

Introduction

*'At last a wolf's whelp will be a wolf
Although he may grow up with a man'*

This couplet is a well-known Iranian proverb whose first creator was the wise famous Iranian poet, Muslih Al Din Saadi Shirazi, who lived in the seventh lunar century–Hijri Ghamari– 13th century. It was used in the content of a story which was about a group of bandits who were captured after hard efforts of the King's soldiers and the King ordered their death. Among them was a very young man towards whom the King's vizier felt pitiful and asked the King to forgive him because of his juvenility and requested to be granted his care in order to train him and familiarize him morals and raise him with worthy behaviour.

At first, the King did not agree however due to the persistence of the Vizier, the king finally surrendered to his request and forgave that young person's sin and left his training and reformation into the Viziers hand.

The Vizier endeavoured to educate the Young person for a while however eventually as Saadi says: 'After two years had elapsed a band of robbers in the locality joined him, tied the knot of friendship and, when the opportunity presented itself, he killed the vizier with his son, took away untold wealth and succeeded to the position of his own father in the robber-cave where he established himself.'¹

This story puts the theory of hereditary determinism forward based upon which the personage and behaviour of man is recognised through the restrictive deterministic factor and as a result education is ineffective before the heredity factor, and has no influential role in shaping the personage and behaviour of man.

According to the theory of hereditary determinism, man has no freedom of will and decision against the hereditary factor since what shapes and directs the will of man is the very hereditary factor which nurtures certain motivations in man in a deterministic and infrangible way. These motivations are shaped alongside the hereditary factors and will be the primitive and deterministic causes of creation of man's will and voluntary actions.

If this theory is accepted, the routes to training man will close and there will be no other choice but for all

men to fully surrender to whatever hereditary factor received from generations before them. This is because any effort to avoid the influence of the hereditary deterministic factor, according to the saying of Saadi, would be a useless and futile effort.

Consequently, in accordance to the example presented in the former tale, man's characteristics are preconfigured, which entails invariability of man's inherited model of personality and thus resulting in the fruitlessness of training and education.

There is another theory confronting this theory which considers the will of man independent of the hereditary factor and believes that although the hereditary factor can influence the will of man, the choice of getting influenced by the hereditary factor or any other external factor is the man's, and using his free will power, it is him who can choose his will and voluntary act, and as a result, shape his personage and destiny.

This other theory has been stated and emphasized in various ways in the Holy Quran among which are the verses that describe Allah (S.W.T) using the description:

'He brings out the living from the dead, and He brings out the dead from the living' (30: 19)

Here the narrations obtained from the pure Imams interpret the word 'Hayy' (the living) to mean the faithful and 'Mayet' (the dead) to mean the infidel [2](#)

This is the same in Islamic religious sources, in the story of 'Buddha' where his father is introduced as a tyrant, anti-religion person who put his utmost effort on killing pious and religious people. [3](#)

Explaining the Islamic view regarding man's freedom factors like environment, hereditary and others Martyr Allamah Mutahhari says:

'Whilst man cannot entirely cut off his relations to hereditary, natural environment, social environment, history and time he can rebel against these barriers. Man by his power of wisdom and knowledge on one hand and his faith and free will on the other hand, can change the received influences of these factors modifying them according to his desires and wishes. He could own and control his life and his destiny'[4](#)

Therefore the theory of hereditary determinism of moral and behavioural characters has definitely been rejected in the religious and philosophical resources originated from Islamic religious sources.

On the other hand, confronting the deterministic hereditary factor, some of the ancient and modern social philosophies believe in the theory of 'the determinism of social environment' as the main factor in shaping the personage and will and behaviour of man and have strongly defended it. Based on this way of thinking, the will of man which is the foundation of his behaviour and personage, is restricted to the 'social environment' deterministic factor.

According to Martyr Allamah Mutahhari:

‘One of the fundamental problems discussed by philosophers, particularly in the last century, is the problem of determinism and freedom of individual as against society, or in other words, determinism and freedom of the individual spirit vis-a-vis the social spirit.’

After the short explanation of four theories regarding the nature of society, he then concluded:

‘If we accept the idea of the absolute essentiality and primariness of the society, there will be no place left for the idea of the freedom and choice of the individual.

Emile Durkheim, the famous French sociologist, emphasizes the importance of society to the extent of saying that social matters (in fact all the human matters, unlike the biological and animal urges and needs like eating and sleeping) are the products of society, not the products of individual thought and will, and have three characteristics: they are external, compulsive, and general.’⁵

Among the most famous social determinism theories is the historical materialism theory of Karl Marx who considers the thought and will of man to be the deterministic product of social production relations and the social production relations to be a deterministic consequence of production factor. Based upon historical materialism, the ‘free will of man’ is a meaningless term since the will of all men is the deterministic result of a form of production relation that is created through production factors.

