



سرشناسه: مطهری، مرتضی، ۱۲۹۸ - ۱۳۵۸. Mutahhari, Murtaza.  
 عنوان قراردادی: انسان و سرنوشت . انگلیسی  
 عنوان و نام پدیدآور: The human being and his destiny/ by  
 Motahhari, Morteza; translated by Shir Ali Shuja.

وضعیت ویراست: 2nd ed.

مشخصات نشر: Qum: Al-Mustafa International Translation and  
 Publication Center, 2015= 1394.

مشخصات ظاهری: س ۲۱/۵/۱۴×۵؛ ۱۲۰ ص. س. م.  
 شابک: ۹۷۸-۹۶۴-۱۹۵-۳۸۷-۶

وضعیت فهرست نویسی: فیبا  
 یادداشت: انگلیسی.

یادداشت: چاپ سوم: ۱۳۹۵ (فیبا).

آوانویسی عنوان: هیومن بینگ اند هیز دستنی  
 موضوع: قضا و قدر

شناسه افزوده: شجاع، شیرعلی، مترجم

شناسه افزوده: Shuja, Shir Ali

رده بندی کنگره: ۱۳۹۴ ۸۰۴۹۵۲ الف م/ ۵/ ۲۱۹/ ۵ BP

رده بندی دیویی: ۲۹۷/۴۶۵

شماره کتابشناسی ملی: ۳۸۹۲۶۵۹

# The Human Being And His Destiny

**Compiled by**  
Murtaza Mutahhari

**Translated by**  
Shir Ali Shuja



**Al-Mustafa International  
Translation and Publication Center**

## The Human Being And His Destiny

Compiled by: Murtaza Mutahhari

Translated by: Shir Ali Shuja

Year of publication (Third Print): 1437 AH/ 1395 Sh/ 2016

Publisher: Al-Mustafa International Publication and  
Translation Center - Qum

Printing: Narenjestan - Tehran

Print-run: 300

ISBN: 978-964-195-387-6

### انسان و سرنوشت

ناشر: مرکز بین‌المللی ترجمه و نشر المصطفی ﷺ

تیراژ: ۳۰۰

چاپ: نارنجستان قیمت: ۹۰۰۰۰ ریال

مؤلف: شهید مرتضی مطهری

مترجم: شیرعلی شجاع

چاپ سوم: ۱۳۹۵ ش / ۱۴۳۷ ق

© Al-Mustafa International Publication and Translation Center

- IRAN, Qom; Muallim avenue western , (Hujjatia). Tel-Fax: +98 25-37839305 - 9
- IRAN, Qom; Boulevard Muhammad Ameen, Y-track Salariyah. Tel: +98 25-32133106, Fax: +98 25-32133146

pub.miu.ac.ir ✉ miup@pub.miu.ac.ir 🌐 [https://telegram.me/pub\\_almostafa](https://telegram.me/pub_almostafa)

We wish to acknowledge the assistance of all for finalization of this book

## **Publisher's Forward**

To begin and execute a research is like walking in the path of development and evolvement. When the seeds of the “questions” are planted, in the soil of the mind of the researcher, this phase initiates, and its end is culminated when the result and the outcome of knowledge and wisdom is gained.

Evidently, this end is a new chapter in itself, for growth, and announces beforehand this good news to humans. For the result of all those mental efforts will not only bring the blooming and flowering of talent and all kinds of Blessings to humans, but it also makes the mind of the researcher to ponder and shape new, more questions.

This will produce a great collection of growing plants and flowers for the seeking mind... Those “questions” are in fact, the seeds, which according to the necessities of Time and the strength of the researchers will grow and bloom by themselves. They will make Culture and Civilization to move forward.

In like manner, the increasing rate of transferring oneself from one place to another place and the decrease of the distances will make those seeds travel miles and miles, to faraway places, in order to install them inside the curious mind of other seekers. This will bring an amazing diversity and a novelty for another civilization...

## 6 The Human Being And His Destiny

It is true then, that the presence of knowledge and a good, capable management will help this project to develop itself and one has to admit indeed, that it has always played an important role...

Al-Mustafa International Publication and Translation Center, because of its global mission, and its special position among the Religious Schools and the colorful human diversity that it has developed inside itself, sees it as a moral duty to procure all the appropriate conditions for any research works, and takes its role in this matter, most seriously. To procure all kinds of necessary grounds, with an excellent management of all the existing possibilities and talents, and to care and protect all its researchers in religious fields; these are the most crucial responsibilities of the Department of Research in this International center.

