



Research Paper

Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi (d.2021), Concise review on his life

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ABSTRACT

It is impossible to discuss about the holy life of Aayatollah Misbah Yazdi (1935-2021) in a single moment. In this article I'll put in my utmost effort, focusing his devotional and righteous life and discussing about his family background. Even though financial crisis, he was eager to go to Najaf Ashraf for studying religious sciences. I will also discuss here about measures taken during tyrannical Reza Shah's government, he was among one of the fighters against Pahlavi regime. I will also discuss here that Misbah Yazdi was model of Islamic ethics in terms of individual and social life. He made good efforts to earn a reputation for the Islamic revolution of Iran and has taken various measures to introduce the Islamic revolutions ideology to the world, to leave no doubts about it. Established number of institutions, organized intensive courses and familiarize seminary students, with the intellectual foundations of anti-revolutionary groups. Misbah Yazdi worked as a best professor of theology and philosophy; he strived for preserving the health of the mind and souls of the youth against the poisonous winds of Marxism and materialism i.e. propaganda of west. This study will help to understand, why professor's personality treat as an enemy by westerners.

KEYWORDS: Misbah Yazdi, Islamic ethics, Philosophy, Islamic revolution, West, Theology, Religious Sciences, Education.

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I. INTRODUCTION:

A prominent influential jurist and member of experts Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi (1352-1442 A.H/1935-2021 A.D)¹, played a unique role in transmitting internal Islamic thoughts and beliefs. In this article I will focus the devotional and righteous life of his family, under the tyrannical period of Reza Khan Government. At that time no one interested in religious studies, especially youth, only the name of Islam is enough. But despite all financial and socio-political difficulties, Misbah Yazdi was eager to go to Najaf Ashraf for studying divine sciences.²

It is important to discuss here that he was among one of the fighter against Pahlavi regime. Speaking at the commemorative ceremony held on the occasion of the second anniversary of the death of Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi, president Raisi said that "the late Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi knew deviations well and fought against them. For this reason he was called Ammar Yaser of the revolution. He was very excellent in the field of clarification Jihad"³.

I will also describe here that his personality considered the reviver of Islamic ethics and savior of Quranic ethics. He was presented ideas of Islamic ethics systematically academically and innovatively. For this purpose he designed curricula, included short term and long term courses for training of ethics instructors. With the aim of training specialist and moral Mujtahids he founded a religious and seminary school called "Rushd theological school".

Misbah yazdi worked as a best professor of theology and philosophy, he protected youngsters and children for trapping by the propaganda of Marxism and materialism. He was specialist for preserving the health of minds and souls of youths against the poisonous winds of that propaganda. This study will help to understand why professors personality stinging in the eyes of western.

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD:

Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi was born on the 11th of Bahman 1313 equal to the 25th of shawwal 1353 A.H.⁴, and 31st January 1935 A.D., in the loving lap of a very pious and religious family of the city of Yazd. His early life was very struggling, his mother used to knit socks at home with the help of her family members, so that his father would sell socks for living. This was a very low paying job, so that the father had to borrow money from time to time to rearrange his work. Despite all the difficulties this family was very religious and passionate about Ahlul Bayt a.s.⁵

During the strangle period of Reza Khan, holding ceremonies and mourning on Muharram was absolutely forbidden, but in the basement of his house all the mourning ceremonies during Muharram and Friday night prayers like Dua-e-Kumail and Hadis-e-Kisa were held and in the every morning of Friday Dua-e-Nudba is also offered.⁶

HIS INCLINATION TOWARDS RELIGION:

During that period the society had no interest in religious sciences. Since then the clerics and religious scholars were looked down upon and due to oppressive government of Reza Khan, people to be pessimistic of the clerics. Many of them forcibly or willingly removed the clerical clothes and engaged in business and other professions. Now in such a time someone said that he wants to become religious scholars it would be very surprising.