Based upon the determined dialectical process and as a result of the inner contradiction of production relations, the new production factors will break apart the old production relations and replace them with modern social production relations. The thoughts, reflections, the feelings and affections of man have been derived from the new production relations.

Since the dialectical progress of production tools is an always active and definitely unavoidable law, a new contradiction will be emerged between the new production tools and the old production relations.

The social reflection of this contradiction will be emerged in the contradiction between the old social class who supports the old production tools and relations with the new social class who support the modern production tools and relations. This social contradiction is followed by struggle and war between the two old and new classes which will end in a modern social revolution in which the new social class who supports the modern production tools and relations is the always winning frontier of this social struggle:

‘When the dialectical method is applied to the study of economic problems, economic phenomena are not viewed separately from each other, by bits and pieces, but in their inner connection as an integrated totality, structured around, and by, a basic predominant mode of production. This totality is analysed in all its aspects and manifestations, as determined by certain given laws of motion, which relate also to its origins and its inevitable disappearance.

These laws of motion of the given production are discovered to be nothing but the unfolding of the inner

contradiction of that structure, which define its very nature. The given economic structure is seen to be characterized at one and the same time by the unity of these contradictions and by their struggle, both of which determine the constant changes which it undergoes. The (quantitative) changes which constantly occur in the given mode of production, through adaptation, integration of reforms and self-defence (evolution), are distinguished from those (qualitative) changes which, by sudden leaps, produce a different structure, a new mode of production (revolution).'⁶

According to the text above the determined production motion laws are the basic foundation of economic relations and structure, and according to Marx's thesis of 'materialist conception of history' the economic relations and its relevant structure are the basic source of social structure containing all social phenomena such as thought, religion, art, politics, ethics, etc.

Bertrand Russell says:

For Marx, the driving force is really man's relation to matter, of which the most important part is his mode of production. In this way Marx's materialism, in practice becomes economics.

The politics, religion, philosophy, and art of any epoch in human history are according to Marx, an outcome of its methods of production, and, to a lesser extent, of distribution. ⁷

Plekhanov says:

'The social environment characteristics are formed by the level of production power in every age which means that when the levels of production powers are fixed, they subordinate all social environment characteristics, its relative psychology and mutual relations between environment on one hand, and ideas, and behaviours on the other hand.'⁸

As a result of the materialist conception of history, individual characteristics are nothing but a reflection of the social structure which derived from the determined laws of dialectical production movement.

Consequently, every agent's action is not a result of an independent free will created by the agent himself, and separated from social structure. Rather it is a determined effect, resulted from social production relations, by the predominant dialectical production motion laws.

The theory of Hegel about the absolute spirit dominating the history and the world, must also be counted among the social deterministic theories. In Hegel's view:

'God is managing the world, the plan and form upon which He manages the world is the history.'⁹

According to Hegel's explanation of the world, the history is nothing but the provided chain of occurrences determined by the Providence of God which presides over the events of the world. The essence of the world and history is the absolute spirit of god, which exists and guides everything including human actions through the determined law directed to the determinate goal.

States, societies and individuals are a part of the provided connected chain of history, then its actions

and behaviours are not spontaneous or accidental, but they are predominated by the Providence of God under determined law.

Martyr Allamah Mutahhari insisted that the two theories of Hegel and Marx with respect to philosophical interpretation of history lead to the same result of historical determinism which absolutely negates the human free will, he says:

‘There are some who, on the basis of the principle of causation and the principle of universality, negate freedom and choice. They maintain that whatever is accepted in the name of freedom is not actually freedom. Contrarily, there are others who approve the principle of freedom and negate the view that history follows certain laws.

Many sociologists accept the incompatibility of causality and freedom, and, therefore, they accept causality and negate freedom.

Hegel, and Marx following him, accepts historical determinism. According to Hegel and Marx, freedom is nothing but consciousness of historical necessity. In the book Marx and Marxism, the following passage of Engels is quoted from his work Anti-Duhring:

Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity. To him freedom is the appreciation of necessity. Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood. Freedom does not consist in the dream of independence from natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends. This holds good in relation to the laws of external nature and those which govern the bodily and mental existence of man themselves. (Andre Peter, Marx and Marxism, Persian translation by Shuja al-Din Diya’iyan, p.249)’ [10](#)

Also in Psychology, there are various theories that support the deterministic factors and psychological reasons. One of the most famous determinist theories in the field of Psychology is the ‘sexual theory’ of Freud.

Freud believed that the will and personage of man originates from thoughts and affections which are the result of sexual deprivations that originate from sexual restrictions. The Oedipus complex will cause the advent of sexual desires following which the feelings and affections and thought of man will strive and endeavor to compensate for the sexual deprivation and will shape the structure of personage of man. By the formation of the psychological personality of man, his requests and desire will orientate parallel to his psychological personality and will shape the will and voluntary actions of man.

