

Biography of the Author

The Golden pages of history are replete with individuals who have sacrificed their lives to play a role in the guidance and leadership of humanity. Throughout the ages, we see many scholars who have dedicated their lives to the path of progress and spiritual upliftment of mankind, one such scholar who is also one of the greatest thinkers of the Islamic world is Ayatullah Ja'far Subhani. Having spent every moment of his adult life in research, writing and teaching, it is through these channels that he has struggled to lift the cultural and spiritual status of humanity.

Ayatullah Subhani was born on the 28th of Shawwal, in the year 1347 ah (1926 ce) in the city of Tabriz (Iran) into a scholarly and well-respected family. His father, the late Ayatullah Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Subhani Khayabani (1299 ah–1392 ah), was one of the outstanding scholars of Tabriz. A scholar in his own right, he spent years in the sacred city of Najaf al-Ashraf under the guidance of Shaykh Sharifatul Isfahani (d. 1339 ah) and Sayyid Muhammad Kazim Taba`taba`i (d. 1337 ah) – the author of *al-Urwatul Wuthqa*. After completing his studies, he returned home to Tabriz and spent more than fifty years teaching, writing and guiding the people and was also responsible for the training and educating of the future teachers and leaders of his community.

After completing his primary school and the introductory Islamic studies, Ayatullah Ja'far Subhani went on to study the books of Persian literature and grammar. Following this, at the young age of 14 (1361 ah/1940 ce) he enrolled in the Theological Seminary of Tabriz named Talibiyah and kept himself occupied with the preliminary and secondary level of studies of Islam.

He studied the Arabic language under the guidance of Hajj Shaykh Hasan Nahwi and Shaykh Ali Akbar Mudarris Khayabani – author of the book *Rayhanatul Adab* (d. 1373 ah/ 1966 ce). These studies took him five years – until the year 1365 ah (1944 ce), after which Ayatullah Subhani was able to complete the second level of theological studies and then proceed on to begin the highest level of Islamic studies (Kharij) in Fiqh (Jurisprudence), Usulul Fiqh (Principles of Jurisprudence) and Philosophy. During this period of his studies, he benefited from the knowledge of:

1. The late Ayatullah al-Uzma al-Hajj Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Burujerdi (d. 1380 ah/1959 ce)

2. The late Ayatullah al-Uzma al-Hajj Sayyid Muhammad Hujjat Kuhkamari (d. 1372 ah/1951 ce)

3. The late Ayatullah al-Uzma al-Hajj Sayyid Ruhullah Musawi Khumayni (d. 1409 ah/1989 ce)

In the field of Philosophy, he studied the commentary of the book *Manzumah* and *al-Asfar* of Mullah Sadra and benefited from private lessons in the subject of realism under the guidance of the late fAllamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Taba'taba'i (d. 1402 ah/1982 ce).

In addition, he studied Ilmul Kalam under the late Sayyid Muhammad Badkuba`i (d. 1390 ah/1969 ce).

Ayatullah Subhani is one of those scholars who took up the pen and began to write on Islamic topics from a very young age and since the early days, his entire life has been spent in the fields of teaching and writing. It has been noted that the first book he ever wrote, titled *The Criterion of Thinking* (concerning the science of Mantiq – Logic) was written when he was only 17 years old!

At the age of 18, he began teaching the secondary level of Islamic studies (Sutuh) and was imparting knowledge in the fields of Fiqh, Usulul Fiqh, Philosophy, Hadith and other subjects.

In addition, he has written notes on the lectures of Usulul Fiqh which were delivered by the late Ayatullah al-Uzma Hajj Sayyid Ruhullah Musawi Khumayni which have been recently printed.

Through all of this work, he has transformed himself into a teacher who goes deep into a subject and an effective thinker such that many important tasks have been imparted upon him, including:

1. Establishing a centre for the teaching of Ilmul Kalam (Science of Theology) and a research library and facility for those who are conducting research in the Islamic sciences.

2. Having written one complete topic-wise commentary of the Qur`an (currently at fourteen volumes and available in both Arabic and Farsi).

3. Prepared and taught one complete course – printed in 16 volumes – in the fields of the History of Fiqh and the Fuqaha.

4. Prepared and wrote manuals for the teaching of Usulul Fiqh, Ilmul Kalam, Hadith, Ilmul Rijal and the history and information on the various religions of the world and their sects and divisions.

In addition to this, he has written numerous works in Farsi – thus, the sum total of books that he has to his credit is well over 200!

The books of this author, which have been translated into English, include the following:

1. *Doctrines of Shi'i Islam: A Compendium of Imami Beliefs and Practices* translated by Reza Shah-Kazemi;

2. *The Islamic Moral System: Tafsir of Suratul Hujurat* translated by Saleem Bhimji;
3. *The Keys to Success* translated by the Al-Qalam Translators Guild;
4. *The Message* – Biography of the Prophet Muhammad translated by Islamic Seminary Publications;
5. *Wahhabism* translated by Jalil Dorrani.

We pray to Allah (awj) to grant the author of this work the blessings to be able to continue on this path.

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