

Leadership in Twelver Imami Shi'ism

Mortaza Motahhari's Ideas on the Imamate and the Role of Religious Scholars

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Abstract

Heated arguments have been waged concerning the meaning of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and in particular, concerning the issue of the leadership of the new regime. For instance, religious scholars' direct political rule has been regarded as a theocracy or as an anachronism by Western researchers. In this paper, starting with the role of Imams (spiritual leaders in the Shi'ite community), an attempt to clarify the significance of the leadership of the *'olama* will be made based on the works of one influential Iranian philosopher, Mortaza Motahhari (1920-79), who was involved in the revolution as a leading ideologue. Motahhari, while criticizing Western socio-political institutions, discusses the significance of leadership in the Shi'ite community and other issues such as whether the *'olama* truly have the legal right to direct political rule in the absence of the Hidden Imam, what constitutes Islamic democracy, and so on. In the process, we will see that his argument necessarily deals with the ethical high-mindedness of the religious scholars as a pre-condition for genuine leaders of the community.

Keywords: Shi'ism, Motahhari, *'olama*, leadership, Imam

1. Introduction

There is a "theory" called "the theory of Molla Naser al-Din." *Molla* means a lower ranking religious scholar in Islam and Naser al-Din is a proper name. This figure is well known among the people in Middle East as being a somewhat foolish individual. One day, while Molla was going down the road on his mule's back, the beast suddenly started rushing forward. When asked, "Hey Molla, where're you going?" the Molla, pointing at the mule, answered, "Sorry, I don't know where I am going. Ask this beast yourself." This is a caricature of a man (state, or society) who doesn't know even his own destination as a result of entrusting himself to the beast (the populace) which behaves according to its own natural instincts, and is a criticism of Western democracy.¹⁾

The Islamic revolution in 1979 was indeed a shocking event. After a quarter of a century, it is about time for us to provide a historical evaluation of this incident. Among the meanings of the revolution, on a philosophical level, we may point out that it was a negative reaction by the Iranians against the materialist values prevailing in the advanced Western countries (in particular, the U.S.A.). Needless to say, Islam does not refuse to accept every achievement of modern technology, but it does make an attempt to curb its excessive and destructive aspects. Still, what is the meaning of such slogans as “the intermediate position of neither socialism nor capitalism,” “the realistic position” (*vaqe' negari*), and “the position of looking at every direction” (*hameh-ye janebeh bini*) which had been presented by Mortaza Motahhari (1920-1979)?²⁾

It is a prerequisite of Islam to put more emphasis upon the spiritual conditions, i.e. religious and philosophical conditions, rather than the material ones (in Marxist terms of infrastructure), when considering any critical phase of historical change. To demonstrate this point, the case of the Prophet Muhammad is usually evoked.³⁾ In this respect, it goes without saying that although taking socio-economic elements into account is crucially important in understanding the revolution, at the same time the scrutiny of “behind the scenes” ideological factors could, under certain condition, be of more significance than the material factors.

In this paper, the issue of leadership in Twelver Imami Shi'ism (*Ithna 'Ashariyya*) will be discussed, covering the twenty-year period between the early 1960s and the end of the 1970s. Since, in Japan, there has been hardly any introduction of Twelver Imami Shi'ism and, particularly, of Imamology, an attempt will be made to explain the fundamental tenet of this school of Islam. For this purpose, the following are the principal documents by M. Motahhari to which reference will be made:

- 1) *Imamat o Rahbari*, Entesharat-e Sadra, 1376 (1997)
- 2) *Majumu'eh-ye Yaddasht-ha-ye Sokhanrani-ha va Mosahebeh-ha-ye Ostad mortaza Motahhari peiramun-e Enqelab-e Islami*, Entesharat-e Sadra, 1374 (1995)
- 3) *Ijtihad dar Islam*, Dah Goftar, (n.d.) pp. 63-85
- 4) *Moshkkel-e Asasi dar Sazeman-e Ruhaniyat*, Dah Goftar, (n.d.) pp. 187-213

In the process, the controversial issue of *velayat-e faqih* (the deputyship of jurisconsults) must inevitably be discussed. In my view, this is closely connected not only with political rule by religious scholars (*'olama*, and especially *foqaha*, jurisconsults) but also with their ethical high-mindedness. Admitting that there are many problems to be solved concerning the approval and entrustment of leadership within the Shi'ite community, there is also some possibility for a form of “democracy” alien to its Western counterpart. The following pages will examine the issue of whether Western democracy is an object of ridicule in Iran, and whether there is truly such a thing as “Islamic democracy.”

2. Imamology

Before we start examining Motahhari's exegesis, it is useful to know the basic ideas regarding the position of Imams in Twelver Imami Shi'ism. Therefore, some introductory remarks on the spiritual leader known as the *imam* in Shi'ite Islam will be presented in this section.⁴⁾

The very essence of Shi'ism is concerned with whether 'Ali b. Abi Taleb (600-661) was in truth appointed as Muhammad's successor openly (*nass-e jalli*), or secretly (*nass-e khafi*). Such is the belief in this special position of 'Ali that it is not an exaggeration to say that its proof has been a vital issue for Shi'ite scholars. Thus, Imamology has occupied a disproportionately large place in Shi'ite theological discussion, and is usually presented under the following arguments:

- 1) the inevitability of the Imams (spiritual leaders) and some conditions on being Imams
- 2) that 'Ali was without doubt appointed as Prophet Muhammad's successor
- 3) that despite item (2), hypocrites denied this
- 4) the narrations of the achievements and miracles of the twelve Imams, and their exegesis
- 5) the return of the twelfth Imam, whereby justice and victory over injustice (*zolm*) would be established on earth

Since items (1) and (2) are directly related to the present paper, it is exclusively these two that will be discussed.

'Allama Sayyid Muhammad Hosein-e Tabataba'i,⁵⁾ philosopher and theologian as well as Motahhari's professor in his school days, explains the necessity of Imams for the community in the following manner. Humans with their divine characteristics acknowledge that they cannot do without leaders in such organized institutions as state, town, village, or tribal community. As Islamic religion is also a social religion, God Himself and the Prophet were much concerned with the problem of social groups and their leaders. Therefore it is essential that there are leaders (Imams) in the Islamic community, and thus Muhammad appointed 'Ali as his successor.