We dearly hope that by being attentive to all these autonomous scientific movements, and by fortifying all the existing motives, we shall be able to witness the blooming of the Religious Culture in every part of this wide world!

We would also like to show our deepest gratitude and appreciation to the respected Islamic compiler, Late **Murtaza Mutahhari** and translator **Shir Ali Shuja** in order for you, dear readers, to read and enjoy it!

**Al-Mustafa International  
Publication and Translation Center**

## Index

Publisher's Introduction.....	9
Author's Introduction .....	13
The Glory And Decline Of Muslims .....	13
Fate And Destiny are Words that Cause Alarm.....	30
The Practical And Social Dimension .....	32
Verses Of The Qur'an.....	34
The Term Qadarite .....	38
Contradictions .....	39
Evil Effects Of The Doctrine Of Predestination.....	42
Political Exploits .....	43
Onslaught Of Christian Europe On Islam .....	45
Intellectual Inability .....	47
Materialistic Philosophy And Destiny .....	48
Immaculateness And Divine Unity .....	49
Meaning Of 'Qada' And' Qadar .....	51
Predestination.....	54
Freedom And Liberty.....	56
Inevitable And Non-Inevitable.....	58
Impossible Imagination .....	61
What Is Possible.....	62
Human Distinction .....	67
A Glance At The Early Days Of Islam.....	69
The Original Source .....	72
Invariability Of Nature .....	73
Unchangeable Systems.....	74

## **8 The Human Being And His Destiny**

Other Views .....	77
Spiritual Factors .....	81
When A Divine Decree Comes ... ..	84
The Difference Between the Two Schools Of Thought .....	88
Exclusive Logic Of The Holy Qur'an.....	92
High Level Of Understanding .....	98
Historical Background .....	103
Some Contradictory Traditions .....	107
Could Allah's Knowledge Be Wrong? .....	112



## **Publisher's Introduction**

It is over a century now that Muslim thinkers and well-wishers of the Muslim nation have been contemplating on how to revive the Islamic civilization. Appreciating the method of its realization, however, without deciphering the elements responsible for its the decline is impossible. In order to understand these elements, apart from historical studies, it is imperative to carry out a socio-psychological research as well. Some of those interested in the history of Islamic civilization, in order to understand the factors of its decline have, by studying the Islamic society, tried to understand the psychological factors of Muslims behavior, and in the course taken some ideological teachings into consideration. One such teaching which is regarded to be influential in the fall of the Islamic civilization is predestination and the negation of a free will for the human being. Principally, this discussion is philosophical and follows important theological results. However, without any speck of doubt, its amazing psychological and social effects are also very important.

Martyr Murtada Mutahhari, who was a philosopher of an in-depth understanding about religion, and a theologian of a great caliber, besides being completely well-versed with the philosophical and theological dimensions of this issue, also took into account its psychological as well as social dimensions, and would

give special importance to the subject of predestination and free will in his research about 'the factors responsible for the decline of the Muslims'. The book *Human Being and His Destiny* was written in order to expound the original Islamic outlook about human volition. The author tries to portray the radiant complexion of the Islamic worldview by expounding the differences between Fatalism and the belief in fate and destiny. While he propounds fundamental philosophical discussions on this issue, his main endeavor is to prove through the Holy Qur'an and Islamic narrations that the belief in fatalism (*jabr*) is a product of misinterpreting the Islamic teachings. These incorrect interpretations sometimes came about as a result of the inability to understand this teaching, and at times as a result of evil intentions. Martyr Mutahhari also makes a mention of the said incorrect interpretations, and shows how political motives of the misled Islamic rulers would promote the belief in fatalism, and as a result, what exaggerative repercussions would ensue. One of the evil motives behind misinterpreting the Qur'anic verses and narrations regarding predestination and free will has been the religious bigotry of Christian Orientalists, that Martyr Mutahhari out of his astuteness came do decipher and demonstrate.

