

## The Epistle of Imam al-Hadi (a) to the People of Ahvaz on Predestination and Delegation

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### Abstract

This article examines the epistle of Imam Ali al-Hadi (a), which elucidates a nuanced, intermediary stance on the theological debate of predestination (jabr) and delegation (tafwid). The epistle systematically refutes predestination, arguing that it logically necessitates attributing injustice to God, as it is rationally untenable for an individual to be compelled into transgression and subsequently punished for it. Concurrently, it rejects the doctrine of delegation—understood as the divine abandonment of creation to absolute autonomy—because such a premise directly contradicts divine sovereignty, omnipotence, and providence. Furthermore, the text establishes the foundational principle of "a position between the two positions" (al-amr bayn al-amrayn), wherein the human being operates as a volitional agent utilizing the capacity endowed by God. This divine endowment of ability enables the individual to choose obedience or disobedience, thereby justifying the application of reward or punishment. The epistle clarifies that moral accountability (taklif) is contingent upon prerequisites such as intellect and capability, asserting that human actions are executed through a divinely imbued capacity without contravening the overarching Divine will. Consequently, this theological framework successfully harmonizes the affirmation of divine justice with human responsibility, carefully avoiding the extremes of negating human agency on one hand, and exaggerating absolute independence from the Divine will on the other.

**Keywords:** amr bayn al-amrayn, predestination and delegation, human capacity, Imam al-Hadi (a), volitional agent

# The Creation of Human Actions and the Concept of Acquisition (Kasb) in Ash'arite Theology: A Historical Study

By Shaykh Husayn Harb

## Abstract

This article investigates the contentious theological issue of human actions, a central debate among Islamic schools of thought due to its profound implications for divine justice, moral accountability, reward, and punishment. While the Mu'tazilites asserted independent human agency to disassociate God from unjust acts, and the Imami Shi'ites adopted the intermediary stance of "a position between the two positions" (al-amr bayn al-amrayn), the Ash'arites posited that God Almighty is the sole creator of all human actions. To circumvent the philosophical implications of predestination, Ash'arite theology introduced the concept of acquisition (kasb), attributing the active execution of actions to the human subject. However, ambiguities surrounding the precise definition of kasb and the actual extent of human efficacy have engendered significant doctrinal variations within the Ash'ari school across different historical epochs. Consequently, this study traces the historical evolution of the Ash'arite perspective by systematically analyzing the foundational views of Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, examining the subsequent interpretations of early Ash'arite scholars, evaluating the shifting paradigms among later theologians, and exploring the approaches of contemporary Ash'ari thinkers. The study concludes with an analytical summary of these internal methodological trajectories, culminating in a critical comparison with the Imamite doctrine of the intermediary position.

**Keywords:** acquisition, Ash'arites, human actions, determinism, free will.



## The Epistemological Framework Connecting the Doctrine of Free Will, Divine Decree, and Rational Goodness

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### Abstract

This research examines the epistemological relationship between three theological doctrines concerning human action and its connection to both divine omnipotence and human volition. It demonstrates the validity of the doctrine of free will within human agency by establishing theological linkages between divine decree and rational goodness. The conceptualization of human beings as autonomous agents operates within a paradigm that synthesizes free will with divine sustenance, transcending the traditional binary of absolute predestination and absolute delegation in favor of the intermediate theological doctrine of "a position between the two positions." Within this framework, human action serves as the preparatory cause that precipitates the realization of outcomes through divine decree. This paradigm fosters robust self-regulation, grounded in the certainty that outcomes actualized by divine decree are inextricably linked to antecedent conditions initiated by human agency, and that divine foreknowledge ordains what individuals have autonomously chosen. Consequently, adherence to this intermediate doctrine evolves from a theoretical theological construct into a comprehensive way of life. It reconciles humility before the Divine, the ultimate source of human capacity, with an embrace of the responsibility inherent in self-determination, thereby precluding both the complacency of predestination and the hubris of absolute independence. To elucidate these propositions, the study is structured around five thematic axes: the theological significance of the three core doctrines; the alignment of free will with the philosophy of divine obligation; the role of human volition in shaping action; the influence of divine guidance on optimal decision-making; and the intermediary position of free will between rational goodness and divine decree.

