

About the Author

Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi Lari is the son of the late Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Ali Asghar Lari, one of the great religious scholars and social personalities of Iran. His grandfather was the late Ayatullah Hajj Sayyid Abd ul-Husayn Lari, who fought for freedom in the Constitutional Revolution. In the course of his lengthy struggles against the tyrannical government of the time, he attempted to establish an Islamic government and succeeded in doing so for a short time in Larestan.

Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi Lari was born in 1314/1925 in the city of Lar where he completed his primary education and his preliminary Islamic studies. In 1332/1953, he departed for Qum to continue his study of the Islamic sciences, studying under the professors and teachers of the religious institution, including the main authorities in jurisprudence (maraji’).

In 1341/1962, he became a collaborator of Maktab-i-Islam, a religious and scientific journal, writing a series of articles on Islamic ethics. These articles were later collected into a book published under the title ‘Ethical and Psychological Problems’. Nine original Persian editions of this book have been published, and it has also been translated into Arabic, and most recently English.

In 1342/1963, he travelled to Germany for medical treatment, and on returning to Iran after a stay of several months, he wrote a book called ‘The Face of Western Civilization’. The book includes a comparative discussion of Western and Islamic civilization, and in it the author seeks to prove by way of a comprehensive, reasoned, and exact comparison, the superiority of the comprehensive and multidimensional civilization of Islam to that of the West.

This book has recently been reprinted for the seventh time. In 1349/1970, it was translated into English by a British orientalist, F. G. Goulding, and it aroused much attention in Europe. Articles concerning the book appeared in several Western periodicals, and the BBC arranged an interview with the translator in which were discussed the reasons for translating the book and the reception accorded it in England. The English version of the book has up to now been printed three times in England, five times in Iran, and twice in America.

About three years after the publication of the English translation, Rudolf Singler, a German university

professor, translated it into German, and the version he produced proved influential in Germany. One of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party informed the translator in a letter that the book had left a profound impression upon him, causing him to change his views of Islam and that he would recommend the book to his friends. The German translation has now been reprinted three times.

The English and German versions of the book were reprinted by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance for wide distribution abroad through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Islamic Students Associations abroad.

At the same time that the first printing of the German translation was published, an Indian Muslim scholar by the name of Maulana Raushan 'Ali translated it into Urdu for distribution in India and Pakistan. This Urdu translation has now been reprinted five times.

Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi Lari has also written a pamphlet on Tawhid (divine unity), which was translated in England and published several times in America.

In 1343/1964, he established a charitable organization in Lar with the purposes of propagating Islam, teaching Islam to rural youth, and helping the needy. This organization remained active until 1346/1967. Its main accomplishments were the dispatch of students of the religious sciences to the countryside to teach Islam to children and young people; providing thousands of school children with clothing, books and writing equipment; building a number of mosques, schools, and clinics in towns and villages; and the provision of miscellaneous services.

Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi Lari pursued his interest in Islamic ethics, writing new articles on the subject. In 1353/1974, a collection of these articles, revised and supplemented, appeared in book form under the title 'The Function of Ethics in Human Development'. This book has now been reprinted six times.

In 1357/1978, he travelled to America at the invitation of an Islamic organization in the country. He then went to England and France and after returning to Iran began writing a series of articles on Islamic ideology for the magazine Soroush. These articles were later collected in a four volume book on the fundamental beliefs of Islam (Tawhid, Divine Justice, Prophethood, Imamate, and Resurrection) under the title 'The Foundations of Islamic Doctrine'.

This four volume work has been translated into Arabic, some parts of it having already been printed three times. The English translation of the first volume of this work forms the present book; the remaining volumes will also be translated and published. Urdu, Hindi and French translations are also underway; two volumes of the French translation have already appeared.

In 1359/1980, Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi Lari established an organization in Qum called 'Office for the Diffusion of Islamic Culture Abroad'. It dispatches free copies of his translated works to interested persons throughout the world. It has also undertaken the printing of a Qur'an for free distribution among Muslim individuals, institutions and religious schools in Africa.

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