On the other hand, 'Allama Muhammad Baqer b. Muhammad Taqi Majlisi (1628-99) accounts for the necessity of Imams in this way: Imams are the leaders not only in political and religious matters but also in every aspect of communal life, and they function as the deputies of the Prophet (*niyabat*) and his successors (*janeshini*). There must be Imams in the Shi'ite community because humans tend to commit sins and this proclivity must be rectified; so it is a divine boon for the believers to have Imams. Majlisi, counting some of the conditions for being an Imam, regards the following as the most significant:

- 1) Imams must be the most learned of men (*afzal*), who know communal affairs best of all
- 2) they are immune from sins (*'ismat*), like the Prophet Muhammad
- 3) they must be members of the Hashimite family (i.e., Muhammad's family)

Besides these, other conditions that are listed include bravery (*shoja'at*), perfect character (*sefat-e kamel*), tolerance (*sekhavat*), manliness (*muravvat*), mercifulness (*karm*), lack of physical handicaps like blindness or leprosy, lack of character defects like jealousy (*kakhal*) and greed (*hers*), and the ability to perform miracles, among others.

The number of Imams who meet the aforementioned conditions is twelve in Twelver Imami Shi'ism, and the first Imam is none other than 'Ali himself. Thus, the demonstration of 'Ali's having been appointed as Muhammad's successor has been a focal point for generations of Shi'ite scholars. Usually, four points have been especially emphasized by the Shi'ite theologians and traditionalists so that they might prove 'Ali's overwhelming position in Islam. First is the fact that 'Ali accepted Islam when he was only ten years old, and Muhammad regarded his deed as meritorious. The second point is the fact that on the expedition of Khaibar, Muhammad compared his relationship with 'Ali to that of Moses and Aaron. The third is very similar to the second one, namely, that on the expedition of Tabuk, Muhammad made the same comparison. Nevertheless, the last point regarding 'Ali's appointment is probably the most significant one; it is the "Ghadir Khumm Incident." Since Motahhari himself quite casually refers to this incident in the process of his argument, it is necessary to explain it in some detail.

This "Ghadir Khumm Incident" took place in 632 when Muhammad carried out the so-called "Farewell Pilgrimage" to Mecca. The Shi'ites firmly believe that on his way back from the pilgrimage, Muhammad's party stopped at a place called Ghadir Khumm, where the Prophet is said to have openly appointed 'Ali as his successor.

It was extremely hot that day, so hot that meat placed on the ground was grilled. The Prophet ordered his companions to set a stone pulpit in the shade and cover it with cloth (*jame'*). Then he stepped to the pulpit and, taking 'Ali's arm, declared, "This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed my favor unto you, and have chosen for you as religion AL-ISLAM" (5: 5, al-Ma'idah, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*). The Qur'anic verse reflected here is believed to have descended on the same day.

Because this hadith has been recorded in both Sunnite and Shi'ite traditions, we can safely conclude that it did actually take place. However, the two schools interpret it in totally different ways. Naturally, Sunnite believers do not look upon this incident as 'Ali's official appointment as Muhammad's successor. By contrast, for Shi'ite believers, it is 'Ali who is the true successor of the Prophet Muhammad and the first three caliphs are nothing but usurpers of 'Ali's proper right.

It was not long before the principle of absolute adherence to 'Ali had gone beyond regarding him as a mere religio-political leader in the community, and reached the stage of accepting him as a semi-divine figure. During the Safavid period, such was the emphasis on 'Ali's spiritual superiority that he was regarded as almost equal, or perhaps even superior, to the Prophet Muhammad himself.

Taking into account the description above, we now introduce Motahhari's discussion of Imamology. In his work, *Imamat o Rahbari* (Imamhood and Leadership), Motahhari argues that the true issue in the Islamic community has been whether, according to the Qur'anic verses or Islamic religion, Muhammad had appointed his own successor, or whether the successor had to be chosen by means of election now that there was no disagreement between the oneness of God (*tawhid*) and the prophethood (of Muhammad). Thus the issue of leadership has occupied a most fundamental place in both Sunnism and Shi'ism.⁶⁾

In modern times, colonial interests that intended to divide the Islamic community saw it as most effective to create discord among Muslims. On the basis of this, some argue that the dichotomy between Sunnism and Shi'ism caused the division of the Islamic community. However, according to Motahhari this sort of argument is totally wrong, for it implies the abandonment of the principle of faith for the sake of the expediency of Muslim unity. It is not a problem that there is a difference of opinion between the two schools of Islam. Shi'ite believers have been proud of following Muhammad's descendants (i.e., Imams) and firmly believe that there is no compromising with the Imams' teachings. In this way, Motahhari insists that even though there are different standpoints called Sunnism and Shi'ism, these also share some common elements; therefore, the two could be united to fight the common enemy. However, even in this case, the difference of opinion is rather a characteristic feature of Islam.

A person who acknowledges the common features of Islam alone and negates all differences among different schools is against the general Islamic standpoint. The activity resulting from such speculation is un-Islamic, for it is a characteristic structure of Islam to admit the differences among the different schools of thought. If we disregard all the specific standpoints and the distinctions found among things, there is no Islam at all.⁷⁾

Thus, even though Motahhari favors the position that Sunnism and Shi'ism have something in common and that a possibility for mutual understanding is given, he emphasizes the features peculiar to Twelver Imami Shi'ism. Based on this premise, he continues his argument on Shi'ite leadership.

The terms "prophethood" (*nobowwat*) and "Imamhood" (*Imamat*), says Motahhari, mean guidance (*rahnama'i*) and leadership (*rahbari*) respectively. Since both prophets and Imams are appointed by the Godhead, the Prophet Muhammad and some other prophets are both

guides and leaders. However, even after the death of the divine Prophet, the role of divine leader will not come to an end. Thus the role played by Imams after the Prophet should be emphasized.

Who then is responsible for leadership? What is the characteristic feature of the leader or of leadership? To the former question, Motahhari answers: the Prophet Muhammad's descendents (i.e. Imams, *'itrati*);⁸⁾ as to the latter, he states that there is no clear-cut division between political problems and spiritual ones. Concerning this point, Motahhari says:

Islam is a lifestyle of mankind which includes everything relating to both outward (*zaheri*) and spiritual (*ma'navi*) dimensions. It is not merely a teacher or philosopher of ethics who leaves some books or students to society. Islam is not only an ethical and cultural school but is also a socio-political system: new regulations of life that create a new method of speculation and new social organization. Islam keeps spirit within matter, the invisible within the visible, the afterlife within this life and the kernel (*maghz*) within the skin (*pust*) [of a seed].

