama knew that this plan was prepared in conjunction with America to put an end to the influence and position of the Theological Center of Qum, so that the Shah and his imperialistic supporters might once for all stop worrying about the Ulama.

With the election of the democratic candidate, John Kennedy, as President of the United States, American statesmen drew up a plan by which they intended to carry out certain superficial and deceptive reforms in the countries where their hired agents had brought bloodshed and suppression to extremes. These reforms aimed solely at establishing a certain degree of political stability and were to serve as a precautionary measure against revolutionary struggles so that imperialism could have a free hand in executing its plots. Following this scheme, repeated notes were delivered to Iran concerning the adoption of reform policies, but the Shah found himself unable to carry them out owing to the deep religious and spiritual influence of Ayatollah Boroujerdi among the people. After Ayatollah Boroujerdi's death, the

Shah found the opportunity he was seeking, and with the coming of Amini to power in 1340, he laid the foundations for the execution of his wicked plans.

Though the basis of the great Islamic movement and revolution of Iran had been established in those days, the date of its actual birth is 15th Khordad 1342, even if its origin is to be sought in previous years under the leadership of the progressive Ulama.

The Islamic society of Iran during half a century of the installed and despotic Pahlavi regime, has been subjected to suppression and savage tyranny; it was a savagery which deprived the people of all freedom, and paved the way for fresh colonization. Secularistic propaganda means depriving religion of its life and driving it out of people's lives. An attempt was made to take Iran back to pre-Islamic times. They forged a new Islamic culture to replace the precious and genuine one. They propagated governmental Marxism, encouraging its atheistic philosophy, omitting its political and social aspects. Their plan was to embark on a pogrom, to incite class differences, to deceive Muslim women, to give non-Muslims domination over Muslims in administrative offices, to propagate artificial, illusionary freedom, and lastly to sever the bond between the Iranian nation and other Islamic countries by means of sycophancy and winning favour with imperialistic America.

All these were realized, and the Muslim nation of Iran became weaker day by day. The most admirable members of this society were taken to the slaughter-house repeatedly or made to suffer torture in dungeons and live a life worse than death. The valiant and progressive Ulama took note of such crimes and chaos, and could not in view of its duty and divine commitment, remain silent and witness the destruction of Islamic teachings.

Thus, the well-informed Ulama began to inform the various enlightened classes of society of the true nature of Islam, and through the pen, public speeches, publications and sermons, they acquainted the new generation and educated classes with the living and dynamic principles of Islam, while at the same time, they exposed the crimes, corruption and oppression committed by the regime. The nation, too, which had witnessed such treason and futile promises and half-way friendships, clearly understood the goal of the progressive Ulama and heartily responded to their call.

The first display of power by the people in this connection was in 1341 during the premiership of Alam, concerning the ratification of the Bill of Provincial Councils. The government, as dictated by America, wanted to have this bill approved with the word 'Islam' omitted from the qualification of the electors and elected, and substituting the word 'heavenly book' for the 'Quran,' and offering the promise of freedom of

election for women, while no such freedom had been given to either men or women before.

The announcement of this bill was like a spark which kindled the fire of the nation. The Ulama, too, showed immediate reaction and took quick steps. The exalted Ulama at Qum sat down together to discuss the situation, and came to the conclusion that this bill was a harbinger to greater dangers and treacherous plots by international colonization and internal despotism. With the publication of the bill, the next day, religious authorities lodged their protest with the government concerning its articles, and provincial Ulama undertook to follow up the matter. Following this protest by the Ulama, other protests were lodged in public by orators, preachers, writers and ordinary people. In the face of rising public opinion, the government discussed the bill in its session of 5-9-1341 and agreed that it was not practicable. (The details of these combats of the Ulama can be found in the book, 'The Two-Month Movement of the Ulama in Iran' written by Davani and in several other sources.)

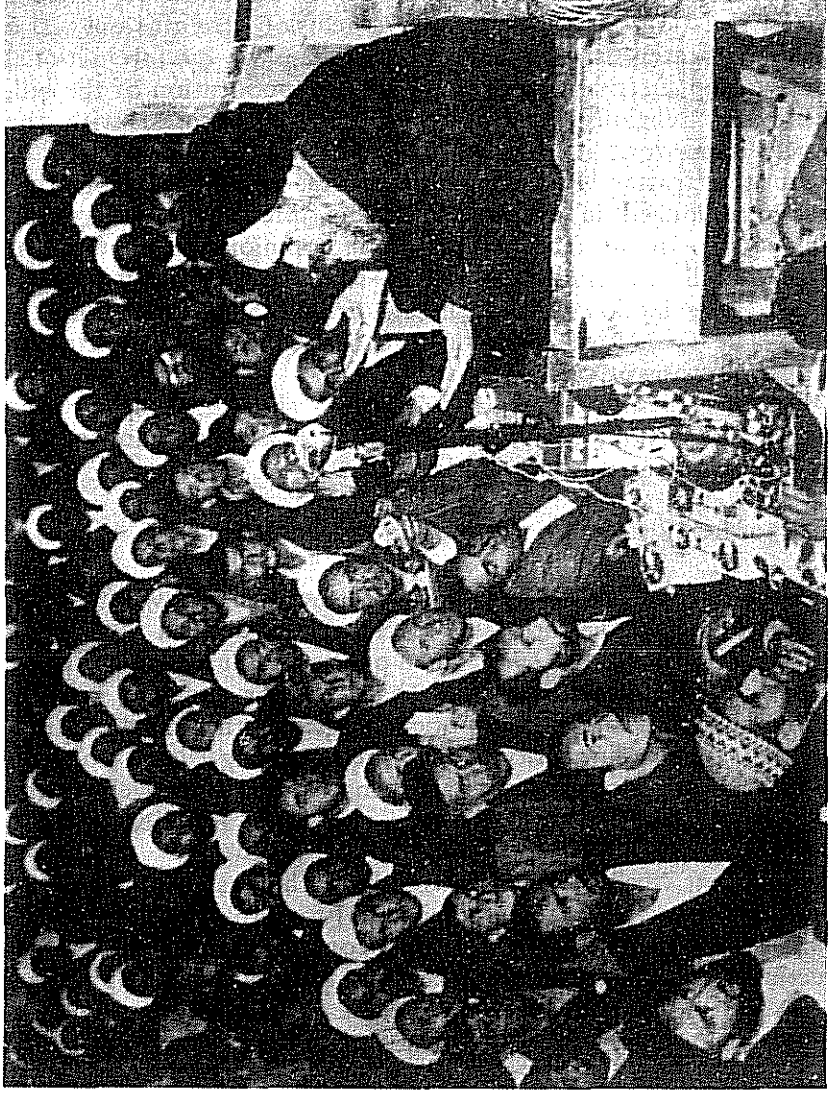
Thus, there resulted the first victory of the nation, led by the progressive Ulama after years of suppression, especially following the disgraceful coup d'etat of 28th Mordad.

15th of Khordad, Birth of the Revolution

This victory marked the beginning for other struggles which shook the foundation of the despotic rule, reaching their peak in the bloody uprising of 15th Khordad in 1342, when public rage at its height dealt a deadly blow at the despotic regime. That date was a turning point in the anti-colonization and anti-despotic struggles of the Iranian nation. On that day, the Muslim nation led by the struggling Ulama stood up against foreign and internal oppressors, and reacted effectively to the artificial referendum of 6th Bahman and the American 'White Revolution'.

During that 'make-believe' referendum, the installed regime of America tried deceivngly, threateningly and forcefully to drag people to the ballot box to vote for it. But the people immediately reacted in an effective way. The Tehran market was fully closed. Shopkeepers followed suit, and government employees left their offices for a few days on some excuses, and all of them tried to stay away from ballot centres. Nevertheless, the regime managed to drag a number of employees, workers and villagers to ballot boxes through deceptions and threats. But the figure of votes cast was so negligible that the regime was compelled to forge it, bringing it up to a total of five million and six hundred thousands.

Following the publication of this distorted figure, the king



Imam Khomeini lectures and criticizes the Shah's regime in the A'azam Mosque of Qum.

attacked his opponents shamelessly, calling them reactionaries, feudal supporters, and accusing them of being anti-progress, and hostile to land reforms and the like. However, the religious authorities did not remain silent before this babbling, and issuing manifestoes and delivering revealing discourses, they invalidated the Shah's claims, and informed the people of true facts.

In this way, the Muslim nation and committed Ulama began their intensive struggles against the Shah's regime and the American ruse through the so-called 'White Revolution.' The pioneer of these combats was the exalted Ayatollah Khomeini who wrote in his manifesto:

"The Iranian nation is presented as a backward nation because of its uproar. The teachings of the Quran are abandoned and the country's laws are violated. Corruption and prostitution prevail all over the country so that neo-colonialism may freely continue its plunder, and its ignoble agents may dance on this cemetery, indulge in debauchery and amassing of wealth.

"The independence of the country is due to this group of Ulama and jurists. It is they who have hitherto defended the independence of Islamic countries. Islam has given them the duty of rising up. Have they ever opposed any progressive matters? When have they endeavoured to check progress in the fields of learning, economics, industry, judiciary, iron-smelting or check other advances? What we say is that there should be no corruption and deviation in the country. What you say is that you have nothing to do with the Ulama. But they have something to do with you. Giving advice is an obligation, and forsaking it is a great sin. An A'lem says that the government should be at the service of the nation, and see to people's affairs. The conquest of a country is not so important as the conquest of hearts. The events which are taking place are threatening to destroy Islam. The plot is against Islam, the Islamic nation and Iran's independence.

Ayatollah Khomeini wrote in those days to religious leaders of Yazd:

"I have decided not to give up until I put the corrupt regime in its place. It is my duty to shout as loudly as I can, and to write as much as my pen is able to, and publish it."

These calls were supported by similar calls and invitations of other religious authorities of Qum and other cities, and with a true harmony and unanimity, they declared the new year, the year of national mourning in order to make the masses aware of the importance of the matter and rouse them in support of religion and independence which the installed regime intended to deny to them, in accordance with American scheming.

The people welcomed the call of the exalted religious authorities, thereby fortifying the Ulama's struggles. And soon, the seeds of strike,

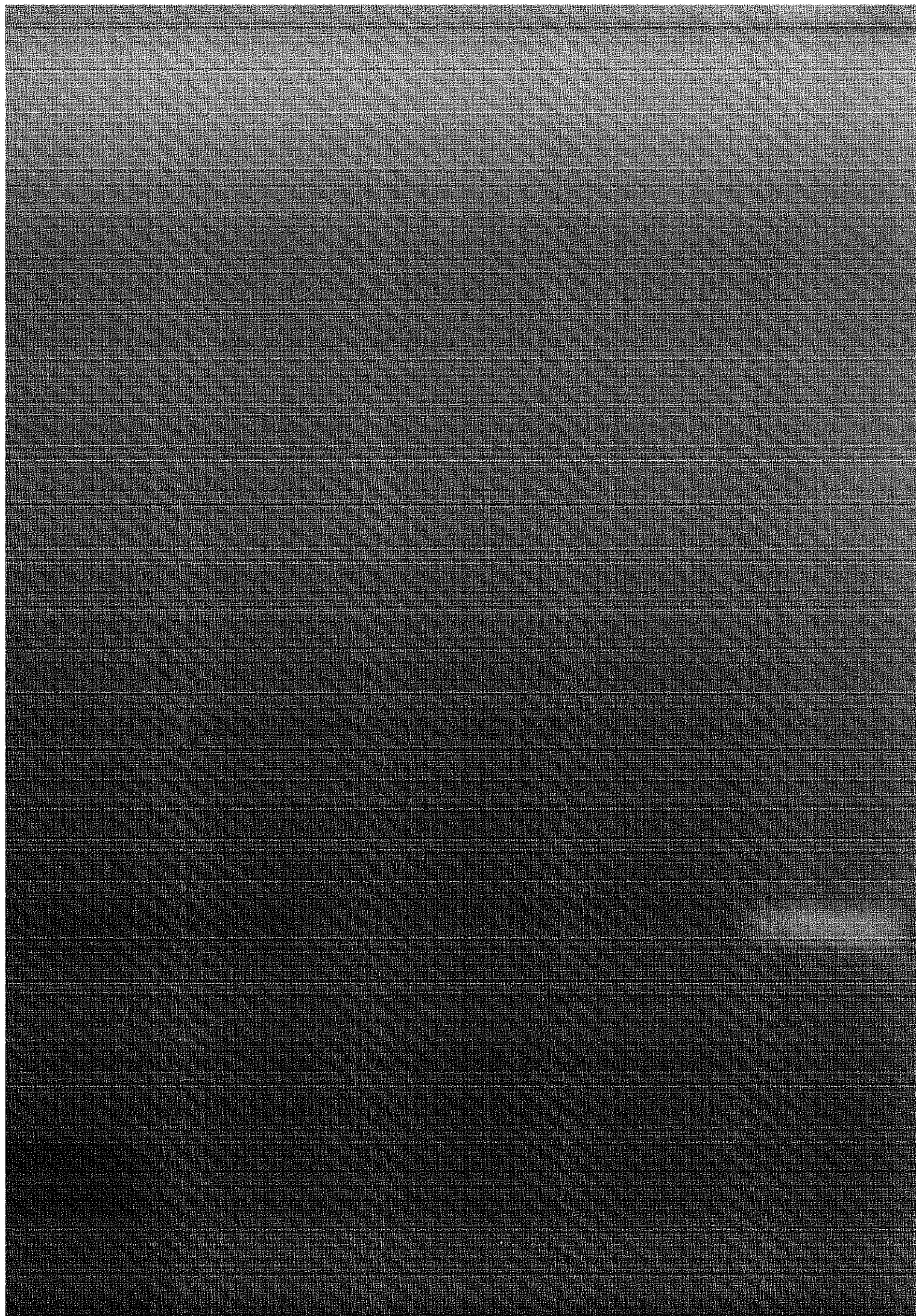
demonstration and protest were sown in the hearts, especially when the students and the enlightened classes joined the struggle.

On 2nd Farvardin 1342, which coincided with the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Jafar al-Sadeq, leader and head of the Jafari creed, a mourning session was held in the Feyziah Theological Center of Qum by Ayatollah Golpaygani in which people from all corners participated, in an unprecedented manner. On the same day, a number of the Shah's executioners, rangers, S.A.V.A.K. and police agents, as planned, disguised as civilians and soldiers, rushed inside the center to create turmoil so as to lay the ground for further abuse in future by the regime.

The same group intended to carry out a wicked plan in Imam Khomeini's house, but this plot was neutralized by the alertness of the religious leader who said aloud: "I warn all those who are sent to create chaos in this gathering that if once more they cause disorder and prevent the voice of the orators from reaching the people, I will depart for the holy shrine of Ma'asumah at once and there I will inform the nation of the facts." This declaration and warning silenced the disrupters and the plot was nullified.

But in the Feyziah Theological Center, where the meeting was held on the order of Ayatollah Golpaygani, things were different. According to eyewitnesses, the Shah's agents, some of whom were drunk, entered the center and surrounded the pulpit and others took position at strategic spots. No sooner had the sermon began, that they started booing loudly, interrupting the sermon and creating much confusion. The preacher and other members of the center who were aware of the rioters' plot, tried to preserve peace and order, but all their efforts went in vain. Seeing that the situation was getting chaotic and beyond control, the preacher descended the pulpit to restore order, but the hirelings intensified their shouts with slogans like, 'Long live the king.'

The rioters advanced from every side, making the ring smaller for an assault on the people. The crowd in fear rushed towards the exits, and in the turmoil that followed, many fell down and were trampled upon and hurt while a few breathed their last. But the ring of commandos and rangers remained intact, and a thousand of them, commanded by an executioner of the regime, named Colonel Mowlavi, assistant director of the Tehran S.A.V.A.K., aimed their assault straight at the theological students, shouting and roaring wildly at the same time. The students, trying to show a certain degree of orderly resistance against this surprise attack, rushed to the second floor of the center. They managed to hold their position on the roof of the building. Though their weapons consisted simply of a few sticks and stones, they manifested a certain spirit of faith and combat. They showed such a stubborn resistance against one thousand soldiers who were armed with the latest American weapons, that the military lines were broken up,



and they were compelled to leave the college's premises. Meanwhile another well-equipped and trained unit launched an attack from the back side of the college and managed to reach the roof and fire upon the students.

This surprise attack forced the students to retreat from this uneven battle, and take refuge in the rooms below. But the soldiers roaring like wild beasts and thirsty for blood and massacre, broke down the doors with their boots and bayonets. In this attack tens of students were shot down and floors and corridors were covered with their blood. In this unequal fight between weapons and empty hands, the hefty rangers who had been trained to kill defenceless people, showed such savagery that each group of three soldiers seized a single student and knocked his head repeatedly against the wall till they broke his skull. Bits and pieces of brain and bloodstain remained for a long time on the walls of the room as evidence of the bloodthirsty barbarism by the regime's hirelings. They showed their full training for savagery on that day and even pushed down the students from the roof and upper floor headlong towards the courtyard or upon the streets beyond. The students and even innocent people jumped from up into the river in an attempt so save their lives. It was while so escaping that Yunus Roodbari was killed in this way.

On that day, these hired executioners left tens of people dead on the scene and hundreds wounded, with broken arms and legs. They heaped up the Qurans and religious books, furniture and clothes and set them ablaze. At seven in the evening, when darkness fell and the atmosphere was terrifying, no life could be seen in the college's compound and dead bodies and half-alive wounded victims laid everywhere. At this time, military trucks arrived to take the dead and wounded to a pre-arranged destination. Only a few of the wounded were saved from this catastrophe and taken to clinics and hospitals where the hospital staff did not dare for fear of the regime to treat them openly.

After this painful disaster, Ayatollah Khomeini and other religious authorities expressed their condolences to the theological students and families who had lost some of their members. In his discourse Ayatollah Khomeini expressed the hope that the regime would be disgraced and that the ground would be prepared for the movement of oppressed Muslims:

"Do not be uneasy and worried. Remove fear from yourselves. The government has disgraced itself by committing this crime and revealed its barbaric nature. The tyrannical regime has made its defeat and annihilation certain by bringing about this calamity. We are victorious. We had prayed to God that one day the regime would show its true nature and be publicly disgraced. It was only by means of this

awareness that the way would be paved for a popular movement. If we had spent millions of tomans, we could not have shown the world the nature of this bloodthirsty regime, but they did it to themselves."

The tragic massacre and plunder carried out by the regime, as they "came, killed, burnt and went," left a deep and everlasting effect on the hearts and conscience of the broad-minded people of Iran, and served as a basis for the victory of the Ulama.

An Iranian loves learning and learned people. Students are highly respected by the people, and this respect and attachment are stronger in the case of theological students, since the people regard them as true seekers of knowledge who follow their religious career for the sake of God's satisfaction and without a regard for worldly and material goals. They stay away from their homes and families, and come from near and far to study and proceed towards their goal, tolerating many difficulties and hardships.

These theological students continue their studies on trifling living expenses which are far below normal, so that they might rise to the rank of the Prophet's disciples and become defenders of the holy religion. These qualities have won a worthy place for them in the hearts of religious and committed Iranians. That is why the savage assault upon their center of learning and lives left a deep impression on the people, mobilizing their unsparing support for this group.

An example of this impression left on the people by the barbarous attack upon Feyziah college is reflected in the speech of Ayatollah Imam Khomeini delivered on the 10th of Muharram (13th Khordad 1342), in the yard of the college. (This speech was printed for the first time after fifteen years in the *Etela'at* paper, at the time of the premiership of Bakhtyar.) Here we will quote parts of it on account of its significance to show how his predictions came true after fifteen years.

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Benevolent.

"After killing the men, they hurt the little children of Imam Hossain, captivated the women and molested them. They seemed to be hostile to the Bani-Hashem family, and did not want this household to exist.

"The same intention is witnessed in Iran today. What had the government to do with boys of sixteen and seventeen? What had these young Sayyeds done to the Shah? What had they done to the government and the tyrannical regime? It seems that they are opposed to the principle of religion, and not to young boys. They do not wish to see Islamic injunctions in this country. They have no desire to allow any of us, big and small, to exist. They do not want to have learned men in this country. They are opposed to the rule of the Quran in this land. They reject religious leaders. What they desire is to uproot Islam here, and

that is why the black agents of Israel pound upon the college, backed by their master and pound upon us and the nation. They want to take control of our economy and destroy commerce and industry so that no wealthy person is left in this country. They intend to remove the only things that serve as obstacles in their way, namely the Quran, Feyziah college, and theological students who may prove to be future obstacles. So, they must be thrown down from roof-tops and their limbs must be broken so that Israel benefits thereby. They encourage the provisional government to insult us following the example of Israel.

“You gentlemen of Qum remember the day that disgraceful and ‘illusionary’ referendum took place, a referendum which was limited to a few thousand votes and running contrary to the interests of the Iranian nation. On that day, they put a number of ruffians, scoundrels and children in cars, going round the streets of Qum which is a religious city, shouting: “This is the end of sponging and of being parasitic.”

“You gentlemen, can see that in this Feyziah college, there are young people in the prime of life, living in these poor rooms, studying hard and living on only 30 or 40 or 100 tomans a month. Are these people spongers? And those who spend millions of tomans on unnecessary things not spongers? Are we parasitic that when such an exalted A'lem as Sheikh Abdol-Karim Hayeri dies, his sons have nothing to eat for supper?

“Are we spongers that when our Reverend Boroujerdi dies, he leaves behind a debt of 600,000 tomans for the expenses of the religious center? But those whose deposits have filled all the world banks and have built great mansions and palaces, and keep on robbing the nation and seizing the wealth of this country for themselves and for Israel, are not parasites? The world must judge! The Ummah must judge!

“How often have I told this man and sent him messages not to resort to referendum, that it would not be to his interest, but he never listened. Sir, I give you advice because the Quran and religion bind me to do so. The law gives me this right. Stop acting in this way. Sir, you are being deluded. I have no wish to see the day when the people will be glad at your being driven out of this country.

“I will narrate a story for you which our old men and even those who are about forty or even thirty may remember. We were attacked by three foreign powers, Soviet Russia, Britain and America. They seized our country and wasted people's property and violated our honour. But God knows the people were happy to see Pahlavi go. I have no wish to see you have the same fate. Stop acting in this way! I have no wish to see you meet the same fate as your father. Do not oppose the Ulama. If it is true that you are hostile to the Ulama, your thought is quite wrong. If they dictate something to you and ask you to read it, reflect about it. Why do you speak without thinking? Are the

Ulama untouchables that you say so?

"If they are untouchables, why do the people kiss their hands and find it a good omen to partake of their half-eaten food? Are we untouchable animals? I hope that this is not what you mean. I hope that you are not speaking of religious authorities when you say: "Black reactionaries are like untouchable animals whom the nation avoids." Otherwise our duty becomes hard to perform, and yours will become harder. We will not let you remain in this country, nor will the nation allow you to live. Stop such acts! Follow my advice! Don't go on in this way! It is enough! Listen to the Ulama. Reflect for a while. Learn a lesson however little. See what happened to your father. Listen to me. Listen to religious authorities. They are seeking the interest of the nation and country. Are we and Islamic leaders reactionary? Are you and your associates progressive? Have you started a black and white revolution? Why do you delude the people? I swear to God that Israel is of no use to you. It is the Quran which helps you.

Today I was informed that some of the preachers have been taken to the S.A.V.A.K. centre and have been told there: "You should abstain from three things, but you are free to say anything else you wish concerning other matters. These three matters are:

- 1) Do not speak of the Shah and about him.
- 2) Do not speak of Israel.
- 3) Do not declare that religion is in danger.

"If we leave these matters aside, what else remains for us to talk about? All our difficulties are related to these things. They themselves attribute them to the Shah. Whomever you refer to, says the Shah has said so. Has the Shah said: "Destroy the college? Kill the Ulama!" That fellow entered the Feyziah college (I won't mention his name now. I will do so when I have his ears cut off) and blew his whistle and ordered the commandos to begin. He shouted: "What are you waiting for? Demolish and plunder the rooms, destroy those who are the enemies of His Majesty." When we objected why they did so, they answered: "It was the king's order. These people are his Majesty's enemies. Israel is a friend of His Majesty." Israel's agents are engaged in sabotage work in Iran. What ill-omened secrets are involved? Should we not talk about them? They tell us not to speak of the Shah and Israel. What is the connection between the Shah and Israel? Is the Shah an Israelite?

"May be the S.A.V.A.K. thinks the Shah is an Israelite, but he claims to be a Muslim and appearances show him to be one. Perhaps there is some secrets involved? The S.A.V.A.K. intends to degrade and disgrace the Shah. We see that religion is threatened in this country, but they tell us not to say so. If we do not say so, would religion not be exposed to danger? If we do not say that the Shah is this and that, would he cease to be so?

“Sir, act differently so that they can't say the S.A.V.A.K. intends to remove the Shah. Don't you think this may be true? If you deem it probable, do something. Take these messages to this man, to awaken him. May be he would realize the facts and put an end to these confusions. They blame the Shah for everything. Poor man, don't you know that on the day that a voice is raised and something happens to you, then all these people who surround you, will leave you? These people are servants and middlemen; they have no faith, no loyalty; they are servants of pound sterlings. I am very sorry for the danger in the way of this nation. We are sorry for the ruinous conditions of this country and this government.

“There are many things to say, more than you can imagine. I have got a headache. Tell someone to come and pray.”

It was after these moving words were uttered that Pahlavi's executioners made use of the night's darkness and at 3 a.m., on 15th Khordad 1342, carried away Ayatollah Khomeini from Qum to the Officers' Club in Tehran. After a few days' confinement there, they took him from the Officers' Club to the Eshrat-Abad garrison and imprisoned him in a cell. At the same time, a number of religious leaders of other towns were arrested and put in jail. These painful events took place within a few days.

Following the event of 15th Khordad, the country's affairs were at a standstill, and the people took refuge in mosques with angry cries and shouts. Torrents of telegrams and letters reached Tehran protesting against the regime and supporting the goals of the Ulama. This was followed by the arrival of religious authorities in Tehran to set Ayatollah Khomeini free from prison and continue the duty of struggle which the rightful religion of Islam and Shi'a had appointed for them. Upon his arrest, the Ulama became at once active to liberate him, and by means of manifestoes informed the Muslim nation of the disaster that was about to take place at the hand of imperialistic agents. They did not only warn the government authorities to observe a limit, but also took step in support of religious authorities in general and Imam Khomeini's exalted spiritual position in particular, so that no one would dare in future to cause any damage to such personalities.

After several months of imprisonment, the leader of the Revolution was set free on 17th Farvardin 1343. The authorities imagined that the discomforts, hardships and tortures of the prison would affect his lofty spirit in such a way that he would forsake his combat and abandon his Islamic and revolutionary struggles after being freed. But this showed their sheer and illusory ignorance, for, very soon after these events, the question of the 'capitulation treaty' came up.

This disgraceful (capitulation) agreement, the bill of which was presented to the assembly in the last week of Mehr 1343 and was

easily ratified by both houses of Parliament, placed the life, property and honour of Iranians from the lowest to the highest in the hand of American subjects, so that if the lowest American subject killed the highest-ranked Iranian without any excuse, our government had no right even to arrest and prosecute the murderer. As the ratification of this bill was contrary to all Islamic principles and criteria and a great and intolerable insult to a Muslim nation and its religious leaders, Ayatollah Khomeini delivered a fiery and revolutionary discourse in his house in the presence of hundreds of the followers of the school of combat, calling upon the people to rise up and revolt against the satanic regime, thus shaking the foundation of the despotic rule.

This discourse which was the last speech of the founder of the Revolution at that time resulted in his banishment to foreign lands. Even though in the last fifteen years, this discourse has been printed in hundreds of thousands of copies and secretly distributed amongst the people, yet it would be proper to quote parts of it here as an important destiny making historical document which directed the course of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. This historical speech which resulted in the exile of Imam Khomeini was delivered at Qum on the 4th Aban 1343 on the occasion of the birthday anniversary celebrations of Muhammad Reza Shah when the people were forced to decorate and illuminate all the places:

“These days after hearing about the problems of Iran, I have slept little. I am uneasy and troubled at heart. In deep sorrow, I am counting the days waiting for death. Iran has no festival any longer. The festival has been turned into mourning. (By festival is not meant the Shah’s birthday anniversary, but the birthday anniversary of Fatima, daughter of the Prophet and wife of Imam Ali (A), which happened to coincide with the 4th of Aban). They have illuminated everywhere and celebrated and danced when they have sold us and our independence. They continued their illumination and dancing. If I had been in their place, I would have forbidden these illuminations, and in their place I would have asked them to raise black flags over shops and houses. Our dignity is trampled upon, our greatness gone, and the honour of Iranian army destroyed. They took a bill to the Parliament to join us to the Vienna Pact to begin with, and then made military advisers who are all American, together with their families and administrative staff and whoever is related to them, immune against every crime that they may commit in Iran.

“If an American servant or cook murders your religious authority in the middle of the market or trample upon him, the Iranian policeman has no right to stop him. Nor have Iranian courts the right of interrogation or trial in such a case. The matter must be followed up in America where the masters will issue the verdict. The former government had approved this agreement and had kept it a secret. The present

government took it to the Parliament a few days ago, to both houses, and ratified it with a simple rising and sitting, and once more they kept quiet about it. Then they brought it to the assembly where some opposition was shown to it, but it was ratified, and shamefully ratified. The government defended this disgraceful bill most shamefully, and lowered the Iranian nation below the rank of American dogs. If an American dog is run over by someone, he is prosecuted, even if that person is the Shah of Iran. But if an American cook runs over the Shah of Iran, or over any other authority or a man of consequence, no one has the right to prosecute him. Why? Because they wanted to ask America for loan, and America asked for this in return.

“What can we do with this calamity? What can the Ulama do with it? Where can they take refuge to? What country can they appeal to? Other countries think that it is the Iranian nation which has humbled itself? They don't know that the Iranian government and Parliament have done so. This Parliament has no connection with the nation. It has been created with the force of the bayonet. What connection does it have with the nation?

The Iranian nation has not given its vote to it. The high-ranked religious leaders prohibited the election. The nation followed suit and refused to vote. These deputies are sitting there by the force of the bayonet. In one of the history textbooks printed this year for children, a false statement that removing the influence of the Ulama is useful for the welfare of this nation is made. So the welfare of the nation depends on the annihilation of this group. Yes this is true. The influence of the Ulama does not allow this nation to be enslaved sometimes by Britain and sometimes by America. The influence of the Ulama does not allow Israel to control Iranian economy, or allow Israelite goods to be sold in Iran, duty free.

“If the Ulama had had any influence, they would have rebuked this Parliament and government and expelled the deputies from Parliament. They would not have permitted a puppet of America to commit such wrong deeds. He would have been driven out of Iran. Is the Ulama's influence harmful for the nation? No it is harmful for you traitors, not for the nation.

“I give a warning! O, army, I give a warning! O, politicians, I give a warning! O, Iranian merchants, I give a warning! O, religious leaders, learned men, theological students, I give a warning! O, gentlemen, O, Najaf, O, Qum, O, Mashhad, O, Tehran, O Shiraz, I give a warning! There are secrets behind the veil, of which we are not aware. In the Parliament it was declared: “Do not let the veils be lifted.” So it is clear that they are deciding on a fate for us. What can they do to us worse than this? I don't know what is worse than captivity. What is worse than abjection?

“Tell us if the country is under American occupation. If so, then

throw us all out of this country. What do they want to do to us? What does this government say? What does this Parliament say? What has this illegal Parliament done to us? This is a Parliament which has been declared illegal by the verdict of the religious authorities, and its members do not belong to the nation. This is a Parliament whose members boast by saying: "We.... We.... We are the products of the White Revolution." Which White Revolution? They have suppressed us. I am aware of people's hunger, of the depressing state of agriculture. Come and think of something for this country, and for this nation. You keep on borrowing and enslaving yourselves. Of course there is a dollar accompanying slavery. But you intend to take the dollars and make us work as slaves.

"Islam is being discarded. O, Islamic nations, O, Islamic leaders, O, Presidents of Islamic republics, O, Kings of Islamic realms, O, Shah of Iran, redress the wrongs which you have done yourselves and come to our relief. Should we be trampled upon by American boots simply because we are a weak nation, and lack dollars? America is worse than Britain, Britain worse than America, and Soviet Russia worse than both of them and the wickedest of all. But today we are dealing with these wicked ones, and with America. The President of America should realize that he is the most hated person in the world. To our nation, today, he is the most hated, for, our nation has been treated by him most unjustly. The Quran and the nation are hostile to him.

"These are not true deputies; they are not deputies of Iran, and even if they were, I would dismiss them. They are discharged as deputies. All the bills which have been approved by the Parliament since the beginning of the constitution are invalid. They do not recognize the law in accordance with the text of the law, and according to the terms and article two of the supplement to the constitutional law.

"As long as there is no supervision by religious authorities over the Parliament, no law is valid. Which religious authority has exercised supervision? And now the hand of the Ulama must be severed? If there were five priests or even one priest in this Parliament, they would have rebuked these people and would not have permitted them to commit such acts. I told those (deputies) who opposed the bill: "It was shameful. Why did you not reject this man? Was it enough to express opposition? And keep on flattering and giving compliments? Your opposition should have taken the form of rising all together and creating an uproar to prevent its ratification. Will everything be remedied by merely saying that you object? You saw that it could not. You should not have allowed the session to be held and should have left the Parliament."

"We do not consider legal this so-called law, Parliament or

government.

They are traitors to the country. O, God, aid the Muslims in their affairs, and grant greatness to the holy religion of Islam. O, God, annihilate traitors who betray this land and Islam and Quran.”

But what happened during the nine days to Iran and Iranians following this fiery and revolutionary and historical discourse? The great leader of the Revolution following his significant speech about capitulation, in a manifesto, condemned the Shah's treason in securing the ratification of the bill of Iran's captivity by the force of the bayonet, and called upon all classes from the Iranian nation to be united to the last and to support Islam and Iran's independence at the cost of their lives.

What is important and certain are the good intention, sympathy and interest in the promotion and victory of the Revolution shown in the depth of the heart of every single exalted Islamic leader, and it has been these noble men who have made clear their real thoughts on various problems through their speeches and interviews. As Imam Khomeini has repeatedly declared, the victory of the Muslim Iranian nation, in addition to the explicitness and decisiveness of leadership, has depended and will depend on the unity of word and action of all classes in safeguarding and continuation of victory, and avoidance of dispersion and differences.

