

HODGSON'S VIEWS ON GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE AS DEPICTED IN THE QUR'AN

Dr. Kersey Antia, Apr 20, 2019

As Marshall G. S. Hodgson notes in *The Venture of Islam* (The University of Chicago Press, 1974, pp. 62-64) according to some observers “there was a logical difficulty in affirming at once God's omnipotence and humans' responsibility for their own acts. Put a bit vulgarly: if God can do whatever He wills, how can humans deserve either praise or blame for acts that it is in God's power to force them to do or to omit? More precisely: if God is truly the sole creator, as the Qur'an seems to imply, He must be not only more powerful than anyone else but alone responsible for all that is; but if God is omnipotent in this radical sense, then He must be responsible also for human acts, since they form part of God's creation; therefore He alone must have decreed them, and the human actors can have had no power over their destiny. Passages in the Qur'an about how God leads further astray those who have once neglected Him seemed to lend themselves to such a notion. Some Muslims, especially at Medina, draw the conclusion that human freewill was illusive. In reaction, others analyzed the meaning of the term for the decrees of God, *qadar*, and tried to show that God need not necessarily determine all human acts; these men were called, by their opponents, Qadaris!

As this particular problem lurks in monotheism and as Zoroastrianism seemed to have resolved it rather well, Zoroastrian priests were quick in pointing out this problem, facing the absolutism of Allah when confronted by the Muslim Ulemas about the inadequacy of their own system.