In this book some current issues discussed in Contemporary studies of the Philosophy of Religion have also been propounded and analyzed. One such discussion is about God's Previous Knowledge and human volition. In order to be acquainted with Martyr Mutahhari's theological outlook about human volition, it is necessary for one to refer to his other works such as "*A Gloss on The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism*" as well as the invaluable work "*Divine Justice*". All together, the distinctive feature of the book "*Human Being and his Destin!*" is that it studies quite well the link between a theological belief and social behavior and historical changes, and shows how the exposition of original beliefs free from diversions can assist in the development and elevation of the Muslim nation, and terminate the days of the decline of Islamic civiliza-

tion and facilitate its revival. This valuable work has been translated at the behest of the International Center for Islamic Studies, by Mr. Muhammad Ashraf Shuja', to benefit the enthusiasts of knowledge and wisdom and in the hope of having taken a step in the path of the elevation of Islamic civilization.

**Research Department  
International Center for Islamic Studies  
Qum-Islamic Republic of Iran**



## **Author's Introduction**

### **The Glory And Decline Of Muslims**

The question of fate and destiny that this booklet tries explore and study is a philosophical problem, which if placed in its proper context, must be sought in philosophy. In this book, however, it has been removed from its philosophical context and placed alongside with some other issues.

Both scientific as well as philosophical issues fall under specific categories determined either from their common discussions or the purpose for which they are studied.

The reason for classifying the issues pertaining to philosophy, mathematics and physics into three separate classes is the special common link between the questions dealt with by each of these subjects or at least the existence of some common theoretical or practical objective which may be achieved by its study.

The question fate and destiny is categorized as being philosophical in nature. In this book, however, it has grouped with the questions that match neither their subject nor the objective of their study.

Here this question is being studied under the topic "*Causes of the Decline of Muslims*". This theme includes various subjects, events, and questions, some of which are historical, others psychological, moral, social, purely religious. A few of them are phi-

losophical also. Therefore many subjects in various classes and categories form part of this study.

The link which binds these subjects together is their positive or negative effects on the progress and decline of the Islamic society.

The aim of raising this question in this book is firstly to investigate whether belief in destiny as required by philosophical reasoning leads its adherents to idleness and lethargy and (consciously or unconsciously) drags them to their declination, or if expounded properly, would have no ill. Secondly, it is also to be seen how Islam has presented this question and what impact it has had on its followers. Because these are the only objectives, we have left out other unrelated dimensions of the question.

I do not remember clearly when I became familiar with the question of 'the causes responsible for the decline of Muslims', and from when exactly was I interested in research and investigation about this issue. However I can definitely say that it is more than twenty years now that it has attracted my attention and I have thought about it or read articles on the subject written by others.

Whenever I would come across any speech or writing relevant, and would be very anxious to know the opinion of the speaker or writer. One day, while delivering a lecture about one of the narrations<sup>1</sup> of Holy Prophet (s), I was lead to speak about this issue. Although what I had already learnt or heard about it was at times beneficial, I was not satisfied, and sensing that my audience had the same interest in the subject as I did, I decided to study it more thoroughly and deeply. It is obvious that if we intend to improve the situation of the Muslim world, we would need to discover the causes for its decline. For this purpose, it was necessary to study all the available

---

1. This refers to the well-known prophetic tradition that says: 'Islam surpasses and cannot be supassed!'; which is relied upon and quoted by both the sects: Shi'ites and Sunnis.

theories and opinions of Muslims and non-Muslims and also to propound in all clarity the related subjects which may have not yet been discussed as yet.

It was while embarking on this task that I understood the vast scope of this subject. I realized that it would not be possible for one person to adequately research all the relevant issues, for that would require many years of study.

Anyhow, I decided to do the preliminary work and then to study one or two dimensions of the subject in detail as a test case. If some other scholars apply themselves to studying the other dimensions, it is hoped that a useful study of an important social subject will be completed through a joint effort and mutual co-operation.

There is no doubt that Muslims have passed an extraordinary glorious period, not because of being the rulers of the world, as the late Adibu'l Mamalik Farahani says: "They took taxes from the kings and waves from sea" (for the world has seen many rulers and conquerors who have imposed their will on the people for some time but they were soon wiped out like the disappearance of foam from the surface of water), but due to the glory which came about as a result of bringing an intellectual awakening and establishing a brilliant culture and civilization that continued for many centuries. Still, it is counted as one of the dazzling chains of human civilization and history itself is proud of the great achievements of Muslims. For many centuries, Muslims dominated the entire world in various fields such as education, science, industry, philosophy, arts, morals and high-leveled social order. Others benefited greatly by borrowing from the Muslims. According to unbiased Western investigators, the European civilizations that have supremacy in the world today have benefited from the brilliant Islamic civilization.

