A Glance At
The Great Library
Of
Ayatollah Al-Uzma
Mar'ashi Najafi

Many Sample Of the Illuminated
Qur'ans of this Library, in different Sizes.

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In the Name of God
The Compassionate, the Merciful

The Name: The Great Library of Ayatollah Marashi Najafi.
The Founder: Imam Marashi is a great jurist, a grand Ayatollah and an Islamic cultural keeper, a fundamental clergyman, and a great researcher, historian and genealogist.

Ayatollah Al-Ozma¹ Sayyed Shahab Al-Din Al-Hoseini Marashi Najafi was born in July 21st 1897 in Najaf (a holy city in south of Iraq) in a religious family noted for its high knowledge and deep faith. He was taught by his father -Ayatollah Sayyed Shamsol Din Mahmood Al-Hoseini Marashi Najafi (passed away in 1338 Hejri Ghamari²)- who was one of the greatest clergymen at that era. He also learned Koran-Recitation and hermeneutic principles, fundamentals of religious jurisprudence, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, Rejal³, Derayah⁴ and Hadith⁵ sciences, religious jurisprudence, inference principles and theology, by the assistance of a large group of well-known masters in Hawza in Najaf, which was one of the biggest religious scientific centers in the Islamic world.

He achieved Ejehad⁶ ahead of schedule and became the most striking one amongst his colleagues in studying and teaching religious sciences. Ejehad is the greatest certificate degree in religious institutes' studying.

Some years later after attaining Ejehad, Imam Marashi set off to Imam Reza's Shrine (Peace be upon him) in Mashhad in 1924 as a pilgrim. After returning, he stopped by in Tehran to continue his studying and researches.

After a year he decided to go to Qom and attended lectures as a student by the help of Ayatollah Al-Ozma Al-Sheikh Abdul Karim Al-Haery Al-Yazdi, the founder of Hawza in Qom. Just a day after his arrival he began teaching. He chose staying there.

¹. The highest title given to the highest rank in religious studies, which is nearly equal to "professor".
². According to the Islamic Calendar, this "H.G." will be used from now on instead of "Hejri Ghamari".
³. Knowledge of recognizing great clergymen who were living before.
⁴. Checking the accuracy of the Prophet's sayings.
⁵. Science of gathering Prophet's sayings.
⁶. Ejehad is a degree, which is granted to someone who passes primary and high stages in religious studies. And on it he can be considered as a reference of religious communications.
for a certain time teaching in Hawza becoming one of the best teachers there afterwards.

After a short time he was titled as one of the Grand Ayatollahs. He had got millions of followers in Iran and in various Islamic countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait, Ihsa, Ghatif in Saudi, Emirates, Bahrain, Pakistan, India, Turkey and Zanjâbal in the African Continent.

He went on teaching in Hawza in Qom for more than 67 continuous years. His class-meeting in each single day was nearly 10 ones. He was unceasingly Imam of prayers in Masomeh Shrine1 more than half a century too.

Sayyed Marashi Najafi didn’t spare his efforts towards the progress of Hawza even a wisk. Graduating hundreds of students, who became the most famous masters in Hawza and University, was the result of those great efforts.

We can consider his knowledge and capability in various kinds of his written matters and papers. Most of them are in Arabic language and they came as the following:

- Molhaqat Al-Haqueq
- Al-Hasheah Ala Al-Orwatt Al-Wothqa
- Menhaj Al-Momenin
- Taqrirat Al-Qusus
- Tabaqat Al-Nasabheen
- Al-Hasheah Ala Kefayah Al-Osule
- Al-Hasheah Ala Al-Rasayel
- Al-Mashhaed Wal Mazarat
- Aayan Al-Marasheen
- Al-Mowal Fee Amr Al-Motawal
- Olama Al-Sudat
- Masareh Al-Akar Wa Al-Hasheah Ala Taqrirat Al-Sheikh Al-Morteza Al-Ansari

The most prominent people whom Imam Marashi Najafi met with in his noble life were:

1. The famous Indian poet and philosopher Tagor.
2. The Egyptian author of Tafseer Al-Manar, Rashied Reza.
3. The great Egyptian author of Tafseer Al-Jawahir, Al-Sheikh Al-Tantawi Al-Jawhari.
4. The Priest Cardinal and the great composer Ernestus Al-Kerny from Baghad.
5. The French philosopher Henry Kerbin.
6. The great historian Al-Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zebarah the Yemeni Minister of Al-Hamid Al-Din Yahiya in Sanah.