After the government was derailed from the right path, the caliphate system had become a mere skin. In other words, though the external form was left untouched, the spiritual dimension of piety, sincerity, justice, love, equality, knowledge, and learning ceased to exist. This situation could be applicable to the Umayyad Dynasty, which made light of genuine knowledge and never encouraged it. What was encouraged was simply poetry, pre-Islamic customs, and respect towards their ancestors. The result was the division of politics and religion. In other words, while those who represented the spiritual heritage of Islam (i.e. the *'olama*) were not allowed to get involved in politics, those who were in power had nothing to do with the Islamic spirit. For instance, all they did was to fulfill their external duties, such as appointing officials so that they could carry out Friday prayers and some other Islamic duties. They were the caliphs and the chiefs of believers merely in name. This formal duality finally disappeared and even the external form ceased to exist. As a result, the system of government had become officially pre-Islamic. In this way spirituality and religiosity had been totally separated from each other. What we can see from this is that the severest blow to Islam had started from the day when religion and politics were torn apart. It may be true that in the time of Abu Bakr and 'Omar, religion and politics co-existed to some extent, but the seed of division had already been sown during their rule. Though 'Omar sometimes made mistakes, it was usually 'Ali who assisted him. Since the separation of religion and politics was the most serious issue, the sincere people (like 'Ali) wished the two would be kept combined. As their relationship is something like spirit and body, so the skin and kernel of a seed must be united. The skin needs to protect the kernel which is the very source of its energy. In Islam, such institutions as politics, government, laws, jihad, etc., have been regarded as something necessary so that people might protect and preserve the Islamic

spiritual legacy—that is to say, to protect the oneness of God, spiritual and ethical values, social justice, and equality, and to take heed of human feelings. If this skin (i.e., politics and government, etc.) were separated from the kernel, the kernel would suffer and be made useless.⁹

We must keep in mind that, in diametrical opposition to the Western political golden rule—namely, the separation of religion and politics—the inseparable relationship between the two is stressed here. And the persons who are to carry out the responsibility of keeping these two aspects together are none other than the Imams.

3. Difference from the Standpoint of Sunnism

We pointed out earlier that it is a mistake to attempt to unite the different schools of Islam simply with a view to avoiding the breakup of the Islamic community. Motahhari, with the help of Borujerdi's arguments, accepts the basic difference between Sunnism and Shi'ism and discusses the characteristic features of Shi'ism. According to Motahhari, the very root of the difference between the two schools lies in the different interpretation of the role of the Imams. He says that while in Shi'ism this role has been an issue of prime importance, in Sunnism it has been a merely secondary one (*furu'-ye din*). We can clearly see this point of difference in the five Shi'ite principles of religion (*osul-e din-e panjganeh*), i.e., the oneness of God (*tawhid*), prophethood (*nobuwwat*), justice (*'adl*), the role of the Imam (*Imamat*), and resurrection (*ma'ad*). In Arabic, the term *imam* has several meanings, such as 'prayer leader' or simply 'leader', but as for who is to be the Imam and who keeps the *Imamat* (function of Imam), there is a critical discrepancy between the two schools.

In the Shi'ite milieu, the most significant meaning of the term *imam* is the role as a leader of the community after the passing away of Muhammad. As pointed out earlier, there is no difference of opinion between Sunnism and Shi'ism as to the necessity of having a leader in the community. The supporters of Shi'ism, however, believe that Muhammad himself appointed his successor and that after him Imam 'Ali would hold the reign of the Islamic community (as noted in the discussion above regarding the Ghadir Khumm Incident). On the other hand, Sunnite believers do not accept this, insisting that Muhammad did not specify any individual as his successor and that it is incumbent upon the people themselves to elect (*entekhab konad*) their own leader. Although Sunnism accepts the principle of the Imam's role when a leader is needed, it insists that the Imam (*Khalifah*) should be elected.

Secondly, according to the Shi'ite point of view, Muhammad trained young 'Ali to be his successor and imbued his mind with all knowledge concerning Islam, or at least its basic truth. In this respect, although *al-Lah* does not explicitly say it (i.e. there is no explicit reference in the Qur'an), 'Ali—just like the Prophet—is immune from every sin (*khata o*

eshtebah na-mi-konad). Therefore, the role assumed by Imams is no ordinary function, and is totally different from the special knowledge attained, for example, by *Mojtahed* (higher ranking religious scholars).

Thirdly, the issue of the Imam's role must be discussed from the perspective of *wilaya*.¹⁰ The word *wilaya*, which the Sufis borrowed from Shi'ism, has a close connection with the concept of the Perfect Man (*ensan al-kamel*) and the Proof of the Age (*hojjat-e zaman*). Motahhari, while referring to Mawlana Rumi, puts the utmost emphasis on the point that every age requires *wali* or *qa'em* and that every age necessitates the existence of a Perfect Man endowed with every good quality. The term *wilaya* in Shi'ism has been used in the noblest sense. Believing that *wali* and Imam are the Master of the Age (*Saheb al-Zaman*) and that there has been such a perfect man before and would be again in the future, Shi'ite believers insist that this good quality should be shared by all the twelve Imams.

4. The Role of the Imam

As the preceding sections indicate, Motahhari's descriptions agree with the general Twelver Imami Shi'ite tenet on leadership mentioned at the beginning of this paper. Following this basic position, he continues his explanation of the role of the Imam in more detail.

Governance (*hokumat*), says Motahhari, is counted as one of the most significant roles of the Imam. Who takes the responsibility of governance after Muhammad? As mentioned earlier, Muslims have faced the issues of whether sovereignty is hereditary or not and whether ordinary people have the right to interfere with it.

According to Motahhari, the Sunnite position may be more attractive in the case where the Imam's role is restricted to mere governance, because Sunnites think that rulers are not entitled to choose their successors, but, rather, that these should be chosen by ordinary people in a democratic way (*bar asas-e demokrasi*). Motahhari is opposed to this notion, saying the issue is not that simple because many questions are still left unanswered; for example, who takes on the responsibility of governance after the last Imam? Can any able politician succeed to his position? Must he be impeccable (like the Imam), and be well versed in the Islamic Law, or must he be a counselor of ordinary people? All in all, says Motahhari, these questions have derived from the narrow interpretation of each problem. What, then, is the role of the Imam?

Motahhari mentions that, among the Imam's roles, his function of religious exegete is by far the most important. Needless to say, the Imam's role does not include the receiving of revelation. Thus, the only difference between Prophet and Imam lies in the fact that the Prophet's statement is based upon revelation, the Imam's on what he has learned from the Prophet. Nevertheless, what the Imam has learned here is not the same as the ordinary sense of learning, but in the sense that 'Ali describes: "the door of knowledge has been opened to me by the Prophet and, as a result, thousands of other doors [of knowledge] opened"

(*peighanbar babi az 'elm beh ru-ye man baz kard keh az an bab hezar bab-e digar baz shod*). As the hadith of Thaḳalayn shows, there are two sources which the prophet left to Muslims, namely, the Qur'an and the descendants of the Prophet. Therefore, if the Qur'an is immune from mistakes, the other (i.e., the descendants) should also be, because it is unthinkable that the Prophet would recommend to his followers that they learn religious truth from persons who commit errors (sins). Hence the Imams are impeccable, and it is on this point that the Shi'ite interpretation of the Imam is in drastic disagreement with its Sunnite counterpart.

