Um al-Banin

(Peace Be Upon Her): The Model of Faith and Virtue

By Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi



أم البنين (عليها السلام) قدوة الإيمان والإستقامة

لآية الله العظمى السيد محمد تقي المدرّسي

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Biography of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi (Arabic: محمد تقي الحسيني المدرسي) born in 1945 is an Iraqi Shia *marja'* and political theorist.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi is the author of over 400 books on matters of theology, historiography, jurisprudence, philosophy, logic and social science.

The Anglican Centre in Rome has stated that *"Grand Ayatollah al-Modarresi is probably the second most senior Shia cleric after al-Sistani. His call for peace & human dignity is very significant."*

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was born into a distinguished Shia religious family in Karbala, Iraq. His father is Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Kadhim al-Modarresi. His mother is the daughter of grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mahdi al-Shirazi. He is from the descendants of the Prophet Mohammed (sawa).

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi began his religious education in the religious seminaries of Karbala, at the young age of 8. He studied under some of Karbala's most senior scholars such as Shaykh Mohammed al-Karbassi, Shaykh Jafar al-Rushti, Shaykh Yusuf al-Khurasani and his uncle, Sayyid Mohammed al-Shirazi.

Due to the rising pressures of the Bathists anti-Shia sentiment Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi emigrated to Kuwait in 1971. He settled there until 1979, after which he moved to Iran. With the

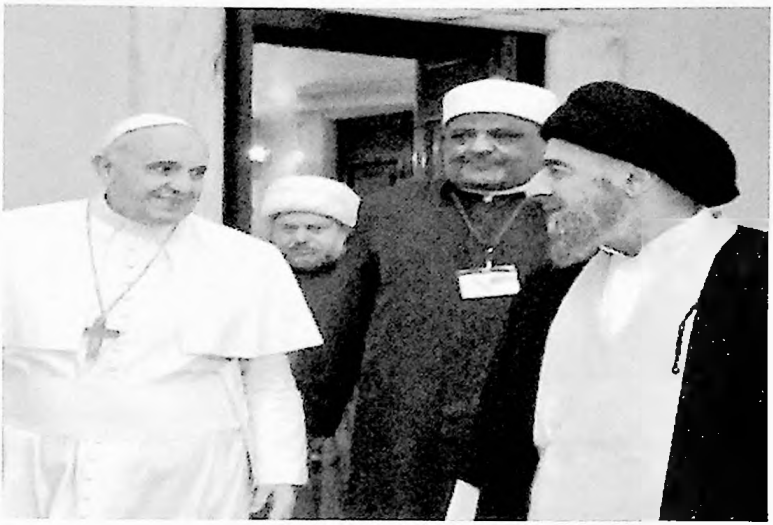
overthrow of Saddam Hussein by American-led forces in 2003, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi along with other Iran-based clerics returned to Iraq.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was the first Shia religious leader to issue a call to popular resistance against ISIS, after its swift capture of large swathes of land in Iraq in June 2014. In his statement, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi warned against the destruction of churches and temples belonging to all religions.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi made an official statement regarding the COVID-19 strain, saying that the people of Iraq should self-isolate, and utilize the month of Rajab, by performing the recommended prayers and supplications at home. He also stated that Muslim community needs to increase its faith in God, so that He may protect us from all evil. Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi also called for the Iraqi government to take up all measures to face this new viral strain, which threatens the lives of many today. He added, the Iraqi people are always willing to stand by its government and provide aid, as is seen in the Arbaeen pilgrimage.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modaressi traveled to Bahrain in 2002 on an official visit, at the invitation of the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs, Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa.

In December 2014, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was invited by the Pope to attend a summit of world religious leaders at the Vatican. This made him the first Grand Ayatollah to have met the Pope.



In his speech, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi asked world religious leaders to "engage in a symbiosis of civilizations and religions". He condemned terrorism, nuclear proliferation, modern day slavery and said:

"At its core, divine religion is one, but failure to understand religion has divided human beings and created barriers between us. We must exert extra effort to tear down those barriers and join religions under the umbrella of a common term. We have a calling to love one another, to protect the environment, to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction and to end slavery in all its forms."

In 2016 he went to Australia, where he met community leaders as well as the Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop. The two discussed Iraq, the war on terrorism, as well as how Muslims can be better integrated into the Australian community.



Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may His blessings be upon Mohammed and his Pure Household.

At this time, speaking of the virtuous women in our glorious history has become very necessary. As we are in grave need of female role models who are characterized by perseverance and resistance to fight the modern challenges that our women face. Um al-Banin ('a) is one of these remarkable virtuous women.