Informed enemies and ignorant friends have not yet been able to estimate the miraculous and amazing effect of unity, or to understand the degree and extent of the sufferings and hardships borne by our contemporary Ulama for the success of this great movement.

Some newly-risen individuals and pseudo-revolutionary anti-revolutionaries have summed up the idea of combat in the words 'prison' and 'banishment,' and measure people's services and their sufferings and the extent of their role and effect on the revolution only by the length of their terms of imprisonment and exiles and if an individual does not satisfy these criteria, he is to be counted as anti-revolutionary, at least he should possess no right to social life. In their opinion, one year's imprisonment or exile of a young theological student may be the equivalent of or higher than fifty years' scholarly endeavours of the great Islamic philosopher, scholar Tabataba'i, who is the pride of Islamic and oriental philosophy, and who has created a dignified position for the Theological Center of Qum in learning and thoughts, and has trained such disciples as Scholar Mutahhari, Scholars Montazeri, Makarem, Rabbani, Noori, Khaz'ali, Amini, Javadi, Sobhani, Beheshti, Moffateh, Moussavi and hundreds of other crusading men of learning, whose activities and efforts were the source of pride for the Theological Center.

CHAPTER TEN

A SURVEY OF A 'CHARACTER-BUILDING' SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

“A great man of Qum will invite people towards truth and freedom, and they will accept his call resolutely and with an iron will gather round him. They are individuals who fear no calamities and unpleasant happenings, and never tire of combat and endeavour. Their only hope and refuge is God. Ultimate victory and success belong to chaste and virtuous people and those who follow the way of God.”

‘Sixth Imam’

“God Almighty reasons with the city of Qum and its people as well as other towns. In the period of Absence a day will come when Qum and its people will act as a plea for other towns. The city of Kufah will be emptied of Shi‘as and lovers of the Prophet’s household, and knowledge and learning will depart from there, whereas Qum will become the city of learning from where all knowledge will spread to other regions of the world.”

‘Seventh Imam’

These two utterances delivered in the form of an amazing predic-

tion and in such a lucid way are quoted from two exalted and divine personalities and two impeccable leaders of the Shi'as, namely the sixth and seventh Imams, written in pages 445 and 446 of volume two of 'Safinatol-Bohar' which has been handed down to us. It is exhilarating and soul-inspiring for believers, and at the same time astonishing and vanquishing for unbelievers and skeptics that the sixth Imam, the founder of the Shi'a creed and leader of the Ja'fari faith, and his son the seventh Imam, have twelve centuries ago, made such a clear and definite prediction concerning the present position of Qum, and have given the world and its people such good tidings about the rise of a man from an Islamic land.

Today, as Islam and atheism confront each other in an unequal war, everyone can see and find a new life by seeing that the above divine promise has been fulfilled, and the city of Qum has become the home of the true uprising of the Iranian nation, and the realm of religion, knowledge and creative ideas, as well as the stronghold of the combat with ignorance and corruption, and a centre of honour and virtue and the axis of all human and Islamic moves.

Today Islam can see and find a new life, and atheism can see and thereby tremble that after twelve centuries since that divine tidings was delivered, a great man of religion, named Ayatollah Imam Khomeini, has stood up, and in the way predicted by the sixth Imam, has invited people towards truth and freedom, and they have accepted his call with an iron resolution.

Today the whole world can see that the rightful voice of this superman of religion has echoed under this vault of heaven, and has inspired all the world Muslims and all the oppressed non-Muslims of this planet full of tyranny, with an exciting and life-giving dynamism. As the two exalted Imams have predicted, the city of Qum has become not only the guiding light of this nation, but the refuge of hopes and expectations of all Muslims and oppressed peoples of the world.

Let us now throw a brief glance at the city of Qum. This blessed city which turned into a center of lofty human ideals and Islamic movements attained its deserved height of splendour from the time that the holy shrine of the great and chaste lady of Islam, Fatimah Masooma, granted it honour and nobility. Eversince, the small town of Qum has borne witness to a new historical and history-making phase.

The blessing of this noble lady's shrine has made Qum the refuge of the devotees of the household of virtue and purity and center of attention of distinguished Islamic personalities. Since then, Islamic scholars, great Islamologists and those enamoured of the Prophet's household and Imam Ali have been drawn to this land, residing in the vicinity of the holy shrine. Gradually, various important theological centers were established in Qum to propagate Islam and a nucleus of

learning was formed which continued to flourish and produced distinguished narrators, orators, jurists, thinkers and religious authorities for the Islamic society, each of whom has won a lofty position in the history of Islamic intellectual endeavours.

The Theological Center of Qum which was founded by the great scholar of divinity Ayatollah Haj Sheikh Abdul-Karim Hayeri Yazdi, has become in the last sixty years a most powerful, destiny-making, intellectual foundation in Iran and the Islamic world.

In view of the heavy responsibility which the Theological Center of Qum has had in the history of social, political and Islamic struggles in Iran and other Islamic lands during the last sixty years, we decided to give in this volume of 'Ten Decades of Ulama's Struggle' an account of the oscillating lives of the great men and banner-bearers of this center. These descriptions may prove valuable to those historians and investigators who wish to clarify certain problems which have remained obscure concerning this pioneering society and may serve as a reliable source for further research. They may illustrate how in this chaotic world and this fearful abyss, the Muslim nations have succeeded in overthrowing the Pharaohs and their foundations by means of reliance on Islamic universal criteria.

The Humanistic and Revolutionary Charter of Qum's Theological Center

The city of Qum is described beautifully as follows by Ayatollah Taleghani, a model of chastity, virtue and a crusader who believed only in Islam, humanity, honour and human dignity to the end of his life and fought for these principles, and even his death, mourned by the whole nation of Iran produced a unity of hearts.

Listen to his warm and eloquent utterances about the city of Qum:

"The city of Qum has been the city of a genuine Islamic and human uprising; the city of the followers of the school of the Prophet's household; the city which has been the source of changes and transformation in other cities of Iran. Qum has been the cradle which has nourished many great narrators, scholars and philosophers such as Mulla Sadra and Hayeri, and then comes the turn of the uprising of Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Yazdi, the Abazar of the time. These doors, walls and courtyard are my memories of fifty years. Even now they inspire and press my heart and an occult voice whispers in my ears. You cannot realize how inspiring these doors and walls are for me. Now I can hear the loud protesting voice of Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Yazdi here in this same courtyard. His voice under the deadly lashes of Reza Khan reaches my ears, and I can hear the thumping of his soldiers'

military boots at the moment when they attacked this holy shrine with guns and tanks. We were there in their midst, and were beaten and bayoneted, but we stood up to fight.”

What did Reza Khan really want to say?

Ayatollah Taleghani continues to say:

“After a year, this old Abazar of the time, this man who lived on a piece of dry bread was freed from prison and banished to the shrine of Abdol-Azim. When I went to visit him he showed his arms on which the scars of lashes could still be seen.”

That is how Ayatollah Taleghani speaks of Qum and of the great fighters who raised their banner of combat in this city. And now we wish to speak of the city of uprising, as it is called by Ayatollah Taleghani, the city of genuine human and Islamic uprising, and of its theological center which opened the bright horizon of hopes and ideals before the oppressed people for Iran during the dark rule of Pahlavi.

As we said before, Qum's Theological Center found a new life since Ayatollah Sheikh Abdol Karim migrated to that town, and it began its present magnificent life.

That great man of religion was the bright light of a circle of men of learning and virtue and served as the nucleus round which scholars gathered. That godly, learned and chaste man educated such accomplished disciples in his school that in the days of hostility and suppression of Islam, knowledge and ideas, when Reza Khan and other hirelings of foreign powers had decided to trample upon everything standing for religion and human honour, united even more strongly his followers and disciples to withstand all slaughters. The number of his disciples rose to six hundred and these stood up valiantly against world-devourers' plots and tyranny of Reza Khan's rule. They refused to give up their religion for worldly things and although all of them were exalted and worthy of respect, there rose from amongst them such noble men as the great Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and other religious authorities, scholars and jurists of whom the Theological Center is highly and fittingly proud. Each of these men has been the illuminating light of Islamic circles, ever since Sheikh Abdol-Karim Hayeri had gathered round himself constructive men of thought and school, and had turned the city of Qum into a center for the propagation of Islamic ideas in the whole of Iran.

In fact it was since he resided in Qum that this city became the center of learning and intellectuality of the Islamic world, and the abode of the exalted authorities and social and intellectual leaders. It was turned into a base which had inherited research and dynamism from the Alawi school, and stability, profundity and precision about Islamic matters from the fruitful Ja'afari jurisprudence.

The fundamental goal and program of a center of learning which

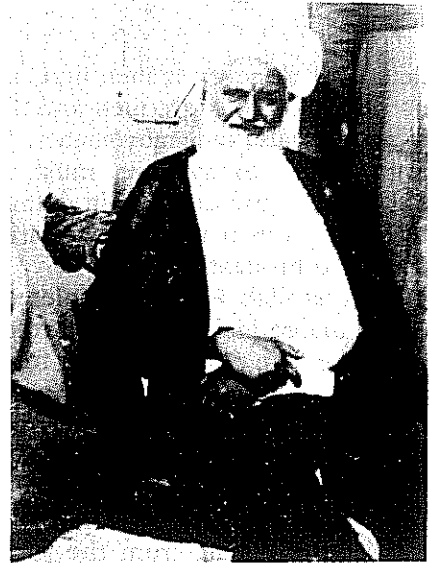
has been recognized as the base of men of knowledge and combat, and the abode of Shi'a guidance in the world, is in the first place to preserve the authenticity of all Islamic branches of knowledge, to promote scientific goals, to guide the people in Islamic matters, to enlighten public minds and to direct the course of Muslim thoughts in social and political life.

It is through being inspired by the above goals that an army in search of knowledge, freedom and chastity is trained in that exalted center, thus producing distinguished researchers, historians, commentators, narrators, orators, preachers, missionaries and philosophers, all of whom are armed with the weapon of religious knowledge and despatched to all parts of the country in order to defend Islamic facts and truth.

Qum's Theological Center has constantly paid attention to people's social and spiritual needs and has taken effective steps in training fine preachers, writers and well-informed investigators. It is now passing through the highest and best phase of its constructive life, directed in its administrative and scholastic programs by exalted authorities who do their utmost in realizing this character building objective.

From the time that Reza Khan appeared on the political scene of Iran, the city of Qum was able to reveal its humanistic, historical and Islamic nature and this time coincided with the period when Ayatollah Hayeri as a religious leader of lofty ideas acted as a religious authority of the Shi'a world, and performed his duties of leadership in that city.

At the time the Theological Center of Qum was so flourishing that it could be compared to other famous centers founded by Behbahani, Sheikh Ansari, Mirza Shirazi, Akhond Mulla Muhammad Kazem Khorassani, and the contemporary master Agha Zia al-Din Araqi. Each of these men of God has trained many other distinguished disciples who have played a great role in the history of thought, faith and religious school.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

BIOGRAPHY OF AYATOLLAH HAYERI

The late Ayatollah Haj Sheikh Abdul Karim Hayeri Yazdi was born in 1276 of the Hijrah year in the village of Mehr-Jerd of Yazd. He was a most exalted scholar of the center of Haj Mirza Muhammad Hassan, known as Mirza Shirazi in Samerah, and then participated in the centers directed by the late Mirza Muhammad Taqi and Sayyed Muhammad Fesharaki.

In 1316, he went to the town of Arak on the invitation of the religious leaders of that town and resided there for a few years. When he came to settle permanently in Qum, he laid the foundation stone of the Theological Center close to the holy shrine of Fatimah Massoumah, the noble lady of Islam, and very soon he succeeded in captivating the attention of various scholarly gatherings of the world to this center. It can in fact be claimed that his going to Qum and his establishing of this center opened a new chapter in the expansion of Islamic culture in the Shi'a world. Thus, the city of Qum which had been a center of attention for Shi'ah leaders since early Islam, was about to add another brilliant page to its proud history, and when Ayatollah Boroujerdi joined this city, it became the main axis of all Islamic theological centers in the world.

Although we have no intention of giving all the biographical

details of these great men here, and wish mainly to deal with the way of life of these godly men and their intellectual influence in promoting Islamic goals and movements, yet since Qum has assumed a great importance today, we must mention certain dates, places and individuals, and describe in detail the life of Ayatollah Hayeri from the beginning down to the foundation of Qum's Theological Center and finally to his death.

Ayatollah Hayeri completed his earlier education at Ardekan of Yazd under Majdol-Ulama Ardakani and other scholars of Ardakan. Then he left for Yazd and found his way to the Khan Theological School, and while he resided there, he studied under the late Haj Mirza Sayyed Hassan Wamegh, and Agha Sayyed Yahya Yazdi.

In his youth, he emigrated to Iraq, and resided in the Theological Center there which was managed by the great religious leader Ayatollah Mirza Muhammad Hassan Shirazi, and continued his higher theological studies, benefiting from the study circles of eminent masters such as Agha Sayyed Muhammad Tabataba'i Fesharaki Isfahani, and Ayatollah Mojaddad.

After the death of these two scholars, he left for holy Najaf where he studied under Akhond Mulla Muhammad Kazem Khorassani, author of 'Kefaya', and Sayyed Muhammad Kazem Yazdi, author of 'Arvat', until he attained the rank of an Islamic jurisprudential expert (Ijtihad).

He then left for holy Karbala where for many years he was engaged in religious instructions and training men of learning and virtue. This phase lasted until 1332 of the Hijrah when the late Haj Sayyed Isma'il, son of Ayatollah Haj Agha Mohsen Araqi invited him to visit Arak to set up a study circle. He accepted the invitation and spent eight years there teaching jurisprudence and principles to a number of scholars of Arak and other places who wished to join his circle.

After spending eight fruitful years in Arak, he left in 1340 for a new year pilgrimage to Qum, and it was in this trip that a new phase of his life and a fresh chapter in the magnificent history of Qum began.

His religious position was at that time so exalted that the news of his trip had reached Qum even before his arrival. Thus the people, following the example of the Ulama, gathered in large groups to welcome and receive the benefit of meeting him.

For that welcome, many great religious leaders were present including the late Bafqi, a model of learning and virtue. It was he who persuaded people to request Ayatollah Hayeri to reside permanently in Qum.

The large crowd of welcomers went as far as Jamal-Abad, four kilometers out of Qum towards Arak, and when they met Ayatollah Hayeri, they decided to rest for an hour there. It was then that they

requested him to settle in that city and for the establishment of a theological center. He was then brought to the city amidst the cheers and enthusiasm of the people, to reside in the house of the late Haj Sheikh Mehdi Pa'in Shahri.

In the new year which coincided with Rajab of 1340, a large number of pilgrims, including religious leaders had come from different parts of the country to be close to the holy shrine at the transition time to the new year. These people, too, hastened to meet Ayatollah Hayeri to persuade him to give his assent for residing in Qum.

The matter was much discussed in family, street and mosque circles, and preachers encouraged all congregations to insist on their request. It is narrated in biographical accounts that Haj Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Bafqi was the most insistent of all since he had been fully acquainted with the Ayatollah at Najaf and well aware of his position as a man of learning and virtue and as a religious authority. He thought it a pity not to give the people the chance to benefit from his deep knowledge through a study circle in Qum.

The fine author of 'Treasure of Scholars' writes in the chapter on Ayatollah Hayeri:

"The late Bafqi told the writer and some others that Ayatollah Hayeri had on his way to Mashhad seen the sorry state of Qum including the centers of Feyziah and Dar-e-Shafe. He had witnessed how this theological college which had been the study center of such exalted masters as the late Muhaddeth, Mulla Mohsen Feyz, Mulla Abdol-Razzaq Lahiji, Sadr al-Mota'allehin Shirazi and others had been turned into a refuge for beggars, lunatics and poor people. He had expressed great regret at this and wished that something would be done but he thought it difficult to transfer the Theological Center from Arak to Qum. However, the insistence of Sheikh Bafqi, in spite of the hesitation of Ayatollah Hayeri, eventually won the latter's assent with the following remark:

"Have you not come across the account narrated from the two impeccable Imams about the end of Time when Qum will become the center of learning, when knowledge will creep underground like a snake from Kufah and Najaf and raise its head at Qum?"

He answered that he had. Bafqi asked whether he believed in it or doubted it. He answered that he believed in it.

Bafqi said: "Don't you wish to set up this center by your hand to make your name everlasting?" He answered in the affirmative. Then Bafqi said: "Then make a decision to stay here and send a message to Arak to those who wish to come and stay at Qum."

In addition to Bafqi, there were other distinguished men of Qum such as Ayatollah Hajj Mirza Muhammad Arbab, Ayatollah Haj Sheikh Muhammad Reza'i Save'i, Haj Sayyed Hassan, custodian of Fatimah's

shrine, Haj Mirza Mahmud Rowhani, all of whom expressed the same desire. Hesitatingly, Ayatollah Hayeri bided beads as to whether it was advisable for him to stay in Qum and invite other masters and his disciples in Arak to do the same. Although Ayatollah Hayeri was not in the habit of basing his decision on an augury, yet one early morning, while visiting the holy shrine, he consulted the Quran at random and verse 93 of chapter Yusuf encouraged him to decide in favour of staying in Qum. He returned to the house of Haj Sayyed Ali Mustafavi, a Qum merchant, to announce his decision to all those who were waiting for it, at which they were all overjoyed.

The late Haj Mirza Abdol-Hossain Saheb al-Dareyn who served as distributor under Ayatollah Hayeri told the writer in Arak that when Hayeri's message reached Arak, he and Haj Mirza Hedayatollah Wahid Golpaygani were the first to join Hayeri after making the usual payment to Arak's divinity students, and there Ayatollah announced to him his decision to stay in Qum, saying to him, "I am destined to stay here. If you want, God is great, you can go and bring your family." Following this, Agha Haji Mirza Hedayatollah left for Iraq, informing the disciples and friends of Ayatollah of the latter's decision and soon, many of them came to Qum and soon started laying the foundation of that center. Thus, the impeccable Imam's prediction proved true and Hazrat Ayatollah Hayeri at the height of his Islamic and humanitarian thoughts, decided to follow suit and settle in Qum, thus giving a new life to this center.

Qum became then a center of Islamic ideas of the Shi'ah world, training and nourishing great leaders each of whom opened a fresh chapter in the field of Alawi Shi'ism and the history of the progressive Ulama.

The Works and Services of Ayatollah Hayeri, Founder of the Theological Center

The fruitful life of Ayatollah Hayeri in the city of Qum has not only left us with his illuminating thoughts over the wide world of Islam and Shi'ism. There are further his precious books and treatises which are often resorted to when religious problems in theological circles arise, his exalted disciples who were trained by him and offered to the Shi'a world, and also his great service in emphasizing the fact that Shi'ism does not only mean groaning and mourning, but also protest and shouting. He reminded one once more that what the Islam of Imam Ali has always been seeking is wholly and basically different from the Islam of Mo'avieh. He showed the true identity of the Ulama in the Islamic society, which is quite different from what had been exhibited by foreign and internal colonizing governments which had installed

pseudo-Ulama in order to hide the genuine visage of the Ulama. With persistent fervour, he succeeded in removing the veil which foreign colonization and internal exploitation had placed between the people and the Ulama, and showed that the Shi'a Ulama are the followers of a school which has Imam Ali as its leader, and have never been apart from people, and have always adopted the example of that leader's way of a simple life and abode, and in spite of having all the tempting wealth of the Muslim nation at his disposal, has been content with a single dish for his meal.

If we are to present a list of his works and services as a great founder, we may offer the following:

1) The formal establishment of Qum's Theological Center which God willing, will last until the advent of the Twelfth Imam.

2) The establishment of Sahami and Fatemi hospitals which were built out of one-third of the inheritance fund left by Sayyed Muhammad Fatemi for the benefit of theological students, and which are now managed by other exalted religious authorities.

3) Building the Qum river dam after the havoc caused by floods which did much damage to houses, streets and even to the holy shrine. The people had a great share in helping to build it.

4) Repair of the Feyziah and Dar-e-Shafe schools which were in ruins before his arrival and on the point of destruction.

5) Building a 'wash-house' for the dead which was badly needed, on the south bank of the Qum river.

6) Building the citadel of Mobarak-Abad for families whose dwellings had been demolished in the flood. (This district is still known as Rahbar street.)

7) Authorship of the valuable book, 'Dorar-ol-Fawayed' on jurisprudence, most topics of which he taught in his circle.

8) Writing the precious book, 'A-Salaat' as a source of reference for scholars and jurists.

9) Founding the Feyziah college library which is now one of the riches of Iran, and is unrivalled not only from the point of view of quantity, but also of quality as compared to important libraries in the world of Islam.

10) Designing the Hayeri cemetery known today as Haj Sheikh Cemetery.

11) Designing the New Cemetery.

12) The disciples of his school. This is the greatest gift left by Ayatollah Hayeri as the finest intellectual and spiritual heritage to benefit many generations to come and to expand the field of knowledge in the world.

Some contemporary writers say in this connection:

"The late Hayeri is such a genius of scholarship that he has

produced many symbols of virtue, honour and fully-qualified theological experts, men of learning, and fine teachers and masters.”

A Brief Account of His Character

The disciples of his scholastic and moral school are always full of praise and admiration for him. His moral, mental and spiritual qualities were such that those who met him or attended his study circles felt a deep affection for him.

The View of Ayatollah Akhond Mulla Ali Ma'asumi

One of the disciples of that great master was the late Akhond Mulla Ali Ma'asumi Hamadani who was a distinguished religious authority coming from the country's west. He always expressed a great respect for his master and spoke of his deep conviction, his morals, his sincerity, and talked of the encouragement he gave to men of learning, which showed his humanity and his love of educating the younger generation and providing the chance for innovators. It was an account which could prove beneficial even to the selfish world of today. He said:

“I had newly returned from Qum to Hamadan and had repaired the school of Akhond Hamadani in Shoorbon street, and had gathered a number of pupils for discussion and teaching. Few people were aware of our condition and time was passing. One day the school servant entered the class and said that a gentleman wished to see me. I asked him to bring him in. When he joined our small group, he had a few purses of money on him. He was a well-known merchant of Hamadan and said that he was returning from a visit to Ayatollah Hayeri where he went to pay his religious taxes. Ayatollah Hayeri had asked him where he lived and he answered that his home was Hamadan. On hearing this name, Hayeri had told the merchant that he should not have taken the trouble to come to Qum since he could pay the taxes to the Reverend Ma'asumi in Hamadan, and that this would bring a greater heavenly reward, since that gentleman is a trustworthy man of religion and is in charge of a study circle there. So the purses containing a considerable sum of money were handed to me, and this enabled me to act generously in the financial affairs of the center. Again, as he was a well-known man in that region, his benevolent act produced much excitement encouraging others to follow suit, so that the center can now accommodate five-hundred students, teachers, congregation Imams and preachers.

In fact, the nucleus of this center owes its existence to the benevolence, commitment and humanitarian activities of Sheikh

Hayeri. It should be mentioned that the Theological Center of Hamadan has hitherto offered the society many religious scholars, some of whom have trained others in the Theological Center of Qum. Among these masters are the martyred scholar Dr. Muhammad Mofatteh, the exalted master Hossein Noori, and Sheikh Hassan Noori and other distinguished men.

Among the brilliant achievements of Akhond Hamadani, who was a zealous lover of books and libraries, was the opening of a library in the west of the country in 1340 containing over 20,000 volumes of precious books on various Islamic branches of knowledge as well as valuable manuscripts including the philosophical treatises of Avicenna and Farabi in their own handwriting. There are also other manuscripts the list of which is compiled by Dr. Maqsudi, former librarian of this library. The writer and others who have benefited so much from this institution are greatly indebted to the admirable and fine intention of the late Hayeri.

Ayatollah Sayyed Shahab al-Din Najafi Mar'ashi's View

This Reverend gentleman who is another distinguished disciple of Qum's Theological Center, made the following brief remark concerning his exalted master: "He possessed distinctive noble qualities which were the same both externally and internally. He loved his disciples and was deeply attached to men of learning and virtue. He believed in preserving the secrets of clericalism. Concerning the forceful unveiling of women, he sent a telegram to Reza Shah and received a very abusive and insulting answer. It was clear that protest was of no avail. In the last six months of his life he was secluded in his own house, and rarely appeared in public. It looked as if he died of grief caused by the installed government, and was repeatedly slandered because of his objections.

Ayatollah Golpaygani's View

Ayatollah Golpaygani who is one of the senior disciples of the late Hayeri, said in an interview on 25 Zihajjeh 1400 about his exalted master: "The late Sheikh possessed many noble qualities, and he seemed to have attained his accomplishments through a hard and long asceticism, otherwise it would not have been an easy matter to pass through such difficult stages. He was a model of humility and modesty, and treated everyone equally. He would sit wherever it was suitable as did the holy Prophet without feeling abased. He was intimate and frank with his friends and pupils. He paid no heed to expensive food, and made a point of partaking of simple foods. He possessed a truly chaste

personality, and often declared that he had never sought a position. He was greatly inclined towards men of learning, considering it a duty to preserve the dignity of the Ulama.

“One day a religious scholar named Sheikh Muhammad Reza Sabeti Savaji had come from Saveh and told the late Hayeri: ‘The people of Saveh have turned aside from Ayatollah Mamaqani and imitate you. Sheikh Hayeri cried out angrily: ‘What has enabled them to consider me superior in learning? There is no material criterion to measure learning so simply and superficially. Why do they give way to such acts?’ He was never interested in wealth and position, and considered his leadership a Divine duty.

“One day a merchant brought him a considerable sum (apparently thirty thousand tomans) which was enough to cover three months’ expenses of the center and its students. Although that money was badly needed by the center at that time, yet when Hayeri realized that the source from which the money had been obtained was not legitimate from a religious point of view and it was open to suspicion, he asked the contributor to refer to another A’lem named Sayyed Abol-Hassan Isfahani, to decide whether the fund was acceptable. Thus out of his uprightness and honesty, he refused to accept such a doubtful contribution despite the urgent need for it for college expenses, and sent the contributor to another man who may not be so particular about his own doubt. At the same time, he did not grudge his colleague a much needed assistance, since they both followed the same goal and ideal.”

Such are those who have trained in the monotheistic school of thought.

The View of the Younger Ayatollah Hayeri in Regard to his Father and Teacher

For a better acquaintance with the character of the founder of Qum’s Theological Center on 26 Muharram 1401, I visited the house of Ayatollah Haj Sheikh Murteza Hayeri, the eldest son of the late Hayeri to question him over this matter.

At first he abstained from answering since he considered praising one’s father implied a praise of oneself. But the question was eventually put differently, that is, he was asked to describe the late Hayeri not as a father, but as his spiritual teacher and the influence the latter has exercised on him as one of his pupils.

He produced a pamphlet he had written on this matter in which the following three points describe his father’s qualities which are worthy of attention in these days where egoism is the rule.

- 1) Respecting the rights of the spouse.

"He possessed certain characteristics which amazed people, revealing a remarkable degree of self-refinement and Islamic education. In his family life, he paid attention to matters which are often ignored by others. For instance, he had another wife before marrying our mother, who had lost her sight, but he looked after her without rousing our attention. I have been told by the late Farid Araki that in spite of his age he carried her about whenever the need arose, and he did so in such a way that would not make us jealous.

2) Generosity to others

For many years, he financially supported the late Sayyed Muhammad Fesharaki, theologian who lived in abject poverty, and after Fesharaki's death, he supported his children even though his own income was inadequate, to satisfy his own needs.

3) Family's hunger on the death of the founder of the Theological Center.

This point is seen in the words of the exalted Leader of the Revolution in 1342 before the happening of 15th Khordad, by which he repudiated the nonsensical statements of the Shah, saying:

"Are we parasitic when our Hayeri on his passing away leaves his family without supper, and are they not parasitic who have filled foreign banks with their money and still continue to plunder the nation?"

The question which was put was this:

"In view of the chastity and remarkable cautiousness of this founder of the Theological Center, should the observance of Islamic standards and economy be to that extent that the founder's children have no security of livelihood?"

The answer given was as follows: "The truth is exactly what the late Hayeri said: 'Religious funds were spent according to certain regulations. The fund was kept in special places to avoid their being spent for personal uses, and our father had earmarked it for definite cases, giving no one the right of alternation and interference. On his death we were short of cash and we borrowed 50 tomans from Sayyed Abol-Fazl Zanjani for personal expenses until we were relieved later on.'"

These three questions were answered by Ayatollah Haj Sheikh Morteza Hayeri who like his father, has a great reputation for learning and chastity and is indifferent to material comfort. He lives in a humble and simple house as did his father and is a fine model of him. May God encourage his example among the Ulama and men of learning!

His Death After Fifteen Years' Endeavour

Ayatollah Hayeri lived a life full of endeavour for fifteen years in

Qum, namely from 1340 to 1355, from the age of 68 to 83. But these fifteen years of this follower of the school of Ali and lover of Imam Hossain's chastity, leadership and martyrdom were full of sufferings, hardships, combats and crusades. His departure from Arak to Qum coincided with the British inspired coup d'état of Reza Khan and the beginning of hostility with Islam. In those years, when the aim of foreign colonial policies had been to destroy the criteria and vestiges of Islam at the hand of their puppet rulers, the heaviest blows were dealt upon Islamic societies, theological centers, clerical gatherings, mosques and congregational centers and whatever was the emblem of Islam and of Shi'ism in particular. Day after day, suffocating policies were adopted against Islam and the Ulama, especially against those who were progressive. Everyday, difficulties and repression increased, and this anti-Islamic policy showered great hardships upon the Divine followers of the school of Islam and wore them out physically and mentally.

But Ayatollah Hayeri was not a man to withdraw from the scene, or leave the banner of religion and learning in the hand of satans and satanic elements. So with a courage inherited from the schools of Imam Ali and Imam Hossain, he stood up firmly against all these hardships, and decided that the best way of combat was to establish even more firmly the Theological Center and train his disciples as an army of religion and virtue.

He saw that big powers rushed in from every side to burn up like poisonous winds the odorous flowers of this heavenly garden of religion and chastity and leave in their place fearful thorns and thistles. He logically realized that he could not face the enemy in an unequal battle with his small followers. But he trained this small army for a day when it would be powerful enough to confront the enemies of religion victoriously.

But this combat, mental and negative in nature, even though being in the direction of his mission, was hardly satisfying to his heart, and the blows he received were most painful to his heart and spirit so that at the end of his life he spent most of his time in retirement and seclusion, and sometimes he told his companions that he heartily prayed God for death so as not to witness any longer the hostility of foreign powers and internal rulers with religion.

He had often told his intimate friends that even though he felt sure that Islam would eventually win over infidelity, yet he was too old to live to see this victory. Therefore, he preferred to die so as not to see the violation of the holy religion of Islam and Quran and Muslims' honour by internal politicians backed by foreign colonisers. That is why his friends, companions as well as a great religious authority of the center declared after his death that he had died of grief.

He spent his last days of life fighting his physical weakness. He passed away on the night of 17 Zel-Gha'dah 1355 at the age of 83, at a time when Reza Khan's anti-religious policies have reached their peak, the latter having allowed foreign politics to penetrate all the foundations of Islam and Shi'ism.

The author of 'Treasure of Scholars' writes about Ayatollah Hayeri and his death and its deep effect on the Ulama's and Islamic circles and the wounded Iranian Muslim nation of that day: "His death was a great loss in that critical and gloomy period when the mysterious hands of all the colonisers and enemies of religion and the country's independence were most active against the Quran and Islam, constantly imposing iniquitous innovations on those who were feeble of belief. They had exiled, destroyed or forced into seclusion all the great scholars and active and protesting religious leaders, and he was the only one left to combat the enemies and foreigners in his negative and positive way and check their aggression.

"He had managed to bring that enemy down to his knees who had claimed that he got rid of all opponents except this one whom he wished to destroy too, to be freed from the bounds of religion and faith.

"When on the morning of his death the news reached Tehran and other places of the country, the people mourned and lamented this loss, and the world predicted gloomy life for Shias and other believers, expecting many other great calamities.

"At that time, performing funeral rites and demonstrations were forbidden, but the people of Qum, men and women of all classes were so distressed that they moaned and cried as if a thunderbolt had fallen from heaven burning everything. At that time of suppression, such a demonstration was carried out by people the like of which is rarely seen. The late Ayatollah Haj Mirza Fakhr al-Din Sheikh-al-Islam read the late Hayeri's burial prayer, and he was buried in the mosque near the shrine, where the deceased himself used to pray and teach."

His household, one of virtue and learning, consisted of five offsprings, two sons and three daughters, all of whom were thoroughly educated. His sons are Ayatollahs Haj Agha Murteza, and Haj Mahdi, and his daughters got married respectively with Hojatol-Islam Haj Sheikh Muhammad Tuysarkani, Haj Sheikh Ahmad Hamadani, and Ayatollah Haj Sayyed Muhammad Mohaqiq Damad Yazdi.

Many poems and odes have been composed eulogizing the late Hayeri's asceticism and abstinence, by men of renown, and many opinions have been expressed about his fine qualities the most important of which is uttered by Ayatollah Imam Khomeini, Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and a disciple of the Hayeri school.

In his famous discourse which in a sense inspired the Islamic

movement of Iran and gave direction to the Islamic Revolution, delivered on 13th Khordad 1342 at the Feyzia college concerning the hostility of the government towards religion and the Ulama, he gave a moving warning to the government and its nonsensical abuse of the Ulama, saying:

“You can see this Feyziah college where so many young men spend their youth in these small lodges studying hard and living on 30 or 40 and a maximum of 100 tomans a month. Are they parasitic whereas those who spend millions of tomans on futile matters are not parasitic? Are we spongers when our Sheikh Abdol-Karim Hayeri on his death leaves his children without supper?”

Indeed his household led a life of chastity and moderation under their father's blessing. But the fact is that his household is not limited to two sons and three daughters and his grandchildren. It comprises also his select disciples and men of faith and martyrdom who were brought up in his school, all of whom form a large army of godly men of learning scattered all around Iran, carrying the echo of his voice throughout the world of Islam.

CHAPTER TWELVE

PERIOD OF INTERMISSION AND DIRECTORSHIP OF THREE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES

In the course of the Theological Center's intellectual combats and evolution after the death of its founder, we come across three exalted and progressive religious authorities whose fame and services to the center cannot be passed over. They are the late Ayatollah Hojjat, Ayatollah Sayyed Sadr (Father of Imam Mussa Sadr and Ayatollah Sayyed Reza Sadr), and Ayatollah Sayyed Muhammad Taqi Khawnsari.

