# The Question of "Self Knowledge" (*ma'rifat an-nafs*) in Islam

Mortazā Motahharī's Theory of the Perfect Man (*ensān-e kāmel*)

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### Abstract

Mortazā Motahharī (1920-79), who was actively writing and lecturing in 1960s and 70s Iran, is well known as an ideologue of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. In this paper I introduce his ethical thought, in which self-knowledge (*ma'rifat an-nafs*) is regarded as the ultimate goal of Islamic ethics and knowing God is taken for granted as its very base. Motahharī discusses the aforementioned issue through his profound knowledge concerning modern Western philosophy. At the same time, he keenly recognized the malaise observed in Iranian society at that time, so he never discussed the issues in an atemporal way that disregarded historical conditions. Lastly, his argument could be used as a stepping-stone for considering somewhat more general issues concerning modern society (e.g. excessively materialistic tendencies) outside of Iranian space.

**Keywords:**   M. Motahharī, self-knowledge, Iran, Islam, ethics

## Introduction

During the 17th and 18th centuries, modern Europe set out to establish a new standard of value: that of man as an autonomous individual. It was then believed that an individual liberated from the medieval God's control should have a sense of self and unlimited possibility. The "New Man" who was thus born gradually developed a new sense of value, which in turn constituted the basis for what was believed to be the ultimate value, found in freedom, equality, the pursuit of profit and so forth, in a manner fitting to the emerging capitalist civilization.[1]

The above illustrates how intellectual developments concerning ethical and moral values are influenced by factors specific to the times (that is, social, political, and economic factors). Likewise, ethical and moral values manifest themselves in ways particular to the specific nations concerned. A glance across the various religions and thought systems that have ever existed or now exist in the world suggests how difficult it is to find one absolute ethical standard.[2]

Regardless of the veracity of the above observation, among the various ethical and moral views existing today there are indeed those that claim an authoritative existence of absolute divine truth, goodness and beauty. They also maintain that the acknowledgment of this divine existence lies at the very root of ethics. They do not adhere to the fossilized value systems of the past but seek, within that divine existence, solutions to diverse problems in today's society.

Mortazā Motahharī (1920-1979),[3] whose ideas we examine in this paper, represents one such position. He was an Iranian religious scholar and, needless to say, an advocate of Islamic values. He was not ambiguous on this point. He was also an enlightened thinker and philosopher for the youth, the leaders of future generations. He addressed his writings and lectures to young people lost in an ever-changing modern society, those who could no longer find existential meaning in traditional religious or national values, and those unable to break out of their own shell as they clung to traditional values and customs.

Motahharī's contemplative style was characterized by his tendency to get to know well the object he was to criticize, i.e. the West. The focal point of his work was informing people of the harmful effects of the excessively advanced Western materialistic civilization, materialism itself, and the atheism resulting from it, as well as proposing remedies for those exhausted by an ailing modern society. His engagement with Iranian society during the 1960s and 1970s eventually served as the ideological pillar for the Islamic Revolution of 1979. It is well known that Motahharī was a treasured protégé of Āyatollāh Khomeinī (1902-1989),[4] and it is evident in Motahharī's activities before and after the Revolution that he faithfully carried on Khomeinī's fundamental position. However, it would be erroneous and unfair to brand him as a purely social and political activist, as in the case of his teacher. To be sure, given his closeness to Khomeinī and his personal charisma, Motahharī was strongly urged to enter into the post-Revolution political arena and he assumed a cardinal post in the Revolution Council. Essentially, however, he remained a philosopher.

Motahharī's most important characteristics as a thinker were twofold: as mentioned above, his criticisms, which were based on a solid understanding of the history of ideological developments in modern and contemporary Western society and its strengths and weaknesses; and then, his arguments for Islam (in particular, Twelver Shi'ism) as a value system surpassing that predominant in Western society. His position in favor of Twelver Shi'ism was undeniable on the whole, although he was not merely a hard-line conservative. His vocabulary was basically that of traditional Islam, but in his unique, consistent and sincere manner, he approached the new and serious problems facing those living in an increasingly globalized society.