Furthermore, says Motahhari, if the role of the Imam is properly understood, there is no need of *qiyas* (assumption). When people study Shi'ite traditions, it looks as if they could make use of *qiyas* in cases where there is not enough evidence in the Qur'an and hadith. Nevertheless, this will turn out to be wrong because, by taking into consideration the role of the (impeccable) Imam, once believers have obtained sufficient traditions (hadith literature) through the holy descendants of the Prophet, they no longer need to resort to *qiyas* (analogy).

Islam is not simply a belief (*yek maslak*), because its founder (*mobtaker*) has clarified its ideology. So when Muslims say governance is required in order to put the teaching into practice, how do those who govern rule?

In terms of the leader (*ze'amat*) and the right of governance (*hokumat*), Motahhari continues, Imam 'Ali is exceptional and cannot be put on the same level with other people since he was appointed by the Prophet Muhammad to be his successor. As far as his Imamate is concerned, there is no room whatsoever to accept the method of election, the electoral committee, and so forth. The same could be said with regard to the other eleven Imams.

This being the case, however, the last Imam's death (absence) brought about a serious problem, for during the Greater Occultation the community had lost the ruler who could carry out his secular authority. Then must the ruler (*hakem*) be the jurisconsult, who could carry out the communal duties? Or, does the community not need such a ruler? Do ordinary people elect him?

To these questions, as far as we can see, the author of *Imamat o Rahbari* seems to provide no explicit answer. What we can say is that Motahhari does not take a positive stance regarding election by the people. He simply says that since both living Imams and deceased ones are divine manifestation of *wilaya*, if believers greet them (at their graves), they will answer their followers. We can assume that Motahhari's attitude is reflecting the situation of the mid-1960s, when the possibility of an Islamic revolution was beyond the scope of his thinking; thus his ideas necessarily lacked clarity. However, around 1979 his ideas became much more concrete because the revolution led by religious scholars was under way and the role of jurisconsults (*foqaha*) became highlighted as a realistic political issue. We can access his ideas in this period through his work *Enqelab-e Islami*, an anthology of his lectures and interviews, and in this way we will scrutinize his standpoint.

5. Islamic Revolution and the Jurisconsults

Before we start describing Motahhari's view concerning the role played by jurisconsults in post-revolutionary politics, it is necessary to refer to his interpretation of the revolutionary government. He points out that while the new government takes the form of a republic (*jomuhuri*), it is also Islamic. In other words, the new regime's essence is Islamic and the republican system is merely a form of government. Being Islamic here means that this government will be run according to Islamic principles and regulations (*osul o moqarrarat*).

Some opponents of this idea express the opinion that if the state has become Islamic, its people have no other choice but to accept it without asking why (*bi chun o chera*) and that if such a thing happens, democracy falls into danger. To this, Motahhari asks: Does democracy mean that the people have no principle underlying the system? For instance, is it against democracy to let the people accept any logic or philosophy without asking the reason why? Isn't it truly against democracy not to give the people any right to choose, even when the opponents themselves do not believe in the principle of majority (*akthariyat*) and yet would force other people to accept it? Therefore, there is nothing wrong in the Iranian people accepting Islam as their principle because the majority of Iranians already share the same religion, namely, Islam. Rather, what is problematic is that the majority of Muslims do not give the minority group any chance to present their problems. Motahhari's stance is backed by the fact that the new leader of the government (*ra'is-e hokumat*) had been sanctioned by the absolute majority of people. In this respect, in Motahhari's view, the new government can be called "democratic."

Next, with regard to the right of jurisconsults to rule, Motahhari—unlike Shaykh Mortaza Ansari,¹¹⁾ Khomeini,¹²⁾ Kadivar,¹³⁾ and others—has not discussed it enough to demonstrate his position on the legality or illegality of this right. However, his standpoint is clear. Some insist that the sovereignty of jurisconsults amounts to a despotism of jurisconsults, thus making it incongruous with the idea of rule by the people (*hakemiyat-e melli*). To this opposition Motahhari answers that, as is the case with the Constitutional Revolution, there is no legal problem with the "outline of the Fundamental Law"¹⁴⁾ (presented in February, 1979); it is not undemocratic because, according to this outline, five jurisconsults of the first grade (*panj faqih-e taraz-e avval*) should watch over the legislative process by attending the assembly as stipulated in the Supplementary Fundamental Law of 1907.¹⁵⁾

What is essential, Motahhari continues, is that the people execute the law themselves (*majra-ye qanun*). In other words, they should execute the law which they stipulate themselves—or, the law that is believed to have been stipulated according to one philosophy. This philosophy and principle, Islam, has been accepted by the people (i.e. the Iranians), and so all they have to do is to put into practice the law bestowed by God.

The gross misunderstanding of the meaning of faith (Islam), which is an indispensable human right, rests upon the interpretation of democracy. Since the democracy of those who

oppose the Islamic regime is that of the 19th-century West, the fact that freedom of thought is one of the most sublime human rights has been completely ignored—for in the 19th-century West itself, most of the people were concerned only about their material conditions, such as food, clothes, and housing.

Here we can observe yet another meaning of the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The Islamic seal (*mohr-e Islamiyat*, i.e. the Revolution), which has been accepted by a majority of the people, stands not only in opposition to the political and imperialist rule of Westerners but also opposes Western culture and ideology as well as “Westoxication” (*gharbzadegi*) among the Iranians—deceptive notions such as liberty, democracy, socialism, civilization, innovation, “Great Civilization,” etc.¹⁶ The people chose Islam so that they might let their ideals come to fruition.

In this way, Motahhari, defining the 1979 Revolution, discusses the issue of *velayat-e faqih*. As seen earlier, his standpoint on this issue is clear throughout his life, in particular at its end (he was assassinated on May 1, 1979). In order to show his standpoint, the following citation is of great use:

Just like the issue of “*velayat-e faqih*,” this means neither the jurisconsults taking over the position of chief of the government (*dowlat*), nor their direct rule (*hokumat konad*). In an Islamic country where the people recognize it as their ideology and accept it, the plan presented by the jurisconsults is an ideology, not the ruler’s plan. The function of the ideologue is to oversee the proper execution of the ideology, and to watch and inspect the people who are in charge of executing the Islamic ideology as chief agent of the government (*ra’is-e dowlat*).