These three undertook the difficult task of managing the Theological Center in the critical period following the death of the founder. It was a time when this institution badly needed mental and spiritual impetus against its opponents and its students required the patronage of its kind leaders.

To follow up the work of its noble founder these men rendered the following services in continuation of a hundred years' combat of the Ulama:

- 1) Ayatollah Hojjat, founder of the great cultural foundation. He was a noble jurispudent, and erudite authority, and a fine Islamic biographer who was greatly respected by his master for his knowledge of jurisprudence and principles as well as his chastity and abstinence. This attachment was so deep that the late Hayeri granted him the

privilege of acting as Imam of the congregational prayer of the holy shrine, and was also chosen by him as one of the two executors of his will with certain duties and responsibilities.

Under those critical conditions, he acted as a director for a short time, making use of his particular method in propagating Islamic teachings. He acted in collaboration with other leaders as an intellectual leader of the center after the death of its founder in 1355.

A Brief Biography

Ayatollah Hojjat

Ayatollah Hojjat was the son of divinity scholar, Sayyed Ali Kuh-Kamari, of the village of Kuh-Kamar in Tabriz, and a descendant of Imam Sajjad through twenty-five generations. He started his studies in Azarbayjan and continued it in Najaf under Ayatollah Shari'at Isfahani, Ayatollah Na'ini and the Reverend Zia Araghi. He was deeply interested in his studies and very soon attained the rank of a theologian.

As the climate of Najaf did not suit his health, in 1349, he emigrated to Qum, and owing to his scholarly capabilities, he soon captivated the attention of Ayatollah Hayeri who appointed him as congregational prayer Imam of the Balasar mosque in his own place, and put him in charge of all the religious affairs several months before his own decease.

He possessed a powerful memory, a penetrating mind and fine judgement. He himself said of his memory that after coming across a narrative in Bohar-el-Anwar, he could still remember the content and the page number after twenty years.

He has produced valuable works, one of which is "The revival of the great Tabyan commentary of Sheikh Toossi." He also founded the school of Hojjatia in an area of eight thousand square meters with 126 well-lit and well-equipped student's rooms which are at present occupied. He also established a valuable library in the same school in 1351 at the end of his life. He was helped in this enterprise by the scholar Haj Agha Mehdi Hayeri Tehrani. The library now possesses a total of 10,000 volumes including theological text books, commentaries, literature, annuals, traditions and biographies. The library is open during the day and night to both the resident students of the center and others from outside.

As one who was entrusted with various responsibilities, he sent the following note through Ayatollah Behbahani to the government of the time concerning the prohibition of the woman's veil in public:

"In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. I should like to beg your reverence to remind those in charge of the country's affairs that it would be impossible to carry out acts which are definitely

contrary to the holy religion in certain respects, since this will lead to corruption. I express my thanks for your endeavours.”

Humbly Yours
Muhammad-al-Hossaini al-Kuh-Kamari

Thus he was very much outspoken and fearlessly opposed a government which was fully supported by America and other western governments. He died in 1372 of the Hijrah and left the world of virtue and knowledge mourning sorrowfully for his loss.

Ayatollah Sayyed Muhammad Taqi Khawnsari

Another director of the period of intermission of Qum's Theological Center after the founder's death, was the late Ayatollah Sayyed Muhammad Taqi Khawnsari born in 1305 and died on 7th Zihajja 1371. After finishing his elementary education in his home town, he visited the cities of holy shrine and in Najaf attended the classes of Ayatollah Akhond Mulla Muhammad Kazem Khorassani and Ayatollah Sayyed Kazem Yazdi. After the death of these two masters, he attended the classes of Shari'at Isfahani, Agha Zia-al-Din Araqi and Agha Sheikh Ali Quchani. In the Iraqi revolution against British colonization led by the progressive fighting Ulama, he rose up together with Ayatollah Mirza (known as the second Mirza) and Agha Sayyed Mustafa Kashani to fight Britain and other colonizers, and together with many other Ulama and Iraqi guerrillas, they checked for two months the enemy's advance at one point in spite of the enemy's modern European equipment and outgrowing number.

He was exiled in 1333 to India which was a British colony and after four years he returned to Iran to his home-town of Khawnsar, and was warmly welcomed there. After a brief stay in Khawnsar, he returned to Qum once again and collaborated with the Theological Center. After the founder's death, he joined Ayatollah Hojjat and Ayatollah Sadr in managing the center until the arrival of Ayatollah Boroujerdi, which duty of keeping the center and education of students and orphans he performed most diligently.

Many poems have been composed eulogizing the late Ayatollah Khawnsari, of which we will quote two here. The first poem is by Hojjatol-Islam Nabavi:

“You are a friend of a friend of religion
and an enemy of its enemy,
sustainer of the helpless, and helper
to the friendless.

You are the champion of the arena of
 learning and knowledge,
 and you are a wide realm of knowledge
 and chastity.
 You received the perfect name of
 Muhammad and Taqi,
 from whom truth has become evident
 and resplendant.
 You, crusader who have risen up
 in all purity and honesty,
 are indeed a perfect symbol
 of the Most Powerful.
 It is natural for one to emerge like
 a mine of art and knowledge,
 who has been trained in learning and
 leadership in such a school.
 You are a source of pride and honour
 for all Muslims,
 and a burning fire to the enemies of
 religion and faith.
 May your shadow fall eternally over
 the heads of Muslims,
 and the fate of your enemy be gloomy
 like the world of infidelity.
 Intellect is unable to describe you, monotheist,
 Desiring one, seeking one and singing the praise
 of the Unique One."

The late Hojjatol-Islam Haj Sayyed Hadi Rowhani Rood-Sari has composed the following poem in praise of Ayatollah Khawnsari:

"Khawnsari, the exalted A'lem of the
 time, has passed away,
 The jurisprudent of Muhammad's household,
 of a fine character."

He fought, was captured and imprisoned in order to make the pillar of religion steadfast. He rose to preserve the center and to educate, and the center like a crescent moon turned into a full moon. His holy self led the Friday congregational prayers, and let those thirsting for truth taste its pure water. In the year 1371 after the Hijrah, on the seventh of Zihajjah with glory and magnificence, passed away that chaste and pure ascetic of the world, to join his noble and exalted ancestor. Here Rowhani concludes his poem, since grief did not allow him to continue.

Ayatollah Boroujerdi had dreamt on the night of Ayatollah Khawnsari's death that the exalted A'lem had died and his body was being carried to Qum. He woke up in terror and was expecting an unpleasant event to take place, when he was informed by telephone about Ayatollah Khawnsari's death in Hamadan whose body was being sent to Qum. He arranged for all the theological teachers and students to participate in the funeral ceremony in Qum, where his body was buried next to that of the late Hayeri, founder of the center.

Ayatollah Haj Sayyed Sadr al-Din Musavi

One of the great men from the Theological Center of Qum who attained a high position as a man of learning was Ayatollah Haj Sayyed Sadr-al-Din Musavi. After the death of the founder of the center, he collaborated with his two colleagues to manage this institution and protect it against damage, collapse and dissolution, and encouraged students to continue their studies and preserve the center with all their interest and sincerity.

He was born in 1296 in Kazemeyn in an atmosphere of learning. In 1328 he left for Najaf to continue his studies and joined the classes of Saheb Kefaya and scholar Yazdi. He then came back to Iran and after six years' stay, returned to Iraq. In 1349 he came to settle in Qum on the invitation of Ayatollah Hayeri. He won the favour and attention of Hayeri so much that he was chosen as one of the two executors of his will. After the founder's death, he collaborated with his two colleagues in the management of the center. He died in the morning of 19th Rabi al-Awal 1373, and was buried close to the tomb of the founder, near the holy shrine.

His Character

He possessed a lofty mind, true benevolence and perfect sincerity. He was deeply interested in religious affairs and their promotion, and in matters related to the needy and helpless. He had a great talent and interest in Arabic literature, and has written many books on various Islamic topics showing his mastery of them. In addition to his book of commentary, 'Kefayt-el-Ossul, he has also written 'The History of Islam,' and a book of poems, odes and elegy on the Prophet's household, showing his indifference to rank and position. He has also composed an elegy on Fatimah Zahra in Arabic, showing a great depth of emotion.

A Noble Household

The household of Sadr belong to a noble Islamic family, the

branches of which have spread greatly in the Middle East. Its famous learned members may be found in Iran, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and other Middle East countries. You find such personalities as Ayatollah Sayyed Abdol-Hossain Sharaf al-Din Jabal-Ameli, Sayyed Mohsen Amin, Sayyed Hassan Sadr, Imam Mussa Sadr, Ayatollah Reza Sadr, like a constellation of bright stars in the heaven of learning, and in the field of politics and Islamic administration, illuminating the world of Islam.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE ACADEMIC CURRICULUM OF THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

It would not be out of place here to give a description of the academic curriculum of theological students which aims at training chaste and learned crusaders for Islamic societies.

The first qualification for admission to this group is an adequate knowledge of Persian at the level of elementary education. But what is noteworthy is that many of those who desire to follow the course of theological studies are those who have graduated from high schools and even from universities.

All those who wish to take this course, no matter what their previous level of education has been, must pass through three stages in order to be able later on to attain the rank of religious experts.

1) Preliminary course

The course begins with a basic course of Arabic grammar and composition, to be followed by elementary syntax and logic. The first text-book used by every student is 'Jame-ol-Moghaddamat' consisting of fourteen sections in Persian and Arabic on grammar and syntax, logic, method of learning and drills of difficult conjugations.

The above book has been used as a text-book for several centuries. This is followed by a more elaborate book on grammar and syntax to enable the student later on to understand the texts of annals, traditions,

jurisprudence, principles and commentary, and develop his power of comprehension.

Next to the first book, the student is expected to study the following books: "Alfia-bin-Malek" of Jalal al-Din Suyuti, 'Sharh-e-bin Aghil', 'Sharh-e-Nezam', and 'Sharh Razi on Shafia-bin Hajeb.' He should also memorize the poems of 'Alfia-bin-Malek.'

Then to become more familiar with Arabic literature he studies 'Moghni-al-Labib' of Ibn-Hosham, and Mottawal' of Sa'ed al-Din Taftazani (now the abbreviated edition is used). He must also use more elaborate books of logic such as the commentary of Mulla Abdollah Yazdi, 'Sharh-e Shamsia' and sometimes 'Sharh-e-Matale'e.' This course ends with a brief course on the principles of jurisprudence, in which the text of 'Mo'alem-el-Ossul' is used with many commentaries on it. In this and sometimes in the next course the text of 'Sharaye'e Mohaqiq' is included.

The basic plan of this course has been in use since the Safavid times. The following is the table showing the preliminary course, text-books and objectives:

TABLE I
The Preliminary Course

Order of courses	Books used formerly	Books used now	Objective of the Course
1	Jame-el Moghadamat	Modern Arabic simple grammar	Elementary teaching of Arabic syntax, and preparation for the following course
2	Suyuti	Al-Chawa'ed-al-Assasia	Recognition of Arabic text and structure and its syntax and preparation for the next course
3	Moghni	Tahzib	Mastery of grammar and syntax
4	Hashia	Al-Mantegh	Familiarity with logic and preparation for logical thinking
5	Mottawal or its abbreviated form	Jawaher-el Balaghah	Familiarity with rhetoric and eloquence, and ability to explain the Quran and difficult texts.

1) Intermediate Course

This course consists mainly of reading. After the beginner has completed the elementary course, he enters the intermediate course and his task is mostly that of learning jurisprudence and principles from related text books.

These books which have for long been used are 'Sharh Lomah Shahid Thani', two volumes of 'Sharh Riaz' on jurisprudence, "Ghavanin" of Mirza Qumi on Principles 'KefayatoI-Ossul' of the late Mulla Muhammad Kazem Khorassani, 'Rassa'el' of the late Sheikh Murtaza Ansari on Principles, and 'Makasseb' of Sheikh Ansari on rational jurisprudence.

Table 2 shows the topic, books and objectives of this course:

The Intermediate Course			
Order of courses	Books used formerly	Books used now	Objective of the Course
1	Mo'alem-al-Ossul	Ossul-al-Fagh'h	Familiarity with principles of jurisprudence, and preparation for the next course
2	Ghavanin	Ossul-al-Fagh'h	Deeper knowledge of principles of jurisprudence
3	L'om'e	---	Familiarity with the basis of expertise in jurisprudence
4	Makasseb	---	Mastery of jurisprudential Laws and their uses
5	Rassa'el	---	Mastery of intellectual reasoning in the principles of jurisprudence
6	Kefaya	---	Complete mastery of principles and problems of jurisprudence

3) Advanced Course

This course consists of discussing matters related to jurisprudence and principles outside textbooks. As the student has in previous courses grasped jurisprudential questions presented in the textbooks of jurisprudence, annals and traditions, he attends the master's class to discuss

either questions of jurisprudence or principles as the case may be. The discussion is begun by the master, and students express their views. Sometimes such a discussion may last several weeks or months for a proper analysis and for reaching a conclusion.

The ultimate purpose of these discussions is to reach a proper conclusion and issue a verdict based on the four sources of reasoning. (The four basic sources of Shi'a jurisprudence are the Quran, Tradition, convocation, and intellect. The Shi'a differ from Sunnis on the question of convocation.)

Henceforth, the student according to his ability and talent moves on towards specialization. What is important in jurisprudence and Shi'a expertise is that there arises a need for a jurisprudential verdict at all times with the development of new events which occur with the passage of time. In each new case, the Shi'a expert can deduce the necessary verdict on the basis of jurisprudential laws and by reliance on the four sources of reasoning mentioned above, and discover a proper Islamic and religious solution.

Table 3 shows the optional courses and their objectives:

Optional Courses		
Order of courses	Courses	Objective
1	Manzuma	Familiarity with philosophy (Pre-requisite)
2	Esharat	Familiarity with peripatetic thinking and gnosticism
3	Bedayat-al Hekma	Familiarity with various schools of philosophy (Pre-requisite)
4	Nehayat al-Hekma	Familiarity with philosophical topics (Pre-requisite)
5	Asfar	Full mastery of philosophical matters and philosophical thinking
*	Sharh Tajrid	Familiarity with scholastic theology
*	Maghamat Hariri	Familiarity with Arabic Literature

* Maghamat
Hamadani

* Moalaghat-
e Sab'e

Extra-Curricular Studies

A student in his leisure time is expected to undertake certain extra-curricular studies and discussions. They are related mostly to scholastic theology, commentary, religion, biography, ancient and modern astronomy and any other branch of knowledge related somehow to the science of jurisprudence and religious precepts.

Philosophy is sometimes studied as an extra-curricular subject, and sometimes as a part of the ordinary curriculum. For beginners, the usual textbook is 'Sharh-e Manzumah' of Haj Mulla Hadi Sabzevari, and for more advanced students, 'Asfar' of Mulla Sadra Shirazi. Other subjects of interest for both teachers and students include sociology, psychology, English language, and ideological topics.

Discussion, Not Lesson

When a student wishes to inquire about the course studied by another student, he usually asks:

"What are you discussing?" And the latter answers, "I am discussing such and such a topic." Generally speaking, the word 'discussion' is used for both teaching and learning.

The reason for the use of this term is apparently the fact that teachers and students usually collaborate in a topic, and a student is absolutely free to express his view or even reject the teacher's view by offering reasons. If the teacher regards the students's reasoning to be right, he admits it and praises the latter for it. There is no denial or refusal. This is the main method and procedure in extra-curricular programs.

A student studies the topic before coming to the class and uses many references, and presents the result to the teacher and fellow-students. In the class all the views are discussed until some acceptable conclusion is reached.

Some Factors Effective in Students' Progress

There are several factors which are important in the academic progress of the students: One of them is careful preparation before the class, enabling him to be already aware of details and only requiring the

teacher's aid in explaining difficult and obscure points.

Another factor is his perfect freedom of expressing his views and raising questions. This is particularly effective in the advanced course where voices sometimes rise high in such discussions.

The third factor is the exchange of views between members of small groups which are voluntarily formed to thrash out problems. The fourth factor is freedom in the choice of a teacher, a matter which is psychologically significant in the relationship of a teacher and his student, leading to a trust of and reliance on the teacher by his student, thus removing all compulsion and monopoly based on a fixed and unalterable schedule.

In this way, a theological student passes through the above stages of his academic studies and aims at attaining the rank of a religious expert.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

AYATOLLAH BOROJERDI

Ayatollah Haj Sayyed Hossain Boroujerdi, the man who has spent the greater part of his fruitful life in the struggle to spread Islam and laying the foundation of the Islamic movements of our time, is one of the pioneers and exalted A'lem of the contemporary period about whom the briefest and yet the most meaningful descriptions have been given. They have often called him: 'A great personality with a profound Islamic thought, and distinct and prominent moral qualities.

This brief description gives a picture of the nobility of spirit and lofty mind and Islamic thought of this great man. Those who are familiar with his moral and spiritual qualities say of him: "He considered Islam in the same precious and genuine form which was entrusted by the Prophet of Islam, and Imam Ali, Lord of Believers, and all his endeavours were in the direction of keeping Islam away from the form given it by foreign colonisers and their internal installed elements and removing the dark veil which had been drawn over the visage of Islam, and exhibiting the magnificent manifestation of the Muhammadan faith as it should be and not as it has been damaged through centuries, especially in recent years. He tried to acquaint the people with true Islamic principles, both those who were ignorant of

them altogether, and those who owing to their negligence and in spite of being Muslims have failed to know them.

He wished to make every effort to make all human beings, both Muslims and followers of other creeds, realize that Islam is not a religion of groaning and lamentation, but a creed of shouting and protestation. He wanted to prove that Shi'ism is not a creed of mourning and grief, but one of crusade, belief and martyrdom.

But that man of virtue was realistic and clear-sighted enough to realize that the time was not ripe yet for raising the voice of protest owing to intense suppression and concentration of foreign forces and their devoted hired agents and lack of people's readiness. He was waiting for a suitable opportunity, not by sitting down and doing nothing, but by making his utmost to create a convenient atmosphere. For this reason, he realized that the best way was to preserve the base of training of the Islamic army, namely the Islamic theological centers, and to keep the Ulama safe from the danger of dissolution caused by wars and unequal clashes. These elements should be strengthened constantly until the time arrives for the performance of their historical function, to erupt from within in order to give fresh impetus to the world of Islam and other religions.

When Ayatollah Boroujerdi appeared as an exalted religious expert and authority, the distressed Islamic society of Iran was covered under a black cloud of oppression and terror, and no one dared utter a word about right and justice. But even then at the height of Reza Khan's power, when talking of human logic and truth and justice was considered an unforgivable sin and speaking of Islam as a religion of truth and justice was punishable, Ayatollah Boroujerdi rose up all by himself in order to reveal the true nature of Islam and present its pure and noble visage.

The first step was to make the voice of Islam heard in that fearful silence. So he held meetings which were attended by a large audience in which he introduced true Islam to those who were lovers of prophethood and imamate. The fame of these sessions which were full of ardour reached every corner and more and more people gathered to benefit from these discourses.

Many of those who attended these sermons in those dark days declare that this noble A'lem spoke with such zeal and sincerity combined with fine logic and reasoning that one felt it was his chaste ancestors who were uttering those words, and the audience were so charmed by his sermons that even official spies who attended these sessions disguised in order to report to the higher authorities, were so impressed that they refused to act as spies thereafter. His Islamic logic proved to them that the slogan, 'An agent is not to be blamed' is considered wrong in Islam, since every Muslim believer can think and

decide for himself. A true Muslim knows that freedom in Islam is based on logical thinking, and each individual has an independent personality which prevents him from telling lies, submitting to force, humbling himself before any but God, fearing anyone but God, and worshipping anyone but God, or becoming a miserable spy.

When the sermons of Ayatollah Boroujerdi had such an effect on the agents sent by the enemies, it is clear how deep were the flames of faith kindled by him in the hearts of believers and how much they were roused to find the needed strength to uproot the rule of tyranny.

He lived at a most critical period of Iranian history when the sword of Reza Khan's tyranny was levelled towards the hearts of true Muslims, and when foreign powers gave their unsparing support of the government installed by them in order to destroy the foundation of Islam and leave no trace of it at all.

At such a time, this heroic A'lem having inherited the courage of his chaste ancestors, stepped into the field of combat, and eagerly lifted up the banner of Islam to bring its light into the darkened world and let its voice be heard everywhere. He upheld a religion which submits to no force. He did not confine his analysis and interpretation of Islamic philosophy to our society, but extended them to other societies as well. He believed that these efforts would one day produce results, and said: "Our mission is to keep the light of Islam burning, and we can be sure that its light will one day illuminate the whole world. The seeds sown now, will produce a rich harvest in future. We prepare the ground, and throw the beams of Islam on people's hearts, and preserve the clerical society against damage until the day when this society enters the field of battle like Imam Hossain's self-sacrificing army to seek victory in martyrdom."

We can venture to say that if today this Ummah of Islam has succeeded in making the voice of Islam echo in the world to reveal its true meaning, and if today the lofty thought of the renowned leader of Ali's Islam has confronted the Islam of Mo'avieh and brought the whole world under its wings, it is mainly due to the untiring endeavours of this noble A'lem in preserving Qum's Theological Center against disasters and calamities, in training distinguished disciples and in laying a foundation of conviction in people's minds.

His resistance against government oppression, internal despotism and foreign colonization, all of which intended to destroy the center and annihilate the Ulama, succeeded in nullifying their plots. The center remained intact, books were written, and press and publications explained the truth of Islam. The progressive Ulama grew in strength and found their way to towns and villages, stabilizing their centers; and even though all these activities were carried on in the silence of the existing suppression, a movement was being born behind the scenes,

growing rapidly, capturing the hearts of the younger generation, spreading over all classes of religious people and waiting for the time when a general uprising would start its work of transformation and reconstruction of the society.

History showed that the grounds laid by Ayatollah Boroujerdi through his persistent efforts remained intact and became more firm day by day until it budded under suitable conditions of the magnificent Islamic Revolution of Iran.

Ayatollah Boroujerdi's Character

Many things have been said and written about the moral qualities of Ayatollah Boroujerdi by his loyal friends, disciples and other followers to quote which is beyond the scope of this book, but a few words will illustrate the strength of his character and his fine qualities.

He was most kind-hearted, affectionate and simple, a man of feeling, simple and unaffected, thoughtful and well-informed and at the same time, a headstrong and unrelenting fighter, who even in his silence like Imam Hassan, at the time of oppression, was planning the course which the future revolution should take.

Brought up in the school of such great scholars as Akhond Mulla Muhammad Kashani, the exalted Islamic philosopher, Hojjatol-Islam Haj Agha Muhammad Moqaddas Isfahani, the noble gnostic, and the late Jahangir Khan Qashqa'i, he possessed a deep and strong faith even as early as his youthful days. In his prayers, he was noticed to fall into such a trance as if he could see God Himself, and when he uttered the sacred words, he trembled so much as if his soul had taken a flight in heaven, and sometimes many hours would pass before he would rise from his prostration.

After some years of study in Iran, he left for Najaf where he continued his studies in Islamic branches of knowledge at the famous Theological Center of that city, and after a few years his teachers realized that he has not only mastered the required subjects, but has also attained such a high degree of scholarship that he was fit to join the group of masters.

From that time onward, he had a school of his own and eager students gathered round him. His fame soon spread across many frontiers of Islamic lands, and he was eagerly invited by the clerical society of Iran to return home and give the seekers of religion and knowledge the benefit of his learning. He accepted the invitation and placed his great store of knowledge at the disposal of his disciples. His course on Islamic jurisprudence attracted many students from even the remotest part of the world, and Qum found a new life in his presence.

As in all his life he hoped to cure the wound of the soul and heart

of human society, he chose the way of expanding the branches of Islamic schools and centers in various parts of Iran and other lands.

His greatest joy was always to set up a new center. Those who were associated with him give a pleasant account of him in this connection and say that in these last years he was seized by a heart attack which almost paralysed a section of his heart, thus causing great anxiety in his companions and followers. The people ran here and there worriedly trying to find a remedy and Qum doctors could only provide first aid waiting for the arrival of specialists from Tehran.

After being delivered an injection to alleviate the pain, he came out of the coma and opened his eyes for a moment. Everyone was overjoyed waiting to carry out his slightest wish. But with his feeble glance he was seeking someone, and his glance fell upon his fifty-year old attendant who was standing tearful in a corner. The faithful servant approached and knelt on the floor near his bed. He said softly to the servant: "Why don't you go?" The man, still kneeling, asked "Where?" He said: "Was it not arranged that you should accompany Mr. Lorzadeh to Mashhad for the opening of Mirza-Jafar school?" The attendant answered: "Yes, sir, but I am waiting for your recovery so that I may leave with peace of mind."

This account given by eye-witnesses who are still alive shows that even in moments when death was near, he was still thinking of opening theological schools and centers, and was well aware what a deep influence such measures would have in organizing the army of religion and its mobilization. Thus he created such a transformation in the world of Islam which no other factor could replace or perform.

It is said of Mirza Taqi Khan Amir-Kabir that when his death warrant was issued, he remarked: "I thank God that the enemies delayed their destruction of me, and I got the opportunity to establish Dar-el-Fonoon (Technical college); for, the establishment of this college means that this tyrannical government will not last long."

Religious Ambassadors

Under the leadership of Ayatollah Boroujerdi, the Theological Center became a meeting-place of all lovers of Islamic subjects, philosophy and jurisprudence.

It was during those glorious sixteen years that the Theological Center for the first time despatched a number of Ulama as religious ambassadors, in the same way that catholic missionaries had been sent, to various European and African countries in order to establish religious centers and mosques through the endeavours of Ayatollah Boroujerdi and with the generous aid of loyal merchants and other believers.

In this task, too, Ayatollah Boroujerdi acted with great care and

planning as he had done in other matters.

Even though he spent most of his life in peace and tranquility which was similar to that of Imam Hassan as a prelude to the late revolution and movement of the next generation, he never abandoned even for a moment his struggles. That is why once, during the repressive rule of Reza Khan, when the Ulama were the targets of guns and bayonets, on his return from Iraq, he was arrested and imprisoned. But this news caused such an uproar among the people that the government was shaken, and within a short time the people of various towns especially of Boroujerdi assembled threatening revolt if he was kept in prison. So the government in fear released him to prevent a rebellion, and he was reinstated in his exalted position.

An Effective Telegram

At the time when Ayatollah Boroujerdi still resided at Qum, it was suddenly rumoured one day that Ayatollah Qumi was leaving for Tehran. This great A'lem who is a most distinguished Shi'a personality and a renowned and chaste leader of Islam, was warmly welcomed in Tehran. He had been exiled to Iraq after the happenings of the Gowhar-Shad Mosque and had for many years lived next to the holy shrine of Imam Hossain. After his arrival in Tehran he did not rest a moment, and began making proposals to the government of the time concerning the freedom of women as far as the public wearing of veils was concerned and the teaching of the Quran and canon law in schools. But the government which considered the execution of these proposals to mean the revival of Islamic injunctions, which would be contrary to its own interests, resorted to delaying tactics hoping that the matter would be soon forgotten.

This procrastination by the government produced a wave of protests and dissatisfaction among the Ulama and rage among the people, so that the leaders of the Theological Center of Qum sent deputies to prominent religious authorities to seek help. But none of these measures of which the government was informed through telegrams, proved effective and the government remained silent as usual.

At last the religious leaders of Tehran assembled, and decided to send some of the more respected Ulama to visit Ayatollah Boroujerdi and request his assistance.

The advisory session of the Tabataba'i household was held in his abode and upon the insistence of the deputies that he should personally leave for Tehran and the refusal of the people to allow his departure, he sent a sharp telegram to the prime minister of the time declaring that if opposition was shown to the proposals of Ayatollah Qumi, he himself would leave for Tehran, and the government would be held responsible

for the consequences.

This telegram, followed by others especially from tribal chieftains and the violent reaction which his probable departure for Tehran would have produced, prompted the government to accept Ayatollah Qumi's proposals, and that great A'lem, having succeeded in this matter, left for Iraq via Arak and Malayer.

Moreover, having expressed a desire to thank Ayatollah Boroujerdi for his endeavours, the next day, he unexpectedly left for Malayer where the two exalted Ulama met for an hour.

This was the last meeting between these two religious personalities, and soon after, Ayatollah Boroujerdi was moved to Tehran owing to his illness, and Ayatollah Qumi following Ayatollah Isfahani's death, was taken to Najaf where he passed away. Ayatollah Boroujerdi was left as the sole leader of the Shi'ah world.

Two Unpublished Documents

In the years 1327-8, when the constituent assembly was to be established to discuss and decide some fundamental affairs of the country, Ayatollah Boroujerdi was uneasy since this assembly could according to the texts of the law, give a verdict about the constitutional law, and he was afraid that foreign and home policies might take a turn to produce certain alterations in the articles of the law related to religion.

So, as soon as the news of the formation of the constituent assembly was announced, he opposed it decisively. This opposition under the suppressive and despotic conditions of those days revealed his crusading and irreconcilable spirit in refusing to exchange the interests of Islam for the expediency of the time. His opposition which was widely supported by Muslim people led him to issue a decree which postponed the holding of the constituent assembly for sometime until the government formally declared cases of intended alterations and gave the Ayatollah, the assurance that no changes were envisaged in the law concerning religious matters. Thus they won his agreement to the formation of the constituent assembly.

His efforts at upholding his views, began a new chapter in the struggles of the Ulama in Iran.

Next comes the struggle carried on under his decisive leadership and the steadfastness of the Ulama in the provinces against atheists and non-believers in the month of Ramazan. In spite of the hidden support given to this group by the authorities to carry out their policies, Ayatollah Boroujerdi did not relinquish his efforts in closing down the centers of corruption, so that even those perverse and misled people came in groups to repent of their past conduct and step in the

holy way of Islam.

The Fadaiyan-e Islam (Devotees of Islam) Movement

The beginning of the movement, Fadaiyan-e Islam, is connected with the social and religious life of Ayatollah Boroujerdi. Some people had criticised his social and political method because he did not openly support this zealous group, and his silence in this matter gave the enemies a free hand.

The most optimistic answer to this criticism is that in those days when groups and factions emerged like mushrooms from that social environment, most of them, dependent on some foreign powers, the people and especially the Ulama had little trust in groups, factions and personalities, and could not easily accept them even if they had a realistic foundation.

Moreover, Ayatollah Boroujerdi, in view of the political atmosphere of the time, did not consider the people to be mature and aware enough, and supporting the Fadaiyan-e Islam would mean favouring terrorism and destroying the Theological Center. So he abstained from giving them an open support. This is the apparent reason, but it is God who knows the whole truth, and now that with the Islamic Revolution, truths are being discovered one after another, there is a hope that history will give a true judgement on this matter.

And now a few words about the activities of this group.

1) Navab Safavi, the fellow-crusader of Ayatollah Taleghani is a personality about whom Yasser Arafat had said: "He is my master." When he returned from Egypt, Ayatollah Taleghani went to welcome and embrace him at the airport, bringing him to stay in his house.

Martyred Safavi, leader of Fadaiyan-e Islam fought in the way of the Quran and establishment of the government of Islamic justice at the cost of his life and never neglected this task. He was the pioneer and founder of armed conflict against the satanic regime of Pahlavi, being inspired in this mission by the Najaf religious leaders and authorities. According to true witnesses, men as Ayatollah Sayyed Abdullah Shirazi, scholar Amini, author of 'Al-Ghadir' and other leaders were aware of his plans, and his return to Iran was on their request in order to defend the sacred realm of the Prophet.

At the dawn of 24 Bahman 1334, the sun had not yet risen and it was still dark. The commander raised his sword and ordered his soldiers to stand in row with rifles at the ready to fire at the targets which the history of tomorrow will call the tulips of this land in all its life.

The deceased Shah sighed with relief in his resting place and gambling house at Ab-e-Ali and treacherous, anti-religion, anti-culture

elements found themselves secure now after shots were fired by the execution squad of the Second Armoured Corps, and the Ettela'at paper wrote in large headings: "The end of Fadaiyan-e Islam."

On that morning, only four members of the Fadaiyan-e Islam were martyred, but those ignorant enemies did not know that Islam has had and will have numberless devotees throughout history ready to offer their lives.

This group of devotees was formed under the leadership of Navab Safavi and the steadfast assistance of Abdol-Hossain Vahedi in 1327. Navab Safavi, whose real name was Sayyed Mojtaba Mir-Lowhi, imitating the Prophet's Ansars (Helpers) at Medina, organized his group to confront the hired agents of foreign powers, and on seeing that Islam was in danger of aggression by an imposed culture through the cunning plots of world imperialism, he decided to assassinate all those individuals who served the policy and interests of British imperialism which at that time controlled the extensive oil zone and refineries and shamefully plundered this God-given source of wealth. As he considered the death of the enemies of Islam the only way of fighting the satanic regime and exposing its tyranny, he gathered the most valiant and self-sacrificing offsprings of Islam to carry out these acts of assassination combined with the reading of Quranic verses and shouting the slogan, 'God is Great' at the assassination scene.

The first assassination by Fadaiyan-e Islam was announced by the mercenary publication of the Shah's regime as a religious (and not political) killing. This act of terror was carried against Kasravi, the author of The Constitutional Revolution of Iran in the court of justice who, out of sheer ignorance, had been speaking of Shi'ism (Red Shi'ism and Black Shi'ism) inflicting severe (and unfair) damage on Red Shi'ism and combatant Islam. Contrary to the supposition of some historians, this act of terrorism was not unexpected, since Navab Safavi had repeatedly tried to dissuade Kasravi from his ignorant hostility to progressive Islam, but his efforts had proved in vain.

This assassination was led by Sayyed Hassan Imami, a loyal and active member of the group. Vahedi was born in a clerical family in Kermanshah and his father was an A'lem of the first rank. He was brought up by his father as a devoted Muslim with a deep conviction, and he had come to Tehran with a profound belief in the rightfulness of Islam in order to continue his studies. As he was familiar with classical studies and was dressed in clerical garment, he became acquainted with Navab Safavi, and collaborated with him in organizing the group. He was a fine-looking and well-spoken young man.

When Navab was in prison, Vahedi organized several demonstrations in his favour, persuading the people to demand his freedom. He was in charge of the group's organization and had set up many

committees such as the committee of investigation, survey of reports and news. and a disciplinary unit, the members of which wore uniforms bearing green armbands on which the phrase 'There is no god but Allah' was written and skin-hats.