This paper examines Motahharī's ethics, arguably the most important subject in his thought system, to explain the solutions he proposed to the seemingly contradictory twin problems of the establishment of "self" in the modern sense of the term, and of submission to God. The following texts by Motahharī shall be referred to in this paper, to which abbreviations are appended on the right of each title as a matter of convenience.[5]

1)  *Akhlāq-e Jensī dar Islām va Jaāhn-e Gharbī* (Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Sadrā, 1993): AJ
2)  *Ensān-e Kāmel* (Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Sadrā, 1993): EK
3)  *Falsafah-ye Akhlāq* (Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Sadrā, 1994): FA
4)  *Seiri dar Nahj al-Balāghah* (Majmūʻeh-ye Āthār [anthology of his works] Vol. 16; Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Sadrā, 2004): NB
5)  *Irfān-e Hāfez* (Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Sadrā, 2005): IH

## Point of Departure

Motahharī took an interest in ethical and moral problems not as abstract, general subjects in philosophy, but in close connection with the specific conditions of the times in which he and his contemporaries were living. It was undoubtedly during his youth and due to the problems he himself experienced then that he set out on his path of contemplation,[6] which finally bore fruit in the 1960s and 1970s when he became actively engaged in writing and conferences. For instance, as the title of Chapter 9 of FA, *bohrān-hā-ye ma'navī va akhlāqi dar 'āsr-e hāzer* (Intellectual and Ethical Danger in the Present Age) suggests, Motahharī never treated ethical problems in an atemporal manner.[7] He never excluded special issues of the times from his contemplation, although he might have considered the immutability of the relationship between God and man as self-evidently timeless.

In developing his arguments, Motahharī kept in mind the innumerable and tangible problems existing in modern society, including the issues of increasing rates of suicide and mental illness, the use of leisure time which modern conveniences allow, youth rebellion, disaffection, the collapse of family, and environmental pollution.

For example, Motahharī says that mental diseases (*bīmāri-hā ye 'asabī*) and schizophrenia (*ekhtilālāt-e ravānī*) widespread among the people are "diseases of civilization" which increase in proportion to material progress and prosperity, according to data in advanced countries. By that he did not mean that those symptoms could be eradicated simply by removing material prosperity. He did not support the simplistic argument that the present affluence of civilization had directly caused either those diseases or moral unrest; yet, he pointed to higher rates of mental disease in the present age than in the past, when people had greater economic need but suffered far less from similar mental conditions.

As for the problem of youth rebellion, in which Motahharī took a particularly strong interest, he found among the Iranian youth not much rebellion per se but a widespread tendency toward the shallow imitation of others. Obviously, this observation reflected the strong American influence which had grown in Iran in the 1960s,[8] when the White Revolution was being promoted. Such typical characteristics of youth as nihilism (*hichī gerī*) and apathy (*khalā'-ye ma'navī*) are, according to Motahharī, signs of the rejection of civilization.

Some young people, thinking that modern civilization is the worthless (*pūch*) Western civilization, declare that they will go to India in the far east where there is true wisdom, in order to be fulfilled. The young thus neglect to perceive the reality around them as it is, refusing to face existing problems. In this way, says Motahharī, they gradually lose interest in matters of importance, losing also their humanity and becoming machine-like.

In such a situation it becomes necessary to seek the correct way for humans to live. At the time of the Revolution of 1979, Western-style materialistic civilization was called into question, paving the way for a value system different from those that attach the ultimate importance to science or material wealth. The ethics that Motahharī set out to search for prior to the Islamic Revolution were premised on a sound relationship between the Perfect Being (God) and man. The thinker maintained that all kinds of problems facing humanity today were caused by the splintering of that relationship, and priority should therefore be given to its restoration. Could this then lead to the establishment of true ethics and morality? If so, what was its rationale? In this paper, these questions shall be addressed from the perspective of *ma'rifat an-nafs* (self-knowledge). In Islam and in Twelver Shi'ism in particular, arguments concerning these questions have developed as a theory of *ensān-e kāmel*, or the perfect, ideal man.