Edgar Pesch says:

It appears that it is necessary to sketch the general lines in the Oedipus complex, the complex which is not only the foundation of the child’s sexual desires but is also the creator of the social and sexual life of mature people. [11](#)

Freud states that the scientific inquiries show that the beginning of religion, the spiritual values, social customs and Art will all join one another in the 'Oedipus complex' point:

'At the conclusion, then, of this exceedingly condensed inquiry, I should like to insist that its outcome shows that the beginnings of religions, morals, society and art in the Oedipus complex.'¹²

Moreover, the freedom of the will of man constitutes the main base of laws. The long disputes regarding the basis of law, the meaning and the source of natural law, common Law, civil law specially the law of contracts, the criminal law, and other forms and fields of law all are rooted in the principle of the freedom of the will of man. The accountability and responsibility of man towards his words and actions whether in the civil laws or criminal laws all depend on the scale of freedom of man in decision making and the scale of involvement of the free will of man in shaping his words, actions, and personality.

'Modern theorists following Machiavelli suggested that natural law (rights and principles held to be common to all humankind and derived from the nature of man rather than from social customs or contracts, religion, etc.) originated not in the heavens but in man himself. Nature supplies no pattern for the good state. In fact, in the state of nature there is no law at all, only individual desire and freedom.'¹³

The main field of the civil law is the law of contracts which is founded on the basis of human freewill. For that the man's responsibility towards his words is entirely meaningless, without his own deliberation and freewill.

With respect to the criminal law, a cardinal principle of criminal law is embodied in the maxim 'an act does not make a man guilty of a crime unless his mind is also guilty'¹⁴ and it is obvious that the guiltiness of mind depends on its deliberation and intention which derives from the agent's freewill.

One of the main subjects related to the criminal law and criminal psychology is education and training in forming the personality of the convict. The theory that considers the personality of the convict to be the definite consequence of his education will direct the main responsibility of the crime of the convict towards his trainer and see the way to reform the society and reduce or eradicate crime in the society exclusively in the educational factors and environment of the society.

The social political crises which cause very vast and deep social problems rather the criminal political events like global wars, massacres, transgressions and social violence and etc., stem from human volition, and its previous prerequisites.

These subjects and all the issues that are related to the voluntary actions of man which cover a vast area, which is as vast as all of the social sciences, is related to the subject of the freedom of man's will and the connection of this freedom with the causal deterministic law or the deterministic causality. The connection of the deterministic causality with the freedom of man and the intellectual justification of the power of man over free decision making and the scale of involvement of the free will of man in shaping the actions, the personality and the destiny of man is the main subject of this research. The prime

foundation of all the discussions is related to social sciences.

This study tries to reflect the problem of compatibility between general causal law and the free will of human being, and whether or not the general causal law is compatible with the freedom of man; I will examine the different theories in contemporary Islamic and Western philosophy comparing them with each other and criticising them, and finally I will present my theory of 'moral obligation' which I think is able to give a new solution to this problem.

In the first chapter I will give a short explanation of the background of this problem in the Islamic philosophy, in chapter two I will reflect upon the contemporary Islamic perspective. In the third chapter I will look at the contemporary Western theories regarding the problem and in the last chapter I'll present my view with respect to the free will and its compatibility with the general causal law.

According to my suggested theory, which was called 'moral preponderant', the main source of the free will of the human act stems from deliberation and reflection. The real meaning of this freedom is that the act must arise from deliberation and reflection of man; what he is going to do, what the possibilities of the different choices are, which one of them is good, which one of them is bad, which one is the best, and which one is the worst.

To consider the different possibilities and to deliberate upon them, and the decision-making which arises from this deliberation and reflection, and then to choose what to do or not to do, is the very foundation and the mere core of the freewill and is actually the basis of the freedom of mankind.

The most important result of this theory is that it is impossible to have free individuals or free societies without having enough opportunity for reflection and deliberation.

The most important responsibility of education systems, mass media systems, economic, and political systems is to prepare the adequate environment for the people to think about their life, and to deliberate about the different types of life-styles, kinds of actions, lanes of movement, and consequently choose which one is the best.

- [1.](#) Sa'adi Shirazi, 1992, pp. 50-54
- [2.](#) Al-Qommi, 1983, Vol 1, p. 211
- [3.](#) Al-Sadooq, 1991, pp. 521-579
- [4.](#) Human Being in Qura'n, 1991, p. 39
- [5.](#) Mutahhari, 1997, pp. 20-21
- [6.](#) Karl Marx, 1990, Vol 1, p. 18
- [7.](#) Bertrand Russell, 1995, p. 750
- [8.](#) Plekhanov, 1969, p. 42
- [9.](#) Hegel G.W.F, 1991, p. 36
- [10.](#) Mutahhari, 1997, p.53
- [11.](#) Pesch, 1993, p. 64
- [12.](#) Freud, 2001, p. 182
- [13.](#) Ezzati A. 2002, p. 26

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