One of the most important cultural services of Imam Marashi is establishing the library that became well known all over the world. It is verity the greatest Cultural Revolution in Iran’s Islamic history. Imam Marashi was titled 'The Greatest Cultural Keeper' in the world’s scientific centers.

1. A holy shrine in Qom where Imam Reza's sister (Fatima Al-Masomeh) was buried.
After about a century of learning, teaching and spreading the Islamic culture, Imam Marashi passed away because of a heart attack on Wednesday 29 August 1990, when he was 96 years of age.

Subsequent to this event, the Iranian government announced 3 days off. The same process had been done amongst the Muslims in Pakistan and Lebanon.

On Friday the 9th of Safar 1 Imam Marashi's corpus had been carried and followed by millions of people including the Masters and Grand Ayatollahs in Hawza, their students, high rank government and military's managers, in addition to many Islamic Embassies' staff in Tehran.

A piece of land had been specified for him in Al-Rouzaq Al-Masumiah in Qom, but he requested to be buried near his books with one sentence in his testament: "Bury me in my library's entry, so that the feet of researchers of Islamic sciences step on me."

Library's Progress Stages:
The first step of constructing the library had been achieved when the great founder was busy studying in Najaf and its institutes. He firstly indexed the manuscript book titles in addition to the scarce published books, which seemed out of ordinary at that time. Sayyed Marashi was renting or selling his clothes and his private devices, so that he could continue gathering books and manuscripts. He bore lots of troubles and hunginess. Imam Marashi Najafi cancelled one of his meals and tried to fulfill the others prayers and fasts accordingly. The books, which he inherited from his father, had very an important role in providing the library with books at the primary stages. Imam Marashi migrated from Iraq to Iran in 1342 H.G. and transported what he had bought and inherited, and kept them in his house. He started gathering and buying some other again. Because of space shortage, he presented some 278 of his scarce manuscripts - most of them were in Persian- to Tehran University's (College of Theology) Maghool and Manghool Library on 1959 (1338 according to the Iranian calendar). He subsequently presented numerous manuscripts and printed books to lots of large libraries in Iran.

After establishing "Marashyah School" in 1385 H.G. a couple of rooms were assigned for the library. That was the starting point of a long shining way. After many months of the same year another part was inaugurated at the library in the third floor of the school. That had been done after transferring a collection of some written and printed books.

The increasing of the number of researchers, made the library's space too narrow to be used comfortably by the visitors.

1. Safar is the second month in the Islamic Calendar.

1. Means reasonable and inherited.
So 1,000 square meters were bought and attached to 'Marashy School' on 1390 H.G. That was done under Imam Marashi's hands in Shaban 15th 1394 H.G. The public section of Ayatollah Marashi Najafi's library was inaugurated with more than 1,600 manuscripts and printed books, and after a while 500 were appended to the library.

A photo of Imam Khomeini's handwriting addressed to the Prior Minister about the library and its development.

Subsequent to that command, Iran's National Insurance Agency presented the old neighboring building to the library, and the library's president bought the nearby houses, so the whole library's land became more than 2,400 square meters.

After checking the sketches of the great libraries in the world, the Iranian consultants and the foreign specialists designed the final library's building map. On 20th Thi Al-Hejaj 1410 H.G. Imam Marashi's hands started constructing the new library's building.

A decade later the final preparations of the new library's building with the most modern equipments came to end with seven stories and a total area of 16,000 square meters. At the time being, both the old and the new neighboring buildings' total area is approximately 21,000 square meters.

Nowadays, the library has communications with more than 400 cultural centers and libraries in the world.

The staff officials are about 160 now. By inaugurating the new library's building the staff officials will be doubled.

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The Aims:
Gathering Islamic sources and establishing this great center by the library's Founder aimed to give a good help to all researchers.

1. Thi Al-Hejaj is the 12th month of Islamic Calendar.

1. Sheban is the 8th month in the Islamic Calendar, the 19th day of this month is the birthday of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him).
and writers. The above approaches had been done for the following scores:

1- Creating a Great International Cultural -Islamic Center, which helps developing and justifying the giant scientific achievements of the Islamic thought within 14 centuries.

2- Spreading discussion and research cultures in the society, which is of an important necessity nowadays.

3- Acquainting all researchers of having valuable manuscripts in this great center and showing them the written Islamic culture in different sciences and arts. All these were hidden in the available and accessible sources, which can be discovered by writing and publishing various indexes everywhere.