Gustave Le Bon says:

"Some Europeans disdain to confess that a heathen nation (The Muslims) is responsible for their emergence from barbarism and ignorance, and for that reason they conceal this fact. But their unreason-

## 16 The Human Being And His Destiny

able attitude is extremely regrettable... It was the moral influence of the Muslim Arabs that humanized the European people who had toppled the Roman Empire. Their intellectual influence opened the door of sciences, arts and philosophy to those who were totally ignorant of such things. These Arabs were for 600 years our (the Europeans) teachers”<sup>1</sup>.

Will Durant in his *History of Medieval Civilization* says:

“The rise and decline of Islamic civilization is one of the major phenomena of history. For five centuries, from 700 to 1200, Islam led the world in power, order, and extent of government, in refinement of manners, in standards of living, in humane legislation and religious toleration, in literature, scholarship, science, medicine, and philosophy”.<sup>2</sup>

He further adds:

"The influence of Islam upon Christendom was varied and immense. From Islam Christian Europe received foods, drinks, drugs, medicaments, armor, heraldry, art motives and tastes, industrial and commercial articles and techniques, maritime codes and ways, and often the words for these things orange, lemon, sugar, syrup, sherbet ... Moslem science preserved and developed Greek mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and medicine, and transmitted this Greek heritage, considerably enriched, to Europe... Moslem philosophy preserved and corrupted Aristotle for Christian Europe. Avicenna and Averroes were lights from the East for the Schoolmen, who cited them as next to the Greeks in authority...

We shall see later by what avenues these influences came: through commerce and the Crusades; through a thousand translations from Arabic into Latin; through the visits of scholars like Gerbert, Michael Scot, and Adelard of Bath to Moslem Spain".<sup>3</sup>

He also says:

“Only at the peaks of history has a society produced, in an equal period, so many illustrious men --in government, education, literature, philology, geography, history, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, philosophy, and medicine--as Islam in the four centuries between Harun al-Rashid and Averroes. Part of this brilliant activity fed on Greek leavings;

---

1. Dr. Gustave Le Bon, *The World of Islamic Civilization* [An extract from the Persian translation called "Tarikhe Tamaddone Islam wa 'Arab", 4th ed., p. 751.

2. Will Durant, *The Age of Faith: A History of Medieval Civilization Christian, Islamic, and Judaic-From Constantine to Dante A.D. 325-1300*, p.341.

3. *Ibid*, p. 342.



but much of it, above all in statesmanship, poetry, and art, was original and invaluable".<sup>1</sup>

It is an undeniable fact that the illustrious phenomenon known as 'Islamic civilization' continued to exist for centuries before it died out. Today the Muslims, as compared to many other nations and to their own glorious past, are in a pitiable state of decline and backwardness.

Naturally a question arises as to why the Muslims, after making all these achievements in sciences, arts, crafts and management, have retrogressed. What is the cause of their decline and retrogression and who is responsible for their present pathetic state? Is it the fault of certain individuals or groups? Or was it because of particular events that the Muslims deviated from their original course? Is it natural that every nation makes progress during a limited period and then its decline begins naturally?

If it is admitted that some particular factor has been responsible for the decline of the Muslims, we must identify it. Some biased Europeans, because of their Christian prejudice or their imperialistic propensities, blame Islam itself for the backwardness of the Muslims. Are they right? Or is it that instead of Islam, the Muslims are to be blamed? Or does the fault lie with those non-Muslim nations which have in various ways come in contact with Muslims during the past fourteen centuries? The answer to these questions is not a simple affair. It requires a relatively lengthy discussion. Every probability is to be weighed and investigated scientifically.

Before entering into this debate, the following preliminary points need to be considered:

- The extent of the glory and magnificence of Islamic culture.
- The causes that led to the thriving of Islamic culture.
- Contribution of Islam to the progress of Muslims.
- The contribution of Islamic culture to the modern European culture.

---

1. *Ibid*, p. 343.

## 18 The Human Being And His Destiny

- The present state of the Muslim world as indicated by the signs of its backwardness.
- Though Islamic culture has disappeared, Islam is still a living, active and expanding movement, and rivals the most powerful new social and revolutionary forces.
- Muslims are becoming aware of their situation and are trying to stand on their own feet again.