Unfortunately, little of her life's details were narrated to us. But despite the limited historical narration, we have been given plenty of highlights from her great personality. Therefore, the best way to display her personality was in the method of a story. A story whose details are difficult to obtain, so it was written in the light of historical narrations but through the imagination of the writer. Therefore, it is closer to describing the reality than the narration, and to Allah we ask for help.

Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi
28 Rabi al-Thani 1424 AH

She is Fatema

She is Fatema daughter of Huzam son of Khalid son of Rabi'a son of al-Wahid son of Ka'ab son of Amer son of Kilab son of Rabi'a son of Amer son of Sasa'ah son of Muawiyah son of Bakr son of Hawazen.

Her mother is Thumamah daughter of Suhail son of Amer son of Malik son of Jafar son of Kulab. History had praised her forefathers for bravery among the Arabs.

There were many records of their bravery and strength during the glorious conquests, and they were as Aqil Ibn Abi Talib ('a) described them, "No Arabs are more courageous and braver than her forefathers."

The Commander of the Faithful Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a) married her directly after the martyrdom of the Truthful Fatema al-Zahra ('a) according to some historians, or after marrying Umamah daughter of Zainab daughter of the Messenger of Allah (s) according to others.

The fruit of this marriage were four sons: al-Abbas, Abdullah, Jafar, and Uthman. They were all well-known for their bravery, and all four of them were martyred alongside Imam al-Hussain ('a) in Karbala on the Tenth of Muharram.

Um al-Banin lived long after the martyrdom of Imam Ali ('a) and did not marry anyone after him.

Ambition: The Quality of Greatness

Like any other young woman, she was waiting for the knight of her dreams. She aspired for that brave man who would ask her hand in marriage. But what did she look for in

him? Was she looking for status, wealth, nobility, or extreme beauty?

Perhaps, but Fatema Bint Huzam al-Kilabiyyah aspired above all for a greater, more lasting quality, the quality of faith and great morality.

So, in whom would this quality be manifested? Who will be the knight of her dreams?

That day, some of her relatives came by and said to her, "O' Fatema, you know that the Lady of the Women of the Universe Fatema al-Zahra ('a) was martyred?"

She said, "Yes."

They said, "And that Ali ('a), the Commander of the Faithful and the greatest man in Quraysh, rather the greatest man of all time[1], is looking for a pious wife for himself and to take care of the orphans of Fatema ('a)."

She said, "Yes."

They said, "He asked his brother Aqil, and he suggested to propose to our daughter."

Fatema said, "Me?"

They said, "Yes, you O' Fatema."

Moments of silence summarized the life of Fatema. She does not want to say "No" but it is difficult for her to say "Yes" not because she does not know Ali ('a) or does not like

[1] After the Messenger of Allah (s)

him, but because it is such a great responsibility. How can she be a wife of Imam Ali ('a)!

She gathered her strength and said, "Yes, I would be honored to live with the Commander of the Faithful Ali ('a), the brother of the Messenger of Allah (s) and his successor. Why would I not be? I would love to serve the children of the Messenger of Allah and the family of Fatema al-Zahra ('a)."

But she asked, "What does Imam Ali ('a) want from me? Does he want me to be a maid for his children, the children of the Messenger of Allah and Fatema al-Zahra, a role which I would be honored to serve?"

They said to her, "No, O' Fatema. Ali ('a) wants more from you."

She said, "What does the Commander of the Faithful want from me?"

They said, "When Imam Ali asked his brother Aqil, he asked for a woman born to the bravest of the Arabs. He wants from you brave children who have the courage, piety, and faith of Ali, and the bravery of Bani Kilab."

Once again, Fatema Bint Huzam al-Kilabiyyah thought for some time. The burden is much greater. What does Imam Ali ('a) want from these courageous children he wants her to bear?

Imam Ali ('a) wanted these brave warriors to be alongside his son Imam al-Hussain ('a) in his decisive battle in Karbala. Truly, there was a battle coming and a great goal behind this marriage.

The Result of Good Intentions

At that moment, Fatema al-Kilabiyyah saw all her aspirations being fulfilled. She will marry someone as great as Imam Ali ('a), she will serve the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (s) and her children, and she will raise heroes to be martyred for the sake of truth, in the way of Islam, and under the banner of Imam al-Hussain ('a). What greater goals can one have?!

There are no goals greater. When a woman's dreams are based on values and not lust and passion, she does not look for any more than that: A pious personality to be her husband, and a great purpose like giving birth to responsible children.