At that time, namely during the Constitutional Revolution, the people, just like the contemporary Iranians, looked on *velayat-e faqih* as neither jurisconsults’ rule nor their capture of state administration. This is true even today. For a long period of time, the people have thought about *velayat-e faqih* in the following way: the people, having a close connection with the Islamic principles of their society, must entrust to the jurisconsults’ judgment whether every ruler is eligible in terms of the execution of state law (*qabeliyat-e ejra-ye qavanin-e melli-ye Islami*). Therefore, Imam [Khomeini] wrote in his *farman* (‘decree’) to the Prime Minister of the temporary government: “Based on Islamic legal right and the intention expressed by the majority of the people, I will decide the chief of government.” *Velayat-e faqih* is a form of ideological rule, and originally people choose their jurisconsults themselves. This fact is the very essence of democracy (*ayn-e demokrasi*) in an Islamic sense. If jurisconsults are appointed—in other words, if all the jurisconsults choose their successors—it is highly problematic in terms of democracy. However, in this school [i.e., Twelver Imami Shi’ism] the people choose learned men as their *marja’ al-taqlid* (source of emulation) themselves.

The Imam's [Khomeini's] Islamic legal right consists in the people's unquestionable relationship with Islam as one principle or one ideology, and therefore the people are convinced that his (the Imam's) position is authoritative and that he can choose efficient officials. Actually, Islamic legal right, Islamic (deputy) rulership—in other words, ideology and secular (*orfi*) right—belong to the people; therefore they have to confirm their leader and entrust him with a task.

Nevertheless, when we talk about government of the ecclesiastic class, there is a gross misunderstanding of the difference between “Islamic government” (*hokumat-e Islami*) and “government of the ecclesiastic class.” I would like to ask: Where is the word Islam used to indicate “ecclesiastic”? Is Islam a religion of the ecclesiastic class? Or is Islam an ideology of the ecclesiastic class? Or, is it an ideology essential for humans? Or do the intellectuals (*rowshanfekran*) imagine that the word “republic” is synonymous with ecclesiastic (*akhundi*)? And when they (i.e., the intellectuals) hear “Islamic Republic,” do they think that the only difference from other republics can be found in the ecclesiastic class holding (governmental) positions and posts? If they think this way without clear recognition, it is amazing, and if they do so with precise understanding, it is regrettable.

Today even elementary school children know that ‘Islamic republic’ means an Islamic society (community) following a republican system. They also know that Islamic society is that of *tawhid* and the society of *tawhid* is one based on the worldview of *tawhid*, according to which our world has an essence (*mahiyat*) moving from the other world to this world. This worldview consists of one ideology, which could be interpreted as “active” (*amali*) *tawhid*. In other words, this worldview indicates that humans will arrive at one morality (*yeganegi-ye akhlaq*) and one society (*yeganegi-ye ejtema'i*).¹⁷⁾

As this citation shows, as far as the *olama's* holding of governmental offices and their commitment in national politics are concerned, Motahhari does not say anything positive; rather, he is negative. Moreover, he indicates that this negative stance has been supported by Khomeini himself.

This seems to be an extremely delicate issue. Motahhari's assassination right after the revolution has deprived us of the possibility of asking his real intention. This being the case, however, his statements and comments in *Enqelab-e Islami* clearly show that his attitude basically follows in the same track as his predecessors (i.e., celebrated '*olama*') who, at least in the modern history of Iran, have taken it upon themselves to prevent any deviation from Islamic Law (the *shari'ah*)—whereby the Islamic community is ruled according to the traditional Islamic values by “just” secular rulers, not by the religious scholars themselves.

The point of dispute for Motahhari, at least in the 1960s when *Imamt o Rahbari* was published, was criticism of religious scholars for their ethical corruption rather than their function as guardian or inspector, because the '*olama*' at that time were not in the position to

carry out such responsibilities in the society. As far as this author can see, it is beyond doubt that the discussion of Islamic leadership occupies a significant part in Motahhari's argument. Nevertheless, the focal point is not political eligibility or the strategy of religious scholars, but their responsibility as "*marja' al-taqlid*" during the Greater Occultation and, in particular, their ethical high-mindedness. As the citation above shows, it is an essential aspect of Islamic democracy that the religious scholars be acknowledged wholeheartedly by their *moqalled* (followers) as "*marja' al-taqlid*."

We can point out some reasons why Motahhari came to have these sorts of ideas: first, his personal character; second, the social conditions in Iran in the 1960s; and third, the influence of his teachers, like Khomeini and Borujerdi (especially the former). Generally speaking, we can hardly find a political tone in Motahhari's writings, which, on the contrary, are consistently philosophical and ethical in character. Therefore, we now have to discuss the ethics of the religious scholars, since this seems to be the core of his argument on leadership.

6. Ethics of Religious Scholars

There is overall agreement as to the role played by the *'olama*, especially the jurisconsults as deputies of the Hidden Imam during the Greater Occultation, for this seems to have been the most practical solution for the normal functioning of society. Theoretically, the issue had been settled around the middle of the 19th century. The real issue is the extent to which the religious scholars can take on the responsibility of the deputyship of the Imam. As mentioned earlier, in the Twelver Imami Shi'ite community until the 1970s, expectations about the religious scholars' positive role as "political leaders" had not been felt so acutely as long as it was supposed that their general function was to watch out for "oppression" or "injustice" (*zolm*) by the secular rulers and to rectify it. Needless to say, this does not deny the probability that religious scholars have some legal right to rule the country directly. Taking into account past historical conditions and the theory itself, this possibility of their direct rule—as the 1979 incident eloquently testifies—clearly does exist. But putting this issue aside for the moment, since it is not the main point of this paper, we would like to return to the ethics of the religious scholars. Motahhari, in my view, had been preoccupied with this problem of ethics from the time he became independent as a thinker and educator in the 1950s until his death in 1979.

In 1978, just one year before the accomplishment of the revolution, Motahhari wrote a letter to Khomeini in which he reported four critical points concerning the ongoing situation in Iran.¹⁸⁾ The most anxious problem for him was the dangerous influence of materialists and atheists, which made him appeal directly to Khomeini to take some effective measure to get rid of them. The third point concerns the religious circle, which, he says, had been under fierce attack by a variety of groups. Motahhari writes, "I myself was a critic of religious scholars and I still am (*man khodam az montaqeddin-e ruhaniyat budeh va hastam*), but at the same time

I recognize and support their privilege; however, I think it necessary to reform it" [i.e., the ongoing inertia among the religious scholars].