Besides his upbringing and brought up through their parents, what Muhammad Taqi drew his inclination towards spirituality that was appeal of and spiritual direction of sheikh Ahmad Akhund, sheikh Ahmad was a devoted and committed spiritualist, a living in Najaf and one of his maternal relatives. Every time when he came to Yazd, became guest in their house. His mystical and devotional states were very magnificent. The sheikh would wake up in the middle of night and perform ablution, and would take a small lantern in his hand and to the mosque. At the time of Al- Tabin he was returning home, after seeing situations Muhammad Taqi spirit was doubled. When the sheikh told him a child who prays so well and studies so well, what is appropriate and suitable for him to become a student and a religious scholar?⁷ After this he became more inspire and his love for learning divine sciences and knowledge provoked him migrating to Najaf and study there.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION:

He completed his elementary education in Yazd. At the age of 13 he entered Khan School, and after that he admitted in Shafiya School in his hometown seminary. In his school days Muhammad Taqi Known as an excellent student, because of his family religious background, all of the teachers encouraged him this way of study and became one of the country's leading inventers, discoverers and scientist. But Muhammad Taqi had another interest. In fourth grade he wrote an essay in which he expressed his dream about studying religious sciences in Najaf, all of them were surprised.⁸

BEGINNING OF APPRENTICESHIP:

In 1948 A.D. (1325-26 A.H), Muhammad Taqi finished his elementary school education and for fulfilling his dream enter Yazd seminary, here he devoted himself for religious studies and completed task that in four years, which usually takes about eight years.⁹ Here he studied under many great teachers. Especially Sheikh Muhammad Aali Nahvi, Sheikh Abdull Hossein Arab wa Ajam (teacher of sharah (ama'h and Rasail, and Haj mirza Muhammad Anwari (teacher of fundamental laws)¹⁰. Besides official courses of seminary, Muhammad Taqi also studied modern sciences such as physics, chemistry, physiology and French language from an educated cleric named Mohagheghi Rashti.¹¹

MIGRATION TO NAJAF:

Young Muhammad Taqi had fall in love with the teachings of Quran and Itrat¹² (family of Holy Prophet PBUH). Seeing his interest sheikh Ahmad Akhund encourage his family to migrate to Najaf Ashraf and promised to support him for living in that country. Therefore it was at the end of 1952 A.D. (1330 A.H), he with his family left for Najaf al- Ashraf.¹³

But only after six months, financial condition became worst and they decided left for Qum, Muhammad Taqi insisted that he would stay alone here, but his parents (especially his mother) did not satisfied at all. Although his teachers late Mr. Sheikh Muhammad Ali Sarabi and late Mr. Seyyed Ali Fani (Allamah fani) urged his father, but he did not.

However, almost a year after he left Najaf for Tehran. In this short span, he left many memories in his heart for Najaf, presence of such great scholars late Hakim, late Shahrودي the late Sayyed Abdul Hadi Shirazi, late Mirza Agha Estebhnati and late Khoi.¹⁴

MIGRATION TO QUM:

After returning from Najaf to Tehran, Muhammad Taqi decided to go to Qum and start his religious study. Although his parents were not agree, but he convinced and he believed that studying is a religious duty that does not involve parental consent and he migrated to Qum. Here Muhammad Taqi started earning in summer vacation by teaching and earned sixty tomans. After migration to Qum he admitted in Faiziyeh School at the age of 19 years. Here he faced many difficulties for searching bread and shelter. But all these problems did not made him stay away from religious studies and inspite of it he completed lessons of Agha Morteza Hacri within one year and after that participated in the courses of Ayatollah Bourjerdi's jurisprudence and the principles of Imam Khomeini (r.a). when he reached at the age of 20, he got admission in Hojjatiyeh school, here he got opportunity to get to know also the elders and pious scholars such as Imam Khomeini, Allamah Tabatabai, and Ayatollah Bahjat.¹⁵ He completed his graduation in 1960. Before Islamic revolution he assisted the other clerics, i.e. Muhammad Beheshti and Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, in publishing two journals called 'Mission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)' and "Revenge", and responsible for all publishing activities in "Revenge".¹⁶

During his studies, especially in Hojjatiyeh School Muhammad Taqi also form a sincere friendship, people who had spiritual and moral qualities. Among his best friends Sheikh Muhammad Hossein Behjati Adrakani (good poet and Imam of AdraKan), Mirza Hossein Nouri, considered as one of the leading authority of Taqlid, Mirza Hasan Agha (an orator, writer and calligrapher) and Sheikh Ali Akbar masoud Khomeini (In charge of Holy Astana-e- Masouma- e- Qum PBUH). Even after marriage he used to visit the Hojjatiyeh School to meet his friends.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES (1963-1989)

i. Fighting Against The Tyrannical Regime:

Ayatollah Yazdi becomes politically active in 1963 A.D. He had many campaigns against tyrannical regime of that time. Although many of his activities remain hidden due to his secretive spirit and not to express them, at that time movement had not yet officially started with the approval of judicial immunity of Americans, the capitulation the parliament and the roar of Imam Khomeini (r.a) against it, which was considered the starting point of movement. At the suggestion of the Haj Agha Mustafa, Ayatollah Mesbah, assigned to enlighten the public opinion of other cities about the issues of the movement and conveying the message of Imam Khomeini (r.a.).

