

The Author

Ayatullah Murtadha Mutahhari, born 1920, was one of the most versatile Islamic scholars and prolific writers of recent times. He was deeply rooted in traditional learning and enamoured of its exponents.

He was a thinker who had fully absorbed a rigorous philosophical training. His work is marked by a philosophical clarity that particularly qualified him to deal with the fundamental problem of religious thought that forms the subject-matter of this book.

Ayatullah Mutahhari received his elementary education in theology from his father, Shaykh Muhammad Husayn in his home town, Fariman. When the Ayatullah was twelve years of age he joined the Educational Centre at Mashad and pursued his studies there for five years. Then he proceeded to Qum, the great centre of Islamic education.

He stayed there for fifteen years and completed his education in Islamic Beliefs and Jurisprudence under the supervision of the renowned philosopher Allama Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai, Imam Khomayni and many other distinguished scholars. Then he migrated to Tehran.

During the period of his education the Ayatullah felt that the communists wanted to change the sacred religion of Islam and destroy its very spirit by mixing their atheistic views with the Islamic philosophy and interpreting the verses of the Qur'an in a materialistic manner. Of course, communism was not the only thing which received Ayatullah's attention.

He also wrote on exegesis of the Qur'an, philosophy, ethics, sociology, history and many other subjects. In all his writings the real object he had in view was to give replies to the objections raised by others against Islam, to point out the shortcomings of other schools of thought and to manifest the greatness of Islam.

He believed that in order to prove the falsity of Marxism and other ideologies like it, it was necessary not only to comment on them in a scholarly manner but also to present the real image of Islam.

Ayatullah Mutahhari wrote assiduously and continuously from his student days right up to 1979, the year of his assassination. Much of his work has been published in and outside Iran. He has written a number

of books not in accordance with his personal interest or predilection but with his perception of its need. Wherever a book was lacking in some vital topic of contemporary Islamic interest Mutahhari sought to supply it.

The activities of the Ayatullah were intolerable for the followers of the atheistic schools and they, therefore, decided to remove him from the scene by terroristic methods. Eventually they succeeded on the 1st of May, 1979. His martyrdom was a great tragedy.

When the sad news was conveyed to Imam Khomeini he could not control his tears. In his condolence message he said: "I have been deprived of a dear son of mine. I am lamenting upon the death of one who was the fruit of my life."

Thousands of Muslims escorted his funeral. He was laid to rest in Qum in the precincts of the Holy shrine of Lady Fatimah Ma'sumah.

Ayatullah Mutahhari was a popular figure in the religious and literary circles of Iran. He served in the Tehran University as the Head of the Department of Theology and Islamic Learnings.

At the time of his martyrdom he was the president of the Constitutional Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran and was performing his duties in a very befitting manner.

His works have been translated and published in French, Arabic, Turkish, Urdu and English. The Islamic Seminary has had the honour of publishing some of them.

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