Have you not read the story of the wife of Imran? When she became pregnant, she said:

(رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا)

[My Lord! I dedicate what is in my womb entirely to Your service].[2]

And what was the result of that good intention? It was as Our Lord Almighty said:

(فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا)

[So, her Lord accepted her graciously and blessed her with a pleasant upbringing].[3]

She gave birth to the Truthful Mariam (Mary) mother of Isa (Jesus) the Spirit of Allah.

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[2] Surah Al Imran: 35

[3] Surah Al Imran: 37

The great goal of great women is to raise a generation that represents all her values and ambitions. Yes, women are a vessel. But when they are vessels of good, a fertile and generous land, the fruits that grow from this land will be the fruits of their hearts, the summaries of their lives, and the essence of their existence.

You may wonder, why do women even exist? They live for a purpose. What is this purpose? The purpose is to be represented in a pious progeny. Fatema al-Kilabiyyah surely accomplished this purpose.

You are the Mother of Four Sons

When Fatema al-Kilabiyyah entered the house of Imam Ali ('a) on the night of their wedding, she saw a very humble house. It was the house of the Most Ascetic of the Ascetics, the Most Pious of the Pious, and the Best of the Worshippers Ali ('a) who saw nothing but the Creator in his heart and thus saw no value in the worldly life.

Fatema al-Kilabiyyah knew that very well and had entered that house with complete awareness and will, but what she had not expected in that moment was the question of Imam Ali ('a) when he said: "What would you like O' Fatema?"

What gift can the Knight of the Nation, the Most Generous of Mankind, and the Best in Virtue give to his new wife?

What did Fatema say?

She said a few words which summarized her assurance of faith. Truly, Fatema had chosen her husband out of pure faith, and when a woman chooses her husband, she has chosen her life, future, and destiny. Thus, when she chooses

a pious man, her choice is based on her values, and it is her first step to the right path, then when she gives birth to children for the sake of serving the religion, she would have fulfilled her destiny in the best shape possible.

She said to the Commander of the Faithful: "Change my name."

The name "Fatema" is a beautiful name. Why would she want to change it? Does it not mean that she is protected from wrongdoings, or that she will give birth to children whom she will feed? Whatever the meaning may be, it is agreeably a very beautiful name that is known amongst the Arabs to be given to the best of their daughters.

Why does Fatema want to give up this name?

She said: "O' Commander of the Faithful, I worry that if my name remains as it is, whenever you call me, the orphans of Fatema al-Zahra ('a) remember their mother and return to their mourning and grief, and I have only come to serve the children of Fatema ('a) not to hurt them."

Imam Ali ('a) said to her: "You shall have that. You are now *Um al-Banin* (the Mother of Sons)," and surely she was the Mother of Four Sons.

On the night of her wedding, Fatema gave up her name, the name which was given to her by her mother, the name which was the symbol of her personality, for the sake of Allah. This shows how completely dissolved she was in the path of faith.

The Glad Tiding of the Sacrificing Son

A mother may sacrifice her children for the sake of faith in a moment of enthusiasm, like how Um Wahab sacrificed her son in the Battle of Karbala. But for a woman to get married, give birth, then feed and raise her children to become martyrs from the very first moment is indeed a great objective. This was what Fatema Um al-Banin did from the very first moments of her marriage and pregnancy, she vowed to devote her children to Allah. She knew that the reason she married Ali ('a) was to give birth to al-Abbas and his brothers who should sacrifice themselves for Imam al-Hussain ('a) in the Epic Battle of Karbala, and so that al-Abbas ('a) carries the banner of his brother in Karbala.

Indeed, even when she was pregnant, she prayed to Allah Almighty to have her children sacrificed before the Son of the Messenger of Allah (s)!

How great is this devotion? How valuable is this time of her life in the eyes of Allah Almighty?

Some narrations say that when Um al-Banin gave birth to al-Abbas ('a), she brought him close to his father Imam Ali ('a). The Imam took him and Um al-Banin looked closely to her husband. The face of the Commander of the Faithful Ali ('a) was filled with joy upon seeing this handsome child, but upon looking at his small hands, his tears fell.

The mother was shocked! Why is her husband, her Imam, her entire life crying? She asked: "Why are you crying O' Commander of the Faithful? Is there a defect in his hands?"

Imam Ali ('a) said to her: "No."

Um al-Banin asked: "Then why are you crying O' Abu al-Hassan?"

He said: "I remembered the Battle of Karbala, and the role of this child. How he will charge the riverside and carry the water. How the enemies will attack and ambush him from behind the palm trees, cutting his hands."