After completing this preliminary discussion, which itself requires a separate treatise, it is necessary to undertake a deep philosophical discussion on '*the nature of time*' to ascertain whether it is true, as claimed by some philosophers of history, that what causes the progress and advancement of a nation, also causes its decline. In other words, every factor can only under certain conditions related to a particular period, push forward a society, and with a change in the circumstances and with the beginning of a new era of history, it loses its vitality and ceases to be a pushing force. Then it automatically becomes the cause of its decline.

Should this theory be true, every culture would disappear because of the same factors which contributed to its advancement. There is no need for the introduction of any foreign factor. Apparently the old factors are always reactionary and new factors progressive. New social factors give rise to a new civilization, which by its very nature is different from the old one.

If this rule were true, naturally the Islamic culture would not be an exception to it. Consequently, it would be futile to discuss the causes of the decline of the Muslims, for they cannot be discussed independently and in isolation from the factors which gave rise to Muslim culture.

According to this philosophy it is not necessary to hold any person, group or event responsible for the decline of the Muslims. Islamic culture disappeared because every culture has to disappear one day. Every living phenomenon has sooner or later to die its natural or unnatural death. Islamic culture too was born. It grew. It matured. It aged and then died. To wish for its

revival is like wishing for the revival of the dead, which is not natural and can only be accomplished by some miracle, which is beyond the power of ordinary man

After a preliminary study of the various aspects of the glory and decline of Muslims we come to an important philosophical and historical question which cannot be overlooked, about which there has already been much worthless talk, and many people have been influenced by immature views.

The philosophical study of this question would be incomplete unless the question of the consistency of Islam with the requirements of the time is also thoroughly investigated. This discussion will naturally consist of two parts: the first will be purely philosophical and the second, Islamic. Both the parts are worthy of being considered under one heading, 'Islam and the requirements of time'.

When I finished this study I came to the conclusion that the abovementioned principle cannot be accepted in the philosophy of history. I could not believe that the causes of the decline of the Muslims were necessarily the same as those of their progress. Now the time has come that we should study the causes of the stagnation, decline and backwardness of the Muslims and see what others have said in this connection.

Considering what others, both Muslims and non-Muslims, have said and keeping in view the questions and the events which are naturally to be considered in this connection, this study will have to be undertaken in three sections:

- I. Role of Islam
- II. Role of Muslims
- III. Role of Foreign factors

Each section consists of a number of subjects and questions. For example, some may hold the Islamic tenets to be responsible for the decline of the Muslims. Some others may think that the moral system of Islam produces degenerating effect. Still others may maintain that the social laws of Islam are the real cause of the decline of the Muslims.

Incidentally, this charge has actually been leveled against

certain doctrines, moral principles and social laws of Islam.

Similarly in the other two sections also there are many questions which are to be considered.

In this connection, the following Islamic tenets and doctrines have to be especially considered:

- I. Belief in fate and destiny
- II. Belief in the hereafter and the disparagement of this worldly life
- III. Intercession (*shafa'a*)
- IV. Dissimulation (*taqjyya*)
- V. Expectation of deliverance (the advent of Mahdi ('a) - the 12th Imam)

Out of these five doctrines the first three are common between the Shiites and the Sunnis but the last three are specific to the Shiites.

Sometimes it is said that the real cause of the decline of Muslims is their belief in fate and destiny. And sometimes it is said that the importance which Islam attaches to the next world and its everlasting life has diverted the attention of the Muslims from the problems of day-to-day life. Again some people say that the belief in intercession, which has existed during all periods of Islamic history and which has been upheld by all Muslims except a few, has made the Muslims indifferent to the sins. The only deterrent against the sins is the fear of their evil consequences. As the Muslims hope for intercession, they feel no need to abstain from any vice or crime.

The two doctrines specific to the Shi'ites i.e. dissimulation and the expectation of deliverance are also criticized in this connection. It is said that the doctrine of dissimulation in the first place means hypocrisy and double-facedness, and in the second it has rendered the Shi'ites timid, weak and unable to face the facts of life boldly.

In connection with the expectation of deliverance it is said that this doctrine has deprived the Shi'ites of every initiative to improve their condition. While all other nations of the world are

making efforts to improve their lot, the Shiites are waiting for the appearance of a savior.

Out of the Islamic moral principles, austerity, contentment, patience, submission to the will of Allah and trust in Him have been charged with having a hand in the decadence of the Muslims.

Out of the administrative rules of Islam which fall in this category, the most important is the question of government. According to some critics, Islam has failed to clearly determine the duties of the Muslims in this respect.

