

Dr. Abouzar Ebrahimi Torkaman, the President of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization Speaks on Allameh Ayatollah Taskhiri, his personality, and his efforts in introducing the Islamic Revolution of Iran and in promoting unity and proximity among Muslims of the world

On Ayatollah Taskhiri's Characteristics

The late Ayatollah Taskhiri was a scholar, a jurist, and a thinker. He had a great passion for Arabic poetry and literature, right from the beginning of his youth, such that some of his poems have been published in the form of a book called *Divan-e She'r*. His mastery of the Arabic language and literature had strengthened his understanding of the Holy Quran. On the other hand, living among the Arabs had made him well acquainted with their culture, customs, and body language and as a result, he spoke in a way that was pleasant to his audience.

Secondly, the way he interacted with others in the course of conferences would make the other party realize that he disagreed with his views and not that person. Many a time when we disagree with someone, we speak in a way that the person thinks we have a problem with his personality and not with his words and speech. Allameh Taskhiri paid a lot of attention to this point, which is why he was very popular among the Sunnis.

He respected the character of the other party in dialogue and listened to them with full attention. There is a big difference between listening and hearing. Ayatollah Taskhiri paid full attention to this important issue and listened to the words of different people and responded to them in a soft tone. It is for this very reason that in his message of condolence on the demise of Ayatollah Taskhiri the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, has referred to him, as the eloquent voice of Islam and Shiism.

Owing to his moral character and ethics, Ayatollah Taskhiri never used harsh, annoying, or provocative words in his speeches and/or interactions and always tried to target the heart of his audience before their intellect. Interestingly, the people who read his books and/or papers would ask about him in the programs he did not attend. I remember I was the host of foreign guests at the Sheikh Mofid Congress in ۱۹۹۶ and was surprised that, right at the airport, all foreign guests would express their eagerness to meet Ayatollah Taskhiri.

Based on a hadith from the Holy Prophet (pbuh) which says “religion is nothing but love and affections for others if there is no love for others, Ayatollah Taskhiri engaged in discussions and dialogues from a human point of view, and love was institutionalized in his very being.

In spite of his adherence to the Ahl al-Bayt (as) and the Shiite school of thought, he believed in proximity among the various Islamic denominations. Ayatollah Taskhiri defended Islam and Shiism with his eloquent, articulate, and persuasive way of talking.

On Allameh Taskhiri's Activities on Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought in the International Arena

From among his effective activities mention may be made of his tireless efforts during his tenure as the Secretary-General of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought; attending the various related conference, and writing several books and papers on this subject.

He considered intellectual rigidity as a key factor in preventing Islamic unity and believed that some people in the Islamic world have a poor understanding of the text. Understanding of ISIS is sacred ignorance. ISIS is a clear example of sacred ignorance. He wanted to fight against this holy ignorance, which is not in line with the teachings of Islam.

This is because when ignorance is garbed in holiness and sacredness, it is very difficult to criticize and/or correct it. Allameh Taskhiri had put in a lot of effort - either in his writings or in his speeches and interactions with other scholars - to make the Muslim world realize that this type of mental rigidity, which brands others as disbelievers and atheists is in no way service to the religion of Islam.

On the Rights and Status of Women from the Viewpoint of Ayatollah Taskhiri

Allameh Taskhiri did not believe in gender superiority and rather paid attention to the merits of the people and that is the reason he appointed the late Dr. Ms. Touba Kermani as Iran's cultural counsellor to Greece. She was a learned and scholarly woman with a doctorate in philosophy. In fact, the late Ayatollah had a meritocratic view of women, and from his point of view, there was no difference between men and women when it came to work and social issues.

On the Ethical Virtues of Allameh Taskhiri

There is a verse in the Holy Quran which says: "Give glad tidings to those who, when an affliction visits them, say: Indeed, we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return." (Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse ١٥٦)

Ayatollah Taskhiri's non-attachment to worldly affairs was his praiseworthy feature. A sense of ownership creates many problems for human beings. But Ayatollah Taskhiri was both just and balanced. His other moral virtues included being committed to his promises, fairness, and encouragement of others.