Then what is required to be an eligible religious scholar, and what prevents him from being a good *'olama*? Motahhari refers to this issue in his "The Principle of Ijtihad in Islam":

A difference exists between a religious scholar's power to resist the carnal desire and that of an ordinary believer because the kind of temptation differs from person to person. For example, the temptation of a young man differs from that of an old man, and similarly (kinds of temptation are different) depending on social status, social class, and age. The criterion of temptation for a religious scholar is not whether he drinks alcohol or not, whether he gambles or not, or whether he abandons prayer or not. Rather, for a religious scholar, temptation means desires of, say, status, high social class, being kissed on the hands, fame, affection, the followers' attention, the use of public funds for his master and, especially, letting distinguished gentlemen use public funds, etc.¹⁹⁾

In this way, he describes several concrete examples of the temptations to which religious scholars are potentially exposed. This potential danger could finally be summed up in their relationship with their followers. The issue is dealt with extensively in his article entitled "A Fundamental Problem for the Organization of the Religious Class" (1963), in which he focuses on the financial base of religious scholars.

Everything started with the changing condition of the times and the change of religious scholars' character itself. In the past, Islamic studies were comprehensive, covering exegesis of the Qur'an, history, the study of traditions (hadith literature), jurisprudence, philosophy, theology, literature, medical science, and even mathematics.²⁰⁾ However, nowadays all these subjects have become restrictive (specialized), and useless scholars have increased in number and flourished like weeds in the holy precinct of religious scholars. Motahhari points out that the ineffective organization of religious scholars has created an ongoing situation, and he puts particular emphasis on the lack of a firm financial base for religious institutions. In this regard, Motahhari says, "... the importance of the organization and the social system should be counted more significant than the influence of leaders; therefore, as the first step we have to take into consideration a genuine organization, and the second step is the issue of leadership." Even though this statement sounds slightly contradictory to his ideas as found, for instance, in his "A View Concerning Islamic Economic Order,"²¹⁾ probably what Motahhari is trying to say here is that in the emergent situation the position of the religious scholars could not be solidified without a firm economic base.

Motahhari explains that, at al-Azhar University in Cairo (in the 1960s), for instance, (1) the university does not have any independent financial resources, and (2) the president of the university is appointed by the state. This differs greatly from the case in a Shi'ite state like

Iran. Although there are strong and weak points in both cases, what concerns Motahhari here is the relationship between religious scholars and ordinary believers. While it is almost totally beyond thinking that there might be an incident like the Tobacco Protest Movement of 1891-2 in a Sunnite state, the Egyptian religious scholars can express their independent opinions more freely because they are not dependent on the financial support of ordinary believers.

In contrast to this, the extremely close relationship with the populace has prevented the Shi'ite religious scholars from taking any innovative measures. "It is the popular intervention" (*avamzadegi*), says Motahhari, "that has paralyzed us and made us unable to stand up."

Starting from the leadership of Imams in Twelver Imami Shi'ism, we have so far discussed, as a logical corollary, the position of religious scholars as leaders of the community during the Occultation. The discussion of leadership is necessarily related to the ordinary believers who are being led. Is there a form of democracy in Islam, and if so, is it totally different from that in the West? We have implied some clues to help answer these questions. To reiterate, at least in the Shi'ite milieu, the Imamate authority is such that it does not allow any intervention whatever from the populace. However, during the over 1100 years since the "Occultation" of the last Imam in 874, there has been no other way but to take into account the socio-religious role played by religious scholars as leaders of the community. This is particularly the case after the 1979 revolution.

Now let us return to Motahhari's previous argument. Popular intervention (*avamzadegi*), he says, has been so great that it has been more harmful than the loss caused by floods and earthquakes, or injury by snakes and scorpions. Serious mishaps have been caused by the financial defect of the religious institution. In other words, as the populace has blindly stuck to the past and to traditional customs and does not make a distinction between right and wrong, it tends to reject everything new, calling it "innovation" (*bid'at*) or "desire" (*hava*). As a result, the leaders cannot deal with such issues as the just division of wealth, social justice, general education, or the sovereignty of the people (*hakemiyat-e melli*). "Alas! This popular intervention has bound our hands and feet. If it were not for this, Islam would surely realize something new in every age!"²²⁾

Here Motahhari introduces the case of Borujerdi (d. 1961), the last sole Marja' al-Taqlid at the Howzeh-ye 'Ilmieh at Qom, quoting his professor's words: "... when I was a general Marja' (*marja'iyat-e 'ameh*), I thought this way, that is, I think something, and the people will do it. In other words, all the people will carry out everything I have issued as a *fatwa* (decree). But I came to realize that with some decrees (when they are against the people's taste), things didn't go as I expected." Motahhari gives yet another example concerning Haj Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim Ha'eri, who re-established the Howzeh-ye 'Ilmieh-ye Qom in the 1930s. Ha'eri's innovative measure to introduce foreign languages and some elementary science as part of a new curriculum was fiercely opposed by ordinary believers.²³⁾

This sort of situation came about, says Motahhari, chiefly because the religious scholars have been directly dependent upon ordinary believers through the payment of the “Imam’s share” (*sahm-e Imam*).²⁴⁾ This financial dependence has caused most of the moral corruption and degradation among the religious scholars, because they have to spend a great amount of energy to attract their followers’ attention before they think over their own research and introduce new systems. The remedy for this entangled situation, Motahhari insists, could be achieved neither through their finding a secular job to make a living, nor the ‘*olama*’s submission to the state authority, as in Egypt. He puts the utmost emphasis on the organization of the financial system, saying:

[...] as for the method of reform, there is no other way but to establish a new financial organization by introducing a common cashier (*sandug-e moshtarak*), account books, lists of debit and credit (*bilan*), etc., which would save any of the religious scholars from directly obtaining their daily bread from ordinary believers. Each religious scholar, according to his achievement, obtains his livelihood from the financial department under the first class authority, such as Marja’ al-Taqlid and Howzeh-ye ‘Ilmieh. If we can establish this system, the people (believers) pay the “Imam’s share” out of their budget according to their conviction and faith. Soon the popular control will come to an end and the religious scholars will be delivered from the bondage of the populace. All these problems have their root in the fact that since we obtain our livelihood from the followers, all of us try to keep a good relationship with those who support us financially. All the *marja’ al-taqlid*, as they have their own “Imam’s share” and divide it among religious students, must keep this source of income by means of personal trustworthiness. At present, the religious scholars have no other way but to choose something relating to religion as their job and select mosques as their working places. If this condition were reformed, no religious scholar would have any direct (financial) relation with his follower. The institution of Marja’ al-Taqlid would be set free, and mosques, which are looked upon as a kind of shop now, would cease to be a place of complaint.²⁵⁾

In this way, as a result of financial independence, Motahhari says that religious scholars will be delivered from popular intervention (*‘avamzadegi*) and be able to play the role of genuine leaders of the community. Once this condition has been met, the condition for religious scholars to be true leaders will have been prepared.