Whenever Imam Khomeini (r.a.) arrested and imprisoned by SANAK¹⁷, Mesbah Yazdi sent a letter in prison in which he mention the situation of society after his arrest and reflection of his actions on scholars and different strata of society. The Imam is pleased with this letter, and through Mr. Hasan Sanei, he greeted Mesbah Yazdi.

ii. Secretly Published The Speeches Of Imam Khomeini (R.A).

With the sharing of his memories Ayatollah Misbah said" During the early era of Islamic Revolution of Iran the Reza Shah government strictly banned publication of Imam Khomeini's announcements and speeches in news paper. In some of printing houses where pious people worked, Mr. Hashem and I knew them, and take appointment of midnight to get the Imam's announcement and deliver it to secretly and after printing, we would distribute them with special secrecy.

iii. Loyal To The Islamic Revolution Of Iran:

The meetings were held under the suggestion and management of Martyr Ayatollah Dr. Beheshti, for about a plan that was supposed to the basis of the Islamic system and government. To determine the topic of the research about of fifty of these nobles participated in the meeting. Professor Misbah in addition to participating in related research and studies, also assumed the office of the secretary of the meetings. They named it "vilayat discussion meetings", which was closely related to the discussion of the government.

iv. 1997-2016

In 1997, after the election of presidents Muhammad Khatami, Mesbah Yazdi encouraged Iran's revolutionary guards and Hezbollah¹⁸, to put a stop to the reform agitation by any means; including violence¹⁹. After the decline of reform movement in 2003, his supporters got influence in local and parliamentary election got influence in local and parliamentary elections. In 2005 Mesbah Yazdi supported Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidential bid and gained direct influence in the Iranian government. In 2009 Mesbah Yazdi supported Ahmadinejad and declared his election as a miracle and a gift from the hidden Imam (PBUH). In 2006 election Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi, won a seat and became a member of assembly of experts and assuming office until 2016.

Religious And Educational Activities:

There are some people in society, who put whole efforts and personally devoted their personality to understand social issues, deficiencies, inadequacies and deviations in society and feel it. Prof. Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi was among one of them who did so. He is one of these benevolent and responsible human beings in Islamic society, whose presence causes its growth and excellence.

Before the Islamic revolution when he entering this field, he realized that the curriculum and teaching material of seminary should be up to date, even the infrastructure of schools were also not good, need of restoration of endowments, repair of damages. He tried to participate solving those problems, but remarkable changes became in the field of curriculum after his entry into Qum seminary. Although, main objective of these activities, to connecting harmony and affinity between academic and seminary assemblies.

i. A Letter to Grand Ayatollah Bourjerdi for a request to introduce and ethics course:

In the every first year of his migration to Qum, he realized the shortcomings of seminary curriculum and programs and take action to eliminate it. After consulting same other elders and nobles of Hawzah seminary he decided to wrote a letter to Ayatollah Boujerdi, signed by two hundred elite scholars of same field, such as the late Ayatollah Haj Agha Morteza Hacri, the late Ayatollah Fakur, and late Ayatollah Zanjani²⁰, which mainly focus about the moral progress and excellence of the students of seminary.

ii. Establishment of Education department of the institute; In right way and its development.

The main founder of this institution was Ayatollah Seyed Mohsen Kharazi, one of the famous mujtahids²¹ and teachers of Howza. Before the victory of revolution it was established with the aim of responding the doubts of Christianity and defended Islamic beliefs against it.²² For the young generation to introduce Islamic beliefs issued pamphlets titled "Principles of Religion". But after Marxist propaganda increased, children and youngsters were easily trapped, so the institution decided to publish new publication with the title of "Rejecting Marxism and materialism". For this purpose they invite especially Aayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, worked as a best professor of theology and philosophy and he accepted it for preserving the health of the minds and soul of the youth against the poisonous winds of materialism and worldliness.

iii. Training and sending student as a preacher of Islam:

Various elected group started propaganda, just after the victory of revolution, to separated student and educated youth from pro-revolution masses, so the cultural and intellectual atmosphere of country became very confused. For this Prof. Mesbah Yazdi stood up to defend and culturally support Islam and revolution. To confront this situation, organized intensive courses and familiarize them with the intellectual foundations of anti-revolutionary groups in form of short courses, pamphlets and ideological debates.²³

After training, a group of 20 student were sent to the areas where hypocrites were active such as, Mazandaran, Gilan, Gorgan, Kurdistan, Amol, Bushehr and Khuzestan.

iv. Establishment of Baqer-ul-uloom cultural foundation:

Prof. Mesbah Yazdi realized that after several years of studying in Institute of righteousness, student must needs specialization and continue their studies in various fields of humanities and comparative study between the theory of Islam and other schools, for this he contact Imam Khomeini (r.a) and Imam give full support.