Many accounts are narrated about Vahedi's intense attachment to Islam. For instance, one day he had organized a demonstration at Mokhber-o-Dowlah square in Tehran for the release of Navab in which many people had taken part, when he suddenly realised that it was noon. He asked the people to join him in reciting loudly the formal call to prayer. They did so and the whole crowd joined in the congregational prayer there and then.

The group at about this time decided to assassinate Hajir, court minister and one of those who were servile to the foreigners, and Vahedi volunteered to carry out this decision. As the Muslims had a deep hatred of the endless crimes of the regime, Vahedi chose 13th Aban 1328 for this task, namely a day of mourning. Hajir who attended the ceremonies of the anniversary of Imam Hussein's martyrdom on behalf of the court was fatally shot by Vahedi during the mourning ceremonies and died the next day.

Following the assassination of Hajir, who was one of the most notorious and ambitious hirelings of British colonisation, Navab Safavi and Sayyed Hassan Imami were arrested. Those who supposed that this heroic act of Fadaian-e Islam was initiated by provocation and was baseless, realized during the trial of Imami what the lofty objectives of this group were.

In answer to the question as to why he had committed this deed, Imami answered: "Fadaian-e Islam considered Hajir, court minister, a traitor to the country and religion, and his punishment was death which we dealt him."

That day the Ettela'at newspaper wrote: "The Fadaian-e Islam exhibited its power even more with the assassination of Hajir."

This was the greatest political assassination executed until that time, and served as the greatest blow to the puppet regime, frightening all the traitors.

After Hajir's assassination, the devotees chose as their next target another person who was offering to the plunderers everything of which this country was proud, and this man was Razmara, prime minister and a hired servant of Britain.

The killing of Razmara which changed the course of Iranian history was carried out by Khalil Tahmasbi. Razmara had effected a number of social, economic and political changes as well as so-called land reforms which had brought suffocation upon the nation. He had also negotiated with other governments which were seeking for an opportunity to pillage this country in order to solve the oil issue, and

had arranged conferences and meetings with Britain and Soviet Russia. These generous deals with the foreigners resulted in the rousing hatred and rancour of the deprived people of Iran, but won some importance for him in foreign circles so that journals and papers like 'Time', 'Newsweek', 'Life' and 'Le Monde' wrote a lot about him.

He had become a distinct world figure and a famous oil personality and had reached agreements with the mean and cunning policy of Britain. This servant of imperialism was so impudent and treacherous that he declared: "We are helpless even in making an ewer. How can an Iranian excavate oil? We should hand over our oil zones to Britain since it is only the British who can perform this important task, and we cannot."

A few days later, Khalil Tahmasbi answered this agent of British colonisation with a few bullets, and this was the judgement given by true Shi'ism. On 16th Esfand 1329 when Razmara was attending the funeral ceremony of Ayatollah Fayz at the Shah Mosque (now called Imam Khomeini mosque), he was shot at the pool, and the next moment Tahmasobi stood up shouting 'God is Great' and calling for prayers. The audience kept absolute silence amazed at the courage of this man, and Razmara died sometime later. In the presence of Assadollah Alam, court minister and servant of satanic powers, they arrested Tahmasobi at once. The 'Teraghi' journal wrote in its issue of that month: "A bullet which changed the course of history."

But it was in fact the hand of a brave son of Islam that changed the course of history, the hand that pressed the trigger to silence for ever, Prime Minister Razmara's opposition to oil nationalisation. It was indeed the Fadaiyan-e Islam which removed him and paved the way for the nationalization of oil. This in fact facilitated Mossadegh's campaign for oil nationalization.

The late Ayatollah Taleghani in honouring the memory of Dr. Mossadeq said on 12 Esfand 1357 at Ahmad-Abad: "It was the Fadaiyans of Islam who paved the way for the national front and Dr. Mossadeq." About this time some members of Parliament offered a bill for pardoning and releasing Tahmasobi, which was ratified by the assembly on 16 Mordad 1331, and Tahmasobi was released. On the night of his release a celebration was held at the Fatima Mosque of Dulab (Tehran) which was attended by many people from various districts of Tehran to congratulate him. He then went to visit Ayatollah Kashani who received him warmly.

The Last Assassination

The last political terroristic assassination carried out by the early Fadaiyan-e Islam took place after 28 Mordad 1332, and this time

the chosen victim was another agent of foreign powers, namely Hossain Ala, prime minister and court servant. The date was 25 Aban 1332 and Zol-Qadr was the one chosen to carry it out. He missed his first shot and the second one got stuck in the barrel, but he rushed towards Ala and knocked him down with the stock of his rifle. This took place when Ala had come to attend the funeral ceremony of the son of Ayatollah Kashani, and the next day he was to participate in the Baghdad pact.

After this unsuccessful attempt, the government and military governor took strict measures against the Fadaïyan-e Islam. On 1st Azar 1334, Navab Safavi, leader of the Fadaïyan group and two of his friends were again arrested. The government also decided to arrest Khalil Tahmasobi once more for re-trial. So, fifteen senators prepared a bill by the order of the deceased Shah at a session on 25 Azar 1334, declaring that the release of Tahmasobi would run contrary to Article 28 of the amendment to the constitutional law in connection with the country's three bodies, and Tahmasobi was arrested on 26 Azar 1334.

Abdol-Hossain Vahedi, Navab Safavi's assistant, who had been arrested at Ahwaz and sent to Tehran the same night under guard was shot dead in the office of General Bakhtyar who was a notorious criminal serving the deceased Shah. The papers, to cover up this crime, falsely reported: "On 7 Azar 1334, Abdol-Hossain, assistant to Navab Safavi who had been brought from Ahwaz to Tehran, tried to escape, but he was shot at by the police and killed near Karaj."

The Ettela'at paper on 13 Dey 1334, reported the verdict of the military court concerning eight of the best sons of Islam as follows:

"Navab Safavi sentenced to death, Khalil Tahmasobi sentenced to death, Muhammad Vahedi sentenced to death, Mozaffar-Ali Zol-Qadr sentenced to death, Ahmad Tehrani with two degrees of mitigation condemned to six years' imprisonment with labour, Asghar Amri with two degrees of mitigation sentenced to five years' imprisonment with labour.

The court of revision confirmed the verdict of the preliminary court and at 6 a.m. of 25 Dey 1334, Navab Safavi, Tahmasobi, Zol-Qadr and Vahedi were executed while their shouts of the slogan, 'God is Great' broke the silence of the dawn. This ended the first period of the Fadaïyans' activities. After the execution of Safavi and his friends, there was no sign of activity from this group, but it was in fact the period for gathering strength and reorganizing the members, since a time came again when the bright stars of Islam broke asunder the black clouds of suppression, and re-appeared on the leaves of history.

They rose once more to perform their mission for God and truth. They engaged in armed combat against the wicked Pahlavi regime in 1342 and 1343, and by assassinating Hassan-Ali Mansoor, prime

minister of the time and servant of the Shah, they added another page to the fine history of Islam. His crime was that as a colonial servant, he signed the capitulation agreement and professional sale of oil and treason against the country.

The supporters of the Fadaiyan-e Islam, who followed the way of Navab Safavi, once more declared themselves an active organization to set up God's government and redress the wrongs of the oppressed Muslims of Iran. They planned the death of Mansoor under the leadership of Mehdi Araqi, Sadeq Amani and Hashem Amani, and another group of three, namely Muhammad Bokhara'i, Morteza Nik-Nejad and Reza Saffar Harandi pledged to carry out the plan, depending on which group succeeded first.

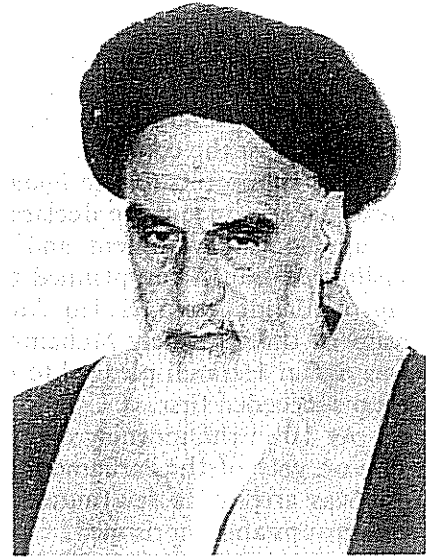
At 10 in the morning of Thursday, as Mansoor was going through the west gate of the Parliament, he was killed by Muhammad Bokhara'i who was arrested a few moments later together with the members of both groups and imprisoned.

After a commandeered trial, Muhammad Bokhara'i, Reza Saffar Harandi and Morteza Nik-Nejad were sentenced to death and executed, and Mehdi Naraqi and his colleagues were sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

In this way, the true sons of Islam rose to establish the rule of God and pave the way for the advent of Imam Mahdi, offering their blood to realize this goal. This was an account of the pioneers of armed movement in Iran.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Fadaiyan-e Islam once again declared its entity (in two separate groups), and is now engaged in various social and political activities. Its members, in view of the precedence set up by such leaders as Navab Safavi are supporters of the Islamic Republic.

Many things have been said of the adventurous life of Safavi. He was born in 1303 in Tehran, and after completing his elementary and secondary education he left for Najaf for higher studies, and as an intelligent lover of Islam he founded the Fadaiyan-e Islam, a group which, as we saw, produced great changes in the course of Iranian history.



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

AYATOLLAH IMAM KHOMEINI: GREAT LEADER OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION OF IRAN

At this junction of time, it is a difficult task to write about the Imam of Ummah and the great Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, firstly because so many books, treatises, articles and analyses have been written up to now in both Iran and abroad on the life, thoughts and combats of this great Leader, and nothing much has been left unwritten for a new writer.

Another reason is that this exalted personality is like a boundless sea about whom what has been written so far reminds one of the utterance of the poet Mowlavi in saying that each person can drink of it to the measure of his thirst, since the water of the sea is unlimited.

On the other hand, today there is no one in Iran who does not have a loving familiarity with the life, thoughts and combats of our great Leader of the Islamic Revolution, and this writer fears that what his pen puts on paper would not be beyond the limits of the knowledge of the great Leader's lovers.

Nevertheless, as the main aim of this book is to illustrate the natural and historical course of the progressive Ulama's crusades, a chapter must be devoted to this exalted Leader even though the topics mentioned here may have been repeated hundreds of times before by

others elsewhere, and even though some of the points given in this chapter have been mentioned in volume two of this book.

The above reasons are given in order that the readers be not surprised by the brevity of this chapter, which is not proportionate to the great personality of the Imam of Ummah, and look with indulgence upon the writer, since the latter himself confesses his inability in this task even to the measure of tens of volumes. Thus silence is commendable where the truth is clear and evident, and a brief account would seem adequate within a biographical framework.

Ayatollah Imam Khomeini whose role in decisive and alert leadership has gone beyond all frontiers and has roused the confirmation and amazement of the world, was born on 20 Jamadi-e Thani 1320 of the Hijrah, coinciding with the auspicious birthday anniversary of Fatimah Zahra in the town of Khomeyn. His father, Sayyed Mustafa Mussavi, who was a distinguished A'lem and religious leader of the people of Khomeyn, became the target of an assassination attempt by the feudals of that time on his way from Khomeyn to Arak, a few months after his son's birth, and was killed on 30 Zel-Hejja 1320 at the age of 74.

The hero of our story who had lost his noble father even before knowing the surrounding world, and was growing up as an orphan in his cradle, lost his dear mother in 1336 at the young age of nearly sixteen.

At home he was called Rooh-ollah and his relatives did not know what destiny was waiting for him in the world of humanity and what great changes would be effected by him in the Islamic world. At the age of 15 he completed his elementary education under the difficult educational conditions of the time, and then began his Islamic studies under his elder brother, the Reverend Passandideh.

In 1339, as a young man he left for Arak to continue his studies under Agha Abdol-Karim Hayeri, and in 1340, when that Theological Center was transferred to Qum, he accompanied Hayeri to the new center and resided at Dar-o-Shafa.

He continued his studies at a higher level until 1345, after which he attended Ayatollah Hayeri's study circle. His great intelligence and talent as well as his industry manifested themselves so remarkably that on the death of Hayeri in 1355 he was chosen as a distinguished master and a scholarly theological expert.

In addition to jurisprudence and principles, he studied Islamic philosophy and gnosticism, but all these which are considered as ideals in some cases, were for his noble spirit only a brief introduction. What satisfied his lofty mind were his nightly lamentations and endeavours for attaining spiritual exaltation and perfection. He was not content with being a distinguished teacher and master, and alongside these divine duties he was engaged in moral teachings.

Very soon, his reputation as a master and 'character-building' teacher spread all over, and he was soon surrounded by talented individuals and those lofty-minded students who sought a lofty spirit through benefiting from his personality and knowledge.

As an exalted teacher and master of a magnificent study circle, he did his utmost to educate his group, and along with Islamic branches of knowledge, he taught morality, spirit of self-sacrifice, courage and fortitude.

He was well aware of the crimes committed by the wicked and installed regime of the time, and knew that only the stronghold of Islam was able to overthrow that tyrannical rule. Moreover, he anxiously witnessed the lack of feeling for the Islamic mission and responsibility in the society and among the Ulama of the time. For this reason, he directed all efforts at training those chaste individuals who had faith, knowledge, experience, and commitment in a crusade, and a disregard for the false worldly things. They were expected to act as pioneers of an army, to rise and roar like thunder and advance like a wave to destroy the walls of oppression.

Thus, in his school and study circle, opposition to foreign and internal political interests of the day was encouraged. So, Reza Khan, the installed dictator, to preserve his and his masters' selfish interests repeatedly closed his school with the aid of his agents to check the approaching danger.

But Ayatollah Khomeini who was familiar with the conditions of the time and place, to escape the sight of the ignorant and hirelings, went underground, but continued his protests and teachings less openly, waiting for the end of the black period of Reza Khan. And when that time came, he once more transferred his 'character-building' study circle to the Feyzia Theological Center.

Imam Khomeini's Study Circle

Imam Khomeini began his teaching of traditional subjects and ultra jurisprudence and principles in 1362, concurrent with the arrival of the late Ayatollah Boroujerdi at Qum. Before teaching the above subjects, he had for long years taught the intermediate course, and the books of jurisprudence and principles in an attractive and eloquent manner to Islamic scholars and students.

When he started teaching the more advanced courses, he brought about a profound change in the Theological Center of Qum, and his wide and overflowing knowledge made this center a cradle of learning for his disciples.

His teaching method in dealing with academic questions, his careful analysis of them, and his deep investigations of matters of

principles and jurisprudence were most encouraging to the field of research and training experts well-versed in problems of injunctions. That is why we see hundreds of experts, of independent views and free from imitation graduating from his study circle in Qum.

It should be mentioned that Imam Khomeini's method of teaching is not easy to follow by every ordinary person, and it requires a few years of higher studies by the student to prepare him for a good understanding of his teachings. That is why few students beginning the higher courses felt prepared enough to join his classes.

Nevertheless, the most distinguished chair as far as Islamic subjects were concerned belonged to him, and his pupils both qualitatively and quantitatively were not comparable with those of other classes, and around a thousand erudite scholars who considered him a peerless master, attended his classes to gather pearls from that sea of knowledge. When his class was over, huge crowds of students could be seen from the Salmasi Mosque and Feyzia College leaving his presence and giving the Aram Avenue and courtyard of the shrine a spiritual environment. In the last few years that Imam Khomeini resided in Qum, the number of his disciples was over twelve hundred, a number which was one and a half times greater than that of Ayatollah Boroujerdi in his last years of life.

It was at this time that he took his first basic and serious step of awakening negligent people about the danger which was in ambush against their religion, life and honour, and that was the publication of his book, "Kashf al-Asrar" in which he clearly and valiantly exposed some of the crimes of Reza Khan.

At that time, which was the period of the religious leadership of Ayatollah Boroujerdi, the study circles of Imam Khomeini's principles and jurisprudence were among the profoundest and most brilliant classes of the Theological Center of Qum, so that the most learned men of that time, over a hundred in number, attended his classes and were proud of being his disciples.

After Ayatollah Boroujerdi's death, many of the Imam's supporters were waiting for his being chosen as religious authority, but he tried not to accept the position and to continue educating responsible and committed pupils for the day when true Islam would be established and the hands of foreign agents would be severed from Muslim affairs. On seeing that the foundation of Islam was in danger of annihilation, he decided to begin the struggle and carry the banner of the movement and revolution.

The Resumption of the Black Period

For a short time, there appeared a sign of hope and that was

when with the establishment of the national government of Dr. Mossadeq, Iran was on its way to secure freedom and revive its political and economic life and resume its dynamic moves. But like a nightmare, the CIA inspired coup d'etat against Dr. Mossadeq's national government was suddenly carried out on the ill-omened day of 28 Mordad, resulting in the overthrow of Mossadeq and the return of the Shah to make the Islamic land of Iran the arena of the inroad for America's colonial policy.

Although the Shah had been placed in power in 1320 on the Allies' interference, in the coup d'etat of 20th Mordad 1332, it was America which made the Shah the axis of the Iranian political scene, while it itself held full control of people's lives, property and honour.

Thenceforth, the rule of force and suppression discouraged all ideas and protests and not the least pity was shown in the massacre of people or destruction of the vestiges and criteria of Islam. Following this, every genuine revolutionary figure was wiped out somehow or the other, and the scene was cleared with their being imprisoned and banished. This irreconcilable hostility was particularly intense against those who endeavoured to realize their Islamic mission, namely to set up the rule of justice, chastity and virtue.

Birth of a New Colonization

American influence increased after the coup d'etat of 28 Mordad and day by day, the domination of the White House in Washington made itself felt increasingly over the destiny of Iran and Iranians.

Meanwhile, the election of John Kennedy created a new situation for Iran. As a democratic presidential candidate, he framed a policy through which those countries where despotism and bloodthirstiness had gone to extremes by American installed hirelings, would undergo certain so-called apparent reforms which would establish political stability to check revolutionary struggles which would definitely put an end to fascistic regimes, and thereby preserve their own imperialistic domination and that of their installed agents over colonised nations.

So, after John Kennedy was made president of America, notes were repeatedly sent to Iran stressing for reformist policies. But the Shah postponed the American proposals under certain excuses, as he feared that such measures would be opposed by Ayatollah Boroujerdi, an influential religious authority who could rouse the people against such policies. Moreover, the regime was afraid lest America would establish its domination through a genuine land reform, and by means of dividing land between farmers, the tyrannical pressure and cruel influence of the court and their dependents, most of whom were big landowners and exploiting feudal lords, would be diminished. Thus the

Shah and his regime paid no heed to the demands of America, and delayed the execution of the proposed plans on various pretexts.

Premiership of Dr. Amini

At that time, Iran was passing through a difficult explosive period so that world political observers and commentators anxiously declared that Iran was like a powder barrel ready to explode with the flicker of a match. And yet the Shah who believed that every problem could be solved by means of bayonets and machine-guns, did not want to admit that fact, and imagined that he could keep the country and people quiet through suppression and terror.

But unlike the Shah, America perfectly foresaw the danger and saw an uncontrollable explosion gathering momentum day by day. Thus, American statesmen were worried lest the Iranian regime would suddenly realize that the explosion in connection with the execution of the American plans had already occurred, and it would be then too late. So it made stronger demands for the execution of its proposals. With this in mind, the Americans hand-picked Dr. Ali Amini, one of their trusted individuals to carry out the plan. Thus, in a sharp note to the Iranian court at the end of 1339, they asked the regime to appoint Dr. Amini as prime minister and entrust him with the task of executing the plans.

So, the Shah who remembered his father's fate and found all efforts useless in continuing the existing condition, was forced to submit to American pressure and commissioned Dr. Amini in a formal note to form a cabinet.

Thus, Dr. Amini became prime minister on 28th Ordibehesht 1340, and tried to save the regime from its imminent collapse. He endeavoured to preserve the American domination while at the same time attempted to initiate changes in the country in the direction of Western democracy. For this purpose, he ordered the dissolution of the commandeered parliament, the imprisonment of a number of leaders of the previous government, the increase of employees' salaries especially the teachers' whose conditions were miserable. In this way he spread his influence in the country and won the confidence of America.

But the Shah, fearing the expansion of Dr. Amini's influence and his close relationship with the White House, tried in various ways to check the latter's activities and to reinforce his own position by keeping America happy in a different way.

Dr. Amini, seeing the hidden opposition of the Shah and his lack of adequate power to execute the necessary objectives, began to effect some apparent reforms like encouraging an open political atmosphere, and freedom, and defending the constitutional law which was in fact

the preserver of monarchy, in order to attain his goals. He used superficially attractive slogans, though undesirable in reality, and these were some of his efforts in the first phase of his premiership.

But even these superficial reforms, temporary and moulded freedoms gave politicians and popular figures who had remained silent and forgotten for years due to the atmosphere of suppression, the opportunity to enter the scene once more and resume their activities in so far as possible. One of the events that took place at this time was the reorganization of the Jabheh Melli (National Front Party) and declaration of the Liberation Movement of Iran headed by Ayatollah Taleghani, Engineer Mahdi Bazargan and Dr. Yadollah Sahabi, as well as the reorganization of parties and political factions.

Victory of the Shah over Amini

Nevertheless, the Shah continued his efforts to drive out Dr. Amini from the arena and to make himself the chosen puppet of the White House, who would carry out its wishes and orders, so that in this way he could eliminate all rivals. Consequently, he got increasingly panicky at Amini's measures, considering him a permanent and dangerous rival to himself, or at least a witness to the regime's crimes and treasons who could use this knowledge to enhance his own power and expose the regime. Therefore, with the aid of his supporters and hirelings, he carefully planned a trip to America hoping to turn conditions to his advantage.

Thus, the Shah visited America on 21 Farvardin 1341 and met American statesmen and carried on extensive discussions concerning current problems in Iran and the manner of preserving American domination and influence in this country, and introduced to the White House the elements who could play an effective role in this connection.

Following this visit, the Shah, realizing that he had no choice but perfect servility to America, successfully convinced the White House about Dr. Amini's dismissal by agreeing to submit to all the whims and fancies of America. So a similar manifesto was printed in the papers in the following form:

"The Shahanshah was assured that America would continue its political and military support, and American government authorities were in their turn assured that the Shahanshah is a steadfast ally, determined resolutely to carry out social and economic reforms."

Having been assured that America would raise no difficulty, the Shah returned to Iran and embarked on a number of superficial reforms preparing the grounds for an atmosphere of suppression and a dictatorial rule.

After his preliminary initiations, he asked Dr. Amini to submit his

resignation, and on 27 Tir 1341, he appointed Assadollah Alam, his loyal servant, and the faithful hireling of America, prime minister.

Alam's father had been an obedient servant of Reza Khan, and Alam who called himself 'a home-born slave' of the Shah very soon nullified all the efforts of Amini with regards to freedom. Party activities were stopped, and party leaders and political factions were either exiled or forced to retirement. With surprising speed, the regime's intelligence service was expanded and moved to quell all opposition to control and watch the movements and even family and friendly contacts of those who had shown the slightest opposition to the regime, and to execute the anti-people's policies of the Shah. Every effort at awakening public mind and exposing the deceits of the regime was violently suppressed by means of imprisonment, exile and careful watch over all individuals who made the least attempt to save the nation. So, as a result of overall foreign influence and the blows inflicted upon religious and national groups, many revolutionary figures were desperately forced to silence and they gave up all activities.

Meanwhile, the uneducated masses were deceived by the thorough, false propaganda of the regime which tried to show all rightful struggles as wrong. Due to their ignorance and the regime's misleading propaganda through the mass media, these people got confused and looked upon every rightful effort and combat against the corrupt regime as cynical and mischievous. They were deceived by the hypocrisy and simulation of the Shah by his false pilgrimages, his gifts to holy shrines, his participation in religious mourning ceremonies, and false religious appearances. They compared the anti-religious and anti-people's crimes and reckless acts of his father with the apparent deeds of the son and supposed the latter to be 'a good kin', 'religious' and 'protector of Islam,' and useful for the nation and religion. Unfortunately, such people formed a majority and it was no easy task to enlighten and attract them to combat corruption and despotism.

On the other hand, the Ulama who had for long kept silent owing to the exigencies of the time, was removed from the political scene, thereby leaving the field of combat free to opponents. As the number of those well-versed with the true state of affairs was very limited, every effort made by them against the regime was either condemned by the majority or at least regarded with indifference, especially as the power of colonization has fed the majority with a fearful and undesirable picture of the past, and every individual, group or class acting in the way of people's liberation was not only accused of being anti-people, and anti-independence, but also anti-religion and anti-holy faith.

The Shah's Objectives

The Shah's objectives through such actions were aimed at:

1- Suppressing every ideal or act which might sooner or later enlighten society and make it aware, or shake the pillars of his rule and hinder his efforts in the execution of wicked colonial plans.

2- Checking the influence of social leaders especially Islamic and clerical personalities, and to sever their hands from probable events and revolutionary happenings, so as to prevent his dependence on and relations with Zionism and world-devouring imperialism whose main purpose is the revival of atheism, paganism and plunder of national wealth from being damaged.

3- Enforcing limitation on true Muslims and sever their hands from judicial, legislative and executive positions, and handing over the affairs of the country to American advisers and Zionists and incompetent but servile individuals, and especially entrusting misled groups with Islamic affairs to carry out his and his masters' wicked plans .

Imam Khomeini once said about this situation: "Had there been no American bayonets one day, the nation would have torn him to pieces."

The Shah's Scheming

In that critical period, aiming at realizing his anti-Islamic and anti-people's policies, and at countering opposition from various social groups, the Shah embarked on certain schemes some of which are briefly mentioned below:

1- The Shah was fully aware of the ignorant masses and their fickle mindedness. He knew that they could not recognize hypocrisy and deceit, though they were devoted to Islam and religion. He therefore hypocritically went on pilgrimages to holy shrines and put on a religious appearance aiming at deceit. He succeeded in deluding many, including unfortunately the Ulama, or at least in diminishing their suspicion of him. The Shah's cunning was effective in the case of so-called enlightened classes and leftists who considered his apparent reforms as useful in speeding the country towards a socialistic order. Those who did not belong to either of these groups were silenced by the police and by the SAVAK.

2- Concerning those individuals and groups in opposition to the regime who heeded neither criteria, nor principles, compromise was easy as they could be bought with money and position, two very effective factors which change opinions easily. In that critical period, when everything was undergoing transformation, many of those who had formerly thought the Shah to be an agent of colonization, reaction

and retardation, suddenly changed their opinion and the people in surprise heard them declare in their speeches and articles that the Shah was for the country's progress, welfare and liberation.

Those who were honourable and devoted to humanitarian values and principles, and were not tempted by money or position, faced imprisonment, torture, banishment and deprivation from every type of social and cultural activity, in which task the police and SAVAK had an important role.

3- In connection with the Ulama, the attitude of the Shah and his regime was different. Since the Islam of Muhammad, and Alawi Shi'ism had illuminated the land of Iran like a glorious sun, the Muslim nation and devoted believers of Iran had supported the Ulama wholeheartedly, giving this crusading group strength and effectiveness.

In Iran, this group of Ulama and Islamic leaders have always enjoyed the unsparing and devoted support of the people, but unfortunately owing to prevailing conditions at that time and the problems which had arisen before (a subject which is too elaborate to mention here and requires another volume), the members of this noble group who had always acted as guides and leaders in Islamic crusades, were either mostly silent or regarded events with indifference. Those who were not indifferent were compelled to remain silent owing to their realistic estimate of ruling conditions and the unpreparedness of the masses, waiting for a more suitable time for their enterprise.

Thus, in those dark years, every thought of reform and revolution was termed as wicked by the agents disguised in religious garments, following which some ignorant Ulama or rather, some pseudo self-sold Ulama, who are called the 'King's preachers' by Imam Khomeini in one of his discourses, adopted the futile slogan of the separation of religion from politics as a weapon even to the extent of using it against committed Islamic Ulama and progressive and enlightened religious leaders and alert elements.

The Shah, fearing the power of the Ulama, used all efforts to check their influence and weaken their privileged position.

At such a momentous time, Ayatollah Boroujerdi passed away, and the Shah found himself free to act, while at the same time, he felt the election of another A'lem of Qum would prove dangerous to him. Therefore, he thought of trying to transfer this position of authority to holy Najaf, thereby removing the centrality of the Islamic Ulama from Iran.

Messages and Instruction of Ayatollah Imam Khomeini to the Prime Minister in 1340

One notable point at the time of Ayatollah Boroujerdi's death was

that Dr. Ali Amini tried to deceptively bring the government and the Ulama in close proximity to each other so as to fool the people into believing that a good understanding existed between the two.

So with this demagogical plan, Amini left for Qum to meet the highest religious authorities on 13th Rajab 1381 of the Hijrah (12th Dey 1340), which was the auspicious birthday anniversary of the lord of chaste, Imam Ali Ibn Abi Taleb. After a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Ma'sumah, he visited a number of religious authorities to discuss the current affairs of the country.

I, the writer, who at the time of this visit was attending the presence of Ayatollah Khomeini, had made a note of the discussions that took place and sent the written report for publication to the 'Nedayeh-Hagh' newspaper, and it was printed in its issue No 596 of Dey 1340.

Now, after nineteen years, once more I place my notes taken at that meeting with certain slight alterations at the disposal of many thousands of devotees of the Imam of Ummah in order to acquaint them with the manner of the Imam's criticism of the authorities in that atmosphere of suppression, and how at that time our great Islamic Revolution was already born in his lofty mind.

This is the text of my notes concerning that meeting and interview:

"I, the writer, had the privilege of being present at the meeting of the prime minister with Ayatollah Khomeini in which I made brief notes of the meeting between this important religious personality and that important civil servant in order to inform the readers of 'Nedayeh-Hagh' of what took place.

At about 12.30 on 13th Rajab 1381, the prime minister accompanied by some aides and colleagues arrived at Ayatollah Khomeini's home. And after greeting and partaking of tea and sweets, Ayatollah Khomeini spoke as follows:

"God Almighty has placed a special talent and worth in each human being, the proper employment of which enables him to progress. In proportion to his advance, an individual's duty and responsibility before God and society increase. Naturally, the responsibility of an ordinary man is never equal to that of a learned and thoughtful man. For example, you who are at the head of the government today do not possess the same responsibility as an ordinary individual, and your duties and responsibilities are much greater than those of others, and you have more duties to perform than others.

"Imam Ali says in one of his discourses: 'You are like shepherds of the flocks with the duty of preserving them.'

"You who act as the head of the government should serve and act in such a way in the interests of the people and society that you would

not be held responsible before God and your conscience. This country has seen many prime ministers such as Amir Kabirs, Gha'em Maghams and others. Those who have served this country and nation well and have performed their duties properly have always been blessed by people in their prayers. The people always speak in praise of Amir Kabir. But there have also been prime ministers who have always been cursed and hated by the people. You should try not to belong to that second category. In the question of religion your conduct should be such as to leave a good memory behind and be remembered for your benevolence. For, God Almighty says: 'Good deeds remain with your God.' You can be sure that the more you serve people, the greater will be your popularity and people's affection for you, and you will be loved and respected by God."

The Country's Spiritual Police

In this meeting Ayatollah Khomeini spoke of Qum's Theological Center and divinity students, adding: "Now in the Theological Center of Qum, there are five to six thousand students engaged in religious studies. They are men who have seen the ups and downs of life, and are zealously following their studies. They spend their youth and joy on studying and live on a very trifling allowance without being the smallest burden on the government, or having any material expectation from it, or being a load on the education ministry or the government's budget.

"They are men who place the fruits of their higher studies freely at the disposal of all individuals of the nation, inviting the people to the right and proper path, and awakening the internal and spiritual police within the nation. With their propaganda and guidance they check the people from committing thefts, treason, transgression over the property and honour of others, cheating, lying and embezzlement. Their valuable services will definitely be more useful than the elaborate police organization of the country which is maintained by means of a heavy budget (Acknowledgement of the prime minister and those present).

The prime minister said: "The Ayatollah is aware of the moral poverty, and various strange social problems, so that in each part of the country the people are following certain ideas and views. The only strong barrier and decisive remedy and our hope are these same men of learning and Ulama, and to be fair, their services to society and the country are undeniable. But the government and people have greater expectations of the Ulama. They should co-operate more with the government and educational organizations, and rise up and act against all vices and contamination of our society."

The Ulama's Demands

Ayatollah Khomeini said: "Yes, but the Ulama, too, have certain demands, religious and spiritual expectations, the fulfilment of which will be hundred percent fruitful to the interest of the government and nation.

"Today we observe that most of the young people who graduate from government schools and are absorbed by the society, do not show much interest in and devotion to Islamic teachings and religious beliefs. They do not only lack this interest, but sometimes they are involved in some vices which are harmful to the society and individuals. Clearly, no regular religious and moral instruction and training exists in the educational program. All this is due to the disorder in the religious and moral program of education. The Ulama expect the government to issue strict orders to develop religious and ethical programs and supervise the character and conduct of school and university students, since the children of today will be the adults of tomorrow for the country, and if today's education is inadequate, the situation will be more serious tomorrow."

Mr. Amini said: "We have paid attention to this important matter from the first day, and realise that the country cannot survive and last without religion. Therefore, we try to employ pious teachers in the educational organizations and much emphasis is laid on the employment of the Ulama. The ministry of education is of present considering the question of proper and useful religious programs, and order is being issued for printing books containing religious issues and educational and moral topics, to be used by the ministry in schools. I also hope that more consideration will be paid to the basic points you have mentioned. But there is also room for complaint, that the absence of effective cooperation by the Ulama themselves has not been without influence in the appearance of such moral depravities. On the day that western civilization entered our country, there were no literates in our country except the Ulama. They could have assumed the control of education and educational centers and checked the influence of the vices of civilization."

Ayatollah Khomeini answered: "It is true. Fifty years ago, the majority of the literate people of the country consisted of the Ulama, but how could they collaborate with governments which were installed by foreigners? Iran did not have an independent government, and their acts were confirmed and supported by installed agents.

"In those days there was no alternative in facing such foreign interference and local dictatorship but retirement and seclusion and reinforcement of national and public bases in order to be able to combat non-national governments one day."

Strengthening the Family Foundation

Ayatollah Khomeini added: "Another matter in which the Ulama are interested is as you know well, the most basic and important pillar, having a great and fundamental role in society, in joining people together, and that is the question of marriage and divorce in families. These two matters must be dealt with on a proper religious and legal basis in order to produce social order in the right manner and in accordance with true principles, so that relationships are not confused.