The point of the discussion above is that with the emergence of independent and genuine scholars, the ordinary believers will “choose” their own *marja’ al-taqlid* following their own judgment, and pay *Khoms* (one fifth, the “Imam’s share” is a part of this tax) on their own initiative. We can easily observe the issue of the religious scholars’ ethics behind this argument. In other words, in the religious community in which the Imam is absent (hidden),

those who are in charge of communal decision and judgment must not pursue their own self-interest, but be exemplary models for their followers. It is not an exaggeration to say that Motahhari had been preoccupied with finding a plausible answer to this problem throughout his life.

7. Islamic Democracy – Concluding Remark

What we have seen from the preceding chapters is that Motahhari believes that Islamic democracy is fundamentally the same as its Western counterpart, inasmuch as people express their opinions and deal with their own problems. Generally speaking, Western democracy follows the procedure of casting popular votes so as to choose its representatives. In this respect, after the 1979 Revolution, the same procedure was taken up in Iran. Nevertheless, the point of departure seems to be Motahhari's relating Islamic democracy very closely to the Marja' al-Taqlid system.²⁶⁾ That is to say, according to the Twelver Imami Shi'ite doctrine, every believer must choose his *marja' al-taqlid* on his own initiative, and as a result, the people's opinion is expressed. As the previous discussion of Imamology reveals, the most significant role of the Imams is the function of explaining the innate meanings of Prophetic messages (the Qur'an), and during the absence of the Imams this function has been entrusted exclusively to the religious scholars (in particular, jurisconsults, *foqaha*), who are best versed in religious sciences.

However, this entrustment was a sort of last resort based on practical requirements because, however well versed in religious sciences, the religious scholars cannot be impeccable like Imams, as they are merely human. Based on the principle that the Imams' hadiths (Four Imami Traditions compiled by the 11th century) are impeccable because the Imams are impeccable, the religious scholars make the utmost attempt to scrutinize the Imami traditions as accurately and sincerely as they can. By so doing, they are expected to supervise and advise those who are actually in charge of political, social, and economic issues in the community. At least just before and after the Revolution, Motahhari seems to have thought that this supervisory function should be the limit of the religious scholars' responsibility. He discussed the issue of economic independence and freedom of expression for religious scholars chiefly because he thought it indispensable for removing too close a relationship with the ordinary believers, so that the scholars can execute their proper function (i.e. the exegesis of the Imami traditions, *akhbar*).

At the beginning of this paper, we introduced the story of Molla Naser al-Din. The story's indication is very profound. It may be true that Motahhari made use of it to criticize Western democracy, but the question of what the point of difference is between Western and Islamic democracies still remains unanswered. As far as the documents at hand are concerned, Motahhari's answer seems to be as follows. On the one hand, he does not support popular

intervention in electing leaders because this hinders the proper function of the religious scholars. In other words, he positively confirms the privileged position of religious scholars, which we cannot call democratic when we take into consideration the fact that in the Islamic community religious scholars' judgment is indispensable; as long as this is so, their position is regarded as something privileged. On the other hand, there is a precondition that ordinary believers have to "choose" or "sanction" their *marja' al-taqlid*. In this regard, the procedure may be more "direct" than in Western democracy. This being the case, however, we still feel that this system is a kind of oligarchic rule (supervision) by wise men (religious scholars). Motahhari somehow naively believes that the basic problem will be solved when a sound relationship between ordinary believers and religious scholars has been established.

Finally, and allegedly based on Khomeini's view, Motahhari explains the issue of Islamic democracy in the following manner: the reason why they call the newly-established state "Islamic Republic" (*Jomhuri-ye Islami*) rather than "Islamic Democratic Republic" (*Jomhuri-ye Demokratik-e Islami*) is that there is no reason for the word "democratic," because Islam already contains within itself freedom and individual rights. However, Motahhari says, the way freedom is interpreted by Europeans is drastically different from that of Islam.

There are a variety of interpretations as to the meanings of freedom and right. Since, in the West, the source of freedom has been regarded as human desires (*tamayelat o kharesh-ha-ye ensan*), no one should suppress individual freedom. Nevertheless, Motahhari says, this sort of Western democracy is just like a beast set free. Humans are living creatures which have a series of progressive and noble qualities peculiar to human beings—for instance, the desires for research, ethical high-mindedness, beauty, and so forth. Humans are created out of two pillars, namely reason (*'aql*) and spirit (*nafs*), or life (*jan*) and body (*tan*).²⁷ Supposing that the desires in the Western sense were the source of freedom and democracy, naturally the principle of majority (*akthariyat*)²⁸ would be adopted just as in the West today. As a result, though, even homosexuality has been approved according to this principle. Since the Europeans do not know the straight path to the truth (*serat-e mostaqim*), they believe it good to act as their desires dictate. This is exactly the situation of Molla Naser al-Din on his mule.

Then what is Islamic democracy? Motahhari states that even though Islamic democracy places its foundation on human freedom, it does not admit freedom of lust (*shahvat*). However, Islam is not an ascetic religion, but one which controls desire and defeats it. Islam gives true freedom by enclosing animality in man and setting humanity free.

Furthermore, Imam Khomeini, says Motahhari, did not use the word "democratic" because he refused to blindly imitate the West. Since the Iranians have already acquired the treasure of freedom (i.e. Islam) in their culture, it is superfluous to look for more from outside.