**Keywords:** free will, divine decree, rational goodness, predestination, absolute delegation, divine guidance



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## **A Treatise on Determinism and Free Will**

By Sayyid Muhsin ibn Muhammad Taqi al-Husayni al-Kuhkamari al-Tabrizi  
Edited by Sheikh Fadhil al-Hasnawi

### **Abstract**

The theological dilemma of predestination and free will constitutes a focal point of Islamic theology and doctrinal disputation, historically captivating human intellect due to its profound implications for human behavior and moral agency. This edited treatise critically examines this perennial issue through the dual lenses of rational and revealed Islamic epistemologies. The text systematically delineates the historical discourse into three primary theological paradigms: the Ash'arite doctrine of determinism—or the deterministic corollaries inherent in their concept of acquisition (kasb)—the Mu'tazilite framework of absolute delegation (tafwid), and the Imamite intermediary principle of "a position between the two positions" (al-amr bayn al-amrayn). Employing a rigorous analytical methodology, the author elucidates these disparate paradigms, evaluates the rational and textual evidence adduced for each, critically refutes conceptually flawed arguments, and comprehensively substantiates the theological stance corroborated by conclusive evidentiary proofs.

**Keywords:** determinism, delegation, the position between the two positions, Ash'arites, Mu'tazilites, Imamites



## A Treatise on the Principles of Religion (Risalat Usul al-Din)

By Sayyid 'Aziz Allah al-Husayni al-Khalkhali  
Edited by Sheikh Nusayr al-Baghdadi

### Abstract

The significance of the scholarly commentary composed by Sayyid 'Aziz Allah al-Husayni al-Khalkhali on *Risalat Usul al-Din* (A Treatise on the Principles of Religion), a foundational theological manuscript originally authored by al-Shaykh al-Tusi, lies in its seamless integration of the original text's robust framework with the commentator's precise elucidation of complex theological doctrines, presented through a rigorous and systematic methodology. The treatise initiates its discourse by establishing the foundational obligation of knowing God, rationally demonstrating His status as the Necessary Being (*wajib al-wujud*) and affirming His absolute eternity. It systematically negates all attributes of imperfection from the Divine—such as corporeality, visibility, and incarnation—while meticulously substantiating His attributes of perfection, including omniscience, omnipotence, life, and oneness. The exposition then advances to the doctrine of prophethood (*nubuwwa*), exploring both its general philosophical necessity and its specific historical manifestations, alongside the infallibility of the prophets and the finality of the Muhammadan dispensation. Furthermore, the commentary comprehensively addresses the doctrine of the Imamate, systematically affirming the rightful succession of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib and tracing the divine designation through to Imam al-Mahdi (a), including the theological implications of his occultation. Finally, the text transitions to eschatology (*ma'ad*) and transmitted doctrines (*sam'iyyat*), detailing core tenets such as the affirmation of divine scriptures and messengers, the trials of the grave (including the questioning by Munkar and Nakir), the distribution of the records of deeds, the testifying of bodily limbs, the Pond, and the ultimate realities of Paradise and Hell, thereby encompassing the comprehensive pillars of Islamic faith.

**Keywords:** existence, divine attributes, prophethood, imamate, eschatology.

## The Birth and Martyrdom of Imam Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (a)

Muhammad Baqir Malikyan

### Abstract

This article investigates the historical dates concerning the birth and martyrdom of Imam Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (a), structuring the inquiry into two primary sections. The first section delineates the chronological details of the Imam's birth, establishing that he was born on Friday, the eleventh of Dhu al-Qa'da in the year 148 AH. The second section examines the historical accounts of his martyrdom, concluding that it occurred on Friday, the last day of Safar in the year 203 AH. While providing these specific biographical dates, the study ultimately acknowledges the epistemological limitations of human historical inquiry, concluding with the Quranic affirmation that absolute and comprehensive knowledge resides solely with God Almighty.

**Keywords:** Imam al-Rida (a), birth, martyrdom, Dhu al-Qa'da, Safar, Islamic chronology.



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