"Unfortunately it is said that in this Islamic country, most of the organizations dealing with this matter have not understood its religious significance or, God forbids, they show negligence owing to a weak belief in religious principles. For example, whenever a woman asks for divorce and her husband is summoned by the notary's office, she is divorced and their names are recorded, and they separate without being advised beforehand."

Dr. Amini said: "Unfortunately the present economic conditions of the people and moral problems and social corruptions with which we are faced, of which you spoke, are the products of the measures taken by the governments of twenty years ago, dragging the people to these cesspools of corruption and misery. But we are not without hope. With God's grace, we believe that all these difficulties will be removed. But it takes time and they must be thoroughly studied in order to solve the problems.

In conclusion Dr. Amini added: "Once more we request the learned Ulama to co-operate with us to remove difficulties, and fill the gap created by enemies. Mysterious hands have produced a separation between the educational organization and true servants of people. And this collaboration will remove that separation and prevent further damage to the society, and every person in this nation can thereby benefit from enlightened and religious men of learning.

This discussion lasted half an hour and the cabinet members then left for Salarieh for lunch. As they were saying good-bye, Ayatollah Khomeini persuaded them to stay and partake of the simple students' lunch.

Dr. Amini answered: "As we have promised, they are waiting for us." Sharif-al-Ulama said to the prime minister: "Ayatollah's purpose is to acquaint you with the table of the theological students and masters, to have an idea of how they live."

The meeting ended with the laughter of those present and Ayatollah's smile.

A Pleasant Memory of the Interview

This interview is coupled with an interesting and pleasant memory since I started my career as a writer and I felt it a pity not to relate it to the readers of this book. The report written by me of this interview was my first effort at professional writing, and those engaged in writing know that the first effort is as pleasant and sweet as having the first child.

At that time, I was a young student and a novice writer. In that meeting, I was deeply impressed by the words of Ayatollah Imam Khomeini (parts of which I have already quoted). When I returned to my residence at Hojjatia school, I decided to write down the account of all I had heard in that meeting as far as my memory permitted.

This implied the forsaking of a few hours sleep and I went on writing well into the night until I finished the task. Next morning, I sent it by post to the 'Nedayeh-Hagh' newspaper in Saray-e Mesbah, Tehran. But since my writing was not at a professional level and since I was unknown, I did not expect it to go on print, especially as the press usually look for reputed writers in order to attract more readers.

A few days passed, and while walking in the yard of Hojjatia school, some friends came and told me that Hojjatol-Islam Sane'i, a close and devoted friend of Ayatollah Khomeini, was looking for me. I hurried to meet him and he told me that my article had been printed, and added that Ayatollah Khomeini wished to see me. Accompanied by Hojjatol-Islam Sane'i, I proudly found my way to Ayatollah Khomeini's presence. He received me warmly and kindly which is his customary way with one and all especially with scholars and divinity students. He then asked me if I had written and sent that article to the paper. I replied in the affirmative and added that I had been so deeply influenced by his words that I felt it a pity not to give others the chance of benefiting from them.

He made a remark the depth of which I did not fathom that day, and now after years of writing, I realize its meaning. He said: "It is a good article, but it would have been better if you had let me see it before sending it to the paper, to make up for its deficiencies. You did well. May God keep you."

Now I must confess that the contents of that article did not include all the points discussed at that meeting, and I also admit that in view of the existing censorship of that time, it was not possible to report the whole discussion, even though I have added in this present edition the unpublished parts as far as memory would allow. But the lesson I learnt then was that an article containing an interview and special points of view should first be shown to the holder of that view before being printed.

Fortunately, now that the Islamic Revolution has been victorious, and the seeds sown nineteen years ago have produced abundant crop, those proposals which at that time took the form of requests and hopes, have found objective fulfillment, and all the responsibilities and leadership have been placed on the Ayatollah and Muslim people of Iran. The leadership of the revolution and the phases of the country's reconstruction and the planning of the revolution's continuation are so great and heavy a burden that it does not allow me to take a few minutes' time of the Imam of Ummah which are a thousand times more precious than those of ordinary individuals, since those minutes belong to the whole nation of Iran and the Islamic society, so as to waste his time to correct and improve an article written before.

But I assure the reader that I tried my best in so far as memory allows me, to show honesty in re-writing the points raised in that meeting, and avoid neglecting one point or another.

The Year 1342

15th Khordad 1342 is a special day in the calendar of Pahlavi massacres. The families whose dear ones were martyred under the volley of bullets are still in mourning; they may still be unaware that the Pahlavi regime itself was the instigator of this scene of people's riot and revolt in order to engage in a greater massacre and silence the voice of liberty-demanding masses. It tried to show their demonstrations which asked for nothing but justice as sabotage in order to kill more and fill up the prisons.

Before speaking of 15th Khordad, we should investigate the causes which led to this great day of Islamic uprisings, since before knowing the cause it would not be proper to talk of effect.

Everything began with the Feyziah school of Qum. The Ulama led by Ayatollah Imam Khomeini protested against the Shah's acts and his so-called revolutionary measures, and criticised him and his puppet prime minister, Assadollah Alam, on pulpits and in mosques.

As the Shah and his government could not openly combat the Ulama because of the bitter memory they had of the assault upon Qum's Feyziah school, and as on the other hand, they felt they must silence the seekers of justice, they chose a strange way, a description of which needs a preliminary explanation of the commandos' assault upon Feyziah, who disguised, on 2nd Farvardin 1342, embarked on a beating, wounding and even killing spree of a number of divinity students and other people who had participated in the mourning anniversary of Imam Jafar Sadeq. There appeared two different reactions among the masses. On the one hand, they feared the government, which after the victory in the commandeered referendum of 6th

Bahman 1341, intended to suppress all oppositions, while on the other hand, they wanted to fight till the end.

Ayatollah Imam Khomeini acted as the leader of the fighting Ulama, and in spite of the suppression and strict censorship and the dangers which threatened the opponents of the regime, he pounded the regime in his discourses, telegrams and sharp manifestoes, sending waves of terror in the authorities' hearts.

Here we will quote the manifesto issued by him in answer to the condolences of the Tehran Ulama concerning the painful disaster at the Feyziah school of Qum, in which he severely criticised the Shah and his government. Copies of this manifesto were concealed by Tayeb and other loyal followers in fruit boxes and sent to all parts of Iran, and this same act was used as one of the evidences against Tayeb in his trial.

Here is the text of the manifesto:

"In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. We are from God and return to Him."

"Care of Hojjatol-Islam Haj Sayyed Ali Asqar Kho'i, to the exalted religious leaders of Islam.

"I express my appreciation for the telegram of condolence sent as a result of this great calamity inflicted upon Islam and Muslims. The assault of the commandos and government disciplinary forces in disguised garments and supported by the police, upon the Ulama's center revived the memory of the Mongols, with the difference that the Mongols attacked a foreign country, whereas these made a sudden assault upon their own Muslim nation and defenceless Ulama and divinity students on the anniversary of the death of Imam Sadeq, peace be upon him, and with slogans of 'Long live the Shah', they rushed upon Imam Sadeq's center and the physical and spiritual descendants of that noble Imam. Within two hours, they plundered the whole Feyziah school, and Imam Mahdi university ruthlessly, in the presence of about thirty thousand people, and broke all the doors and windows of residential chambers.

"The students in fear, threw themselves down from the roofs, breaking heads and limbs. The attackers collected all the turbans and set fire to them. They threw down young adolescents of sixteen and seventeen from the roofs, and tore to pieces all books and copies of the Quran.

"At present, the Ulama and divinity students of this religious city feel no security for their lives. The houses of religious authorities are surrounded by intelligence agents and sometimes by commandos and policemen. They threaten to treat other schools in the same way as Feyziah. Divinity students have in fear, removed their clerical garments. Taxi and bus drivers have been ordered not to pick up such students. In public gatherings, the Ulama are insulted by members of disciplinary

forces in very obscene words. At night, they distribute, threatening leaflets with unknown signatures, calling for loyalty to the Shah and affronting whatever is holy in Islam.

"Loyalty to the Shah means plunder, affronting Islam, transgression over the rights of Muslims, violation of the centers of learning, dealing blows on the body of the Quran and Islam, burning signs of Islam, annihilating the vestiges of Islam, trespassing on Islamic decrees, altering Quranic injunctions, suppressing the Ulama, and overthrowing the manifestations of the Prophet's mission.

"The reverend gentlemen realize that the principles of Islam are threatened, and Quran and religion are endangered, and with such a probability, dissimulation is wrong and forbidden, and stating the truth is obligatory. Now that there exists no competent authority to appeal to, and the country is ruled in a crazy manner, I interpellate Mr. Alam, the prime minister, in the name of the nation, on what legal basis was the bazaar of Tehran assaulted two months ago and Ulama maltreated and beaten? By what legal sanction were the Ulama and others dragged to prison, so that a large number are still in prison? By what legal permission was the country's budget spent on the so-called referendum, while this referendum was ordered by the Shah himself and he is rich enough to have paid for it? By what legal authority were government employees who are paid by the people ordered to serve in a personal referendum? By what sanction was the bazaar of Qum pillaged two months ago? What sanction was there for assaulting Feyziah school and beating and imprisoning the students? By what authority were commandos and disciplinary forces in disguise sent to Feyziah school on the anniversary of Imam Sadeq's death to commit so many crimes.

"I have now prepared my heart for the bayonets of your agents, but I will not offer it in submitting to your injustice and being humble before your oppressions.

With God's wish, I shall declare God's injunctions at any suitable occasion, and I will expose the acts running contrary to the country's interests as long as I hold a pen. Just now, the Muslims have one eye on their own world and the other eye weeping for their religion. Your few months' old government with its oppression is endangering the economy, agriculture, industry, education and religion of this country and threatening its collapse in every way.

May God Almighty preserve Islam and Muslims Under His own Care and the Quran's.

Ruhollah-al-Mussavi al-Khomeini."

The happening at Feyziah with all its wide dimension was passed over in silence by the government controlled mass media. The government expected that by cunning concoctions, this painful disaster would

be forgotten altogether, but with the approaching 40th day of that bloody event, the people made preparations for holding memorial ceremonies of the martyrs. The excitement was especially greater in Qum, and a few days before that date, Ayatollah Khomeini, delivered an important discourse in Azam Mosque of Qum which we will quote here on account of its significance:

“In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful”

“After killing the men, the enemy hurt the children of Imam Hossain, captured the women and hurt them. It seemed that they were hostile to the Bani-Hashem family, and rejected that tribe, and had no wish that they should exist.

“The same idea seems prevalent in Iran today. What did the government want with the adolescents of sixteen and seventeen? What had these young boys done to the Shah? What had they done to the tyrannical government organization? One must think that they are opposed to the basis of religion, and not to children. They have no wish to see Islamic decrees in this country. They do not want the Quran to rule in this land. They reject leaders of religion. What they desire is to uproot the foundation of Islam in this realm. That is why the agents of the Shah and Israel pounded the school by the hand of their master. They pounded us and will pound you people as a nation.

They want to seize this land's economy, destroy people's commerce, and have no wish to see wealthy people amongst you. So what may prove a barrier in this course must be annihilated. Divinity students may later on become an obstacle. So they must be knocked over the roof and have their heads and limbs broken so that Israel reaps its profits, and the government of the time following Israel's suit, insults us.

“You gentlemen of Qum noticed that on the day that wrong and disgraceful referendum took place, a referendum that gained only a few thousand votes, a referendum that was contrary to the interests of the Iranian nation, a number of children and rascals were placed in cars, going round the streets of Qum, the center of the Ulama and in the proximity of the holy shrine of Fatimah Ma'sooma, shouting: ‘This is the end of sponging and being parasitic.’ Gentlemen, look at this Feyzia, where those young men spend the spring of their life in the little rooms that you know well, studying hard, receiving a monthly allowance of 30 or 40 or 100 Tomans. These people are parasitic, but those men for whom millions of Tomans form one item of their futile expenditure are not parasitic. Are we parasitic that on the day that our Sheikh Abdol-Karim Hayeri dies, his children have nothing for supper? Are we parasitic that when our Ayatollah Boroujerdi passes away, he leaves behind a debt of 600,000 Tomans for the expenses and allowances of the Theological Center? But those who have filled the banks of the

world and built huge palaces, and do not yet leave this nation alone, and are trying to pour the profits of this country into their own pockets and those of Israel, are not parasitic? The world and nation must judge this matter.

How often have I told this man and sent him messages, saying: "Abstain from this referendum, it is not advisable for you," but he never listened. Sir, I advise you, since the religion and the Quran charge me with the duty to give you advice. Abstain from such acts. Sir, you are being deluded by them, and I have no wish to see people overjoyed at your being driven out of this country one day.

"I will narrate you a story that is remembered by those of you who are old or around forty, or at least thirty. Three foreign powers attacked us, namely Soviet Russia, Britain and America. They seized our country, wasting people's property, offending people's honour, but the people were happy to see Pahlavi go. I do not wish you to be like him. Stop acting thus. If it is true that you are hostile to the Ulama, you are mistaken. If they dictate to you and ask you to recite it, think about it first. Why do you say such things without thinking? Are the Ulama and clericalism untouchables for the people as you claim? If they are untouchables, why do the people kiss their hands, and take it as a good omen to partake of their half-eaten food? Are we untouchable animals? I hope to God that this is not what you mean.

"I hope to God that what you mean by the phrase. 'Black reactionaries are like untouchable animals that the nation avoids' are not the Ulama, for then, our duty will be difficult, and yours even more so. Then we will not let you live in this country, and the nation will not allow you to do so.

"Do not act in this way, and listen to my advice. Stop such acts, it is enough, and listen to the words of the Ulama. Reflect a little. Learn a lesson by your father's fate. Listen to me and to leaders of religion. They desire the welfare of the nation and country.

"Are we reactionaries? Are the learned men of Islam reactionaries? And are you and your attendants progressive? Did you make that black and white revolution? Why do you deceive people so much? By God, Israel is of no use to you. The Quran is beneficial for you. Today, I was informed that a number of preachers have been taken to the security organization and ordered not to say anything about Israel, and not to say that religion is endangered, and not to say anything about the Shah.

"If we leave these three fundamental questions aside, what else do we have to speak about? All our difficulties are related to these three problems, all our difficulties...I am not saying this myself. They themselves attribute these matters to the Shah. Whomever you refer to, says this is what the Shah has said. The Shah has ordered to destroy the school to kill the Ulama. That fellow (I won't mention his name now,

but I will do so when I order to cut his ears) came to Feyziah school, blew his whistle and shouted to the commandos: 'Get it done with.' What are you waiting for? Pillage all the rooms and destroy everything. These are His Majesty's enemies.'

"When we protest their deeds, they say that His Majesty ordered it. They say, 'These people are His Majesty's enemies. Israel is a friend of His Majesty.' But the agents of Israel are engaged in sabotage in Iran, and what other evil secrets are at work. Should we not speak of these things? They tell us not to speak of the Shah and Israel. What is the connection between the Shah and Israel? Is the Shah an Israelite? The security organization probably thinks he is a Jew. But he claims to be a Muslim and says so. He appears to be a Muslim, too. There is some mystery involved.

"The security service intends to disgrace the Shah and make people look with disfavour upon him. We see that religion is endangered in this country. Is religion not truly in danger?

"Sir, act such that the rumour that the SAVAK wants to remove the Shah' proves false. Do you not suppose that this is true? If you think it probable, find a remedy. Let this man hear these words, so that when he wakes up, he may become aware, and may remove this confusion. They throw all the blame upon the Shah. Poor man, don't you know that one day when a voice is raised and something happens to you, not one of those who have surrounded you, will stay with you? These are middlemen and servants, and are without faith and loyalty, they have always been servants. I am very sorry about the danger which is approaching, and sorry about the miserable conditions and state of this country, and position of this cabinet.

"There are many things to say, more than you may imagine. But I have got a headache. Ask someone to come and pray."

It was after these moving words were uttered that the executionaries of Pahlavi, taking advantage of the night's darkness, carried Ayatollah Khomeini from Qum to Tehran at 3 a.m. of 12 Muharram 1383 (15 Khordad 1342) to the Officers' Club.

After several days of arrest there, he was taken to the Eshrat-Abad garrison of Tehran and imprisoned in a cell. At the same time, they arrested a number of religious leaders and preachers in other cities and imprisoned them, and this was followed by those heart-rending events of several days.

Following the happening of 15th Khordad, the country was at a standstill, and enraged people took refuge in mosques shouting and groaning angrily. A torrent of telegrams and letters flooded Tehran in protest to the regime and in support of the Ulama's goals. Then, high religious authorities came to Tehran to free Ayatollah Khomeini from prison and continue the struggle in the way shown by the rightful

religion of Islam and true Shi'a faith.

The religious authorities of Tehran and provinces took effective steps to release him from the clutches of the satanic regime and issued manifestoes informing the people of the calamity which was about to befall the nation at the hand of imperialistic agents, and warning responsible authorities to observe their limits. The defence and support of Ayatollah Khomeini by the religious authorities were directed at preventing any probable harm to the person and position of this exalted Shi'a authority, and thus confirmed his right of protest as a religious authority in accordance with the constitutional law of Iran.

The Open Letter of the Azarbayjan's Learned

Following the arrest of Ayatollah Khomeini, numerous telegrams, letters and scrolls reached Tehran from religious authorities and learned men of Islam and teachers and students of theological centers and other groups of Muslims, condemning the anti-Islamic and illegal acts of the previous government, and demanding the release of Imam Khomeini, and other prisoners, abolition of anti-Islamic laws which went contrary to the constitutional law, and amelioration of existing conditions. Most of these matters have been analysed in the books written about the Imam's struggle, based on documents most of which did not reach the government since telegrams and telephones were forbidden, and letters were strictly censored, and messages were often written on the walls.

One rare case in which a very interesting letter was skilfully delivered at the prime minister's office, was a letter written by the Azarbayjan's learned. As this letter was an authentic one, it played an effective role and will be recorded in history. On that day, a number of pseudo-revolutionaries withdrew their signature in fear, and some others forged theirs. The letter somehow reached not only the prime minister, but copies of it were also delivered to the high court of justice, the semi-national 'Keyhan' and 'Donya' newspapers. About one thousand copies of it were also distributed in important centers and to the social personalities of the time. This is the text of the letter:

"In the name of God Almighty

"His excellency, Mr. Hoveyda, prime minister of Iran.

"The pages of Iranian history are a true witness that the independence and greatness of our country are indebted to the life-giving teachings of dear Islam and the self-sacrifice and valuable services of the learned Ulama and religious Shi'a authorities. The country whose constitutional law has been gained with the blood of many thousand learned, valiant and patriotic men, has granted legal immunity to its religious authorities, allowing them in critical times to warn the govern-

ment and check the ratification of anti-Islamic laws which are contrary to the constitutional law. The recent Ulama movement led by the exalted religious authorities which had been faced with the anti-human reactions of former governments, has had no goal but to preserve the country's independence and revive Islamic laws. Ayatollah Khomeini, too, who has been exiled for some time, has had no guilt but defending Islamic laws and legitimate rights of the nation and honour of the country.

"Dear Mr. Hoveyda, the only way to satisfy the religious and national sentiments of the people is for your government to repeal approved laws which are anti-religion and contrary to the constitutional law, and to bring back Ayatollah Khomeini to the Theological Center of Qum, to release the preachers and distinguished Ulama and innocent prisoners who have been arrested in this movement, to respect public opinion, and restore the honour damaged by former governments.

Signed by 74 learned men of Azarbayjan."

An Interesting Account of the Letter

This letter had an interesting account which will be narrated to show the zeal and love of people for the freedom of Ayatollah Khomeini and how each individual did his utmost to secure his release.

In those days, when no letter or telegrams concerning the country's politics ever reached the person to whom it was addressed, lots were drawn by four of my colleagues for the delivery of the above letter and the lot fell upon me. Very eagerly and with a bag full of forbidden manifestoes, I was commissioned to deliver the message to four important centres of that time, namely the High Court of Justice, the Keyhan and Donya dailies and the prime minister's office. So I set off for Tehran at once, visited the High Court and the Keyhan daily, and was warmly welcomed in both places. Then I left for the prime minister's office, put a copy of the letter in an envelope and wrote the prime minister's name (the deceased Hoveyda) on it. When I reached his office, his bureau was on the third floor of the building and saw many visitors there. I gave the letter to the chief of the bureau to enter on the letter registry and give me its number. He opened the letter on seeing the manifesto signed by 70 or 80 persons, warning the prime minister of the same fate as Mansoor before him who had been killed, if he did not release the Imam. He looked at me sternly, and said: 'Sir, this is not an open letter but a full-bodied manifesto that you have brought to the prime minister's office. You must have printed a few thousand copies of it and distributed them amongst the people and brought the last copy for the prime minister. Very well, sit down and you will receive an answer now.

I sat down opposite him, thinking mostly of the fate of those seventy or eighty signatories. He pressed a bell and I felt certain that he was summoning an agent to arrest me. He put the letter in a drawer and addressing me harshly, he said: "What insolence. They bring to the prime minister's office a manifesto threatening him with death, and call it an open letter. Tell me who has given you this manifesto. I told him it was given to me by the Theological Center of Qum on behalf of the learned religious men of Azarbayjan to deliver here. They must have had legitimate wishes which they expect the prime minister to fulfill."

He said: 'Yes, they will be fulfilled soon. Wait a few moments.' He pressed the bell again and then he took the letter out of the drawer and began perusing it. He was scrutinising the signatures and was deeply and anxiously studying the contents, whispering to himself 'What insolence'.

I was watching his reactions when I had an idea on the spur of the moment, and that was how Dr. Mossadeq had saved himself in one of the international sessions of the Hague court in which he felt he would be condemned on the oil issue since he was in minority. So he pretended he had a painful stomach trouble and shouted: 'My stomach... my stomach and with that excuse he withdrew from the court to go to a hospital for which he had no need. I thought I must somehow save myself before a policeman came, and leave the place with a reasonable excuse. Since childhood I suffered from nose-bleeding, and a slight pressure did the trick. I dealt the nose a blow and blood soon started dripping. He looked up suddenly and on seeing this, he asked what had happened. I said: 'Your office is too hot and my nose bleeds in hot weather.' To save his carpet from being stained with blood he asked me to go quickly to the toilet and come back after washing my face and hands. I left the office, but instead of going to the toilet, very calmly went towards the exit and left the building, passing by the office police guards. Then I moved through various back-streets until I found myself in Marvi School, having covered the distance in a few minutes. There I saw the two brothers Sayyed Fatah and Sayyed Abol-Hassan Hashemi Hakam-Abadi who were two learned Ulama of Tabriz and were at that hour departing for Qum. They asked me what had happened and I narrated the story. At first when they saw my bloody face, they were worried since they had already talked with some of the masters of Qum and had considered my visits a rash and reckless adventure, whereas my motive had been faith and devotion. Anyhow the letter reached the prime minister in that way, informing the authorities of what should be done concerning the release of Ayatollah Khomeini.

Thanks be to God that this was done and other personalities concerned, too, received their copies of the letter throughout Iran, and

with God's aid, the exalted Imam was gifted back to the nation. After sometime, his discourse and manifesto about capitulation resulted in his being exiled to Turkey, which subject will be narrated in the next chapter.

The Year 1343

The disgraceful "Capitulation Bill" which was taken to the parliament in the last week of Mehr 1343 was ratified by the showy standing of the deputies of the faked parliament. This agreement left the life, property and honour of Muslim Iranians in the hands of American subjects, whether these Iranians were of the highest or lowest. Thus, if the meanest American subject murdered the highest Iranian national even without any excuse and motive, our government and responsible Iranian organizations had no right even to arrest the accused or interrogate him even briefly.

Bringing this bill to parliament and turning it into law was contrary to all Islamic principles and criteria and an intolerable insult to a Muslim nation and its religious leaders. The result was that Ayatollah Khomeini delivered a spirited revolutionary discourse at his home in the presence of hundreds of devotees of Imam Hossain, openly inciting the Muslim nation to rise and revolt against the satanic regime, thereby shaking the very foundation of the despotic rule.

This discourse was the last speech made at that time by the founder of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, resulting in his banishment abroad. Although during the last fifteen years, hundreds of thousands of copies have been printed from time to time and secretly distributed among the people, yet as a historical and destiny-making discourse which has directed the Islamic Revolution of Iran towards a definite course, it would be fitting to quote parts of it here. This speech which resulted in the exile of Ayatollah Khomeini from Iran was delivered on 4th Aban 1343 when all the places had been adorned and illuminated by force on the occasion of the Shah's birthday anniversary. This discourse which was delivered in the holy and religious city of Qum on capitulation, is as follows:

"These days, after hearing the problems of Iran, I can hardly sleep. I am worried and my heart is painful. In grief I count the days for my death to arrive. (By the festival is meant the birthday of Zahra, the Prophet's daughter, not the Shah's birthday.) They illuminated the places and celebrated, danced and made merry. They sold us and our independence, and resumed their dancing and illuminations. If I were in their place I would forbid the illumination and ask them to hang black flags over the gates of bazars and houses instead.

"Iran's greatness is gone, and the glory of Iran's army is trampled

upon. They took a bill to parliament joining us first to the Vienna pact, and then made American military advisers, their families and office employees and all those dependent on them, legally immune from every crime they may commit in Iran.

“If an American servant or cook kills your religious authority and tramples upon him, the Iranian police has no right to stop him, and Iranian courts have no right of trial or interrogation. He must go to America for his fate to be decided by his masters.

“This was ratified by the former government secretly. Sometime ago, too, it was taken to the Senate, and again it was easily approved and again nothing was said about it. A few days ago it was taken to the assembly, where they talked about it and some members opposed it, but it went shamefully through. The government brazenly defended this disgraceful agreement. Thus they made the Iranian nation meaner than American dogs. If an American’s dog is run over, the driver is sued, and if the Shah of Iran runs over an American’s dog, he is sued, but if an American cook runs over the Shah of Iran or a religious authority or any other dignitary, no one has the right of prosecution. Why? Because they were asking America for a loan and America made this a condition.

“What should we do with this calamity? What should the Ulama do with this disaster? What competent country can they appeal to? Other countries suppose that it is the Iranian nation that has humbled itself thus. They don’t know that the blame falls upon the Iranian government and parliament, a parliament that has no connection with the nation. This is a parliament of bayonets. What connection has it with the nation? The nation has not voted for it, and religious leaders and authorities boycotted the elections. The nation obeyed and refused to vote for these candidates.

“But today is the day of bayonets and these men are brought to sit on these benches. In one of the history books printed this year our children are deceptively told that breaking through the influence of the Ulama is in the interest of the nation. So the nation’s welfare depends on the Ulama’s removal. Yes, that is true. If the influence of the Ulama exists, it does not allow this nation to be enslaved by Britain or America. If that influence exists, it does not let Israel seize Iran’s economy, or let Israel’s goods be sold in Iran duty-free. If the Ulama’s influence exists, it rebukes this parliament and government and throws out the deputies. If that influence exists, an installed agent of America will not be allowed to commit such wrongs; he will be driven out of the country. Is Ulama’s influence harmful to the nation? No! It is harmful to you traitors, not to the nation.

“Gentlemen, I give a warning. O, army of Iran, I give a warning. O, politicians, merchants, religious leaders, Islamic authorities, I give a

warning. O, learned men, divinity students, theological centers, religious authorities. O, Najaf, Qum, Mashhad, Tehran. I give a warning. Obviously there are hidden things of which we are unaware. In the parliament it was stated that the veils should not be drawn aside. So, evidently they have evil intentions towards us. What will be worse than this? What is worse than slavery? Worse than abjectness?

“If the country is under American occupation, say so. Then throw us all out of this land. What do they want to do with us? What does this government say? And this parliament, which is illegal? What has this illegal parliament done for us? This parliament which was boycotted by the verdict of religious authorities, and its members are not of the nation? These are the deputies who keep on declaring that they have come there through the white revolution. Where is that white revolution? They ruined us. I am aware of people’s hunger, of the state of agriculture. Sir, do something for this country.

“Think of a way for this nation. Do not heap up debt upon debt. Stop being a servant. There are of course dollars accompanying servitude. But you are benefiting from the dollars, and leaving us the servitude.

“Islam has gone to the wind. O, Islamic nations, Islamic leaders, presidents of Islamic realms, Kings of Islamic countries, Shah of Iran. We appeal to you to redress wrongs! Should we be trampled under American boots simply because we are weak and lack dollars? America is worse than Britain, and Britain is worse than America, and Soviet Russia worse than both of them and even more wicked. But today we are dealing with these wicked ones, and with America. The President of America should realize that he is the most hated person in the world. He is the most hated individual to our nation since he has initiated such a tyranny upon the Islamic nation. The Quran and Iranian nation are hostile to him.

“These men are not deputies and the world should know that they are not deputies of Iran. Even if they were, I would dismiss them. They are dismissed. All the bills which have been approved are invalid. Since the beginning of the constitution they have rejected the text of the law. According to Article II of the Amendment to the constitutional law, no law is acceptable without the supervision of religious authorities. What authority has exercised supervision? Should the hand of the Ulama be severed now? If there were five priests or even one in this parliament, they would have rebuked these men, and would not allow such deeds. I said to those deputies who had opposed the bill: “Why didn’t you rise and throw this man out?” Was it enough to say that you were opposed to it? Why stand on ceremony and use flattery? Real opposition requires making an uproar and rushing in the middle of the hall and fighting to stop its ratification. Would everything be put right merely

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

HISTORICAL PRECEDENCE OF QUM'S THEOLOGICAL CENTER

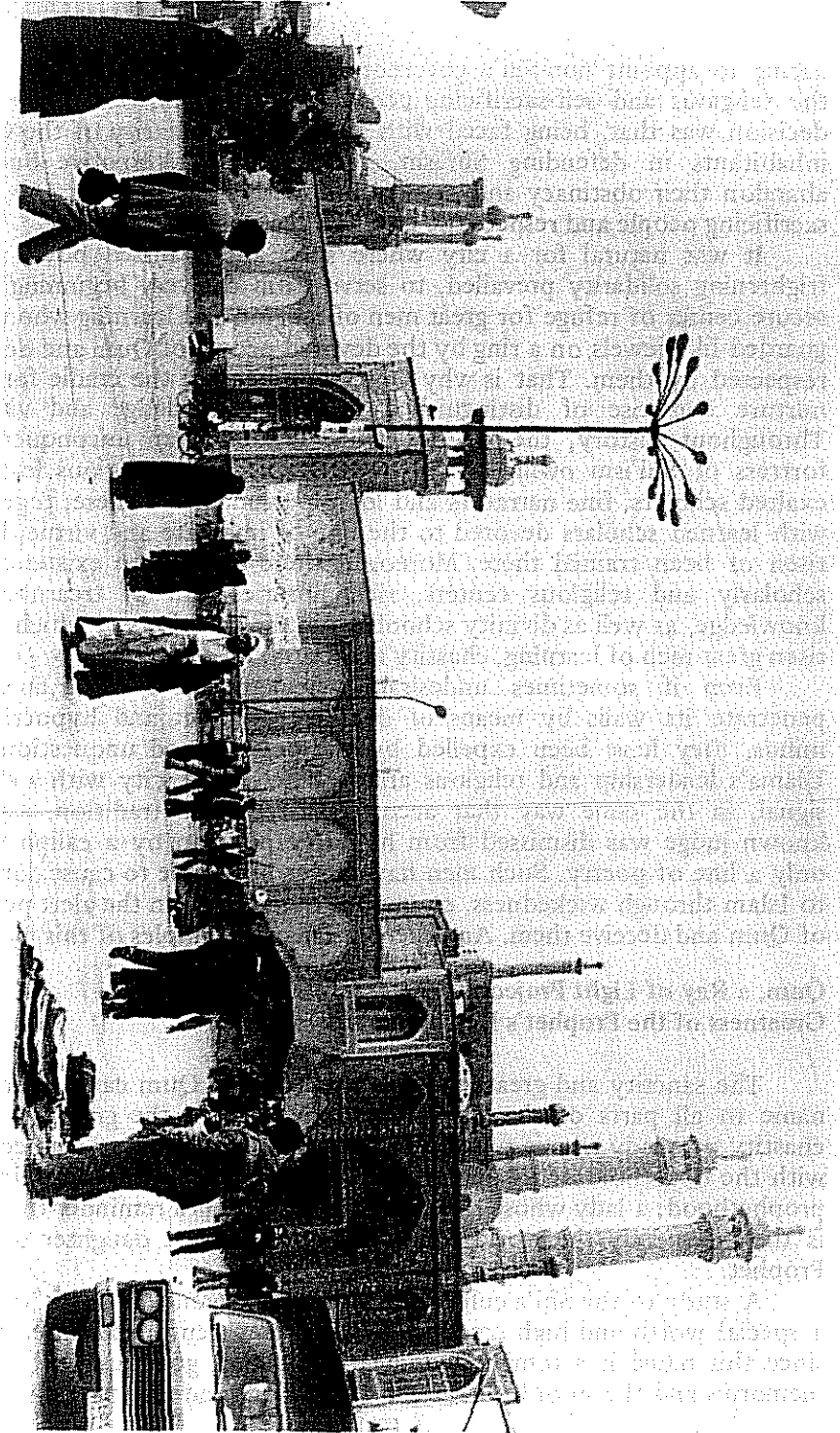
The city of Qum has for long been an important Shi'a center ever since the Iranians embraced the divine religion of Muhammad, peace be upon him, the true form of Shi'ism, and adopted combat as the way out against new Arab sovereignty. They have since then, directed their intellectual and spiritual faculties towards the attainment of this goal by accepting the life-giving creed of the twelve-Imams' Shi'ism and school of brotherhood, equality and love of the Prophet's Household and the twelve Imams' in order to stand against the kingly and dictatorial rule of the Amavis and the Abassids. The center of refuge of lovers of imamate and the focal point of the friends of the household of chastity and purity rose so high in importance and the love and zeal of its inhabitants in defending the precinct of Shi'ism became so strong that it became a source of fear for usurping caliphs and for those who trampled upon the right of the Imamate's household. This state of affairs went so far that the Abassid caliphs even at a time when their unquestioned domination and their tyrannical rule had spread over the whole of Islamic regions, and when they recklessly issued orders for the massacre of their opponents, were frightened of the inhabitants of Qum. Contrary to their inmost wish, this fear checked them from

by saying that you are against it? You saw that it was of no avail. You should not allow such a parliament to exist. Leave that parliament. We cannot recognize that so-called law as a law, nor the parliament or government as a parliament or government. They are traitors to the country!

