

In the Memory of a Servant of God

Mohammad Taqi Ansarian (1325-1401) is the founder of Ansarian Publishing House, a publisher of Islamic and Shia books in different languages, in the international arena, as well as translations of the Quran in seventeen languages. Ansarian worked in the international department of Dar al-Tabligh Islami in his youth between 1348 and 1353. After that, he published books in Arabic and English independently under the title of Shafaq Publications. Mohammad Taqi Ansarian founded Ansarian publishing house more than thirty years ago and published Islamic and Shiite books in different languages such as Farsi, English, Urdu, French, Turkish, Russian, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Swahili and published 1,200 book titles.

He was also in charge of distributing his printed works in the international arena and participated in international exhibitions in Iraq, Malaysia, Russia, Sudan, Morocco, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

He also translated, printed and published the Quran in seventeen languages, and in the 1980s, he was introduced as the "Servant of the Quran" and the best publisher of Iran. Ansarian has written about thirty books, most of which are about the biography of Shia scholars. The special feature of late Ansarian's work was that anyone who wrote letters to him and his publications from anywhere in the world, he considered himself obliged to reply and he did. He even measured the needs and believed that the needs of people, territories and time are different. He believed that in order to progress, we must have self-evaluation, so he was never satisfied with his own work. He

always mentioned a speech by the late Allameh Amini, whose content is as follows: The situation of the Shiites in the world is such that instead of eight hours of work, which is the order of religion, we must work for 16 hours to return to our previous situation especially now that there is so much activity against Islam and Shia. They also said that I wish, and if I had the means, I would do so, that dear students go abroad during non-school days; Because visiting people and different countries has a significant impact on the missionary affairs of students and their decisions. They used to say about their wishes: I always pray that God will grant this favor to 100 other people, so that these 100 people will do the same thing that I am doing. Because the field and scope for Shiite issues in the world is infinite and work can be done. In this regard Muhammad Masjid Jame'ei, well-known religious scholar and

religious, has written about this great figure that we offer it in the following:

Iranian society is actually a complex and unpredictable society. This saying is true more or less everywhere in our time due to excessive intertwining of influential factors. Here the unpredictability is mainly due to the multiplicity of factors and their mutual effects. These interactions cannot be calculated and therefore the result cannot be predicted. But the Iranian society had and has another story that we have continuously experienced and witnessed, both at the macro-national level and at much lower levels.

The essence of Iranian society is complex and layered: A "long" and "dense" history locating in the juncture of events. It has been continuously subjected to hard and soft and especially hard attacks by

different tribes and groups, both from the east and from the west, both from the north and from the south. To this collection, "pride" of belonging to the great empires of the past and the inability to make a scientific and accurate assessment of its position, as well as its "unsuccessful" and "bitter" experience with the new civilization, should be added. These and other factors have been involved in shaping his complex and unpredictable nature.

The funeral ceremony of the late Mohammad Taqi Ansarian is probably one of these examples. In the current very difficult economic and social conditions, holding such a grand ceremony was surprising for the general participants. Certainly, the deceased deserved such a ceremony, but considering all aspects, such a ceremony was not expected and probably no one predicted it. When the conditions

become difficult, naturally the perceptions and priorities of the society change and they have served less to their culture and school of thoughts. Although there are exceptions to this point but the story is generally like this.

Part of the reason goes back to his family history: a large, well-known and serving family. They are basically from Khansar, some of them migrated to Tehran and some to Qom a long time ago. Sheikh Hossein Ansarian, the great orator of this family, was the cousin and father-in-law of this deceased, and the members of this great family are generally known.

Despite all this, the late Ansarian was a self-made person and his honor was mainly due to his character, ethics, sincerity and service, which we will discuss below.

The author's acquaintance with him goes back to the first days when he settled in Qom to continue his education. In those days, he was a publisher of religious books, he sought to translate and publish religious texts in different languages, from classic religious texts to other books written in contemporary time.

It seems that their interest in translation was the result of their successful experience in this field. During that time, he reprinted the English translation of several books and sent them abroad. These books were highly welcomed and those who were interested sent many letters from different countries to Ansarian Publications, which showed their sincere interest and influence towards these books. However, I used to go to their workplace once a day and read the letters and explain their contents to them. He was very excited because

the people were getting familiar with Islam and the school of Ahl al-Bayt.

This cooperation continued until I left for the Vatican mission. His activity continued to grow. At first, most of the translations were in English, but after a while, he switched to other important European languages and more or less simultaneously published Urdu, Turkish, Russian, and even Swahili translations. The Islamist atmosphere of that time was as if these translations were not read, but swallowed. This point came out well from the content of the letters they sent.