Beautiful Are Her Qualities

Um al-Banin ('a) played a vital role in the marital house. She served the children of the Messenger of Allah (s) and taught her children to serve them. So, al-Abbas and his brothers learned from their mother how to serve the children of the Messenger of Allah (s) like how al-Abbas, for example, would always stand before his brother and say: "My Master O' Aba Abdillah."

Al-Abbas learned how to quickly meet his brother's needs. Even when Imam al-Hussain ('a) felt thirsty, al-Abbas would quickly bring a cup of water to his brother. It is even said that he was given the name "the Water-Bringer" from a young age.

This was how al-Abbas and his brothers were raised. Their mother would look at them as living martyrs awaiting martyrdom. She would teach them the values of courage, bravery, sacrifice, and submission to Allah Almighty, and the decisive battle was in Karbala.

Um al-Banin gave farewell to her children and stayed in Medina awaiting the news. The heavy months passed, and the Battle of Karbala had been destined. The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) knew that a battle between truth and falsehood would occur, but not all of them knew its details. They knew that there would be martyrdom, captivity, and suffering which would

have to be endured, and they would have to submit to Allah in it totally. The day came, and as the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) returned from Karbala to Medina, the crier came to the grave of the Messenger (s) crying:

يا أهل يثرب لا مقام لكم بها
O' People of Yathrib (Medina), you no longer have status.
قتل الحسين فأدمعي مدرار
Hussain was killed, and my tears shall shed.
الجسم منه بكربلاء مضرج
His body is in Karbala covered with blood,
والرأس منه على القناة يدار
And his head is on the spear being circulated.

Um al-Banin was not unaware of the Battle, but the shock was too powerful for her gentle heart to take. It is not easy for a believer to hear of the martyrdom of Abu Abdullah al-Hussain ('a), the Grandson of the Messenger of Allah (s), and the Master of the Youth of Paradise. She came and stood before the crier (Bishr Ibn Hathlama) as he mourned the Master of Martyrs.

She said: "O' Bishr, tell me about my son Hussain!"

Bishr said to her: "O' Um al-Banin, may Allah increase your reward in the martyrdom of your son Awn."[4]

She said: "What about Hussain?"

Bishr said: "O' Um al-Banin, may Allah give you a great reward in the martyrdom of your son Jafar."

She said: "What about Hussain?"

[4] One of her sons is known also by the name of Awn

He continued to mourn her children one after the other and give her condolences, and she kept on insisting on knowing what happened to Abu Abdullah al-Hussain ('a), until Bishr said: "O' Um al-Banin, may Allah give you a great reward in the martyrdom of your son al-Abbas."

The calamity shocked the heart of Um al-Banin. She was shaken. In fact, it was narrated that she was carrying a child of Abu al-Fadhl al-Abbas on her shoulder who fell to the ground. But she kept on saying: "What about my son Hussain?"

Finally, when Bishr told her about the martyrdom of the Master of Martyrs ('a), she began weeping and crying. A poet[5] describes this scene saying:

أم البنين وما أسمى مزاياك

Um al-Banin, how beautiful are your qualities?

خلدتِ بالصبر والإيمان ذكراك

You have eternalized your remembrance with patience and faith.

أبناؤك الغر في يوم الطفوف قضوا

Your memorable sons passed on the Day of Karbala,

وضمخوا في ثراها بالدم الزاكي

And were covered on its sands with pure blood.

لما أتى بشر ينعاهم ويندبهم

But when Bishr came mourning them to you,

إليك لم تنفجر بالدمع عيناك

---

[5] Shaykh Ahmed al-Dujaili

Your eyes did not burst with tears.

وقلت قولتك العظمى التي خلدت

Rather you said your great saying whose

إلى يوم القيامة باق عطرها الزاكي

Beauty will be eternalized to the Day of Judgement:

أفدي بروحي وأبنائي الحسين إذا

"I sacrifice myself and children if

عاش الحسين قرير العين مولاك

My master Hussain lives well."

The Means to Allah

This calamity had a great effect on the heart of this noble woman. But she gathered her strength and asked: "O' Bishr, tell me about al-Abbas, how was he martyred?"

Um al-Banin knew that her heroic son would bravely fight thousands, so she wondered: How was he martyred? How was he killed?

So, when Bishr told her how her son Abu al-Fadhl al-Abbas ('a) was martyred and said: "They cut his right hand, then his left, then struck his head," Um al-Banin felt that her greater purpose has come to an end.