“O, God, put the Muslims’ affairs in order. O, God, grant greatness to the holy religion of Islam. O, God, destroy all those who betray this land and betray the Quran and Islam.”

The great fighter was exiled to Turkey nine days after this speech on 13th Aban 1343. But what happened in these nine days to Iran and Iranians following the fiery, revolutionary and historical speech?

The great Leader of the Revolution, following his important discourse on the Capitulation Bill, issued a manifesto condemning the Shah’s treason in having the bill which would enslave Iran ratified with the force of bayonets, and asked all classes of Iran to reinforce their unity and solidarity to the last to win victory, and defend Islam and the independence of Iran at the cost of their lives.



An external view of Hazrate Ma'asoumah complex in Qum.

daring to appoint non-Shi'a governors and administrators to rule over the religious and self-sacrificing people of Qum. The reason for this decision was that, being faced with the daring solidarity of the Qum inhabitants in defending Shi'ism, they had no alternative but to abandon their obstinacy and compromise with these devoted and self-sacrificing people and respect the city's public opinion.

It was natural for a city where such an organized power and frightening solidarity prevailed, to serve from the very beginning as a secure center of refuge for great men of religion and learning who were guarded like jewels on a ring by the devoted people of Qum and deeply respected by them. That is why Qum soon became the cradle for the nurture and rise of distinguished men of knowledge and virtue. Throughout history, the city of Qum has been an unconquerable fortress of Shi'ism owing to the presence of great religious leaders, exalted scholars, fine narrators and lofty personalities. These, together with learned scholars devoted to the line of imamate and virtue, have risen or been trained there. Moreover, there is also the existence of scholarly and religious centers, rich libraries full of treasures of knowledge, as well as divinity schools from the chambers of which have risen great men of learning, chastity and crusade.

Even if sometimes undesirable elements have been able to penetrate its walls by means of deluding conduct and hypocritical minds, they have been expelled by the decisive and unquestionable Ulama's leadership and religious atmosphere of the city with a slight signal, in the same way that according to the old tradition, a well-known judge was dismissed from his lofty position by a caliph with only a line of poetry. Such men have never been able to cause damage to Islam through wickedness, or impose themselves on the alert people of Qum and deceive them. And there are many examples of this to cite.

Qum, a Ray of Light Projecting the Greatness of the Prophet's Descendants

The sanctity and greatness which the city of Qum carries with its name to all parts of the world are derived from the greatness and chastity of a lady who is a model of purity and virtue in her connection with the household of Imamate and her descent from the noble line of prophethood; a lady whose fine name of Fatimah is a reminder that she is the finest lady the world has ever seen as a pure daughter of the Prophet.

A study of the Shi'a culture shows that the name 'Fatimah' enjoys a special worth and high credit in this fourteen centuries' old culture, since this name is a reminder of peerless values, greatness and proud memories and the most brilliant era of the glory and chastity of Islamic

women.

For the first time, (not chronologically but from the viewpoint of the brilliance and greatness of Shi'a history), we come across this noble name in the household of the holy Prophet. That name presents the virtuous daughter of the exalted Prophet of Islam, the second impeccable personality of human history, the dearest model of womanhood, and mother of the two Imams, Hassan and Hossain. She is called the Great Seddiqa, Fatimah Zahra, a holy and exalted lady who spent a whole life of purity and fruitfulness gloriously and joined her beloved God with honour and pride, a lady who left behind a world of virtue and sanctity, whose sons, Hassan and Hossain, and her impeccable descendants are fine examples of that virtue and sanctity imbibed from her instructive way of life.

And elsewhere (chronologically a few years earlier), we find that pure and beautiful name in conjunction with the name of the lord of the chaste, the Commander of the Faithful and the first impeccable leader of Shi'as, Ali ibn-Abi-Talib, and this time she is called Fatimah, daughter of Assad. She is a lady who does not only possess the honour of being the mother of the first impeccable leader of the Shi'as, but even before the birth of that true imam and rightful successor to the Prophet, had possessed a high rank and peerless position, so that neither before her nor afterwards did any woman attain such a lofty position. She was so deeply attached to the Ka'aba that she gave birth to her child in that holy House of God and made that house the home of her own and her offspring. She was one of the first to be converted to Islam and to accept the prophethood of the Prophet, and she was the eleventh person whose name was recorded in history by the Prophet's, at a time when infidelity, atheism and ignorance prevailed.

Fatimah bento-Assad is a virtuous and exalted lady under whose motherly care and kindness, the Prophet of Islam spent his childhood, and that was when Abi-Taleb (father of Imam Ali) acted as guardian of his orphaned nephew. The Prophet developed a strong affection for this devoted lady. He loved her like his own mother, so that at her death, he wept bitterly and covered her with a shroud with his own hands. He repeated forty times, 'God is Great' and performed the burial prayer. He finally came beside her tomb and prayed God to bring peace and tranquility upon her soul.

Next time, we meet the same name in the house of the third Imam of the Shi'as. This was Fatimah, the daughter of Imam Hossain who entered Kufah in the group of the household captives, delivering a fiery oration in defence of the school of right and that of her exalted father and brothers, and stood side by side with her great aunt Zeinab, defending the sanguine revolution and sacred Hossain movement.

Fatimah Ma'soumah

In this group of chaste Fatimahs, we meet another Fatimah after two centuries, namely the daughter of Imam Moussa-ibn-Jaafar who is another descendant of the Prophet's chaste household.

In the account of her life, it is said that this noble lady was brought up in Medina and in her youth travelled to Iran to follow the worthy goal of her exalted brother Imam Ali ibn Moussa-al-Raza. But when on her way she reached the town of Saveh, she was so exhausted that she fell ill with fever. However, being eager to join her brother, she did not rest for long and once more set off, reaching the city of Qum in fever and sickness. However she was so ill that for seventeen days she was in bed and eventually passed away full of love to meet her noble brother.

Concerning the nobility of this chaste lady, many narrations have been quoted from her exalted brother Imam Reza which encourage the devotees of the Prophet's household to make a pilgrimage of devotion to the shrine of this great lady.

Qum, as a Sanctuary of the Imamate's Household

For twelve centuries, Qum has been the city of religion and learning, a land of spirituality, bearing the shrine of the chaste lady of Islam, Fatimah Ma'soumah, and a center of pilgrimage for virtuous believers. It is justifiably called the 'city of blood, uprising and jurisprudence'. Today, too, this city has more than ever won the world attention so that its news and reports head the limelight of world events.

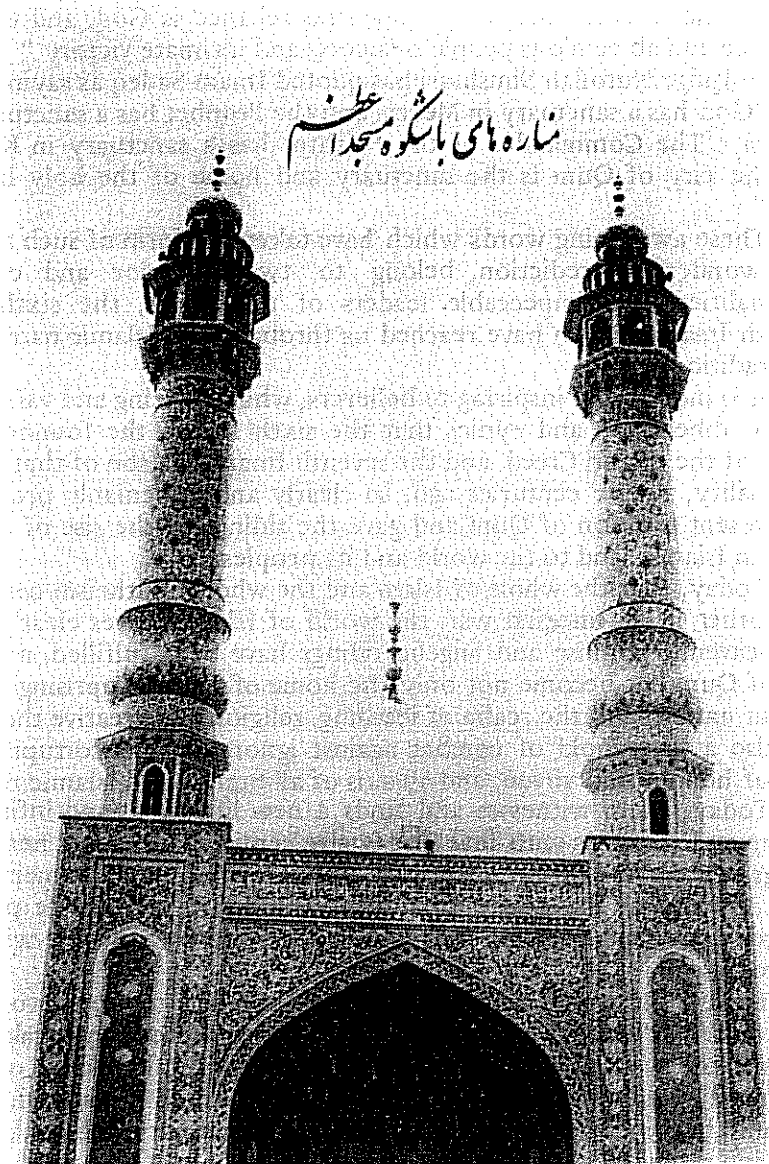
This city has long attracted our impeccable leaders so that they have been endlessly talking about it and their many predictions in connection to this city recall to mind its present greatness. The mention of a few worthy and interesting traditions will give one a better picture:

1) The sixth Imam, Imam Jaafar Sadeq said:

"God Almighty will adduce an argument with other towns about the city of Qum and its people, and in the absence of the Imam, a time will come when Qum and its people will act as a plea for others. The town of Kufa will be emptied of the Shi'as and devotees of the household, and knowledge and learning will depart from it, giving its place to the city of Qum. Whence all knowledge and learning will spread to other parts of the world."

2) Ali ibn-Issa has quoted from Ayub son of Yahya-bin-Jandal, quoting Imam Mousa-bin-Jaafar who says:

"A great man of Qum will call the people to truth and freedom



A picturesque view of the A'zam Mosque's minarets.

and the people resolutely and with an iron determination will rally to his call and gather round him. They are fearless men who never tire of combat and effort. Their only hope and reliance is God, and the lot of chaste and abstemious people is success and ultimate victory."

3) Judge Nurollah Shushtari has quoted Imam Sadeq as saying:

"God has a sanctuary in Mecca, and the Prophet has a sanctuary in Medina . The Commander of the Faithful has a sanctuary in Kufah, and the city of Qum is the sanctuary and home of the holy household."

These awakening words which have taken the form of such a clear and wonderful prediction, belong to two superior and exalted personalities, two impeccable leaders of the Shi'as, the sixth and seventh Imams, which have reached us through valid Islamic narrations and traditions.

It is indeed soul-inspiring to believers, while amazing and vanquishing to unbelievers and cynics that the sixth Imam, the founder and leader of the Jaafari Creed, and the seventh Imam, the son of that noble personality, twelve centuries ago, so clearly and undeniably predicted the present position of Qum and gave the tidings of the rise of a man from an Islamic land to the world and its peoples.

Today, that the whole of Islam and the whole of atheism confront each other in an unequal war, the world of Islam notices clearly that this heavenly promise and angelic tidings have been fulfilled, and the city of Qum has become not only the home of the true uprising of the Iranian nation, and the realm of learning, religion and creative thought, but also a stronghold of combat against ignorance and corruption, a base of honour and virtue, and an axis of all human and Islamic moves.

Today, Islam witnesses and finds a new life by it, and infidelity notices and trembles with fear that twelve centuries after that heavenly tidings, a great and divine A'lem such as Ayatollah Imam Khomeini will stand up and in the words of the seventh Imam, will invite people towards truth and freedom and will be followed by a people with an iron resolution.

Today, the whole world can witness how the righteous voice of that exalted A'lem has echoed below this azure dome fully awakening Muslims the world over and even the oppressed non-Muslims of this tyrannical world of ours. As predicted by both exalted Imams, Qum has not only become the guiding light for the Iranian nation, but also the hope and refuge of all Muslims and oppressed people of the world.

The City of Fatimah Ma'soumah

A brief glance suffices to see that this blessed city has become a center of lofty human thoughts and Islamic moves and attained its deserving brilliance ever since the holy shrine of that great personality

of Islam, that pure, virtuous and learned lady, namely Fatimah Ma'soumah, bestowed honour on that city. Since that time, the little town of Qum began its new historical and history-making phase and the blessing of that noble lady made Qum a safe refuge of the devotees of the household of chastity and center of attention of distinguished Islamic personalities.

From then on, Islamic scholars, great Islamologists, and devotees of the household of the Prophet and Imam Ali were drawn to this city, residing in the vicinity of the shrine of this noble lady of Islam, and gradually important centers were established to propagate Islamic thought.

With the passage of time, in the center of this city, reputable religious centers were established, whose fame increased day by day, and they produced narrators, jurisprudents, orators, thinkers and learned men for the Islamic society, each of whom attaining a deserving position in the history of the Islamic intellectual combats.

The Bright Shrine

As we said, the city of Qum, despite its long history and inspite of the honour it had gained owing to the respect shown to its future by the impeccable religious leaders, it was held in high esteem by men of learning. Nevertheless, its real credit and honour must be attributed to the day when it became the eternal residence and burial home of the great and chaste lady of the Prophet's household, namely the Reverend Ma'soumah; a lady whose chastity and virtue, whose sanctity and brilliance, had won world fame. Thus, within a short time, seekers of knowledge and virtue, and lovers of chastity and spirituality, were drawn to it. It was soon adorned with jewels of intellect and in time, it became the greatest center of learning in the world.

Fatimah Ma'soumah; the noble and virtuous daughter of the Imam's household, who was peerless in her asceticism, devotion and chastity among the female children of the seventh Imam, had a deep and fiery love for her exalted brother, Imam Ali-bin-Moussa-Reza ever since her childhood, and felt for that dear brother as does a worthy pupil for a precious teacher, or a quiet child for a kind father. A symbol of affection and humbleness, she did not neglect a moment to show this attachment and devotion or to benefit from that ocean of knowledge and goodness.

This devotion was so deep that on the one hand this noble sister could not bear being separated from that exalted brother and on the other hand she always tried to be a worthy disciple in the school of her brother's intellectual and spiritual combats and endeavours. She stood by his side in all his struggles in the way of Islam so that she brought

back to the mind of discerning men, the memory of that lioness of Karbala, Zeinab-al-Kobra, and her deep attachment to her noble brother, Imam Hossain-bin-Ali.

During the rule and unlawful caliphate of Ma'moun of the Abassids, Imam Reza left for Iran and stayed in Toos to resume his divine combats and guide the Islamic Ummah on the path of worldly happiness and salvation of the world to come, his noble sister Fatimah Ma'soumah could not bear this separation, and so she set off from Hejaz for Iran in the year 201 H. to meet her brother and join that exalted Imam in his divine endeavours.

When M'soumah left Medina for Marv, known as Mashhad today, she was a young girl of eighteen. In those days, when travel between two close towns was difficult even for men owing to bad roads and inadequate transport and other travelling means, it is obvious how hard such a long journey between two remote towns was for a young girl and what hardship it entailed. But love and affection overcame all these.

She bore whatever hardship in order to join her beloved brother and eventually reached the town of Saveh. Here she went down with high fever owing to fatigue. However she was resolute on setting off in spite of her illness, even though her companions insisted that she should rest there to get well since in her condition it was dangerous to continue her journey. But the desire to meet her brother dominated all feelings and she decided otherwise. When she found that the distance between Saveh and Qum was about sixty kilometers, though she was sick, she asked her servant to accompany her to Qum where she intended to take a few days' rest, after which she would resume her journey. This clearly reveals the high esteem in which she held Qum, a city which possessed a reputation even in those days in spite of its being only a small town. As a place which had won fame for being a religious center, she considered it fitting for a member of the Prophet's household to use it as a resting place.

The author of Safinatol-Bohar writes: "As soon as the tribe of Al-Khazraj, the members of which were friends and followers of the Prophet's household, heard that the daughter of the seventh Imam and sister of the eighth Imam intended to travel to Marv and had reached the town of Saveh, they went to meet her and gave her a warm welcome, so that the chief of the tribe pulled the halter of her camel while the others followed the camel on foot, and in this way, she arrived at the town of Qum.

"This noble guest died there after 16 days at the age of eighteen (born 183, died 201 H.) in her wish to meet her brother whom she loved so much. She was buried in a piece of land which belonged to her host, and this is where the present shrine is situated. After some years, Zeinab, daughter of Imam Jawad, had a shelter built over her aunt's tomb to make it more visible, and today the altar where she prayed

attracts many pilgrims to the shrine.'

Several traditions have been quoted by that noble lady as recorded in books of traditions, one of which is the 'Fatemiyat tradition' in which the names of several Fatimas are mentioned ending with the name of Fatimah, daughter of the holy Prophet. This precious document which speaks of the dignity of the household and the love for it, is engraved also on the tombstone of the Reverend Ma'soumah.

The Effective Role in Founding the Religious Center of Qum

Fatimah Ma'soumah, as a symbol of honour and pride for all ladies of the world, has attained such a lofty position that she is considered today as the spiritual evidence and support of men of learning and virtue and Islamic facts, and serves as the main and permanent axis of Qum's religious center. This center is the propagator of proper and authentic Islamic thoughts and center of publication of the true ideologies of Islamic school in the contemporary world. In addition to advancing knowledge and intellectual goals and providing guidance, its resistance against tyranny and tyrants, its exposure of the plots of the enemies of Islam, and the leadership of one of its exalted members, have made the city a source of amazement in the world so that this center is recognised now as a symbol of freedom, a stronghold of resistance and epic of faith and greatness of the Islamic and revolutionary land of Iran.

Today, owing to the blessing of the personality of that noble lady, the city of Qum is the asylum for great religious scholars, Ulama and exalted intellectual and spiritual leaders of Islam, and its holy religious center serves as the headquarters for spiritual guidance. Pilgrims visit it from all parts of the country and other Islamic lands to pay homage to that great lady, singing her praises day and night in their prayers, thinking of her as the nucleus of faith and learning in this Islamic and revolutionary realm, and gathering round her like moths round a candle, for, they realize that she has been a symbol of spirituality and a source of steadfastness, and the secret behind the survival and success of the religious center.

The Religious Center of Qum and its Vestiges

The shrine of the Reverend Ma'soumah, daughter of the seventh Imam of the Shi'as is situated in the heart of the center of the Shi'a world. It is a source of inspiration and glory for thousands of Islamic scholars, men of learning, eager pilgrims who come there day and night to purify their mind and spirit by means of proximity to her inspiring court, learn lessons of chastity and resistance in the way

of God in her school, to deliver these lessons to others in other towns and villages of our Islamic country and carry them to distant spots beyond the borders, to benefit other lands.

There are now, thousands of seekers of knowledge residing there to absorb and preserve knowledge and religion. There are not only a great many men of learning engaged in training young men for future generations, but there are also a number of schools for chaste girls and women at different academic stages studying Islamic branches of knowledge under exalted masters, in order to serve later as preachers, writers, missionaries and propagators of religious teachings among the women of the Islamic country in near and far towns and villages.

A University Bearing a Spiritual Record of 12 Centuries

What is noteworthy is that this holy center, inspite of its short life as a modern institution, has a record of 12 centuries as a great Islamic university. In other words, since this base of faith and learning won a fame as the shrine of the Reverend Ma'soumah, it has attracted men of research and zealous scholars from all parts of Islamic lands and they laid the foundation of the greatest university of Islamic branches of knowledge there.

But in its modern form, the center is indebted to the great divinity scholar, Ayatollah Haj Sheikh Abdol Karim Hayeri Yazdi, and in these sixty years, it has become the most influential and powerful center of intellectual activity in Iran and the Islamic world.

Consequently, owing to its heavy responsibility as a center in the history of political, social and Islamic struggles in the last sixty years in Iran and other Islamic lands, it would be fitting here to give an account of the leaders of this center in order to clarify for historians and pioneers of the revolutionary society some of the dark and obscure points that still remain.

This research may be able in all humility to provide a basis for further investigation and show how in this chaotic world and fearful abyss in which the world is involved, the Muslim nation of Iran led by the Ulama has succeeded in winning victory over the dominant powers of the east and west, and how other Muslim nations can, by means of inspiration from this great historical experiment and by reliance on Islamic criteria, break all the Pharaohs and overthrow their regimes.

The Human and Revolutionary Charter of the Center

Ayatollah Taleghani, a symbol of learning, chastity and crusade who was trained in the Center and thought and fought for Islam, humanity and human honour, speaks fine words about Qum. In a

discourse delivered at Qum in the Theological Center after the victory of the revolution, he said:

“The city of Qum, a city of authentic Islamic uprising, a city of the holy household, a city which has been the source of transformation in other cities of Iran has been the cradle of traditions, scholars, philosophers, many Mulla Sadras and Hayeris, until there comes the turn of the rise of Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Yazdi, the Abazar of the time.

“These doors and walls and the second courtyard are memories of fifty years for me. They make me attentive, press my heart, and whisper occult words in my ears. You do not know how inspiring these doors and walls are for me. Now look at this court and hear the loud and clear voice of Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Yazdi, under the deadly whip of Reza Khan. They booted Reza Khan’s soldiers, attacked this holy shrine with guns and tanks, and we were besieged, beaten and bayoneted by them. We stood up and fought. Indeed, what did Reza Khan have to say?”

Ayatollah Taleghani goes on to say:

“After one year, this old man, this Abazar of the time, this man who lived on dry bread, was released from prison and banished to the shrine of Abdol-Azim. I went to see him, and he showed me his arms on which the marks of whips could still be seen.”

That is how Ayatollah Taleghani speaks of Qum and the crusaders who raised the banner of combat there, and how this center has been able to declare its human and divine mission inspite of all those tortures and sufferings; a center which with its human and Islamic charter in the dark period of Pahlavi rule opened up the horizon of hopes and ideals for the oppressed people of Iran, and exhibited its true mettle and essence.

As said before, the Theological Center of Qum found a new life since Ayatollah Haj Sheikh Abdol Karim Hayeri came to stay there, and began its present magnificent life. This great A’lem illuminated the circle of scholars there with his knowledge and virtue, and trained learned and accomplished disciples who became more united and resolute through his efforts in those days of suppression and enmity with Islam and knowledge and thought, and those days when human honour and religion were being trampled upon by Reza Khan and other hirelings of foreign governments. It was then that the number of his disciples rose to six hundred; six hundred men of learning and combat who withstood the plots of world-devourers and tyranny of Reza Khan’s government, and refused to change their faith for the world. Here was a group to which belonged the exalted Leader of the Revolution and other present religious authorities and masters of jurisprudence, each of whom has been or is the torch-bearer of Islamic

circles. Ayatollah Hayeri had gathered round him builders of ideas and school of thought, and had made Qum the center for propagation of Islamic thought for all parts of Iran.

In fact, ever since he made Qum his residing place, this city of uprising and resolution became an intellectual and spiritual center for the world of Islam, and the home of distinguished religious authorities and great social and intellectual leaders. It became a base which had inherited dynamism from Ali's school, and scholarly mentality, precision and constancy in Islamic matters from the rich Ja'afari jurisprudence.

Famous Figures in Qum's History

The history of Qum shows that this fruitful city has always been the cradle for nourishing individuals whose names have adorned the circles of knowledge, literature, Islamic philosophy, jurisprudence and research. There have risen men like Sheikh Sadduq, the authority respected by traditionists, Ibn-Ghoulavya, peerless jurist, Sheikh Mofid and Baraghi Bare'e, masters of various branches of learning, Honeyn-bin-Sahl, the well-known philosopher, of whom Ibn-Amid, the minister has said: "If he were the only man risen from our city, it would be sufficient." There are also Khawjeh Nassir-al-Din Toossi who is famous in the east and west, and Ibn-Amid, minister of Rokn-al-Dowlah Deylami, of whom it is said: "The art of composition began with Abdol-Hamid and ended with Ibn-Amid." There were also his son, Abol-Fat'h nicknamed 'Zol-Kefayateyn', minister of both Rokn-al-Dowlah and Mo'ayed-al-Dowlah Deylami, as well as Mo'ayed-al-Din Qumi, minister of three Abassid caliphs, Taj-el-Molk. Abol-Ghanayem Qumi, minister of Malek Shah Saljuqi, Majd-al-Molk Beravestani, minister of Barikaragh, and lastly Nezami Ganjavi author of the work 'Khamssa'.

Jurisprudents and narrators

Qum has also been the training ground and home of a group of distinguished jurisprudents and Islamic narrators, a description of whose names and qualities and works would entail an extensive volume. Here we will briefly mention a few:

1) Abol-Hassan Ali-bin-Hossain-bin-Mussa-bin-Babwayh Qumi who is one of the greatest masters of tradition and leader of the Shi'a sect. He died in 329 H.

2) Abu-Ja'afar Muhammad-bin-Ali-bin-Hossain-bin-Moussa-bin-Babwayh Qumi, nicknamed Sheikh Saduq, who was a prominent narrator, leader of jurisprudents and religious experts, and according to

biographers, he was unique in his abounding knowledge and memory.

3) Abu Abdollah Hossain-Ali-bin-Hossain-bin-Moussa-bin-Bahwayah Qumi, Sheikh Saduq's brother, a great narrator and man of learning, and has produced valuable books.

4) Abol-Ghassem Ja'afar-bin-Muhammad-bin-Ja'afar-bin-Moussa-bin-Ghoulawayh Qumi, a great narrator and jurisprudent.

5) Abu-Muhammad Jafar-bin-Ahmad-bin-Ali-al-Qumi, a peerless scholar and a great narrator, author, of 'Al-Mossalsalat' on traditions.

6) Ibn Shazan Muhammad-bin-Ali-al-Qumi, an exalted jurisprudent and narrator. A nephew of Ibn-Ghoulawayh, who wrote a book on Imam Ali's character, in which he has mentioned one hundred qualities quoted from the narrations of opponents.

7) Shazan-bin-Jabra'il-bin-Isma'il-bin-Abitaleb Qumi, a credible narrator and distinguished jurisprudent, author of valuable books including 'Zad-el-Mossafer.

8) Sa'd-bin-Abdollah-bin-Abi-Khalaf-el-Asha'ri Qumi, a companion of Imam Hassan Askari, and a great man of learning.

9) Muhammad-ibn-Abel-Qassem Qumi, nicknamed 'Majeyluya', son-in-law of Ahmad-bin-Abi-Abdollah Baraghi, and a great scholar about whom scholar Helli has said: "This noble man is a friend of the Qumis."

10) Muhammad-bin-al-Hassan-al-Saffar Qumi, a companion of Imam Hassan Askari and a distinguished jurisprudent, author of valuable books including Bassayer-e-Darajat.

11) Abu-Abdollah Muhammad-bin-Khaled-al-Baraghi Qumi, a companion of Imam Reza and a great scholar.

12) Ahmad-bin-Muhammad-bin-Khaled-al-Baraghi, a distinguished scholar after whose death Ahmad-bin-Issa, a great jurisprudent of Qum escorted his funeral bare-footed.

13) Sayyed Sadr-al-Din-bin-Muhammad Baqer-al-Razavi Qumi, an exalted jurisprudent, a disciple of whom was Master Akbar who called his teacher 'Master of masters'.

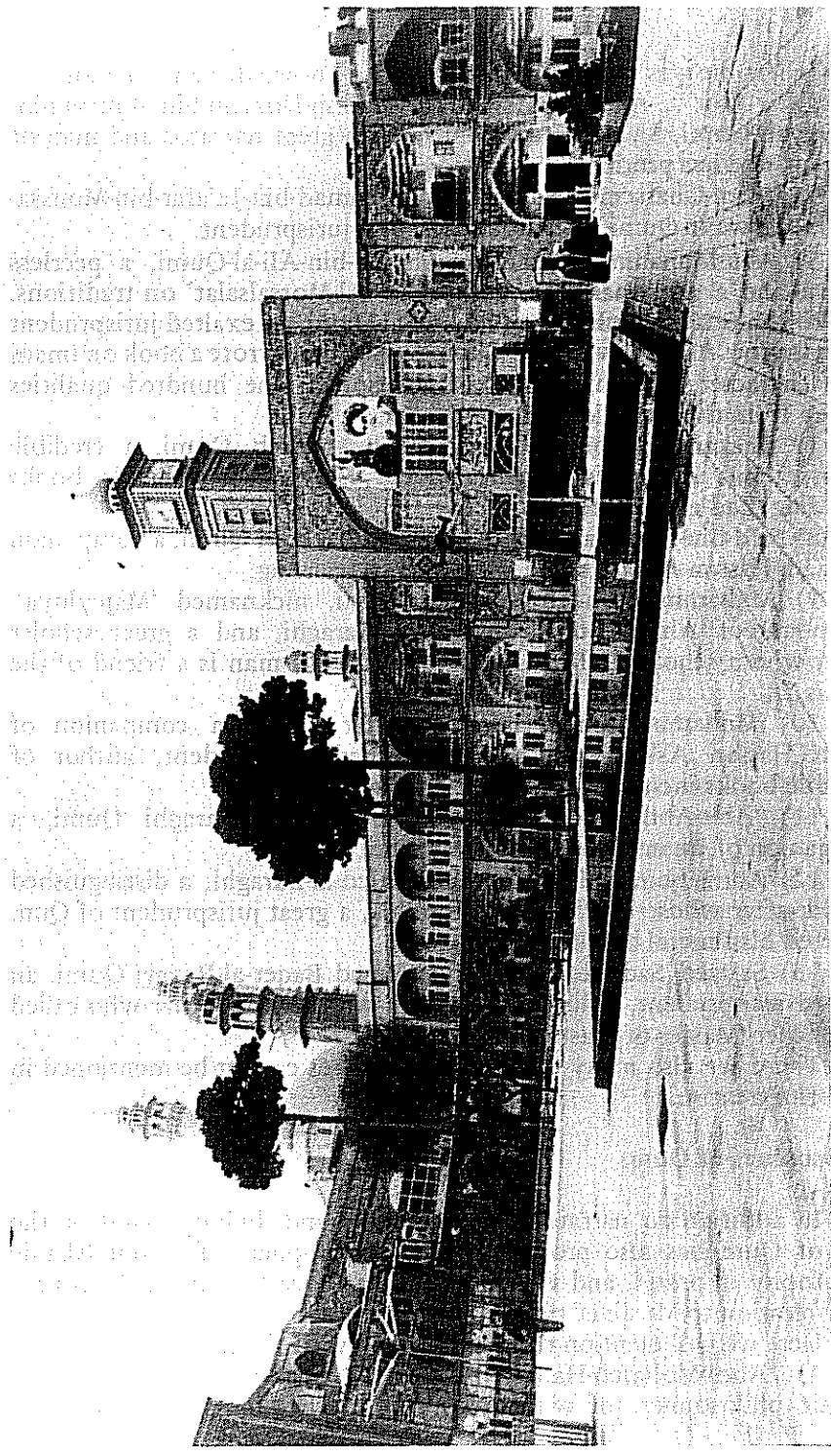
There are also many others whose names cannot be mentioned in this brief treatise.

Philosophers of Qum

In addition to narrators, jurisprudents and divinity scholars, the city of Qum has also produced great philosophers of whom Islamic philosophy is proud, and whose lofty ideas have long been the source of inspiration to Muslims' philosophical circles.

Here we will mention the names of a few of them:

1) Abol-Mohareb-Hanin-bin-Sahl-bin-Mohareb Qumi, a great Islamic philosopher, of whom Ibn-Amid, the minister, spoke very



A western view inside the Feziah School complex in Qum.

proudly.

2) Khawjeh Nassir-al-Din Muhammad-bin-Muhammad-al-Jahrudi-al-Toossi, a peerless scholar and fine philosopher, of whom Georgi Zeydan, the Christian Arab scholar writes in his book, 'Arabic Vocabulary': "His collection comprised more than four hundred thousand books. He assembled philosophers, astrologers and scholars and arranged an endowment for them, and the field of science and knowledge was so illuminated by this Persian man of learning in the Mogul realm that it shone like a bright light in a dark night." One of his valuable books is 'Tajrid-al-Kalam', which has been commented upon by many scholars, one of whom is scholar Helli, a fact which illustrates his fame and greatness.

3) Qazi Sa'id Muhammad-bin-Muhammad Mofid Qumi, a distinguished gnostic who has been considered a confirmer of 'the Holy Spirit' owing to his fine analysis of gnostic principles, and discovery of hidden secrets, without which confirmation this matter would not have been accessible.

The Curriculum of Theological Centers

The discussion of the role of Qum's Theological Center in the Islamic movements of the present century requires a study of its system of education and its training of chaste and religious men in this exalted school of thought, to show what stages the trainees pass through and how they are equipped with the weapons of religion, learning and virtue.

The point to be stressed is that the love and interest in the study of Islamic subjects have always been something intellectual where material things, privileges, or academic degrees, have never been the motive. An Islamic divinity student zealously enters this field to acquire Islamic knowledge and eagerly bears difficulties and hardships in its pursuit.

The Academic Program of Divinity Students

The first pre-requisite for taking up this course is an adequate knowledge of reading and writing Persian, at least at an elementary level. But there are many who on admission to this course, have completed high school or even a university degree course. Anyone who is admitted to this course must go through three stages to be qualified for the course leading to religious expertise.

1- Preliminary Course

This course begins with a study of basic Arabic grammar and syntax and composition as well as logic. The books to be studied in this

course are two simple grammar books, namely 'Mabadi-al-Arabia' and 'Jame'-ol-Moghaddamat' which consists of fourteen brief books in Persian and Arabic on grammar, syntax, logic, method of reading, and drill in difficult grammatical conjugations. This book was used as a text-book a long time ago, and is still used, and although this book comprises 14 brief books, is written in an older style commonly used before, some sections of it such as 'Samaddiah' of Sheikh Baha'i, and 'Avamel' of Mulla Hassan are still of interest to the students, and the due attention is paid to them during this course.

Next to the above book, more detailed books on grammar and syntax and studied as preparation for a mastery of Arabic literature and texts of annals, traditions, jurisprudence, principles and commentary, helping for a better understanding. Such books include 'Alfia' of Ibn Malek Jalal-al-Din Suyuti, 'Sharh-e-Jami', 'Sharh-e-Nezam', 'Sharh-e-Razi and Shafia of Ibn-Hajeb.'