The penal laws of Islam have since long been ignored by the Muslims, and the Muslim countries have replaced them with the alien laws, with unfortunate consequences. Nevertheless the penal laws of Islam are still being criticized.

Two provisions of the Islamic civil laws have been especially criticized during the modern times. One of them is the question of the rights of women and the other that of the economic laws of Islam in respect of property and inheritance.

Many people feel upset by the restrictions imposed by Islam on the relations between the Muslims and the non-Muslims, such as the rules in respect of marriage between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, meat of the animal slaughtered by a non-Muslim and the impurity of the infidels as described in Islamic jurisprudence. These questions are regarded as the factors contributing to the backwardness of the Muslims.

These are the subjects in the section of Islam which need investigation and thorough study.

Fortunately favorable conditions for such an investigation now exist and it is possible to clarify these questions and remove any doubts about them that lurk in the minds of the young and the educated classes.

The next section is that of the role of Muslims. In this section our attention is concentrated on the Muslims instead of Islam. In other words, we ascertain if it is true, that it is the Muslims themselves who are responsible for their decadence by deviating from the teachings of Islam.

In this section also, we face many questions. First of all we have to determine what are the points of deviation and to find out what teachings of Islam have been abandoned by the Muslims and which practices foreign to Islam have been adopted by them. Secondly, we have to see whether the Muslims generally are responsible for their decadence or only some sections of amongst them.

It is known that Islam first appeared among the Arabs and thereafter spread to other nations such as the Iranians, the Indians, the Copts, the Berbers etc. All these people had their own national, racial and historic characteristics. It is to be seen whether these people or some of them influenced Islam through their characteristics and diverted it from its original course in such a way that if it had gone to some other nations, for example the Europeans, the destiny of Islam and the Muslims would have been different today. Or is it that the Muslim masses had no role in this respect and whatever damage has been done to Islam and the Muslims, was wrought by the two influential classes, namely, the rulers and the religious leaders.

In the section of the role of foreign factors, there are many events which seek attention. From the very beginning Islam has always faced the hostility of its internal and external enemies. The Jews, the Christians, the Zoroastrians, the Manicheans and the heretics among the Muslims themselves, were not idle. They stabbed Islam in the back whenever they got an opportunity. Many of them played an active role in distorting the Islamic facts by fabricating ahadith (traditions) or by creating new sects and sowing the seeds of dissention. If they could do nothing else, they fanned the differences among the Muslims.

In Islamic history we come across many political or religious movements started by the non-Muslims with a view to weakening or obliterating Islam.

Occasionally the Muslim world was also subjected to large-scale invasions. The crusades and the Mongol invasions are the outstanding examples.

Western imperialism did even more harm during the past few centuries. It sucked the blood of the Muslims and sapped their energy under the pressure of its oppressive policies.

Imam Khomeini, the leader of the oppressed nations of the world said:

“The Muslims of the world should make a united effort to regain the lost glory of Islam. It should be clearly remembered by one and all that those who spur up disunity among the ranks of the Muslims are neither Sunnis nor Shiites; they are lackeys of the imperialists whose only aim is to destroy Islam”.

In view of what has been stated above, the subjects which should be considered are the following:

1. Spectacular progress of the Muslims and their decline. (This subject is preliminary to the rest of the study)
2. Islam and the Requirements of Time. (This subject has two parts: the first is related to the philosophy of history and the second deals with the application of the Islamic rules in the changing circumstances. This study also has a preliminary aspect)
3. Fate and destiny
4. Belief in the hereafter and its effect on the progress and decline
5. Intercession
6. Dissimulation
7. Expectation of deliverance
8. Moral system of Islam
9. Islamic view about the government
10. Islamic economy
11. Penal laws of Islam
12. Rights of women in Islam
13. International law of Islam
14. Points of deviation
15. Forgery and fabrication of narrations
16. Shiite-Sunni differences and their contribution to the decline of the Muslims
17. Ash'arism and Mu'tazilism

18. Stagnation and Ijtihad
19. Philosophy and mysticism ('irfan)
20. Rulers of the Muslim world
21. Leadership of the Divine scholars (' ulami)
22. Subversive activities of the minorities in the Muslim world
23. Crusades
24. Fall of Muslim Spain
25. Mongol invasions
26. Imperialism

These are the subjects which, in my view, should be included in this study. I do not claim the list to be complete nor to have been arranged in an ideal order. There are possibly some other subjects which should have been included in this list but have been missed by me. I know that I have neither capacity nor time to deal with all these subjects alone, but in some of them, including nos. 1 and 2, I have prepared notes and hope to be able to publish them as early as possible.