She had prayed to Allah to make her a pious soldier of Islam, so he gave her the duty of serving the children of Fatema al-Zahra ('a) and giving birth to children who would sacrifice themselves before Imam al-Hussain ('a), the Son of the Messenger of Allah (s), and there was nothing left for Um al-Banin in this mission except preserving the values of

Abu Abdullah al-Hussain ('a) and spreading his teachings and sacrifices.

So, she made for herself four visionary graves in the cemetery of al-Baqi where she would mourn her sons and say:

لا تدعوني ويك أم البنين

Do not call me Um al-Banin

تذكريني بليوث العرين

Reminding me of the Brave Lions.

كانت بنون لي أدعى بهم

I had sons whom I would be called by,

واليوم أصبحت ولا من بنين

But today I am left with no sons.

أربعة مثل نسور الربى

Four, like glorious eagles.

قد واصلوا الموت بقطع الوتين

Have sacrificed themselves in the face of death.

تنازع الخرصان أشلاءهم

The spears have slashed their bodies,

فكلهم أمسى صريعاً طعين

Leaving them slaughtered and severed.

يا ليت شعري أكما أخبروا

If only I know if it is true

بأن عباساً قطيع اليمين

That the hands of al-Abbas were severed?[6]

The people of Medina would gather around her and mourn Abu Abdullah al-Hussain and his companions, including the sons of Um al-Banin, and they would deliver their condolences to her. She kept on doing so until she returned to her Lord and passed away in the Luminous City of Medina. She was buried there, and her grave became a shrine for the believers who would visit her and ask her intercession before Allah Almighty.

Indeed, Um al-Banin became a symbol of heroism, a means of blessing, and a path to good.

So, if you have any difficult need, ask Allah Almighty through the intercession of Um al-Banin, as this noble lady is perfect "means" in the saying of Allah Almighty:

(وَٱبْتَغُوٓاْ إِلَيْهِ ٱلْوَسِيلَةَ)

[and seek the means (of nearness) to Him].[7]

You may ask: Why did Um al-Banin become a Gate to (answering) Needs?

She became a Gate to Needs because she dissolved into the religion and values and gave all that she had for the sake of Allah: her personality, children, and even her name!

Allah answered the needs of the writer of these lines[8] too when he asked Him through her intercession. We ask Allah Almighty to answer the needs of all the believers.

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[6] Ibsar al-Ain fi Ansar al-Hussain by Shaykh al-Samawi, pg72.

[7] Surah al-Maidah: 35

[8] The author, Sayyid al-Modarresi, is referring to himself here.

Peace be upon Um al-Banin the day she married Ali, the day she sacrificed her children, and the day she is raised back by Allah to be a witness of truth.

About Us



2nd Chance Books is a 501c3 non-profit organization that was founded in order to assist incarcerated Muslims by providing them with educational materials, a support system, and tools for rehabilitation. The organization is comprised of a team of dedicated, devoted individuals, including the founders of this organization, who came together to provide services for those in need and those seeking guidance. The partnered organizations 2nd Chance Books, SABA Prison Project, al-Kisa Prison Project, and IEC Houston. 2nd Chance is under the guidance of several scholars, Such as Moulana Nabi Raza Abidi, Shaykh Mateen Charbonneau and Shaykh Saed Ali Kulayni.

This program is independently funded by donations from the community. We want to stress the importance of helping fellow believers who are less fortunate than ourselves.

Dedication

This initiative is dedicated to our beloved 11th Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (ʿa), who spent the majority of his life in prison and under house arrest by the corrupt ruler of the time. He is the great grandson of our beloved Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) and father of our beloved 12th Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj).

Mission

Our mission is to deliver knowledge to those individuals who are less fortunate in life through the dissemination of various books. We strive to teach and inform those who are

looking for a second chance and desire to walk the straight path but are unable to access the necessary information passed down to us by the beloved Infallibles (peace be upon them all).

Facts & Statistics

The USA has the highest incarceration rate in the entire world. While Americans only represent 5% of the entire world's population, it comprises nearly 25% of the entire world's incarcerated population, with 2.3 million inmates. Most of these prisoners will fall victim to the cycle of the revolving door and become repeat offenders if they do not have the proper resources to educate themselves properly while serving their sentences.

2nd Chance seeks to provide the proper tools for change: free Islamic books on topics such as beliefs, ethics, morality, and family structure in Islam. The aim is for these books to be used as a tool for self-development and reform.

Some goals of this program are molding leaders, transforming prisoners' bad habits into good ones, achieving social reform, producing better citizens who will actively help their communities, and promoting awareness of the true teachings of Islam by teaching the morals and ethics of the Noble Prophet and his divine household.

For prisoners who are reading this we want you to know that we are honored to be at your service. Please write us at the address below.

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