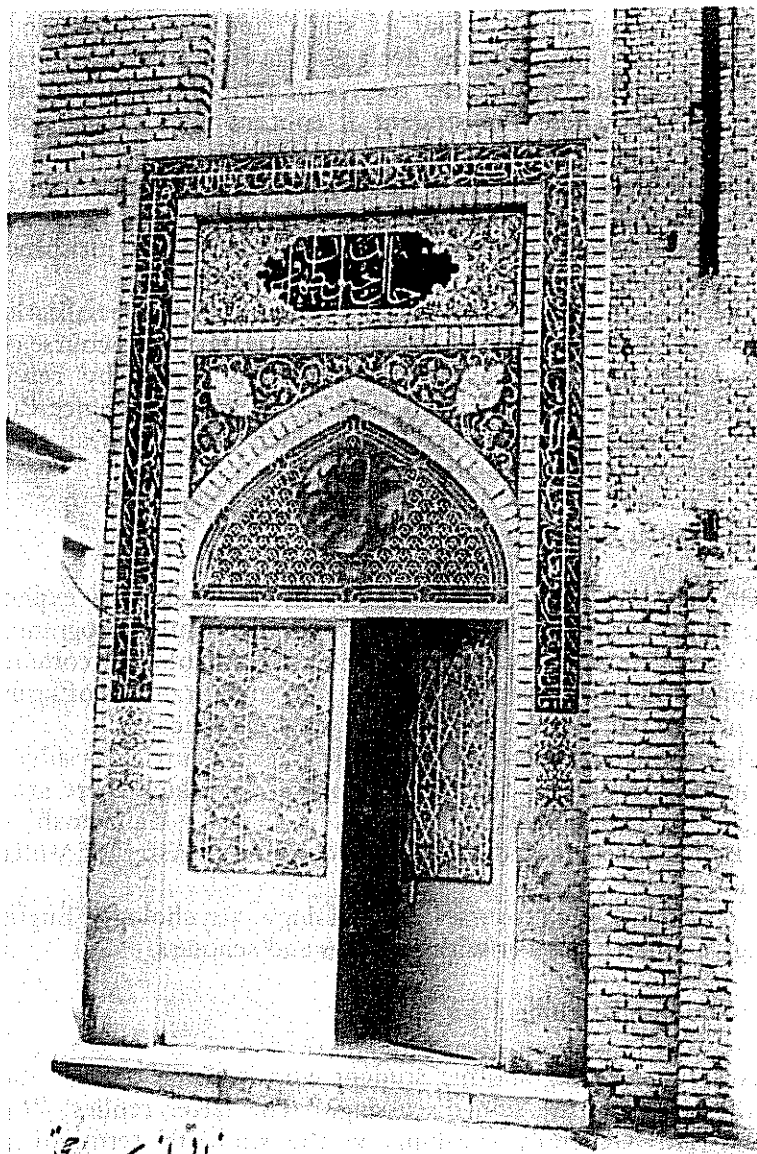
The poems of 'Alfiah' of Ibn Malek on Syntax are usually memorized. Then for further knowledge of Arabic literature, the books, 'Mughni-al-labib' of Ibn Hosham and 'Mottawal' of Sa'ed-al-Din Taftazani are studied, though in recent years, shorter books, have replaced 'Motawal'. There are also more elaborate books on logic such as 'Hashia' of Mulla Abdollah Yazdi, 'Sharh-e-Shamsiah' and sometimes 'Sharh-e-Matale'e'. The program also contains a brief description of the principles of jurisprudence at the end of the preliminary course. The main text-book of principles is usually 'Ma'alem-ol-Ossoul', with many descriptions and commentaries. The book, 'Sharay'e Mohaqiq' is also included in this course and the beginning of the next one.

2- Intermediate course

This course consists mainly of reading. After completing the preliminary course, the students is admitted to the intermediate course in which his task consists mainly of learning jurisprudence, principles and philosophy from related texts. These texts include two volumes of 'Sharh-e-Lomah' of Shahid Thani, 'Ghavanin' of Mirza'i Qumi, 'Makaseb and Fara'ed' of Sheikh Murteza Ansari, and 'Kefayat-ol-Ossoul' of the late Akhond Mulla Muhammad Kazem Khorassani on argumentative principles.

3- Advanced Course

This course consists of discussion of principles and jurisprudence beyond text-books. After the student has learnt jurisprudence, principles and philosophy in the first two courses through text-books and is able to comprehend the annals and traditions related to jurisprudence, it becomes time for him to attend the master's class. Here, relevant questions relating to principles and jurisprudence are discussed. The teacher discusses these questions, keeping in mind the



نمایی از مدرسه حجتیه

The northern gate of the Hojjatiyah School in Qum.

views of other Islamic scholars, and also propounds his own views. The students participate in the discussion and sometimes, such a discussion may last for weeks or even months until the subject is thrashed out and fully understood.

Thus, after a long period of study and preparation in earlier courses, various topics are now dealt with in the presence of masters in these centers. This is quite the reverse of procedures current in some secular colleges where the student is content with taking notes and memorising things without reflection and analysis.

The ultimate goal of these discussions is to strengthen the reasoning and thinking faculty and enable a solid understanding of verdicts, by reliance on four sources of reasoning (in Shi'a jurisprudence), namely the Quran, tradition, unanimity and intellect.

Thenceforth, the student follows the course of specialisation in a field for which he feels gifted. What is significant in this course of Shi'a jurisprudence and specialisation is that the expert by relying on jurisprudential laws and his own long study and experience can issue verdicts concerning matters and cases which crop up at all times and require jurisprudential verdicts.

Extra-curricular Studies

On holidays and in times of leisure, the student is expected to engage in studies and discussions beyond the regular program. These studies are mostly related to scholastic theology, commentary, biography, old and modern astronomy and such branches of knowledge which are related to jurisprudence and religious precepts.

Philosophy is sometimes studied as an extra-curricular subject, and sometimes as a part of the regular course, for which there are special timings. For beginners, the textbook is 'Sharh-e-Manzumah' of Haj Mulla Hadi Sabzevari, and for advanced courses, 'Asfar' of Mulla Sadra Shirazi.

At present, such courses as sociology, psychology, English and ideology are more popular with students and scholars.

Discussion, not Teaching

A student asking another student who is also a teacher about his study says: "What are you discussing?" The latter replies: "I discuss this subject." Generally speaking, in the students' terminology, the word 'discussion' is usually used instead of 'learning' and 'teaching.'

The reason for the use of this term is that both the teacher and student co-operate in the analysis of topics, and a student is perfectly free to express his own view and even reject the teacher's view by

offering reasons and arguments. If he proves to be in the right, the teacher accepts his objections and there is no denial or refusal.

This freedom of expression by the students is one of the strong points in favour of the system. The student prepares himself beforehand by consulting various sources, and then presents his findings to the master and other students who are usually well-versed in the subject. Then views are expressed by each member of the circle, and final conclusions are drawn.

Factors of Students' Progress

This method of study contains several important factors which effect a better understanding and progress in the subjects being studied by the students.

1) Previous study and preparation, enabling the student to acquire sufficient knowledge for participation in the discussion which is mainly confined to an analysis of difficult points.

2) Perfect freedom of expression for the student to state his own views and criticise those of the teacher. This is particularly true of the advanced courses where voices are raised so high at times, that a by-stander might mistake the scene as one of quarrel.

3) Exchange of views which takes place by small groups of students after each session in order to discuss difficult points.

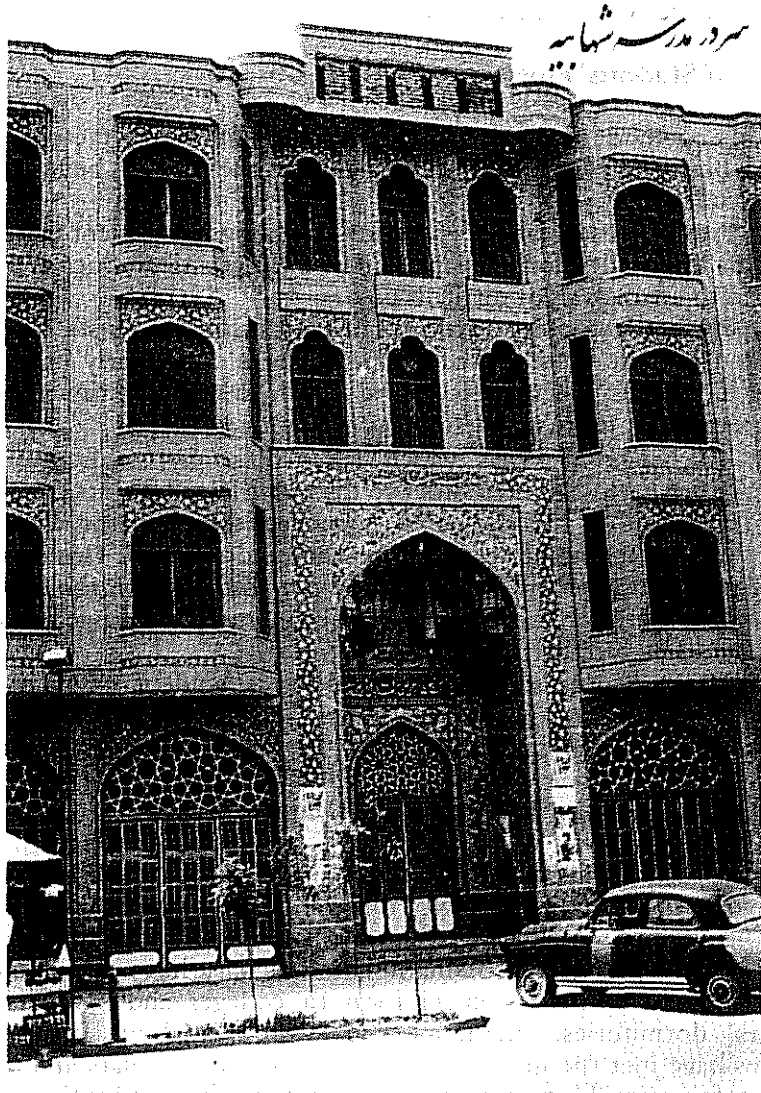
4) Freedom in the choice of a teacher, the result of which is a perfect understanding between the teacher and student. This choice is made on the basis of full familiarity of the student with the teacher's outlook and method. There is no compulsion or a pre-arranged program which a student is obliged to accept.

Thus the word 'searcher' is used for a student of theological subjects. He goes through various stages for intellectual advancement and proceeds towards specialisation.

Books and Libraries in the Theological Center

Its special intellectual and social position has made the Theological Center of Qum a center of gravity for Islamic scholars, thinkers and the Shi'a Ulama of the world.

The gathering of the Ulama in this holy city has necessitated the creation of rich libraries in addition to colleges and students' and scholars' dormitories, the number of which is about fifty. These libraries have met the needs of students, teachers, scholars and men of research for many long years and are used day and night by them as the greatest source of mental nourishment.



Shahabiyah School's gate in Qum.

Maximum Usage

Without exaggeration, the libraries of Theological Center of Qum are unrivalled among the public libraries of the country from the viewpoint of efficiency, benefits, members and usage.

What is noteworthy is that very often, before the opening hours, large numbers of people line up outside the door waiting. During the library hours, the halls are full of readers and scholars working in silence. Sometimes in each of these libraries, three or four hundred are engaged in studying at the same time, and this goes on the whole day. In this respect, no other public library in Iran is comparable to them.

500,000 Volumes

The Theological Center of Qum at present has ten public libraries containing a total of half a million fine books on Islam, and their efficient librarians serve applicants day and night.

Applicants can easily and without formality or waste of time, make use of the books they wish to consult. Here is a brief account of these libraries which might be of use to those who desire to benefit from these important centers.

1) Feyziah Public Library

This is the oldest library of Qum's Theological Center, founded over half a century ago in 1349 H. by the founder of the center, Ayatollah Hayeri. Founded in a small area with limited books, it expanded under Ayatollah Boroujerdi in its number of books, reading rooms, and in its storage capacity, undergoing fundamental changes. In recent years, under the supervision of the contemporary religious authorities, it has expanded, having a total collection of 30,000 books, most of which are on jurisprudence, basic Islamic laws, principles, commentary, history, and Persian and Arabic literature. Out of the above total, there are 3,000 valuable manuscripts, the index of which is published in two volumes by the library.

Among the manuscripts the following may be mentioned:

- a) "Sharh-e-Tanghih-ol-Fossoul Fi Ekhtesar-ol-Mahsoul" by Ahmad-bin-Idriss Maleki, 8th century Hijrah.
- b) "Nahayat" by Bin-Assir (8th Century H.).
- c) Translation of "Ehya-al-Oloum" in fine handwriting.
- d) "Isteghsa-al-E'tebar Fi Sharh-al-Estebzar" published by Sheikh Toossi.
- e) "Rowzat-al-Ahbab" of Foru'e Kafi in the handwriting of the late Majlessi.
- f) "Helyat-al-Abrar" of Sayyed Hashem Bahrani.
- g) "Al-Hojjat-ol-Balegha", written by a disciple of Mirza Shirazi.

- h) "Jamal-al-Osbou'e" in the writing of Mohaddeth Qumi.
- i) "Massabih" of Sayyed Bahr-ol-Oloum.
- j) "Hekmat Mote'alia" of Mulla Shamsa-e-Gilani, a rare copy.
- k) "Sharh-e-Mafatih" of Haj Agha Bagher Behbahani.
- l) "Awa'ed" of Naraq'i in the writing of the author (original copy).

In view of the universal fame of Feyziah and the number of applicants and expectation of scholars, this library is in need of greater attention, for, at present, it does not meet the above needs.

2) Masjed A'azam Library

Next to Masjed A'azam, which is an eternal reminder of the late religious leader, Ayatollah Boroujerdi, a rich library was founded in 1850. This library has now over 65,000 books, of which 5,000 are valuable manuscripts. The simultaneity of founding the mosque and library shows that in Islam a mosque and center of learning are inseparable and complement each other.

The late Ramezani, proprietor of Kolaieh-e-Khavar publications gifted 30,000 volumes from his collection to this library, and Ayatollah Farid Araki offered 2,450 volumes, thereby providing a rich collection to the library. It receives two thousand applicants daily, mostly from students, teachers and scholars.

3) Islamic Propagation Bureau Library

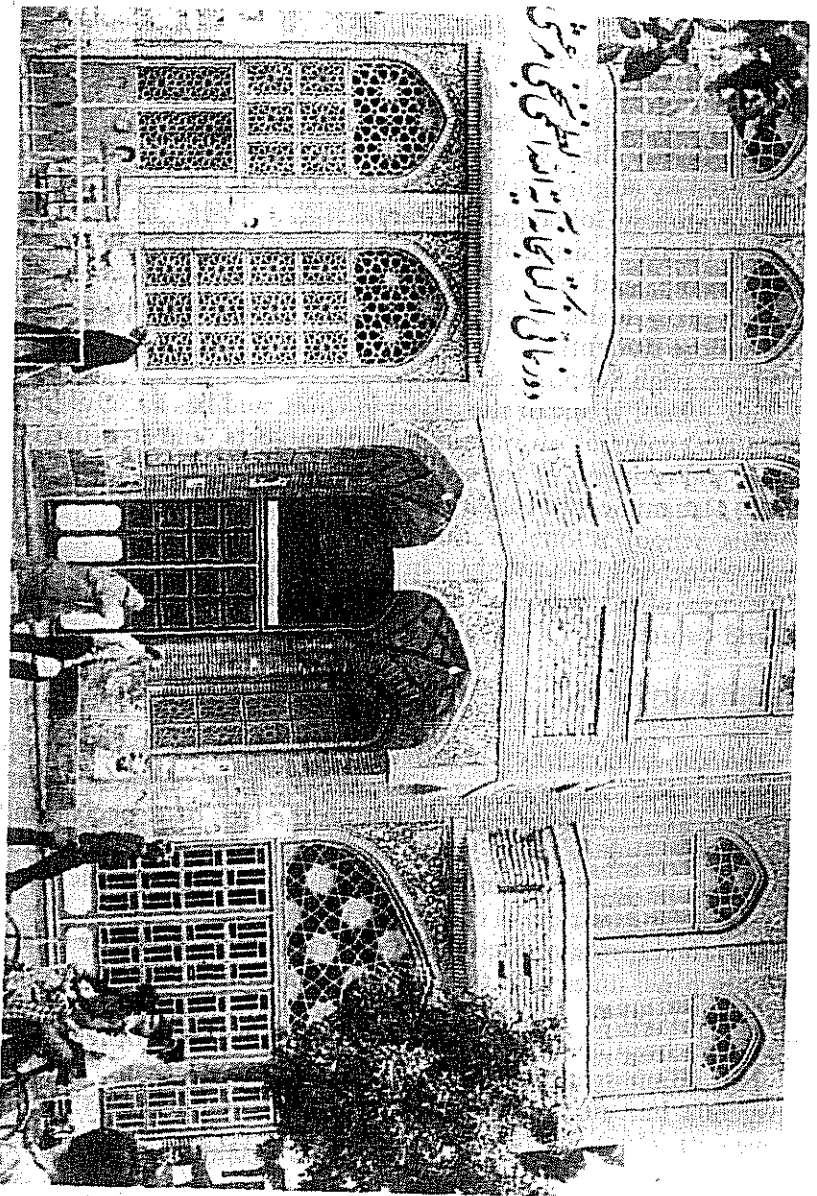
This extensive and well-equipped library was established in 1350 H., and consists of three storeys with modern equipment. It possesses over 50,000 volumes of both printed books and manuscripts in its own center and branches (namely Ma'had-ol-Derasat and Dar-o-Zahra), which are consulted by seekers of knowledge. Its lending section has issued over two thousand membership cards to applicants, most of whom are school students.

4) Library and Public Reading Rooms of Ayatollah Najafi Mar'ashi

Situated in Eram Avenue, opposite Mar'ashiah Theological Center, this library consists of a four-storey building with an open space area of 2,500 meters. It is well equipped and contain valuable Islamic treasures. There are many facilities provided here for applicants including quiet reading rooms. Its numerous halls accomodate several hundred people, and the library now possesses over 200,000 books, of which 15,000 are manuscripts. So far, seven volumes of index have been published by the library for its books.

5) Hojjatia Library

This library was founded in 1371 H. in the last years of the late Ayatollah Hojjat in a corner of Hojjatiah school, and now possesses 15,000 books used by the students residing in that college. Unfortunately, as a result of an earthquake in Qum, the library suffered a deep chink so as to make it unusable at present. It is hoped that greater care will be taken of this center of learning by college authorities to prevent



Ayatollah Najafi Mar'ashi's Library.

the destruction of this valuable treasure.

6) Astanah-e Maqaddasah Library

This library was founded almost at the same time as Hojjatia Library in 1370 H. in a corner of the courtyard of the holy shrine of Ma'soumah, and possesses over 25,000 varied volumes especially in the fields of history and literature.

7) Journal of Islamic School Library

This library has six thousand different volumes in its central bureau, used by editors, writers and other men of learning.

8) Ayatollah Golpaygani Library

This library is situated in Safa'iah avenue in the Safa'iah school's building name, and has about 15,000 volumes, of which about two thousands are valuable manuscripts, and the library is frequented mostly by the college students.

9) Razaviah School Library

This school is one of the oldest in Qum, and has a useful library of about 5,000 volumes on various Islamic subjects, and it is used by the students and residents of the school and others.

10) Haqani School Library

This school is one of the centers for training young people in Islamic branches of knowledge. In its building, there is a general library for the use of its students and other applicants. It has about two thousand volumes.

Main Difficulty

The above-mentioned libraries are among those which are open to the public. Notwithstanding the effective role of these libraries as mentioned above, their main difficulty is the lack of a special fund, and they receive most of their books in the form of gifts. Consequently, they come to possess many copies of one volume, while the range of books as far as variety is concerned is limited.

It is therefore suggested that a central library should be established to supply other units with the copies of available books, and be granted a purchase fund to feed all the branches with new publications. This will prevent heaping of repeated copies and will enrich other units.

The administrative office of the Theological Center and Islamic propaganda bureau could take steps for carrying out this proposal to achieve better results.

The Center's Schools, a Cradle for Breeding Great Personalities

Without exaggeration, the schools of the Theological Center of Qum have been among the most brilliant institutions which train

scholars and distinguished personalities in the world, and from those pleasant and simple rooms, virtuous and committed thinkers are delivered to the Islamic society.

There are many schools and institutes in Qum, amounting to fifty, all of which have been founded by benevolent men with the guidance of religious authorities and intellectual and spiritual leaders of the Islamic world.

Some of these religious schools are for young men, and some for girls and young women. The following are the names of some of these colleges and schools:

- 1) Feyziah
- 2) Dar-e-Shafa
- 3) Hojjatiah
- 4) Settiah
- 5) Razaviah
- 6) Najaffiah
- 7) Mo'emeniah
- 8) Mahdiah
- 9) Montazeriah Haqani
- 10) Golpaygani
- 11) Khan school
- 12) Sa'adat
- 13) Vahidiah
- 14) Amellia
- 15) Imam Amir-al-Mo'emenin
- 16) Ma'ehad-al-Derasat-al-Islamiah
- 17) Maktab Towhid
- 18) Maktab-al-Mahdi
- 19) Dar-o-Zahra
- 20) Imam Sadeq
- 21) Jani-Khan
- 22) Haj Sayyed Sadeq
- 23) Madar Shah
- 24) Mahdi-Gholi Khan
- 25) Haji
- 26) Hossainiah
- 27) Sadeqiah
- 28) Isfahaniah
- 29) Resselat
- 30) Ghadiriah
- 31) Imam Sadeq (Towhid Ave.)
- 32) High Judicial school
- 33) Haj Ghazanfari



A teacher lectures from a pulpit.

- 34) Alavi
- 35) Shohabiah

Qum's Oldest Schools

Here, we will give a brief description of a few of these schools:

1- Feyziah College

The building of this college belongs to the Safavid times. Situated next to the old courtyard of the shrine of Ma'asoumah, in Astanah square, the building is one of those constructed in the reign of Shah Tahmaseb, and used to be a small school until it was expanded in 1223 on the order of the then governor.

Above the southern portico of the school which leads to the old courtyard, there is an inscription bearing the name of the said governor. For that reason, all the subsequent construction works accomplished long after, were given the same name. The foundation stone is dated 934 H.

As for its name, 'Feyziah', it is said that since at one time Mowla Mohsen Feyz Kashani, a great narrator and religious jurisprudent, son-in-law of Sadr-ol-Moteallehin, used to reside in this school, this name was given to it.

The building was renewed in the Qajar time between 1213 and 1214, since the old one was in total ruin. On the porticus, there are poetical inscriptions composed by Fat't-Ali Khan Saba.

The school building was at first rectangular with 48 living rooms, until in the time of Ayatollah Hayeri, founder of the Theological Center of Qum, owing to the increase in the number of students and a great need for dwellings, the upper stories were added to it. Recently more attention is being paid to it by contemporary religious authorities and it is now considered as the center of all the religious schools of Qum, having 100 rooms, with an accomodating capacity of 300.

World Fame of Feyziah

Although Feyziah college has always enjoyed a rightful fame for the great personalities who have emerged from it, since Farvardin 1342, with the culmination of the Islamic Revolution led by the crusading Ulama and leaders of the center, and because of the horrible crime committed by the commandos of the savage regime of Pahlavi, the news of which was reported throughout the world, it won even a greater universal fame. Since then Feyziah has become the center of Islamic revolutions and liberation movements of oppressed nations.

Many people confuse Feyziah with the Theological Center, whereas Feyziah is one of the many schools of the Theological Center, except that owing to its historical precedence, it is considered as the center of other schools. The main reason for its fame is that the first opposition to dictatorship began there, and the banner of this opposition was carried by the students residing there, and its pavements were smeared with their blood on 2nd Farvardin 1342 which coincided with the martyrdom anniversary of the founder of Islamic school, namely Imam Sadeq, and the building received much damage.

In its life-span of three hundred years, Feyziah was vacant for some years and no voice was heard from it, until with divine favour, it resumed its activity and won a greater fame than ever.

2- Dar-o-Shafa school

Another of Qum's oldest school is Dar-o-Shafa adjoining Feyziah school. It is said that this school used to be a hospital for the holy shrine until in the time of the founder of the Theological Center, a number of rooms were added on two storeys, possessing 80 rooms and accomodating 250 people.

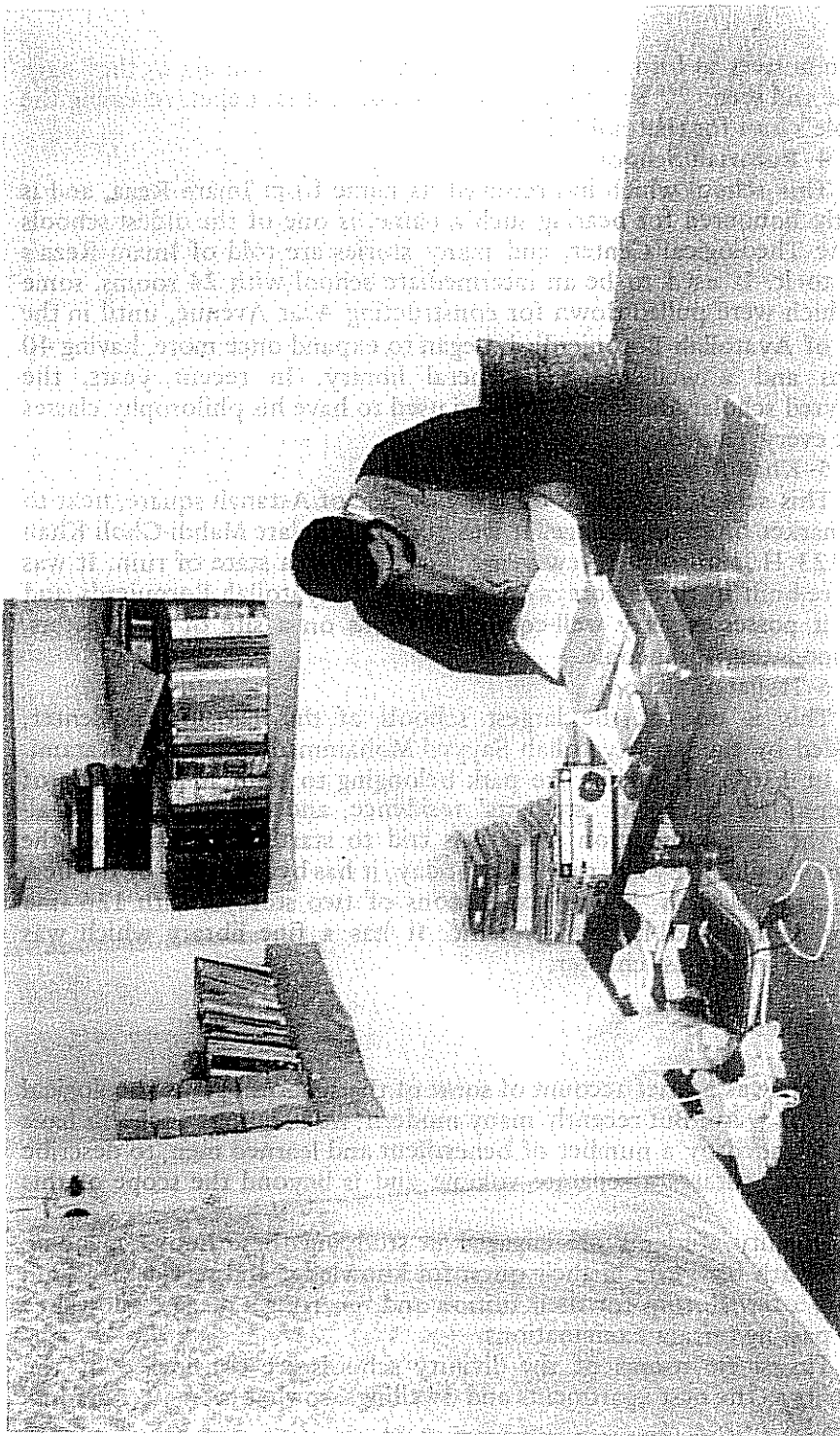
3- Settiah school or Beyt-al-Noor

The Reverend Ma'asoumah, daughter of the seventh Imam, on arriving at Qum, resided in the house of Moussa-bin-Khazraj, and stayed there in her sickness until her death. That house is still honoured as her residence, and the place she used as an altar for her devotions is still preserved. Round it, a beautiful and magnificent mosque is built, having a number of rooms for students, and has been given the name of Settiah. It is so-called because it is apparently an abbreviation for 'Sayyedeti Fatimah' meaning 'dear lady Fatimah', a word of endearment used by the people for Ma'asoumah as a noble and fine lady.

Ali-Asghar Feghihi, a historian of Qum, writes: "Setti seems to be an abbreviation of Sayyedeti, and the people of Qum as well as some writers of the Safavid period called Ma'asoumah, 'Setti Fatimah', and today her place of devotion is called Settiah. "

Mostowfi describes Ma'asoumah as follows in his history: "A daughter of Moussa-al-Kazem, Setti Fatimah, is buried in Qum. "

In addition to these two historians, another writer of the old history of Qum namely Hassan-bin-Mohammad-bin-Hassan Qumi, a scholar of the fourth century and a pupil of Sheikh Saduq, in his valuable book (written in 378 H.) written on the order of Saheb-bin-Ebad, a minister of Al-e-Buyeh dynasty in twenty chapters (showing that Qum enjoyed a greater importance and magnificence at that time) repeatedly speaks of Fatimah Ma'asoumah as 'Setti Fatimah' in pages 213, 214 and 215. For the same reason Sheikh Abdol-Jalil Razi writes in his book, 'Al-Naghz': "The purity and blessing of the shrine of Setti, daughter of Moussa-bin-Jafar, are believed by all men, including rulers



A student at work in his dormitory in Qum.

and ministers to bring charities and abundance upon all, as they have heard and seen. " So this name is based upon that belief, revealing the people's love for that noble lady.

4- Razaviah School

This school which has received its name from Imam Reza, and is greatly honoured for bearing such a name, is one of the oldest schools of the Theological Center, and many stories are told of Imam Reza's visit to it. It used to be an intermediate school with 24 rooms, some of which were pulled down for constructing Azar Avenue, until in the time of Ayatollah Boroujerdi, it began to expand once more, having 40 rooms and a well-equipped general library. In recent years, the martyred scholar Murteza Mutahhari used to have his philosophy classes there every Thursday.

5- Khan School

This school is situated on the east side of Astanah square, next to the market of Khan passage. It was built by the late Mahdi-Gholi Khan in 1123 H. and until a few years ago it was in a state of ruin. It was then re-built in three storeys on the order of Ayatollah Boroujerdi, and now it possesses sixty well-equipped rooms on a site of 780 meters, accomodating 150 people.

6- Hojjatiah School

This is one of the largest schools of the Theological Center, founded by the late Ayatollah Sayyed Mohammad Hojjat Kuh-Karami.

In 1364, he bought the park belonging to Kamran-Mirza, son of Nasser-al-Din Shah, for students' residence, and on 20 of Jamada-al-Sani, the first foundation stone was laid to start construction of the school's building by the river-side. Today, it has become one of the best and largest schools, having six sections of two storeys, with 126 fine sunny rooms, well-lit and hygienic. It has a fine library which was described in the last chapter.

Best Wishes

This was a brief account of some of the schools of the Theological Center of Qum. But recently many modern, well equipped schools have been founded by a number of benevolent and learned men, to describe which necessitates a separate volume and is beyond the scope of this book.

Divinity students are engaged in studying these books spending their youth for years in their quest for knowledge and service to Islam, paying a trivial sum for their tuition and receiving a meagre allowance after passing certain examinations.

Ths single rooms of the divinity schools are considered by the students as the best apartments and dwellings, so that even after gradua-

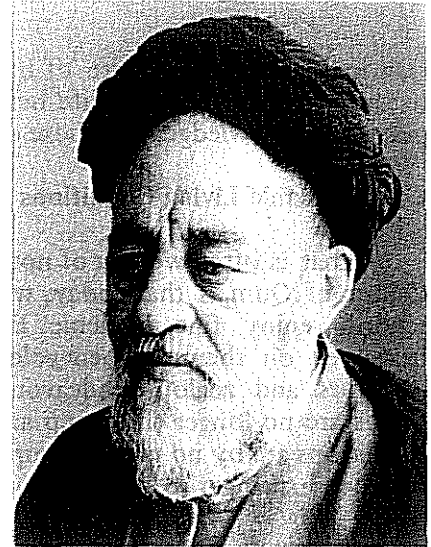
tion many of them in spite of having their own houses, long to return to these rooms, since the life here is mingled with the sweetness of the pursuit of knowledge, and those days are never forgotten.

Commendable Living Conditions

What is often worthy of notice in connection with the Theological Center of Qum is that today, with God's help, most of these divinity schools enjoy fine hygienic living conditions owing to the care bestowed on them by benevolent men and the endeavours of their directors and zealous endeavours of the Theological Center. These places are no longer the damp and gloomy rooms of the past, and their conditions are by no means comparable with those of the past. And this is only a harbinger to an even more promising future.

An Example of Those Trained in These Schools

In the year when this book was being written, the Theological Center of Qum lost one of its most brilliant personalities, namely the great scholar Tabataba'i, whose death has had a deep effect on the center's foundation, and left the mist of sorrow on the faces of its students and masters. Therefore, as this and other Islamic centers in the world are indebted so deeply to him, this part of the book will be devoted to a description of his life and services, and an account of the intellectual transformation effected by him will be postponed to a future opportunity.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SCHOLAR TABATABA'I, A PIONEER OF INTELLECTUAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE WORLD OF ISLAM

The world of thought and learning has witnessed many changes during various periods, the reaction of which has been reflected in the world. The Islamic world has been so accustomed to such changes that it has added a separate chapter to its wide culture, which chapter in the golden history of Islam has been entitled "The innovators and pioneers of learning and religion."

Revivers of Thought

Revivers of learning and religion in every period have offered new ideas in various intellectual, scientific, social, political and religious fields, bringing deep transformations to safeguard the culture and authentic needs of society, thereby opening a fresh chapter before the Muslims and the world as a whole. Each of these pioneers has had a separate history and a different destiny-making course which is both valuable and instructive.

