



*An Interview with the Christian Priest,  
Hanna Fakhori*

*Imam Ali (a.s.) is the Imam of the world.*

Hanna Fakhori is the old and well-known Christian priest, whose works about the Arabic and Islamic philosophies are famous. He talked about Imam Ali (a.s.) and teaching of Nahjul Balagha, and appreciated the religious freedom of the Christians in Iran.

He who has a PhD degree in the Islamic philosophy, has finished his high school in Jerusalem. Fakhori is a Catholic of Saint Paul church in Lebanon. He is the member organizer of the organization of the teachers of language, art and science in Lebanon. He has also written some educational books about Christianity theology.

Fakhori abandoned the administrative activity from 1962. He began searching in language, literature, and philosophy fields. By now, he has published tens of books and articles in Lebanon and Egypt. Some of them are :

- Ekhvan Al-safa, 1947
- The history of Al-adab Al-Arabi, 1951
- The collection of Al-loghat Al- Arabiah in 4 volume,1951
- The collection of Navabegh Al-fekr,
- Al-jadid Al-adab Al-arabi, in 6 volume, 1955
- Al- hekam va Al- Amsal ,1956
- The history of the Islamic Philosophy, 2volume, 1958
- Al-mojam al-vafi,1983
- The history of Al-adab al-arabi in Meghreb, 1982
- The history of Islamic Philosophy, 1984

The history of the Arab literature was translated to Persian by Abdul Mohammad Ayati (Tehran). Hanna Fakhori made researches about the manuscripts, or explanation of old works: he has translated some works from Latin, Greek and French languages into the Arabic language which include the religious texts, the history of the Christians thought, the culture and laws of the Christian church.

**Please tell about your educational, scientific and social activities?**

I entered a Christian school; after two years study of philosophy I went to Harisa church, and then I joined to the “priests association”. Simultaneously, I wrote and translated some literary and philosophical books from the Latin, Greek and French into the Arabic language. I study in my free time and like to study the Islamic and Arabic fields. I have friendly relation with the Islamic World, specially the Egypt and the Al-Azhar shaikhs.

**What is your evaluation about the interfaith Dialogue in Lebanon?**

We can see some violations, but they do not hurt the religious affairs in Lebanon.

**What is the view of the religious leaders about the dialogue?**

The Islamic leaders in Lebanon are really respectable and try to have a mutual understanding with different divine religions according to the existing realities. I believe that the affairs are in their right way. Of course, there are a few persons who are abnormal, but we don't care them.

**what's the place of religion in the human communities?**

The truth is that we witness almost scientific developments, not religious; it is a material movement, and taking away from the religion. Of course, the clergies should try to be faithful to the religion principles, and protect from it.

**What is the role of the religious leaders and organizations in developments of spirituality?**

Their roles are very broad and deep. They should use scientific and interesting ways, on a logical basis and discuss all religious issues.

**How do you see the dialogue between Islam and Christianity?**

There is dialogue between Islam and Christianity. The Muslim and Christian leaders talk with each other. A religion movement is formed in the East world that tries to create a space for coexisting and we should protect this opportunity.

**What is the advantage of dialogue among the Shi'a and Christian, or among the religious communities, as a whole?**

It brings the hearts together, and makes the life easier.

**What is your opinion about the priority in dialogue between the Shia and Christian communities?**

There is a dialogue between them. We respect Imam Ali (a.s.) a lot! I have written books about Imam Ali and his offspring and I can say that my best works are about Imam Ali (a.s.). A considerable part of my books about the Arab literature and university research books are about Imam Ali (a.s.). It is because Imam Ali is the Imam and leader of the world, not only the Muslims! We also want and respect him because of his

teachings that bring the humans close together. In Lebanon churches, we teach some parts of Imam Ali letters. The students form groups and every group learn one part of the Nahjul Balaghah. All of them respect Imam Ali (a.s).

**Which of Imam Ali's virtues are attracting to you?**

Blessing and openness toward people, brotherhood, goodwill and trying to guide people to growing and perfection are the most important virtues of Imam Ali. Imam Ali wanted universal kindness and sympathy for all people, and emphasized on respecting people each other in Nahjol Balaghah that is common with the teaching of Christ and Christianity.

**What lessons do we learn from Imam Ali (a.s.)?**

Many lessons and the important one is to respect the humanity and humanitarian principles. Respecting people as human beings is one of the prominent characteristic of Imam Ali (a.s.).

**In your opinion, what is the important gift of Imam Ali to mankind?**

In my opinion, it is Nahjul Balaghe that should be read and followed.

**What relations can be among the Christian and Muslim researchers, or, in other words, among the church and mosque?**

Both of them are God's houses, and all God houses are respectable, the mosque or church. We believe when a person enters a God house, the respects God, reverence Him, and this gives the affection that should be in one's heart.

**According to the shia belief, the Jesus Christ will come to help Imam Mahdi (a.s) after his appearance, and will form a just world. In your opinion what is the most important vocation of this great incident?**

It is a reward to human deeds! They encourage people to a fortunate life. it is a reality that human should understand he is a human; all people are his brothers, and should behave them in brotherhood, respect, and affection; and also help people to abandon their past and return to everlasting life.

**We want to know brief information about educational system in church and Christianity in Lebanon, because most of our readers are the Islamic students?**

Beside the church that is a place for pray, there are some schools that are called Patricki schools, in all the Christian areas in Lebanon. At those schools, the youth are taught religious and philosophical courses. They will become priests in the future and teach the religion!

**In your opinion, what is the relation between religion and politics?**

They have a close relationship with each other, without any interfere at each other!

**As you know many politicians know themselves as true Christians but their behaviors say another thing. What's your idea about such people?**

The politician acts on the basis of his understanding, and unfortunately, sometimes puts the politics prior to religion! They don't limit themselves to the religious rules, and some of their acts are not related to religion. In my opinion, if the world politicians attend the Imam Ali 's letters to his rulers, it would be better for them, because they are human letters that preserve human rights and judge them in the right way. They are not letters to ruin the human lives.

**Since you have been in Tehran before, what's your idea about the freedom of the Christians in Iran?**

I visited some of my Christianity brothers in Tehran and other places. They obey the Iranian rules but do their religious affairs in liberty, and have their own religious and Christian life!

**In my recent travel to Britain, I saw the youth don't come to the church even on Sundays, and some elder people were at the churches. What's the reason for that?**

Unfortunately, they have much liberty in the world and we can't force them to go to the church. Now the youth are quite free. Believing and submission is necessary. I think they will return to religion, at last.

**According to your studying about the Persian literature, what is the common spirit in the Persian works?**

The Persian literature is a world one. A world solution. Shahnameh is a world wide book. There are the old teachings in the world literature, besides the Shahnameh.

**What is the role of the Iranian writers in development of the Arab literature?**

They have had a great role. During the Abbasside period, the Arabs and Persians have intermingled with each other. The Persian researchers, such as Ibn Moghaffa, who was originally a Persian, wrote some books about the Arabic language and its grammar founded the basis of the Arab literature during the Abbasside dynasty.

**What is the most important characteristic of the shia teachings?** The human spirit.

**Why?** Because the people had bad behavior toward Imam Ali, but Imam behaved in a right manner with them. Imam Ali that shia people follow him- wants people to be complete human in all his speeches, orders and letters in Nahjul Balagha.

**Thank you.** Thanks a lot, to you too!