

Book to go!

**History:
“Magistra
Bouna!”**

Hamid Kasiri



ILogos's 5th Anniversary!

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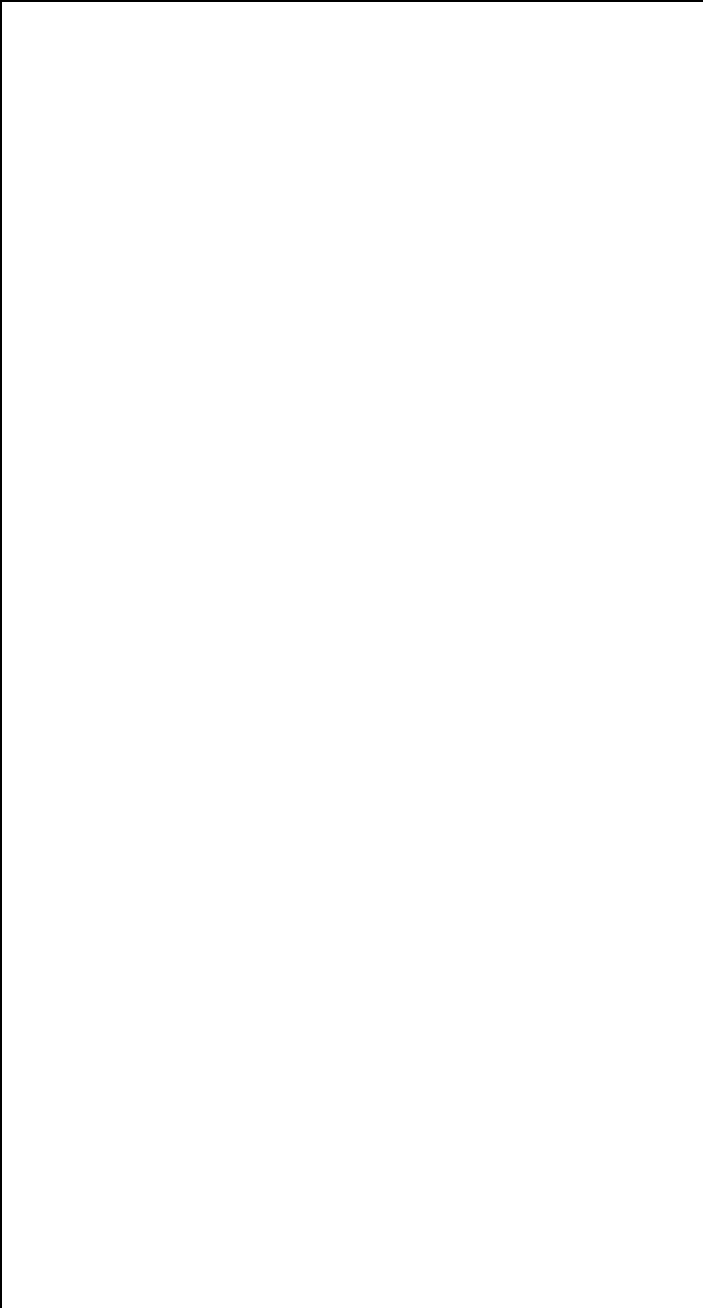
Book to Go!

“Book to Go!” as a new book series deals with some relevant issues from the perspective of the Shia Islam. Everything presented here is **“Shiite Discourses”** and was published in my previous works, but some readers were interested to have them in a new compact form so that they can take them with on travel, on the subway and ...!

These multi-volume study booklets are a kind of **“Book to Go!”** and try to remind us in a different way of actions and lead us to harmony between faith and praxis and in life with others: *“Behave toward people the way, you want them to behave toward you.”* And this is my way, so follow it and do not follow the other paths.

This book series is published in the hope of contributing to a better understanding of **“Shiite Discourses”** in the 21st century. **“Book to Go!”** aims to motivate people to think. It thus doesn't mean, “cash and carry” or “cash and go”, but rather **“cash and read!”** This is because reading leads to the revival of the soul and refresh the mind!

Hamid Kasiri
(Amin-ul-Islam Mazandarani)
Vienna, at 03.03.2023!



History: ***“Magistra Bouna”!***

The Educational Function of History

All religious communities in the world have an individual, sometimes highly divergent relationship to history and historicity. The fundamental importance of factual, historical events has always served religion as a basis for legitimation and for establishing certain rituals, celebrations and procedures that largely affect the course of the year and the lives of people in the religious communities.

So, if one wants to talk about a vivid representation of religion, it is absolutely necessary to analyze the relationship between *religion to its history* and time of origin as well as the conditions with which the emerging religion was confronted. For this reason, any illustration of Islam must take into account its understanding of history.

“Theology of History” in Islam is not exclusively concerned with the narrative of historical events, but also does not want to be understood merely as a narrative of meaning. It is mainly about the historical dimension and, above all, about the *historical thinking* of Islam.

“History” is widely regarded as a central aspect of Islamic thought as a whole and brings with it a historical research area that focuses on both religious and cultural areas in a religious context: *“Historical approach”*, that based on its Theology.