In the East and West and from the past to the present, wherever there is civilized human habitation, there has always been an interest in the ethical and moral question as to how man should live. According to Motahharī , there are various theoretical schools of ethics in the world, including those founded on 1) affection (love, sympathy), 2) reason and conscience, 3) force and power, 4) mysticism, 5) socialism, and 6) existentialism.[9] Due to limited space, in this paper I shall take up only 3) and 4) to present an overview of Motahharī's interpretation and criticism of these theoretical positions so as to understand his own stance. Let us begin by examining how Motahharī interpreted the theory of ethics based on force (power).

**(1) Ethics based on force (power)**
The law of the survival of the fittest exists in the world of living things. Living in the same world, humanity has tried to control and maintain balance between the strong and the weak by making sure that this law does not run to extremes. Nevertheless, a historical look at the international political developments since the beginning of the 19th century suffices to impart that a handful of the European "Great Powers" have tormented the majority of nations in the Middle East on the basis of the principle of force.

Having undergone this bitter experience in Iran, Motahharī says that under ethics which are based on force the one who defeats the enemy is just (*'adālat*) and the actions of those who are able and strong are considered to be the essence of justice because of their strength. The principle that bases ethical judgment on force or power has existed since Ancient Greece. Christianity represents a principle which is directly opposed to this position.

According to Motahharī,[10] (modern) Europeans first declared that power is truth starting with the Italian thinker Machiavelli (1469-1527). Following Machiavelli, from the 16th-century onward other thinkers such as Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and Rene Descartes (1596-1650) led the movement toward the discovery of new knowledge in physics and its theorization for the purpose of human control and the manipulation of nature. These Europeans (particularly Bacon) changed even the notion of intelligence. That is, it became no longer shameful to acquire knowledge in order to obtain money, for knowledge became a means of livelihood. Bacon's view was not erroneous in the beginning, but it started to cause enormous damage as he commenced to propose that all exist for the purpose of obtaining power. Eventually, Bacon's "power is everything" philosophy was linked with Machiavellian and particularly Nietzschean philosophy. Meanwhile, Darwin's theory of evolution was adopted and developed by others in a direction different from the original intention. The notions of the preservation of species and the struggle for survival were given materialistic interpretations and applied to social and ethical questions (I consider Herbert Spencer's social Darwinism as one example of such deviation).

On the premise of the above observation, Motahharī considers Nietzsche as the one who has developed the most extreme ethics of power. In Nietzsche's philosophy, *ensān-e kāmel* (perfect man) is the strongest man, for whom the ethics of the weak (*akhlāq-e za'yef parvar*), such as those of Christianity, do not apply. Basing his argument mostly on Farughi's *Seyr-e Hekmat dar Orūpā (A Study of Wisdom in Europe)*, Motahharī observes that Nietzsche's contempt for the masses and his view that only the elite (*khās*) is just (*dhī haqq*) form the essential part of his philosophy, construing that the core of his ethics is based on following and acting out one's own worldly desires (*havā-ye nafs*). According to this philosopher, writes Motahharī, humanity is divided into two categories, the elite (*zabrdastān va khājegan*) and subordinates (*zīrdastān va bandegān*), the latter existing solely for the purpose of realizing the former's plans; truth, goodness and beauty in the world are not absolute, and the truth is that all crave for power. Moreover, Nietzsche views religion as a system invented for the strong to efficiently control the weak; therefore, Christian ethics are an ethics of slavery.