According to the remarks and perhaps criticisms about the translations, especially the translation into European languages, he decided to find better translators and spend more money, which helped to increase the quality level of the translations, but the point was

that these translations were mainly for those who were Shiites and Muslims, and if they were not, this type of expression and literature would be meaningful for them.

Ansarian's publications did not have an academic character and naturally could not have such a framework, in addition to the fact that the translation and publication of the book at the academic level of developed countries was not very possible. The level of literary knowledge for the majority of Muslim and even non-Muslim Asian or African readers was far lower than academic translations and still is. Of course, a false translation should not be offered, but the expectation from a private publishing house, which provides the budget for the translation and publication of such books with great effort and dedication, cannot be the same as the expectation that comes from a large European publishing company.

When I was in charge of the General Department of Culture of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I had more contact with them and their publications.

The delegations or people who came to Iran and went to Qom during those years, 2831-2831, were advised to visit Ansariyan publications. Apart from this, books were continuously sent to the ambassadors of Islamic countries residing in Tehran on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, and on the occasion of Christmas to the Christian ambassadors. These books were generally produced by his institute, of course at that time they published a significant number of Islamic texts in Arabic.

The peak of these collaborations goes back to the time when I went on a mission to Morocco. At the beginning of the mission, I asked the minister of

science, Mr. Aliweh, to invite Ayatollah Sobhani as a Muslim professor of Islamic sciences, which he accepted and sent official invitations. I sent the names of the books of Ayatollah Sobhani to the Minister, the number and variety of which surprised him and his colleagues, and this caused them to give the greatest and most respectful cooperation to organize the numerous programs of him, and he is one of the honors of the Shiite world. Their unparalleled mastery of the Arabic language and literature, along with their mastery of various branches of Islamic sciences, including jurisprudence, principles, philosophy, theology, history, commentary, and hadith, attracted the elites who, over the years, were the most frequent visitors to the site of Imam Sadiq Institute were from Morocco.

After the extremely successful program of Ayatollah

Sobhani, requests for various books became abundant and the main supplier was Ansariyan Publications, which did it with complete sincerity and enthusiasm.

The following year, the "Dar al-Bayda" book exhibition was to be held, and I asked the people involved to invite Ansarian Publishing House, and so it happened. He went with about three thousand books, which was a very difficult task to enter this number of books in an Arab country considering the sensitivities, which was happened.

Mr. Ansarian chose to stay in the residence and did not stay in the hotel provided by the exhibition, so I heard the daily report of his activities. On the first day, there was a lot of acceptance of books, especially educational and mystical books, and he said that I gave these books as gifts to those interested. I told them, in order to avoid

misunderstanding, please receive the costs of the books, this is more prudent.

After the end of the exhibition, the books were transferred to the residence, and many of them were sent to libraries, universities, and religious and non-religious personalities. The most important part of it, consisting of more than six hundred titles, was gifted to the "King Abdullah" library in Dar Al Bayda, and in order to maintain transparency, the names of the books sent to the important members of the board of directors including the chairman of the board of directors, whose name was I don't remember, and the ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Morocco and the minister of endowments, Mr. Ahmed Tawfiq.

As far as I can remember, several important Maghrebi personalities expressed sincere

thanks for the books that were sent to them independently. Mr. Mohamed Yassif, President of the Moroccan Academic Council, President of Qarouyin University, President of Rabat University, Mr. Abdul Hadi Al-Tazi, Mr. Mohammed Al-Dahhak, President of the Judiciary and Mr. Abbas Jarari, Advisor to the King and Malik Hassan. The collections of "Tabaqat al-Fuqaha", "Tahrir Al-Majlah", "Tafsir Al-Mizan" and "Meanings of the Qur'an" received great attention and praise from professors and scholars.

In recent years, he turned to the collection of biographies and documents that are about the great authorities of recent decades: from the founder of Qom seminary, Ayatollah Sheikh Haeri, to Ayatollah Seyyed Mahmoud Shahroudi. This initiative was well received. As far as he said, for some books for example the book related to

Ayatollah Seyyed Ahmad Khansari the welcome was far more than expected. The most interesting point was writing about the life and charitable activities of those that have been providing religious services for less than the last century. Apparently, this is his last book, which is truly an initiative worthy of appreciation.

It is very difficult to organize such collections for many reasons. What made him successful was his good reputation that caused people trust him and cooperate with him. In these cases, he was constantly connected with me and I could actually feel his passion for protecting the works of the past.

His most important characteristic was his sincere devotion to the Prophet and his family, and it was actually this factor that encouraged him to try more despite all the problems and

shortcomings. May God bless him with his infallible ones and protect our society in the shade of love towards the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt from everything that threatens it and its originality and identity.

Muhammad Masjid Jame'ei