

Good and Bad Luck of Days and Their Avicennian Explanation by Nasir al-Din al-Tusi

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Abstract: Celestial circumstances, appearance and position of stars, and consequently the good and bad luck of days have been traditionally paid attention to. Many people believe that celestial circumstances play a decisive role in their life events. Scientifically speaking, this is an irrefutable issue, such as the effect of lunar eclipse and solar eclipse on natural phenomena. Unscientifically, however, this has been typically manifested as superstitions in people's lives. Whether celestial circumstances can, in addition to their natural effects, determine value concepts such as good and bad luck of days has even involved philosophers, one of whom is Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. The main question of this research is the type of philosophical explanation Nasir al-Din al-Tusi has proposed for good and bad luck of days along with his respective Avicennian fundamentals. This research investigated the good and bad luck of days and their ascription to celestial circumstances from philosophers' viewpoint, particularly Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. He believed that given the capability of human spirit to affect and be affected by objects, celestial interactions and motions as well as the shape and arrangement of stars and celestial bodies can cause good and bad luck in human life and influence objects on the Earth.

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Introduction: Human beings have traditionally paid attention to astronomy and observation of constellations. Unable to find convincing cause for events, our ancestors typically ascribed them to certain celestial phenomena and astrology to justify them. They considered celestial orbits contributing to creation, death, and bad (unfortunate) or good (fortunate) luck of people. Astronomically appealing to them was the extraction of astrology and determination of its impact on human being's fate. Astrology helped them achieve a method to divinity, and even set the stage for earning money. Soothsayers believed that they are able to predict the good and bad luck of days. Some philosophers and astrologers also claimed the same, with the difference that the latter provided scientific justifications to predict events. This paper attempts to demonstrate that some of the beliefs by astrologers and those interested in investigating and observing constellations concerning the effect of celestial bodies on the

quality and interactions of people's lives did not lack scientific validity; the physical effect of celestial motion on human life is one example that can be acknowledged, whose manifestation is seen in remoteness or proximity of celestial orbits to the Earth. For instance, it can be stated that, according to physical laws, celestial motion and remoteness and proximity of orbits generate force; the greater the distance, the lesser effect the force creates, and vice versa. As events such as lunar eclipse and solar eclipse, that are affected by celestial circumstances, have an explicit impact on the Earth, any other celestial phenomenon may similarly cause some events to happen in the Earth. This is affirmed by almost all astronomers. If we also take into account the effect of physical phenomena on spiritual aspects of humans, the belief in bad or good luck of days shall be contemplated; this has been also mentioned in certain religious teachings. Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, one of these great thinkers, was a profound philosopher and famous orator,

familiar with religious jurisprudence. He was among those who investigated astronomy and good and bad luck of days. Al-Tusi's concentration on the explanation of good and bad luck of days was not merely on the scientific basis; rather, he explicitly attempted to provide a rational justification based on philosophical fundamentals typically adopted from Avicennian wisdom (see Noman Farhat, 2010:24-26).

Methodology: In this research, data were first collected by documentary method. Research fundamentals were then described by content analysis; and finally, the results were shown through descriptive method.

Findings: The results indicated that the good and bad luck of days and their ascription to celestial circumstances were not neglected by Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. He has analyzed and explained the effect of celestial orbits on human spirit and good and bad luck of days, based on anthropological and

cosmological principles adopted from Avicennian wisdom. He believed that, given the capability of human spirit in relation to astral spirit and the relationship between the two, celestial interactions and motions, the shape and arrangement of stars and celestial bodies, and the celestial orbits — either by the angels inside them or their celestial spirits or bodies — affect the events of this world, including the phenomena of human's body and spirit; this can cause good and bad luck in human life and influence objects on the Earth.

Discussion and Conclusion:

Nasir al-Din al-Tusi was one of the few philosophers and astronomers who strongly believed in the effect of celestial orbits and stars on the Earth and its objects, and acknowledged it explicitly. In many cases, this belief was supported by science, and is even proved today. He discovered these phenomena by meticulous scientific measurements and observation of stars at the observatory. In fact, he deemed the whole universe to have

interplay, and explained it philosophically and scientifically. Although he did not submit strong scientific evidence of that interplay (which might be justified by lack of modern facilities and precise laboratories), his somewhat inaccurate endeavor distinguished him from druids, foretellers, soothsayers, and the like. Unlike soothsayers who usually did this job to abuse people or to inculcate a divine position for stars and celestial orbits, al-Tusi strongly believed in this religious teaching that “لا مؤثر في الوجود الا الله” (*nothing affects existence but Allah*), and founded his works based on this thought.

Accordingly, it can be stated that those religious narratives interdicting astrology do not negate the effect of celestial orbits on human life or on the worlds below; they rather prohibit those numerous negative effects incurred by soothsaying on people's lives — those that are logically testified to be prohibited. However, this is not reproached in astronomical areas where scholars have achieved these

results through experimental explorations.

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