I shall be highly obliged if some other writers and eminent scholars could choose a subject of their liking and carry out necessary investigations.

Some twenty years back when I first noticed that the Europeans regard the belief in fate and destiny as a cause, or even the main cause, of the decadence of the Muslims, at the time I was still a student at the Islamic Educational Centre at Qum.

I was reading the second volume of the "Life of Muhammad" by Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal. The final portion of the book consisted of two articles:

1. Islamic Culture as explained by the Quran
2. Orientalists and Islamic Culture.

In the course of the second article he had reproduced what the well-known American writer, Washington Irving, has said in his book about the Holy Prophet (s). Haykal, towards the end of his book after explaining the Islamic tenets about faith in Allah, the Angels, the Scriptures, the Prophets and the Day of Resurrection, quotes Washington Irving thus:



"The sixth and last article of the Islam faith is PREDESTINATION, and on this Mahomet evidently reposed his chief dependence for the success of his military enterprises. He inculcated that every event had been predetermined by God, and written down in the eternal tablet previous to the creation of the world. That the destiny of every individual, and the hour of his death, were irrevocably fixed, and could neither be varied nor evaded by any effort of human sagacity or foresight. Under this persuasion, the Moslems engaged in battle without risk; and, as death in battle was equivalent to martyrdom, and entitled them to an immediate admission into paradise, they had in either alternative, death or victory, a certainty of gain.

This doctrine, according to which men by their own free will can neither avoid sin nor avert punishment, is considered by many Musulmen as derogatory to the justice and clemency of God; and several sects have sprung up, who endeavor to soften and explain away this perplexing dogma; but the number of these doubters is small, and they are not considered orthodox.

What doctrine could have been devised more calculated to hurry forward, in a wild career of conquest, a set of ignorant and predatory soldiers than this assurance of booty if they survived, and paradise if they fell? It rendered almost irresistible the Moslem arms; but it likewise contained the poison that was to destroy their dominion. From the moment the successors of the prophet ceased to be aggressors and conquerors, and sheathed the sword definitively, the doctrine of predestination began its baneful work. Enervated by peace, and the sensuality permitted by the Koran -- which so distinctly separates its doctrines from the pure and self-denying religion of the Messiah -the Moslem regarded every reverse as preordained by Allah, and inevitable; to be borne stoically, since human exertion and foresight were vain. "Help thyself and God will help thee," was a precept never in force with the followers of Mahomet, and its reverse has been their fate. The crescent has waned before the cross, and exists in Europe, where it was once so mighty, only by the suffrage, or rather the jealousy, of the great Christian powers, probably ere long to furnish another illustration, that "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword".<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Washington Irving, *Mahomet and his Successors*, pp. pp.214-215

Dr. Haykal in reply to this American has given a detailed explanation according to his own thinking and taste. His explanation, though it contains many good points, is not methodical, and hence it is controversial and can be refuted.

In this book we propose to disprove the baseless statement of Washington Irving and other Europeans and show that the doctrine of fate and destiny is miles apart from the fatalist theory of predestination. We will show that the same soldiers of early Islam whom Mr. Washington Irving arrogantly describes as uninformed and self-conceited, were fully aware of the difference which he is unable to comprehend.

Secondly, the Quran itself has supported human liberty in a number of its verses. Those who advocated the doctrine of free will and described the theory of predestination as opposed to the justice and mercy of Allah (viz. The Shi'ites and the Mutazilites), contrary to the assertion of the Orientalists, did not go against the teachings of the Qur'an, nor did they modify what the Qur'an had said. Actually they derived their view from the Qur'an itself.

Thirdly, this great writer who, according to Haykal, is a bi-ased Christian who calls Christianity a religion of purity and self-negation because unlike Islam it has given no heed to the problems of life, refers to the eternal Divine knowledge sarcastically.

Is it possible that a person believing in God may deny His eternal knowledge of everything? Is it a fault of the Qur'an that it describes Allah as All-Knowing?

Fourthly, he says that the followers of Muhammad did not give importance to the rule that 'God helps those who help themselves'.