This approach is of great importance within Shia Islam and is treated with great vitality and passion. It could easily be interpreted as that Shia Islam allows fact-oriented research into reports to take a back seat in favor of religious doctrine and parables. But it is precisely the examination of one’s own developmental history that is of essential importance, so that it should be conveyed with the same liveliness that is easily inherent in every other cultural area.

The Shia Islam has from the foundations of its faith the vocation to direct the whole of human life, as well as its cultural formation, towards the will of God. This task given by God led him to actively intervene in the

events of human history and to shape this history from their convictions. This theological show of history had significant consequences for Shiite Islamic culture. In its historical development, Shia Islam was convinced that God's ultimate salvation was revealed in it. This salvation, as the vocation of the Prophets, should now be respected in culture and politics and in the entirety of its thinking.

So, Shia Islam saw its internal task in the fact that the entire social and cultural order had to be oriented towards the main principles of the Quranic revelation and the prophetic tradition. By describing the development of human history and the life forms of individuals and groups in the light of the history of revelation, *Shiite theology of history* attempts to explain the reasons for its progress and defeat.

Thereby the knowledge gained in the course of history is newly collected, analyzed and evaluated so that one can claim with good reason: *Shiite historical thinking* collects and gathers together the perspectives and dimensions that are possible in terms of content, and according to analyses, this gives a living idea of it, which shapes our present and determines our future.

The historical thought of Shia Islam, which itself is in the light of the Quran, aims to show the causes of negative and positive developments, which, despite all the differences between individuals and societies, have always been the same. History and narrations always have an educational function at the same time: they challenge people to recognize the mistakes and errors of the past and to draw the appropriate conclusions for a humane way of life. Since we as human beings cannot live in complete isolation from one another, we need ways to enable us to live together as dignified human beings.

The progressive coalescence of human communities across existing borders and cultures illustrates the need for such ways of behavior and procedures that commonly affect us as rules, laws and binding values. Especially in our age, in which originally fixed terms are becoming increasingly arbitrary, the concept of Shia Islam is subject to equally great developments.

It therefore seems all the more urgent to present the path of the Shia Islam - from its beginnings to modernity - in order to give new space to the discourse about its various development phases. However, such an outline would go beyond the scope of the

present investigations. We are sure that the following questions as a starting point are helpful:

- What does Islam have to do with human history?
- What does the history of Islam have to do with human history?
- Does Islam want to be / remain a world religion?
- What has happened on the path of Shia Islam from its beginning to the modern age?
- Man (especially through the Enlightenment and its consequences) has been fundamentally unsettled, there has been an alienation and alienation from religion. What is the situation in the history of Shia Islam?

But these questions also don't form the reason for the present study. We are sure that the question of whether Islam can and wants to live up to its role as a world religion in the future is quite justified. Only in this way can a well-founded explanation of the tasks of such a discourse be made possible with a viewpoint-moving intention.

Both the Islamic historical view and this study will focus primarily on the fate of the human family and by describing the

development of its forms of life, will attempt to explain the reasons for its progress and regression. By dealing with the ways of life of individuals and societies, the Quran wants to show the causes of negative and positive developments, namely, to reach the *world of faith* - by taking example from the fate of the others - in the *world of life*. In this sense we regard the history of mankind as a teaching and also a *life lesson*:

- to recognize and avoid the mistakes and errors of the past.
- to draw appropriate conclusions for a dignified way of life.

In this teaching and learning process, the revelation experiences of the prophets and messengers are presented and their liberation-theological movements in history related to geography and living space are introduced.

Our *magistra bouna*,¹ that is, history, does not intend to present ornamental tales with imaginative embellishments, but rather, through the stories told in the Hl. Quran, it wants to introduce us learning paths of authentic events that have taken place in the life histories of peoples,

¹ Good master.

especially the peoples of the prophets. That is why:

- the Quranic historical events are not narratives of meaning - such as myths - because they are consistent with geography and their earthly evidence can be verified.
- to understand the prophets, (who have brought about the development of mankind for the better, also) as historical personalities.
- the rulers and potentates who misled the people to no small degree were the real historical figures.
- It is more important that, the turning points, which are concretely and almost constantly recalled by the Quran, are also actual experiences and events that make up history.

After this brief introduction to the general development of the historical understanding of Shia Islam, it is necessary to explain:

- the importance of history,
- the Characteristics of historical events,
- the Future in the light of history,
- history in the Light of Revelation,
- the messages of history and
- history in the light of the *Wilaya*.

Book to Go!

“Book to Go!” as a multi-volume study booklet is a kind of ***“cash and read”*** and tries to remind the readers different ways of thinking and actions. Its compact content leads to harmony between faith and praxis and in living with others.

History: “Magistra Bouna!”

Shiite “Theology of History” attempts to explain the reasons for development of human history and the life forms of individuals and groups in the light of Revelation. This gives a living idea, which shapes our present and determines our future. History as our ***magistra bouna*** (good master), introduces us learning paths of authentic events that have taken place in the “life stories” and the “belief story” of the prophets and their peoples.

Prof. Dr. Hamid Kasiri

Author of several book series on nonviolent, Dialogue, ***“Just peace”*** and Shia Studies. His monographs on Shia Islam at universities are now considered as classics. He is the founder and owner of ***“ILogos*** International Publications”, Vienna/Austria.