Ethics based on power thus spread throughout the West. What imperialism (*estema'ar*) achieved in the world was precisely based on these ethics; the spirit of the West, particularly that of America and advanced European countries, corresponded to imperialism and Nietzschean ethics.

How does Islam treat power, by comparison? Motahharī says that Islam does not deny power itself and not only tolerates the kind of power that enhances human attributes, quite naturally, but also actively promotes it. In Islam, it is a duty of the faithful to fight against enemies of the faith. However, the enemies' rights must not be violated; their rights, and justice toward them, must never be overlooked (this is what I understand as defensive *jihād*).[11]

In Islam, therefore, power is one of many virtues that make up a perfect (ideal) man, whereas, Motahharī maintains, the modern West has carried on Nietzschean philosophy and its tradition and maintained a position heavily inclined toward power. Let us note that Motahharī's argument is consistent in that it avoids extremes and aims at maintaining a good balance (*adl,'adālat*).[12]

## (2) Ethics based on theosophy (*irfān*)[13]

Examining not only Motahharī's thought but also that of Khomeinī, the teacher who greatly influenced his ideological development and his life itself, it becomes apparent that mystical knowledge (*'irfān*) is considered the foundation of a true sage (perfect man) in Islam. The Islamic sage "knows God" through a direct encounter with God in one way or another. I believe that this mystical experience is also an indispensable condition for knowing oneself. Those who have had a truly mystical experience are closer to the status of Perfect Man, compared to those who have not. In the mystical experience the world is called *ensān-e saghīr* (minor man), and the heart, *ensān-e kabīr* (major man), and the two are considered as one.

> What is in a barrel but not in the flow of a river?
>> What is inside a house but not in a town?

> This world is a barrel, and the heart is like the flow of water
>> This world is a house, and the heart is a mysterious town
>>> (Jalāl-ad-Dīn Muhammad Rumī, cited in EK, p. 199)

The above poem seems to suggest that when one seeks the source of something, one wants to know where it is, not where its fragments (parts) are found, and that in this sense, one can find the source of the mystery of the world not in the phenomenal world, but in one's heart, which is its source and in which the true mystery (the Truth) is found.

Despite this position, which locates supreme wisdom within man himself, the phenomenal world is not considered totally worthless in Islam. As the heart is likened to a mirror that reflects God, Nature is also viewed metaphorically. In Islam, the relationship between man and Nature is represented as relationships between 1) farmers and farmland, 2) merchants and bazaars, and 3) believers and places of worship. Farmland, bazaars and places of worship are merely means of living in this world, not ends. In many senses, this world is like a birdcage that deprives its occupants of freedom, but Islam does not approve of escaping from it. Motahharī claims that man can progress in nature as well and must not close himself up in his own inner world like a mystic, or escape from reality.[14]

Motahharī thus argues that some aspects of mysticism (*tasawwof*) do not agree with Islam. In general, the notion of the "Perfect Man" is rarely discussed from a philosophical

perspective among the general public, although discussions of the theme from the mystical standpoint are abundant and widespread. From this standpoint, human reason cannot be trusted, and love is considered most important, love which is generated inside man and is directed toward God, but which is found not only in man but in all creatures (*fī sariyān al-'eshq fī jamīa al-maujudāt*).

In this world, an ordinary sage (*hākem*) does nothing more than know and observe it (that is, he thinks he can obtain knowledge simply by observing the phenomenal world), whereas a mystic (*āref*) strives for the ultimate purpose of reaching the essence of the Truth (*dhāt-e haqq*). If a person purifies his heart and travels by a vehicle of love on the route leading to the status of Perfect Man, the barrier between he and God will be completely removed, and he can reach God through his own interpretation (*ta'bīr-e khodeshān*).

Motahharī says that this process of reaching God through mysterious steps and purifying one's soul is not erroneous since it corresponds to what is written in the Qur'an.

