



MAHDAVI, YAḤYĀ

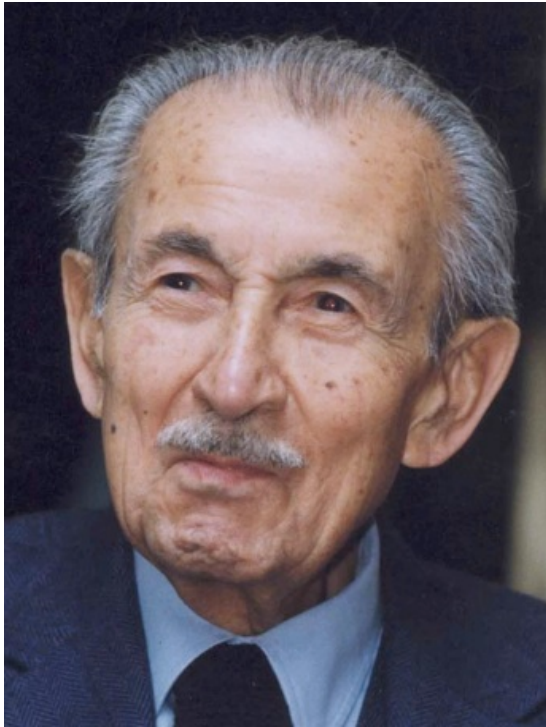


Figure 1. Photograph of Yaḥyā Maḥdavi

MAHDAVI, YAḤYĀ (b. Tehran, 1287/1908; d. Tehran, 1379/2000; [Figure 1](#)), professor of philosophy at the University of Tehran and a leading translator of Western philosophical works. Maḥdavi was the son of [Ḥājj Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Amin-al-Žarb](#) and the grandson of Ḥājj Moḥammad-Ḥasan Amin-al-Žarb, the famous 19th-century businessman and industrialist. Maḥdavi learnt



reading and writing from his home tutors and studied the Qur'ān and some classical Persian texts at home. His father was strict with the education of his children and did not allow his children to leave the house without an escort or a chaperone (*lala*). Yaḥyā was allowed by his father to attend the Dār al-Fonun, which he entered as a junior and finished the last two grades in a single year, graduating in 1928. The faculty at Dār al-Fonun included such renowned scholars as Badi'-al-Zamān [Foruzānfar](#), 'Abd-al-'Aẓim Qarib, 'Abbās [Eqbāl Āštiāni](#), Mas'ud Kayhān, and Ḥosayn [Gol-Golāb](#), who in future became colleagues of Mahdavi at the university.

Mahdavi continued his education at Tehran Teachers College (Dār al-mo'allemīn-e 'āli, later Daneš-sarā-ye 'āli) from 1928 until 1931. He was among the first students to graduate from this college with a bachelor's degree. In 1931, he received a scholarship from the state and went to France to continue his education there until 1938, when he wrote his doctoral thesis under the supervision of André Lanlande and Emile Bréhier. He returned to Persia in the same year and, after doing his military service, joined the Faculty of Literature at the University of Tehran as associate professor. He was later promoted to full professorship (1941), chaired the Department of Philosophy, and taught there until 1973, when he retired, but, as professor emeritus (*ostād-e momtāz*), he continued to teach a few courses in the doctoral program at the Department of Philosophy and also supervise theses. Throughout his years of association with the university, he donated the salary he received to the university press to be spent on publishing books on literary and philosophical topics. His contributions enabled the university to publish many books in these fields.

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For more details of Mahdavi's biography and contributions, see Ḥasan Sayyed 'Arab and 'Ali-Aṣḡar Moḥammad-kāni, eds., *Mahdavi-nāma: jašn-nāma-ye Ostād Doktor Yaḥyā Mahdavi*, Tehran, 1999; and *Eṭṭelā'āt*, no. 21995, 6 Šahrivar 1379 Š./27 August 2000.

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