NOTES

- 1) *Peiramun-e Enqelab-e Islami*, pp. 101-104.
- 2) Shimamoto, "Historical Materialism and Islam – M. Motahhari's (1919-79) critique and Islamic World View" (Osaka Gaikokugo Daigaku Ronshu, vol. 30, 2004), in which I discussed Motahhari's interpretation of historical materialism. See also, "Criticism by M. Motahhari of Western Materialistic Philosophy – his Criticism of B. Russell's ideas" (EX ORIENTE, vol. 5, 2001). In the latter article, I pointed out that Motahhari attributes the basic Western fallacies to the fact that Western philosophy regards the phenomena of the outside world as a sufficient condition for our understanding and he clarifies the basic difference between the Western materialist (atheist) approach and Islamic (theistic) one. Motahhari insists that the characteristic feature of Islam is its balance (moderation) between two extremes.
- 3) Op. cit. "Historical Materialism," pp. 101-104.
- 4) The following description is mostly based on *Hitobito no Isuramu-sono gakusaiteki kenkyu* (People in Islam – An Interdisciplinary Study; Katakura Motoko, ed., 1987), pp. 299-303.
- 5) As for Tabataba'i, see my "The Life of Mortaza Motahhari" (Osaka Gaikokugo Daigaku Ronshu, vol. 31, 2005), pp. 226-227. More detailed explanation can be found in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Shi'ite Islam*, pp. 3-28.
- 6) *Imamat o Rahbari*, p. 16.
- 7) *ibid.*, pp. 18ff. According to divine justice (*'adl-e elahi*), the coexistence of the opposing elements is a characteristic feature of Islam. As for a more detailed description, see my "A Meaning of Divine Justice (*Adl-e elahi*) – Theodicy of M. Motahhari (1919-79)" (Osaka Gaikokugo Daigaku Ronshu, vol. 23, 2000), esp., pp. 131-134, the sections (2) evils, and (3) benefits of evils. In his *Adl-e Elahi*, Motahhari discusses that both good and evil and beauty and ugliness coexist and that they are essential pre-conditions for human perfection. B. Russell points out in his *Mysticism and Logic* (Routledge, London, 1994, pp. 28-29) that "the last of the doctrines of mysticism which we have to consider is its belief that all evil is a mere appearance, an illusion produced by the divisions and oppositions of the analytic intellect. Mysticism does not maintain that such things as cruelty, for example, are good, but it denies that they are real.... What is, in all cases, ethically characteristic of mysticism is absence of indignation or protest, acceptance with joy, disbelief in the ultimate truth of the division into two camps, the good and the bad."
- 8) *Imamt o Rahbari*, pp. 34-40. Here Motahhari introduces and minutely discusses the so-called tradition (hadith) of Thaqa'lain. The same hadith says "I (Prophet Muhammad) will leave you two trustworthy things; one is the Book of Allah (the Qur'an), and the other my chosen descendents (*'itrati*). There is another version of the hadith, which says "*sunna*" instead of "descendents." According to Motahhari, as this hadith has been accepted as "*mutawatir*," that is, the one authorized by many religious authorities despite its difference of expression, it is a confirmed hadith. Based on Borujerdi's scrutiny of the same hadith, Motahhari says that the theory of "descendents" has obtained more acceptance than that of "*sunna*." (pp. 34-35)
- 9) *ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
- 10) As for the terms of the same origin such as *wala*, *walayyat*, *wilayat*, *wali*, *mawla*, etc., see M. Motahhari, *Wala-ha va wilayat-ha* (Majmu'eh-ye Athar-e Ostad Motahhari, vol. 3), pp.

- 255-307. The English translation of the same book is available with the title of *Master and Mastership* (trans. Mustajab A. Ansari, Foreign Department of Bethat Foundation, 1982).
- 11) Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sacesdina, *The Just Ruler in Shi'ite Islam* (Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 135-231. Here the author introduces and discusses Ansari's standpoint concerning the issue of "velayat-e faqih" in detail.
 - 12) Khomeini, *Velayat-e Faqih* (Hokumat-e Islami).
 - 13) Mahsan Kadivar, *Hokumat-e Vala'i*, Tehran, 1988.
 - 14) Asghar Schirazi, *The Constitution of Iran, Politics and the State in the Islamic Republic* (trans. John O'Kane, London, 1998, p. 22), in which the author says that at that time, the outline of the constitution was drafted and completed on January 22, 1979 by Hasan Habibi, the first deputy of the president, and others. This outline, once presented to Khomeini and slightly rectified later, became "the draft of the Constitution." As for the process of National Referendum, see pp. 22-58.
 - 15) E. G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (London, 1966), pp. 372-73.

Art. 2: ...It is hereby declared that it is for the learned doctors of theology (the 'ulama)—may God prolong the blessing of their existence!—to determine whether such laws as may be proposed are or are not conformable to the principles of Islam; and it is therefore officially enacted that there shall at all times exist a Committee composed of not less than five mujtahids or other devout theologians, cognizant also of the requirement of the age, [which committee shall be elected] in this manner...
 - 16) *Tamaddon-e Bozorg* is the expression used by the Shah in the period after his 'success' of the White Revolution in the 1960s.
 - 17) *Peiramun-e Enqelab-e Islami*, pp. 85-87.
 - 18) Shaykh Shahid, *Majmu'eh-ye Musavvar az Zendegani-ye Ostad-e Shahid Motahhari*, (Entesharat-e Sadra, Tehran, 2003), pp. 39-45.
 - 19) Motahhari, "Ijtihad dar Islam," *Dah Goftar*, p. 79.
 - 20) *ibid.*, pp. 163-167, in which Motahhari proposes that the Marja' al-Taqlid system has been in danger as a result of the sophistication of social conditions and the division of specialties among the religious scholars, and that therefore the conference of religious scholars should be established.
 - 21) See note (2) above.
 - 22) *Moshkkel-e Asasidar Sazeman-e Ruhaniyat*, p. 203.
 - 23) As for Marja' al-Taqlid and Ha'eri, see my "Short History of Shi'ism" in *Isuramu no Matsuri*, (ed. Shimamoto, Hosei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, 2002), pp. 159-176.
 - 24) As for the "Imam's share," see Borujerdi, *Towzih al-Masa'el*, n.d. pp. 371-395, and Khomeini, *Masa'el-e Eqtisadi* (trans. and ed. 'Abd al-Karim bi Azar-e Shirazi, Sepehr, 1980), etc. The Imam's share is a part of religious tax called *Khoms* ('one-fifth'), which believers in Shi'ism are obliged to pay. Every believer should pay one-fifth of their net income to his *marja' al-taqlid*. This fund is divided into six portions to afford the expenditure for God, prophet, Imam, orphans, the poor, and travelers. The expenditure for the Imam is called *sahm-e Imam* (Imam's share), but most of these funds are under the *marja' al-taqlid's* control, which enables him to be independent of secular rulers and execute enormous authority among believers.
 - 25) *Moshkkel-e Asasi*, p. 207.

- 26) *Peiramun-e Enqelab-e Islami*, p. 86, etc.
- 27) When Motahhari was a student at the Hozieh-ye 'Ilmieh-ye Qom, he was saved from his spiritual crisis by attending Khomeini's class on ethics. See my "The life of Mortaza Motahhari" (*morutaza motahhari no shougai*), pp. 223-226.
- 28) As for the opposition to the idea of majority (*akthariyat*), see my "Re-Evaluation of Shaykh Fazl al-Lah-e Nuri's Position in the Constitutional Revolution in Iran" (ORIENT, Vol. 23, 1987), pp. 105-108. Based on the conviction that the Islamic Law is unchangeable, Nuri shows strong distrust and hatred towards the situation in which ineligible people (i.e. non-religious scholars) legislate new laws through parliamentary activities.