> O, man! Surely you must strive (to attain) to your Lord, a hard striving until you meet Him… (The Rending Asunder 84: 6)[15]

As for the purification of soul, the Qur'an says as follows:

> He will indeed be successful who purifies it (his soul). And he will indeed fail who corrupts it. (The Sun 91: 9-10)

In Islam, therefore, two approaches to knowledge and truth are basically recognized: namely, reason, and mystical knowledge which wells up from one's heart. Moreover, the door to mystical knowledge or divine wisdom is considered accessible to everyone (ordinary people), just as when the Prophet Muhammad received the Revelation, 'Alī also heard it.

It is said that purifying one's soul and keeping away from one's desires can make one's heart transparent (*saf*) and that the purification of the soul enables knowledge and wisdom (*'ilm o hikmat*) to emerge from within. In Motahharī's thought, the purification of soul (*tahdhīb-e nafs*) is the starting point and the goal of his ethics. If the Perfect Man in Islam is likened to a traveler who walks on the path to the Truth, once he sees God, He appears to him clearer than the leaves of trees, sky or earth. To be sure, "seeing God" is not an act of the same order as observing the phenomenal world. The Perfect Man sees God with the eyes of his heart. Imam 'Alī is said to have answered the question as to whether he had ever seen God as follows: "it would be impossible to worship God if I had never seen Him, but it is not with the eyes in my head that I see God, but with the eyes of the heart; with them, I can see His presence."

As indicated above, mysticism occupies an extremely important place in Islam. So, what problems should mysticism overcome, according to Motahharī? As already mentioned, one of the absolute conditions for becoming a sage is "knowing God" in the sense discussed above, and this also corresponds to Motahharī's ideological development. About this indispensable condition, however, he points out one fault, excessiveness, as he also does in regard to power-based ethics. In other words, he recommends moderation and balance; a well-balanced condition is indeed what *'adl,adālat* means and is the root of Islamic morality.

Mystics tend to disdain rational judgment. In Islam, however, as much as love, asceticism and discipline are treasured, rational inference is not slighted. This is a characteristic particularly notable in Shi'ism. Motahharī says that the Perfect Man in the Qur'an does have a rational aspect, which is an integral part of his perfection. As already stated, his criticism is reserved for the excessiveness of mystics who are too absorbed in the purification of the soul to remain interested in realistic issues in society.

According to Motahharī, the Perfect Man is also a social being. Those who repent, fast, worship, praise, kneel down to and prostrate themselves before Him, and submit to Allah so as to purify their soul should also be those who recommend good and avoid evil in their social dealings. The grave error committed by mystics is forgetting to turn their eyes toward the outside world due to excessive self-reflection. Motahharī sees them as heavily inclined toward one side, out of balance and falling short of attaining the status of Perfect Man.

## "Perfect Man" in the Islamic Sense[16]

According to Motahharī, the core of Islamic ethics is loving and respecting one's own spirit (soul, *nafs*). The original meaning of the word *nafs* is "self" (*khod*). In Islam, each individual seems to have two selves within him. In other words (according to the Qur'an), each person has an animal-like aspect on the one hand and a god-like soul (*rūh-e elāhī*) on the other. The latter is the true "self," while the animal-like "self" merely parasitizes (*tofīlī*) the true self. The true self is a God-inspired, angelic self (*man-e malakūtī*).

How do these two selves differ more specifically? Motahharī says that the true self is the ethical will itself, which is under the control of reason (*'aql*). Man, who has his own nature or natural tendencies (*meil-e tabī'ī*), cannot remain as his true self once under his nature's control, and is put in an alienated (*bīgāneh, gheirī*) situation. Then, man must fight against a self who is, in fact, not himself (*nā khod*). What does this "oneself who is not oneself" signify? Such a state—that is, the one in which one seems to be oneself but is actually not aware of being one's true self—occurs, according to Motahharī, when one begins to forsake God. Motahharī shares this starting point of contemplation with many Muslim thinkers.