4- Collecting the valuable Islamic manuscripts and preserving them in a great center to avoid smuggling them out of Islamic countries by international smugglers.

5- Preferring to congregate all old and original manuscripts -writers' handwritings- which are trustful, creditable and confident for researches and arguments.

6- Preparing and gathering images and microfilms of the Islamic scarce valuable manuscripts, which had been taken out of Iran and the rest of the Islamic countries in the past century or before, and have been located in other nations' libraries and museums in the world now. Of course congregating these valuable manuscripts can be of much help to the researchers and writers.

7- Delivering these great humane treasures perfectly to the subsequent generations to let them know more about their past generations' cultures and sciences. They will share in keeping knowledge by using the papers of their great ancestors and being creators of civilization like their forefathers, not only transporters.

8- Preserving the Islamic manuscript treasures from different events and mishaps, such as: (Burning, ignoring and indifference of the governments or trying demolishing them, tribal or religious crises along the time, floods and earthquakes and so forth) in addition to that mending them and taking photos, slides and microfilms to put an end for the destruction of this valuable and humane writings and papers.

Library's Units and Divisions
This library contains various units and sections, which are under the library's head's hands. Imam Marashi gave the responsibility of managing the library to his son and executor Hojjatol Islam Wal Moslimeen¹ Dr. Mahmood Marashi Najafi 35 years ago.

A. The Library's President Office:
This section consists of the president's private office, reception room, a special secretary's room, his assistance room and the manager of women section (his wife). The president has

¹ A religious rank or degree.
the highest position in delivering commands and decisions concerning the library in all its affairs. The following divisions come subsequently:

1- Presents' Affairs:
There are some residential and commercial buildings in Qom, Tehran and Isfahan presented to the library some years ago by some beneficent people.

2- Public Relations and International Affairs: which should fulfills the following duties:
This part manages and programs the invitations and receptions' timetables for Iranian and foreign guests, preparing the library's news, making up communications with international cultural centers, preparing and managing conferences, exhibitions, trips, scientific matches, looking up for visitors' ideas and opinions and also collecting monthly and annually statistics.

3- Ceremonies and Receptions:
This division has the responsibility of welcoming and receiving both Iranian and foreign guests, giving the necessary information about the library's different parts and divisions, presenting special gifts to guests, and so forth. The visitors of the library reaches to 2,000 in each season totally, and there are 200 high rank foreign visitors amongst them.

4- Secretariat:
This part is asked to carry out all internal and external correspondences duties.

5- Women Section:
This sector takes the responsibility of helping women researchers to access and gain to scientific sources and library's references.

6- Correspondence:
This part has the responsibility to send, transport or exchange books, which are chosen and granted by the president to be sent to some organizations or individuals.

B- Public Service Division:
This section has the responsibility of giving services to the public hall visitors and researchers. It consists of:

i. Ibn Sina's Hall: which is for public usage with 2,200 square meters area and also with 750 seats situated on benches for four or six people. The total daily hall visitors, in both morning and evening sequences, are about 2,000. The number of members, both men and women reaches to 40,000 members.

ii. Private Hall
For Hozza Religious Books: which is designed to be used by clergymen and religion students. In this hall there is no necessity to have a membership card.

iii. Khawajeh Nasser Toosi's Hall: which occupies 200 seats for holding national and international congresses.

iv. Sheik Mofid's Hall: which is a special hall for local conferences and seminars held by the library.
v. Books' Exhibition: which is designed to exhibit library's publications.

C. Special Service & Reference Section
(Research Center)

This unit has the following divisions:

i. Manuscript Store: Manuscripts' number on October 2001 reached to 32,000 volumes in more than 60,000 titles. 65 percents are in Arabic and the rest of them are in Persian. A few Turkish, Urdu, Abyssinian, Syriac and Latin volumes are available too.

In addition to the above volumes 500-800 other valuable manuscripts are added to the library every year, either gifted or bought.

It seems that the oldest and dateless manuscript in the store now is a part of Holy Koran in Kufic old script from the early beginning of the second H.G. century. There are also some samples from the 3rd and the 4th H.G. centuries. But the eldest dated manuscript is two parts of Holy Koran in Kufic script, which was written by the well-known calligraphist Ali Ibn Helal, Baghdad who is famed as Ibn Bawab, dated on 1002.

Till now 12,000 manuscripts from the store have been indexed. These indexes have been published in 30 volumes.