Among Islamic thinkers, (not to mention renown experts in Islamic branches of knowledge such as jurisprudence, commentary, literature etc. each of whom has made a name for himself), can be

mentioned the names of Imam Muhammad Ghazali (505H), Abd-al Rahman-bin-Khaldoon (780 H.), Khawjeh Nassir-al-Din Toossi, Feyz Kashani (1090 H.), Sayyed Jamal-al-Din Assad-Abadi (1314 H.) Iqbal Lahuri (1357 H.), Sheikh Muhammad Abduh (1323 H.), Sayyed Rashid Reza (1354 H.), martyred scholar Murteza Mutahhari (1400 H.) and many others, each of whom has taken effective steps in his own time with attention to the spirit of the society and its intellectual and spiritual needs to produce a revival which has been outstanding in the history of Islam.

The late master and great philosopher of the east and commentator of the Quran, Sayyed Muhammad Hassan Tabataba'i is a fine and worthy example of this group, effecting noteworthy changes in the contemporary period as a reviver of thought and reformer. It can be correctly stated that his contribution was greater and more extensive than other great men of the past, in reviving Islam and rendering a great service to it.

A Zealous Personality

Scholar Tabataba'i possessed remarkable and extraordinary efficiency. His modest spirit, brightness of heart and inquisitive mind, blended with pure Islamic gnosticism and his homely breeding made of him such a personality in those days as to enable him to benefit from the rays of knowledge and light of revelation and prophethood. He became so familiar with the profound thoughts of Islamic and eastern thinkers and philosophers that he himself eventually became a pioneer and model of learning, gnosticism and occult sciences.

The true worth of Tabataba'i's work lies in the fact that he engaged in the teaching and interpretation of the Quran at a time when the Quran had been sadly neglected in theological centers, and anyone wishing to undertake such a task, had to forsake all social privileges and the advantages accompanying these and sacrifice himself in the way of God's words. He did exactly this in a period when the significance of the task was concealed to many. He began the teaching and investigation of philosophy and metaphysics at a time when the world of Islam in its confrontation with western philosophy badly needed true divine philosophy and metaphysics. The majority of people did not only neglect this matter, but were also hostile to anyone who wished to save them and meet their needs. He followed his task without any pretension, material or immaterial expectation, qualities peculiar to honest and true men of learning and thought.

He engaged himself in educating disciples who were thirsty for Islamic teachings, and trained such devoted, sincere and distinguished students without desiring fame and rank. He himself declared in a

gathering of his pupils who in the Hojjatiah school insisted on his using the pulpit and loud speakers: "The gentlemen want me to use two things, a lofty place and a loud voice, and I am averse to both." This remark was not for the sake of affectation or ostentation. He was not only averse to a high office and talking loudly, but also to high, superficial positions and a worldly reputation, all of which are sought eagerly by many who lack virtue.

Transformation in Philosophy and Metaphysics

The changes and innovation brought about by scholar Tabataba'i in the Theological Center become clear when we see his determination in defending Islamic philosophical ideas against materialistic thoughts which were flooding Islamic and eastern lands. Enlightened men of learning were all disarmed. They wanted Islamic east to adopt the spiritual and material ways of the westerners. He fully sacrificed himself, stood peerlessly against this torrent, and preserved the identity and authenticity of Islamic spiritual teaching in the way of an ideal which was neither eastern nor western, neither Greek nor Roman. He laid such a strong foundation for Islamic and eastern philosophy that he could fight imported philosophy, and with the ideas of Mulla Sadra and Islamic thoughts, he challenged the westerners. His profound vision and futuristic attitude, typical of men of faith and those devoted to the Prophet's household, helped him immensely in this combat.

At a time when the ignorants criticised philosophy and philosophers, he did not only remove heretical and materialistic ideas from the atmosphere of Islamic east, but also succeeded in opening the way for western thinkers to Islamic thought, and familiarize orientalisists with the spiritualism of Shi'ism.

He always sought to dig a new tunnel towards light and bring the material world back to the spiritual world of Islam. In this difficult task, philosophy and divine wisdom were his tools; he always held a universal outlook about the world. He was a gnostic whose delicate thoughts were in some cases more effective than philosophy. He was a peerless master of jurisprudence, principles and ethics.

One of the most outstanding manifestation of the intellectual change and revolution he brought about, resulted from his interest in comparative philosophy of which he was a pioneer and he began to compare western ideas with Islamic philosophy, successfully revealing the superiority of Islamic ideas in the years, 1320-1330. Standing as an impenetrable wall against the poisonous waves of propaganda, he checked the spread and onslaught of heretical ideas, and in this objective, he was aided by his staunch disciples such as martyred scholar Mutahhari in his footnotes on "Principles of Philosophy and

Method of Realism," and scholar Nasser Makarem, in a description of pseudo-philosophers showed that those who boasted to be more objective and realistic, are more involved with their own confused subjectivity.

Famous Students

One of his great endeavours was directed at training fine men of learning, and this proved to be a divine favour in the service of change and revolution.

It has become customary in religious circles not to mention living figures, in accordance to this old saying that a good living person and a bad dead one do not exist. This attitude has inflicted irreparable damage on our society, an objective example of which may be seen in the martyrdom of Ayatollah Mutahhari and other great men with whom the society was not quite familiar. I have tried impartially and without any ultra motive, and by accepting the unpleasant consequence of this wrong psychological phenomenon, to break up this tradition by committing the unforgivable sin of naming some of his distinguished disciples. In this brief glance, we meet worthy figures who have brought change and progress to the revolutionary society of Iran, each within his own limit. Ranking first among these men, we can mention scholar Murteza Muttahari, scholar Ayatollah Montazeri, scholar Dr. Muhammad Mofatteh, Martyred scholar Dr. Sayyed Muhammad Hossein Beheshti, Martyred scholar Ali Qoddoussi, scholar Javadi Amoli, scholar Ansari, scholar Nasser Makarem Shirazi, and scholar Ja'afar Sobhani.

He gifted to the Islamic society such disciples, each of whom played his role in theory or practice as far as the Islamic Revolution of Iran was concerned. In the east, particularly Iran, from the viewpoint of the revolutionary thinkers of today his role has been deep and wide.

A Great Commentator of the Quran

This scholar was a pupil of the Quran, a companion of gnosticism, and master of philosophy. He was a teacher of teachers, and instructor of Quranic instructors of the Ummah. He has inscribed his exalted personality on each leaf of his fruitful life by his efforts and labour and his lofty spirit is felt in each line of his books, in his study circle, and in the mental set up of his pupils, each of whom has been a pillar of the Revolution. The extent of his influence may be seen on the realm of thought of all thinkers. At the forefront of his works is 'Al-Mizan', a commentary which may be found in every room and every library where Islamic and Quranic teachings are sought. This twenty-

volume book has found its way to all Islamic countries. Tabataba'i has interpreted the Quran in his 'Al-Mizan' by means of the Quran itself, and it is a contribution which is the most outstanding and comprehensive of its kind among all commentaries since early Islam. It illustrates the greatness of its kind among all commentaries since early Islam. It illustrates the greatness of its author as a commentator of the Quran, so much so that it overshadows his mastery of other branches of Islamic knowledge. His life reflected his extraordinary qualities.

Tabatabai's Autobiography

After being acquainted with this scholar's role in bringing about an intellectual transformation in the Theological Center of Qum, it would be fitting to have a glance at his autobiography as well as a biography written by one of his disciples.

Autobiography:

"I was born in Tabriz in the year 1281 of the solar year in an educated family. I lost my mother at the age of five, and my father at the age of nine. As we were not poor, our guardian did not disturb the condition of our (mine and my younger brother's) life. We were placed under the care of a maid and a manservant. A short time after my father's death, we were sent to an old-fashioned class (maktab) and then to a school, and eventually placed under a private tutor who came to our house. Thus we spent about six years on Persian and elementary education.

"In those days, there was no definite program for elementary education. I only remember that between 1290 and 1296, I read the holy Quran which was more commonly read than other books, and Sa'adi's 'Golestan' and 'Bustan', 'Arabic Vocabulary in Persian Rhyme, Ethics,' of Anwar Soheili, 'Mo'ejam History', 'Literary Compositions' of Amir Nezam, and "Guide-book to Arithmetic."

"In 1297, I joined the divinity and Arabic courses and continued reading texts until 1304. During these seven years, I read in detail the books of Amsela, Mir and Tasrif on grammar; Awamel, Onmuzage, Samaddiah, Sayuti, Jami and Mughni on Syntax; Mottawal on rhetoric; Sharh-e-Lom'a and Makaseb on jurisprudence, Kobra, Hashia and Sharh-e-Shamsia on logic; Sharh-e-Esharat on philosophy; Kashf al-Morad on scholastic theology. Thus the courses of texts (excluding philosophy and gnosticism) were completed.

"In 1304, I left for Najaf to continue my studies and attended the study cricle of the late Ayatollah Sheikh Muhammad Hossain Isfahani, and studied higher principles for around six years. For four years, I

attended the higher jurisprudence classes of this same person, and for eight years, I attended the higher jurisprudence classes of Ayatollah Naini. For a short while, I attended the higher jurisprudence class of the late Ayatollah Sayyed Abol-Hassan Isfahani. For general biography, I joined the class of the late Ayatollah Hojjat Kuh-Kamari.

For philosophy I attended the class of the famous sage and philosopher, the late Sayyed Hossain Badkubi, and during my six years there, I read 'Manzumah' of Sabzavari, 'Asfar' and 'Masha'er' of Mulla Sadra, 'Shafa' of Ibn-Sina and 'Athologia' and 'Tamid' of Ibn-Turka, and 'Ethics' of Ibn-Moskuya.

As the late Badkubi was interested in my education, to acquaint me with reasoning method and reinforce my philosophical talent, he suggested that I should study mathematics. As per his suggestion I attended the class of Sayyed Abol-Qassem Khawnsari, a born mathematician and took a course in rational arithmetic.

In 1314, owing to financial difficulties, I had to return to my home town of Tabriz, where I stayed for over ten years. This period was a time of mental loss for me since I had to obtain a livelihood (by farming) and because of the need for social contact, I had little chance for teaching and reflection, and I was mentally tortured.

In 1325, I left my home town for the Theological Center of Qum and resided there, resuming my study, and staying till 1341.

Naturally, everyone experiences the pleasure and bitterness, ugliness and beauty of life, and has some memories. I, too, had many ups and downs, especially as I have spent most of my life either as an orphan or a stranger in surroundings, far from friends, or in indigence and other hardships. But I always felt that an invisible hand saved me from a dangerous fall, and a mysterious force dragged me out of barriers and directed me towards my destination. As the poet says:

'If I am a thorn, or a flower it does not matter; because there is a grower of flower adorning the field. I am nourished by the hand that makes me grow.'

At the beginning of my studies, when I learnt grammar and syntax, I had no great interest in studying. So I did not understand what I read. Four years passed in this way, and then I was suddenly blessed with God's favour, and felt a deep love and zeal for learning so that from that moment to the end of my studies which lasted 17 years, I never felt any fatigue or weariness or discouragement in my task of learning and thinking. I forgot the world's beauty and ugliness, and ignored its sweetness and bitterness. I abandoned my contact with those who had no interest in knowledge, and contented myself with the minimum of comfort, and devoted myself wholly to learning. Very often, especially in spring and summer, I kept awake the whole night studying until sunrise, to prepare the next day's work. If I came across

a problem, I did my best to solve it. When I attended a class, I was already clear about what the teacher was going to discuss, and never referred to him to solve my problem.

Some of the works which I prepared during my studies in Najaf are as follows:

- A treatise on reasoning
- A treatise on paralogism
- A treatise on analysis
- A treatise on synthesis
- A treatise on credible matters (man-made ideas)
- A treatise on predictions and dreams.

The following works were prepared at the time of residence in Tabriz:

- A treatise on the proof of essence
- A treatise on attributes and qualities
- A treatise on power and action
- A treatise on deeds
- A treatise on intermediaries between God and man.
- A treatise on man before birth.
- A treatise on man in the world
- A treatise on man in the hereafter.
- A treatise on guardianship
- A treatise on prophethood

(The above treatise are based on a comparison of reasoning and tradition)

- A book on the geneological tree of the Tabataba'i family in Azarbayjan
- A description of Persian Nasta'eligh Calligraphy

The following are the works written during the residence at Qum:

- Commentary of Al-Mizan in 20 volumes
- Principles of philosophy (realistic method) in 5 volumes, (a comparison of eastern and western philosophers).
- Annotation on 'Kefayat-ol-Ossul'.
- Annotation on Mulla Sadra's 'Asfar' in 9 volumes.
- Revelation or mysterious intelligence.
- Two treatises on Islamic Guardianship and Rule (in Persian and Arabic).

- Interviews of 1388 with Professor Corbin, the French Orientalist, in one volume (Re-published, entitled “Shia”).
- Interviews held in 1339 and 1340 with Ayatollah Tabataba’i, entitled “A treatise on Shi’ism in the world of today.”
- A treatise on miracles.
- Ali and divine philosophy (In Arabic and Persian)
- Shi’ism in Islam
- The Quran in Islam
- A collection of articles, questions, answers, various scientific and philosophical discussions published in the journals of ‘School of Shi’ism’, ‘School of Islam’, ‘Guide to Books’.
- The Prophet’s traditions with a translation published recently in 400 pages by Muhammad Hadi Feghi.

Views of the Great Men of Jurisprudence on Scholar Tabataba’i

The Imam of Ummah and Leader of the Revolution in a meeting expressed the following view concerning this great loss of learning and thought:

“I must express my deep regret for this loss to the Theological Centers and Muslims, namely the death of scholar Tabataba’i, and offer my condolences to you Iranian nation and especially the theological centers. May God associate him with the servants of Islam and Imams of Islam, and grant fortitude to his descendants and heirs and disciples.”

Office of Ayatollah Golpaygani

“When a man of learning departs this world, an irreparable gap appears in Islam.”

“The divine scholar and eternal philosopher, the great commentator Ayatollah Tabataba’i who spent his fruitful life in the service of Islam, has passed away and joined the lofty heaven. His everlasting works and valuable writings especially his noble ‘Al-Mizan’ are a symbol of his learned personality and his endeavour in the propagation of Quranic teachings and his guidance of the present generation. We offer our condolences for this irreparable loss to the holy threshold of the Guardian of Time, Imam Mahdi, and exalted religious leaders, as well as theological centers and all Muslims.”

Ayatollah Najafi Mar’ashi

“When a man of learning departs this world, an irreparable gap

appears in Islam.”

“I regret to announce this irreparable loss to the world of learning and Iranian nation namely the death of the divine scholar, lofty commentator, great philosopher of the east, noble master of the theological centers of Qum and holy Najaf, author of the unique ‘Al-Mizan’ and other precious works, the scholar Ayatollah Haj Sayyed Muhammad-Hussain Tabataba’i, and offer my condolences to the Guardian of Time, Imam Mahdi, and his noble heirs and household and his disciples.”

Shohab-al-Din Hossaini Najafi Mar’ashi

Ayatollah Sayyed Abdollah Shirazi

“Ayatollah scholar Tabataba’i was a great learned personality who succeeded in effecting a transformation in all learned circles with his views and erudite works. He was a brilliant figure among the noble personalities of the Shi’a world, and a profound thinker in Islam who spent his life on the propagation of Islamic teachings, commentary of the holy Quran, and authentic culture of the sacred school of the Prophet’s household. He never neglected a moment in mastering Islamic branches of knowledge and training scholars and Islamic thinkers until he departed for the eternal world. He lived happily and died happily.

“The departure of such learned and Islamic personalities is always and especially at this time an irreparable damage when all Islamic societies are in a great need of his fine personality. We are from God and we return to Him.

“I offer my condolences to the threshold of Imam Mahdi, and the crusading Muslim nation of Iran, and the household of this lost Islamic personality, and declare formal mourning in Mashhad, and suspension of work there on 18th Moharram 1402, equivalent of 24 Aban 1360.”

Sayyed Abdollah Shirazi

Ayatollah Montazeri, the Exalted Jurisprudent

“In the name of Almighty God. We are from God and we return to Him.

“I announce the passing away of the great scholar, philosopher and exalted commentator, Ayatollah Tabataba’i:

“He was truly a divine treasure and pride of the Islamic world, and his position as an exalted learned philosopher at the theological centers is not hidden from anyone. The loss of such a distinguished personality is to be deeply regretted. All those who are devoted to virtue and knowledge, and all the Ulama are expected to honour the memory of this great master and familiarize people with his ideas and works.

"I offer my condolences to the Guardian of Time, Imam Mahdi, and to the great leader of the Revolution, to theological centers, and his honourable heirs and household.

"I pray God for blessing and exalted spiritual rank for him, and fortitude and reward for his heirs."

Qum. Hossain-Ali Montazeri 24/8/60

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

PUBLICATIONS OF QUM'S THEOLOGICAL CENTER

Publication is one of the most important activities of the Theological Center of Qum in view of the part played by the pen and book in enlightening public mind and guiding people, and these are the goals of the center.

This center is considered as one of the most fruitful in the world, as far as quality and quantity of publications are concerned, on different fields of knowledge and topics, and this in itself is significant in view of present conditions.

Now, in the year 1361, which is the fourth spring of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, it would be fitting to make a brief survey on the activities of Qum's Theological Center. In spite of the importance of this subject, hitherto, unfortunately adequate attention has not been paid to it by Islamic writers, whereas such an attention would lead to an increase in the quantity and quality of what is produced to meet the needs of a progressive and revolutionary society, satisfying its spiritual and intellectual aspirations and expectations.

300 Books in 16 Years

A talented Islamic writer, Ali Davani, published some statistics

after the death of Ayatollah Boroujerdi concerning the publications of Qum's Theological Center during his 16 years' direction of the center, and he has stated that during this period, about 300 books were published on various topics. In a book entitled, "The Movement of Authorship, writing and translation in Qum's Theological Center" on the biography of Ayatollah Boroujerdi, he writes:

"According to our investigation in this field we have gathered statistics that during the religious leadership of Ayatollah Boroujerdi, over 300 books on jurisprudence, principles, logic, philosophy, commentary, tradition, religious personalities, refutation of various creeds and materialistic schools, Persian and Arabic literature have been written by the scholars of the Theological Center, some of which are in manuscript and others have been printed and published.

"Some of these books have been printed several times in several thousand copies, and if we take two thousand copies as an average of each book, we can say that during Ayatollah Boroujerdi's directorship of the center, 346,000 copies of various books have been offered to the public."

At the end of his article, introducing published books, he speaks praisingly of the valuable 'Al-Mizan', "Principles of Philosophy and Method of Realism" by scholar Tabataba'i, with fine footnotes by martyred scholar Mutahhari, 'Journal of the School of Islam', and "School of Shi'ism". This is a useful book to study for a better understanding of the social spirit and scientific needs of that time.

Wide Range of Subjects

Now that twenty years have passed since that time, the publications of the Theological Center have increased greatly in both the range of subjects and the quality of the contents. Many books have been published on different topics and in a large number of copies, some of which are as many as over one million copies, and the average number of copies for each book is five thousands.

Regular Publications of the Center

It would be interesting here to mention a few of the regular publications of the center, inspite of the political ups and downs it has been subjected to and interruptions in its functioning. We use the word 'regular' on account of the number of issues published. They are as follows:

1- 'Journal of the School of Islam'

This journal faced political and financial difficulties from the very beginning, and has been censored or stopped several times. This

dignified monthly is now (1361) in its twenty-second year of publication and has been so far published in a large number of copies ranging to several millions. It has been well received by the Muslim and enlightened nation of Iran and the issues published in a period of 21 years make an Islamic encyclopedia. It continues its life with the support of its devoted readers and aid of God. It does not serve the interests of any special group whether it be intellectual or administrative.

2- 'School of Shi'ism'

Another regular publication of the Theological Center was the 'School of Shi'ism' which was published through efforts of martyred Dr. Beheshti, martyred Dr. Bahonar and Hojjatol-Islam Hashemi Rafsanjani, as an annual and quarterly journal, even though its life was short owing to the emigration, banishment or imprisonment of its directors. It contained useful and valuable articles by the masters of the Theological Center and committed professors of Tehran University.

3- 'Ja'afari Teachings'

Another regular publication was 'Ja'afari Teachings' which was published for several years by a staunch scholar of the center. It contained useful articles by the learned men of the center and was a quarterly journal.

4- 'Al-Hadi' is published in Arabic containing articles by the scholars of Qum's Theological Center and other centers of various countries.

5- Survey on the press

6- New Generation

7- Message of Joy

8- Muslim child

9- Publications by an institute named, 'In the way of God'.

10- Muslim women

Recently, the monthly journal, 'Guard of Islam,' has been published in large numbers of copies by a group of masters of the center, containing useful articles. So far 9 issues have been published.

Press Units

In addition to regular publications, a number of press units have been established in the Qum's center most of which are the works of learned men trained at the Theological Center of Qum, a list of which is given below:

1- Publications of teachers society, consisting of hundreds of books in millions of copies.

2- Publications of Ismailian, with 50 books on Islamic topics and authentic references.

- 3- Publications of Dar-ol-Elm, with 40 books on various subjects.
- 4- Publications of Dar-ol-Fekr, with 48 books.
- 5- Publications of former Islamic Dar-ol-Tabliq, known today as Islamic Propaganda Bureau of Imam, with 138 books up to now.
- 6- Younger Generation (Nasl-e-Javan), with 54 books for young people.
- 7- Hadaf press, with 17 books.
- 8- Publications of Payam Islam (Message of Islam), with 84 books.
- 9- Publications of Mostafavi, with 104 books.
- 10- Publications of Shafaq, with 102 books for children and young people.
- 11- 'Dar-Rah-e-Hagh' Institute (In the way of God), with 50 ideological books.
- 12- Publication Bureau of Navid-e-Islam (Tidings of Islam), with 25 books.
- 13- Publications of Nasser, with 20 ideological books.
- 14- Publications of Tabataba'i, with 52 books.
- 15- Publications of Sadra, with 35 books.
- 16- Publications of Towhid-No-Bonyad, with 20 books.
- 17- Publications of Basirati, with 43 books.
- 18- Publications of Hejrat, with 26 books.
- 19- Publications of the library of Ayatollah Najafi Mar'ashi, with 25 books.
- 20- Publications of Rooh (Spirit) with 40 books on religious guidance.
- 21- Book exhibition and publications, with 50 books on religious guidance.

The above figures are related to the end of 1360 and beginning of 1361. Since then many other books have been printed and published by the above units. The total of the above publications the index of which are at hand, is 1018 volumes, and if another 200 books, which have been published privately by individual authors, and the books whose index are not at hand are added to the above figure, we get a total of over 1200. If we estimate an average of 5000 copies for each book, we get a total of 6 million copies which is a considerable figure. But as some of these books are published at several hundred thousands and even a million copies each (such as scholar Mutahhari's books) the figure rises to tens of millions copies.

In Memory of the Martyrs of Qum's Theological Center

The blood of sanguine-shrouded martyrs sowed the seed of the glorious Islamic Revolution of Iran, irrigated it, and it grew with the red rays of the sun of martyrdom and became fruitful in the life-giving

breeze of martyrdom's essence. In this sanguinary course, all the martyrs were lovers of one faith and followers of one religion, and everyone was equal. All people including university professors and young undergraduates, teachers and students, workers and employees, housewives and children, physicians and engineers, scholars and Ulama, followed the same path and welcomed death for the same goal. These life-inspiring deaths continued with the progress of the Revolution, and took victims from each group and class, so that if in this section of the book we deal with the memory of the Theological Center's martyrs or martyred Ulama, it is because this book is devoted to matters related to this center.

Among men of faith, there have been personalities who have acted most sincerely according to their divine pact, and some of them have joined God, while others are waiting to do so.

One of the particularities of the Islamic Revolution of Iran has been the effective presence of men of learning and religion, virtuous thinkers, and committed and alert Ulama on the scene of politics and combat. It is one of the important achievements of Islam to call one and all to the scene of endeavour and crusade.

The effective presence and noticeable activity of the committed Ulama and men of learning and chastity on the social, political and cultural scenes has been an invaluable contribution, and its importance becomes more evident when we see self-sacrificing and worthy divinity teachers and students in the battle front of honour and virtue and witness their efforts and self-sacrifice.

In the combat of Islam against atheism, and confrontation with the devilish forces of atheistic super-powers, and in the holy crusade in which our country is at present engaged, no day passes without seeing the fields of battle smeared by the blood of the learned and virtuous.

Naturally, we value the devotions, efforts and self-sacrifices of all our fighters from every class of our Muslim nation and honour their memory. But at the same time, with perfect shame for our failure in embracing martyrdom, we must confess that a biography of these dear crusaders is beyond the scope of a chapter in this book or even ten separate books. This is specially so since the whole land of Islam is the noblest book and manifestation of their heroism and sacrifices.

Therefore, mentioning the names of the martyrs of the Theological Center and honouring memory of these men of learning may be an answer to the ill-omened voice of the enemies of Islam, and to the calculated plots of the opponents of the Islamic Revolution and Ulama, enemies whose arrows are aimed at these motivating revolutionary forces of the movement. Everyday, they level fresh charges against these groups of devotees, who are anti-colonization and anti-exploitation. They are pioneers of sanguine Shi'ism throughout history, a line of men

who are descended from the renowned first, second and third martyrs. In the last hundred years, alone, more than hundreds of the Ulama have been martyred in the way of Islam and the Islamic society. Sheikh Fazlollah Noori, Sayyed Hassan Modarress, Sayyed Jamal-al-Din Assad-Abadi, Mirza Muhammad Khiabani, Seghatol-Islam and after the victory of the Revolution such martyrs as scholar Mutahhari, Dr. Mofatteh, Dr. Beheshti, and Dr. Muhammad Bahonar, etc. In one period alone, three hundred and thirteen religious experts and scholars have given their lives in the way of God and for the sake of Islam.

The Ulama and anti-colonial and anti-despotic pioneers have always been a model and a source of inspiration to other combatants, and no page of the history of the crusades of Islamic societies and nations has ever lacked the glory and blessings of these precious elements in their Islamic struggles against injustice and tyranny. In the most critical periods of history, it has been the Ulama who have risen to the aid of oppressed and deprived nations, and have roused them to rebellion against tyrannical colonisers.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

OTHER THEOLOGICAL CENTERS OF IRANIAN CITIES

Now that owing to the glorious Islamic Revolution of Iran, a great transformation has taken place in the affairs of theological centers, religious authorities have decided to pay greater attention to provincial centers in order to provide them with the same facilities available to the Qum's center. It has also been decided to check the unbalanced centralization in Qum's center, and see to the fair distribution of privileges among all centers, so that all of them can benefit from these Islamic and intellectual advantages, enabling them to play an active part in the performance of their mission. It is, therefore, fitting to throw a glance at other centers to win a greater attention to them especially by the authorities of Qum's center in order to secure a greater assistance for the revival of those half-forgotten centers.

The worth and importance of these centers lie in the fact that they serve as the foundation of the main center, and can provide preliminary training to the students, who can be then despatched to Qum for more advanced studies.

1- Mashhad's Theological Center

Next to Qum's center, this center is the most renown in Iran.

Situated in the vicinity of the shrine of the eighth Imam, Ali-bin Mussa al-Reza, it contains a valuable treasure of books. Of course, this center is older than Qum's and was established about a thousand years ago. There are also other centers in the province of Khorassan, but Mashhad's center, owing to its proximity to the holy shrine, is considered as the main one of that province. It has about five thousand divinity students studying various branches of Islamic knowledge under great masters and teachers.

Religious Schools

In Mashhad, there are 20 divinity schools some of which had a reputation in the past, but they have fallen into abeyance since the reconstruction of the districts neighbouring the shrine. Some of them are however being revived and improved.

Among these schools we may name the following:

Nawab school, Abbas-Gholi Khan,
Mirza Ja'afar, Khirat Khan (which are run on a traditional basis).
Milani, High Theological School of Hossaini (which function as modern schools).

Several girls' schools including Narjessia, Esmattia, etc. in which about one thousand girls study.

2- Tehran's Theological Center

Although Tehran has about fifty divinity schools, most of them are non-residential and in a state of ruin. There are, however, some flourishing ones including the following:

High college of Shahid Mutahhari, Marvi, Sadr, Haj Abol-Fat'h, Sheikh Abdol-Hossain, all of which are used by students.

In Tehran there are no regular girls' divinity schools, and this is something which must be attended to.

Altogether, Tehran's Theological Center has about 1500 students at various levels of study, in better working conditions than before. There are also advanced courses.

3- Isfahan's Theological Center

This center has had a long record and now it possesses over a thousand divinity students in various fields. It has many schools, some of which are deserted, while the rest are active. Most of these schools are run on a traditional basis and their names are as follows:

Chahar Bagh, Sadr Bazar, Jadda Bozorg, Jadda Kuchek, Mulla Abdollah, Darb-e-Kushk, Turk'ha, Mirza Hossain Mir Ahmadi, Majdia, Nasseria, Nuria, Kasseh-Garan, Sheikh Muhammad Ali, Arabha, Sadr Khaju, Muhammad Hashem.

The following schools provide a similar curriculum:

Zol-Feqaria, Imam Sadeq, and Tawhid Cultural Center.

There are also a number of girls' schools in Isfahan which are very active.

The courses provided are at various levels including advanced courses.

4- Tabriz Theological Center

This center has several divinity schools, the most well-known of which are the following:

Talebbia, Sadeqia, Hassan Pasha, and Haj Safar Ali.

Recently, the high college of Walli-e-Asr has been established there. These schools have a total of 550 students.

Formerly, this center held a greater reputation, and it is now gradually regaining its previous fame. It is taking steps to progress. Its literary and preliminary courses are particularly commendable.

5- Shiraz Theological Center

Nearby to the Khan school of Shiraz, there is a school in which it is said, the famous philosopher Mulla Sadra used to teach, revealing the antiquity and importance of the Shiraz center. Though this center is not as flourishing as before, it has 300 divinity students and ten active schools and two abandoned ones.

These divinity schools are as follows:

Khan school, Agha Baba Khan, Moghimia, Hakim, Mansurria Ghavam, Amir-al-Mo'emenin, Imamzade Ibrahim all of which are well managed.

There are also several active girls' schools.

6- Yazd Theological Center

After 20th Shahrivar and the exile of Reza Khan, this center began its activity under Ayatollah Sheikh Gholam-Reza Faqih Khorassani, with the permission of the Najaf authorities. After the death of Ayatollah Boroujerdi, about one hundred students from Yazd were engaged in studying at Najaf and Qum. After the Revolution, the schools of Yazd were repaired and expanded by the martyred Ayatollah Saduqi. Now there are 300 divinity students in Yazd, and another 300 in Qum and Mashhad.

In many towns of this province, there are also schools which are mostly used in summer, a total of 15 schools.

There is a girls' school, named Esmattia or Maktab-al-Zahra, founded four years ago, having a hundred students.

Tarz-Jan, 35 kilometers away from Yazd, has three summer schools, capable of accomodating 300 students from Yazd and the provinces in summer. The course offered in these centers is a preliminary one.

7- Hamadan Theological Center

This center is quite huge with an accomodation capacity of three to four hundred students. It also has a number of divinity schools, the

most flourishing of which are Ayatollahs Akhond, Zangena and Damghani. This center was very active in the time of Ayatollah Akhond Mulla Ali Ma'asoumi, from which have risen some well-known masters of Qum.

8- Khorram-Abad Theological Center

This center was founded in 1329 in the time of Ayatollah Boroujerdi's leadership by a religious leader of Khorram-Abad in the name of Haj-Agha Ruhollah Kamalvand on the request of the people of that city. The old school of the city was repaired, and its students returned from Qum to study under Ayatollah Kamalvand.

In 1343 he died, and martyr Ayatollah Sayyed Assadollah Madani was invited from Hamadan to teach there for two years, and then the past regime banished him from this center and he was in exile until the Revolution.

This center has 60 students now, and in the time of Ayatollah Madani it used to offer even advanced courses. However now, it offers only intermediate courses.

Among other provincial centers, we may mention Zanjan, Qazvin, Arak, Rasht, Lahijan, Astana Ashrafia, Langrood, Mazandaran, Kermanshah, Ahwaz, and Boroujerd centers, each having a number of divinity students.

Approximate Figure of Divinity Students

As for the great number of divinity students all over Iran, no exact statistics are available, yet an approximate figure may be given, hoping that this defect may be removed by the authorities one day.

Imam's Allowance Bureau, which covers the majority of divinity students estimates the figure at twelve thousands for Qum. The following statistics are related to all centers:

Qum	12,000	Mashhad	5,000
Tehran	1,500	Isfahan	1,000
Tabriz	500	Shiraz	300
Yazd	300	Hamadan	100
Khorram-Abad	100	Arak	100
Qazvin	100	Zanjan	100
Rasht	100		
Total:	21,400		

Financing the Centers

The expenses of these centers are provided by two main sources, namely the Imam's share and religious endowments. The funds are

collected and entrusted to religious authorities, and a part of them is earmarked for the theological centers.

Most of the divinity schools are built by charitable individuals, and some of them possess small endowments, the revenue of which is spent on the maintenance, renovation, water and electricity of the schools, and if there is any additional fund available, it is given as allowance to the students of the schools. This kind of revenue is exceptional and students' financial aid is mostly granted by the people.

The financial needs of the Shi'a centers were so met that they were never dependent upon despotic regimes and authorities, preventing them from infiltrating these centers. This is the secret of their survival and steadfastness during one thousand years. This also explains the reason for the people's interest in them and popularity of the Ulama.

Expenditure

Some of the expenses are related to the management and maintenance of the schools, and some to their renovation and expansion.

The allowance is paid individually in the centers by religious authorities. Traditionally, each authority has a bureau and a current list of allowance receivers according to which they are paid. Under present conditions, this allowance can safeguard one third of a student's living expenses, and the remainder is provided by the students's parents or relatives, or public support through preaching, missionary work and writing.

This shows to which group these parasites and spongers, despite their colonizing propaganda and deceiving malevolent ideas, belong to, while divinity students live a simple and humble life on scanty living, rendering great services to the society.

Now that this book is nearing its end with God's favour, we pray Him to expand the field of activities of the theological centers in the world of Islam, and enable their teachers and students to achieve much in the way of the lofty goals of Islam, so that the great Islamic Revolution will attain victory in the world as per the Will of God, the Holy Prophet, and the Imams (peace be upon them).

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