After some consultation a new center with the name of Baqer-ul-uloom cultural foundation²⁴, founded by Prof. Mesbah Yazdi were eleven subjects included curriculum such as; Quranic sciences, philosophy, law, sociology, psychology, educational sciences, economics, history and theology and taught by great teachers.

v. Establishment of Imam Khomeini educational and research institute:

After a wide acceptance of the institute in the path right and Baqer-ul-uloom cultural foundation, Prof. Mesbah Yazdi realized the lack of space and facilities for student to study in various educational and research groups. Therefore Prof. Mesbah and the decision making council agreed with the establishment of Imam Khomeini educational and research institute in 1991 A.D.²⁵ During the life time of Imam Khomeini due to low budget it was not possible, but after few years it was done under the leadership of Ayatollah khamenai, the institution was completed in 1995 AD/ 1374 AH and inaugurated by supreme leader of Islamic Republic of Iran.

vi. Establishment of ethics training center:

With aim of strengthen morals and spirituality in the society, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi established a training center for moral educators. He also established Rushd theological schools²⁶ in which qualified student can undertake the task of moral education in long term.

vii. His Works:

Prof. Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi wrote many Islamic books on various topics such as Islamic Philosophy, belief theology ethics and political thoughts. He also wrote Quranic exegesis, the collection of his works published by Muassisa Amuzishi Imam Khomeini in software as Mishkat. His works include Amuzish falsafa (teaching philosophy, akhlaq dar Quran) (ethics in the Quran) and Nazariyya-iyi-siyasi-yi Islam (Islamic political theory in two volumes).

HIS DEATH:

Professor Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi died in 2nd Jan 2021 at the age of 15 due to gastro intestinal disease. Leader of Islamic revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenai expressed his condolences over the demise of prominent cleric, saying he himself is mourning the demise of a “dear brother”. In his message leader said Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi’s death is loss for the seminary and Islamic studies.

II. CONCLUSION:

Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi travelled 30 countries he knew very well about the weakness of western notions into consideration for western elite academics. So, it was quite natural that the west treated him as a threat and enemy.²⁷ He always felt a sense of a duty to guide all human beings and considered his primary duty to shed light on the truth by enlightening people using his well documented arguments and established logics.

Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi was very fond of reading books and always recommended reading original text, not to summarizing and categorizing the material of others, but he was creating something new by contemplating the material and the data. The lessons and speeches and as well as what he wrote, said, was the result of his own reflections and thoughts. He was a thinker in a true sense of the word.²⁸

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³ Ayatollah Mesbah yazdi was ‘Prominent, influential jurist’: Raisi, 31/Dec/2022, www.tehrantimes.com/news/480294 accessed on 30/sep/2023.

⁴ <https://mesbahyazdi.ir/node/8091/Biography> (accessed on 29/sep/2023)

⁵ Ibid.

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⁸ <http://mesbahyazdi.ir/node/836> (accessed on 29/sep/2023)

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² “Itrat” in shii theology this term itrat is used to denote the lineage and descendants of Holy Prophet (PBUH & HP), specially household of Prophet (Ahlul Bayt) (PBUH & HP).

¹³ <https://mesbahyazdi.ir/node/8091/Biography> (accessed 30/sep/2023)

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ <https://mesbahyazdi.ir/node/8093/> (accessed on 30 sep/2023)

¹⁷ SAVAK: savak was a the secret police, domestic security and intelligence service in Iran during the reign of Pahlavi dynasty.

¹⁸ Hezbollah: Hezbollah is an Iranian movement formed at the time of the Iranian revolution to assist the Ayatollah Ruhullah Khomeini r.a. and his forces consolidating power.

¹⁹ Nasr, Vali . The Shia Revival Norton (2006), p.216

²⁰ <https://mesbahyazdi.ir/node/8094> (accessed on 30/sep/ 2023)

²¹ Mujtahids: an authority of divine law who practices ijtehad, i.e. the search for a correct opinion ... in the deducing of specific provisions of the law from its principles and ordinances”. Saklanji, Muhammad, Qaza dar Islam (Tehran) [1338 AH/ 1959] p.14

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