The work is going on to publish the other index volumes. There are about 60 volumes left, which will be issued subsequently.

ii. Photographic Sheet Store: which contains more than 4,000 volumes of valuable and priceless manuscripts in different libraries in the world.

iii. Microfilm And Microfiche Store: which contains about 12,200 priceless manuscripts.

iv. Written Documents Store: This division consists of more than 100,000 written documents, which belongs to five centuries before.

v. Permanent Exhibition of the Valuable Manuscripts Samples.

vi. The Founder's Written Books and Papers.

vii. The Store of the Oldest Published Books, with their publication dates; dated back to the last five centuries.

viii. The Store of Scarce Petrographs.

ix. The Center Store For Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Urdu Printed Matters, distributed in three floors with three millions book-capacity.

x. Newspapers And Periodical Magazines Store. This store contains more than 2,500 newspaper and magazine titles in Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Urdu.
xi. Open Reference Book Store.
 xii. The Store of Islamic Manuscripts Index About the World Libraries.
 xiii. The Store of Foreign Printed and Periodical Matters.
 xv. The Store of Maps and Geographical Charts.
 vi. The Store of Repetitive Printed Books.
 vii. The Great Hall.
 viii. Manuscripts and Documents’ Researchers Section.
 ix. Qom Researchers’ Section.
 x. The Genealogy Division.
 xi. The Indexing Part of Manuscripts.
 xii. The Division of Organizing and Publishing the Founder’s Written Matters.
 xiii. The Division of Investigating Islamic Manuscripts.

D- Administrative Section: including the financial, staff affairs and training departments.

E- Center of Public Service Affairs: consists of 18 different parts, such as: Computing Services, Telephone, Wireless Connections, Electronic Mail (e-mail), Publishing and Distributing, Congress and Exhibition Affairs, Guesthouses and Restaurants, Buying and Exchanging Books and References, Photos’ Part, Office of Civil Technical Advisors, Meera Shah (Periodical Magazine), Capital's Office, Translation Department, Managing and Programming Office, Library's Subdivisions, Technical Supports and Building Security.

F- Center of Researches and Services For Book Broadcasting.

G- Preserving Manuscripts and Documents’ Unit:

Including the following sections:

1- Book Preserving Section (Book’s Hospital), which has the responsibility of getting through with books’ pests.

2- The Section of Mending Manuscripts and Documents: This part is one of the most sensitive and important sections in the library.

3- Micrographic Center, which means minimized films (contains 50 million book titles in different languages). Recently, this section was supplied with optical cleaner, which is connected to computer and on it to the Internet.

4- The Modern Laboratory, which is supplied with the most novel equipments, such as: Electronics Microscope that is connected to computer and then to the Internet.

H- Store With Different Vision: which has a Compass, Coins, Keys and etc.

I- The Center of World Libraries’ Encyclopedia.

Publications:

1- Mirath Shahab, the periodical magazine: which concerns with manuscript and book’s recognizance and their relative matters in Persian language. This magazine is issued under the charge of the president Dr. Mahmood Marashi Najafi. Till now 22 issues have been published.

2- 165 books have been published in more than 405 volumes.

What Makes The Library Distinguished
(Library’s characterizations)

According to the scarce old Islamic manuscripts’ viewpoint, this is the first library in Iran and the third in the Islamic world.

The library has published the book "Molqaat Al-Ehqaq" written by Ayatollah Al-Ozza Marashi Najafi. The number of published volumes reached 36 till now. This book has been granted the "Book Prize" in Iran (amongst religious books section) in 1994.

Explanations:

Women can attend the library a couple of days each week, Friday and Saturday but the female scholars, who are passing their Postgraduate or PhD studies can come to the library and get use of it throughout the week.

The library’s doors are opened from 7 a.m. till 9:30 p.m. increasingly. The members are given annually membership cards freely by the secretariat. Library's total members' visitors are about 2,000 daily.
A Manuscript on Skin in Old Abyssinian Script (Al-Amhari)

A Manuscript on Skin From Psalms’ Prayers (Weighs 16 Kg)

The President presents a report about the library's new building in front of the Founder and Syyed Ahmad Khomeini.
Holy Koran on Skin in Moresque Script. From the 4th H.G. century.

Compass

Al-Sahaba’s Dictionary Written By Al-Baghawi

Sheikh of Al-Toos’s Handwriting on "Tahbeer Al-Tehyen" 455 H.G.

Holy Koran, 3rd H.G. Century