This writer did not take the trouble of reading a translation of the Holy Quran even once, otherwise he would not have made such a frivolous assertion. The Qur'an expressly says:

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يَرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَاهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا \* وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا \* كَلَّا نُنَادِي هُوَآءِ وَهُوَآءِ مِنْ عَطَآءِ رَبِّكَ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَآءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا﴾

Whoever desires this present life, We hasten to him therein what We please for whomsoever We desire, then We assign to him the hell; he shall enter it despised, driven away. And whoever desires the hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive and he is a believer; (as for) these, their striving shall surely be accepted. All do We aid-- these as well as those-out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined.<sup>1</sup>

The followers of Muhammad attain an even higher stage of self-reliance, when they believe in the teaching of the Qur'an saying:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَنصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ﴾

“O you who believe If you help (the cause of) Allah, He will help you and make you firm your feet”.<sup>2</sup>

The Quran did not say: "If you help yourselves..." because that expression would have reeked of cupidity and personal profit. Instead it has used the expression: "If you help Allah", which has a general and human aspect and implies service to humanity.

As for the ascendancy of the Cross over the Crescent, which is regarded by Washington Irving as final and everlasting, we will discuss this point later at a suitable place in this book.

These views are not peculiar to Mr. Washington Irving. Almost all other European writers, including those who appear to be unbiased to a certain extent, have expressed similar views. They all agree that Islam is a fatalist creed. The only difference is that some of them do not regard this as a factor responsible for the decadence of the Muslims, whereas some others maintain that it is. Some European authors have even declared it to be the main cause of the decline of the Muslims.

Will Durant in his "*History of Medieval Civilization*" after referring to the Qur'anic verses regarding the omnipotence and knowledge of Allah says:

"It [Fatalism] gave the Moslem a dignified resignation against the hardships and necessities of life; but it conspired with other factors to

1. Holy *Qur'an*, chapter al-Isra'(17), v18-20.

2. Holy *Qur'an*, chapter Muhammad (47), v7.

produce, in later centuries, a pessimistic inertia in Arab life and thought.." <sup>1</sup>

In contrast, Gustave Le Bon maintains that the belief in predestination was not a cause of the decline of the Muslims, and that the causes of their decline should be looked for elsewhere.

At first I intended to mention all the points connected with the progress and the decline of the Muslims in the introduction of this book. But later I gave up the idea, for if the necessary details of all the points were elaborated, the introduction would have become lengthier than the main book and if brevity was observed, that would not have served the purpose. Hence I preferred to be contented with what has been mentioned as an illustration. The details may be given in a separate treatise.

7 Will Durant, *The Age of Faith: A History of Medieval Civilization Christian, Islamic, and Judaic-From Constantine to Dante A.D. 325-1300*, p.178.

In this book, not all the points and the questions related to fate and destiny have been mentioned, because the aim is only to study whether this doctrine has actually been a cause of the decline of the Muslims or not. Hence certain aspects of this question which appeared to be irrelevant for our present purpose, have been omitted.

The question of fate has a long history among the Muslims. The commentators of the Quran, the scholastic theologians, the philosophers, the mystics, and even the poets and literary figures have all discussed this question. An account of the views expressed by them requires a separate book. Besides, this question is covered by a large number of Quranic verses and ahadith (traditions) which are a model of the depth of Islamic knowledge. These very verses and ahadith have guided the Muslim philosophers and have enriched Islamic philosophy to such an extent that pre-Islamic Greek philosophy paled in comparison to it.

Furthermore, there are some other connected questions in

---

1. Will Durant, *The Age of Faith: A History of Medieval Civilization Christian, Islamic, and Judaic-From Constantine to Dante A.D. 325-1300*, p.178.

Islamic teachings that are not easy to explain by means of logical reasoning. One such point is Laylat al-Qadr (The Night of Destiny) which has been expressly mentioned in the Holy Quran, and about which there is no difference of opinion between the Shi'ites and the Sunnis. Another point is that of bada' (Divine exposition), which is an indisputable Shi'ites doctrine based on Qur'anic evidence.

Predestination, free will and human liberty are the questions which, if considered from various psychological, moral, philosophical and social angles, will require too lengthy a discussion.

It is hoped this book will prove useful and interesting to the keen reader, and it would also remove his doubts with regard to the subject discussed, and would enlighten him to an appreciable degree.

**Tehran 23.1.1345 [AB solar]  
20th Dhul Hijja 1358 [AB lunar]  
Muratada Mutahhari**