And be not like those who forsook Allah, so He made them forsake their own souls: those it is that are the transgressors. (The Banishment 59: 19)

As well, Imam ʿAlī says:

When people have lost something, they become upset and look for it, but why don't they try to find it when they have lost themselves?[17]

The loss of self is, therefore, a fundamental question in Islamic ethics. Basically, the loss of self is the opposite of maintaining a normal relationship with God. The true ethical question in this regard is to find out what a person is able to do in that normal relationship with God.

Let us take up the state of being miserly (*bakhīl*) as an example of not being one's true self. ʿAlī says that a miserly person is someone who has lost his true self, for whom money or other forms of wealth have become precious (*esālat*) and his purpose in life. Such a person becomes absorbed in money or dreams about it. He has no other self than money; he has lost his true self (*man-e aslī*). In *Art of Eloquence (Nahj al-Balāghah)*, ʿAlī says:

How surprising miserly people are. They seek affluence, wealth and satisfaction (*bi-niyāzī*) and attempt to escape from poverty, and yet in fact they are caught in neediness. In this world they live like the poor, unhappy and miserable (*maflūk*), but in the next world, they will be questioned like those who were rich in this world.[18]

Following the above quotation, Motahharī cites a famous story: a man planning to have his house built sends an architect and carpenters to the site at night. He pays for their work. Later he is told that the house is completed, but when he moves, he finds that the new house is built on somebody else's piece of land, not his. The moral of the story is that an irreversible incident awaits you if you lose yourself while living in this world. In the story, the man's land represents one's true self. To avoid a tragic end, one must know oneself (*khodshenāsī*), and one's true self is something God-inspired (*nafkhah-ye elahi*) and a divine spirit (*rūh-e elahī*).

In Islam, each person is supposed to be given this God-inspired true self, and human ethical consciousness (*ahsās-e akhlāq-e ensānī*) is originated in the self. Man is not made of mud like dregs (*lajan*), but is a divine spirit. Man exists in a higher world (*ālam-e bālā-tar*) and a natural, material world (*ālām-e tabīʿat o mādeh*) at the same time, and if not for his true self (*man-e vāqeʾi va khod-e vāqeʾi*) he would have no ethical sensibility.

In Europe, on the other hand, things are different says Motahharī. The Europeans do not recognize the existence of the angelic spirit within man. William James (1842-1910) may be the only exception. Through his many years' clinical studies as a psychiatrist, he acknowledges

man's conflicting tendencies toward materialism and toward goodness, wisdom and God. This exceptional position notwithstanding, the Western world is generally marked with a strong attachment (*ta'sob*) to materialism. In the West, materialism is a reactionary movement against the Christian Church.[19]

Motahharī maintains[20] that many factors have caused hostile feelings against the Christian Church among people; these factors include ignorance, erroneous interpretations of the Resurrection, the Holy Spirit and God, organizational blockage, the Inquisition, and antagonism towards freedom and democracy. Many have thus been led to choose between God or science, God or the comfortable life, God or freedom, and God or democracy. Under such circumstances, an overwhelming majority of people have turned away from God, although some have chosen God. This craze of materialism has captured the Western world for various reasons and has now spread to the East.

People in the East become gradually attached to the benefits of materialism without giving much thought to the fact that their social, political, economic and cultural conditions differ from those in the West. This is similar to the way in which the Christian Church clings to its creed. That is, those in the East promote materialism just as the Church justifies its dogmas without theoretical foundation. Motahharī laments that Westerners behave as if they were afraid they might be forced to return to the Middle Ages were materialism to be taken from them.

Motahharī's analysis[21] as summarized above corresponds as a whole to my understanding of the relationship between the Great Powers of Europe and the Muslim countries in the Middle East since the 19th century, against the backdrop of Western technical innovation since the 17th and particularly during the 18th century. As a result of the above analysis it becomes clear that, as in his view of modern power-based ethics in the West discussed in the first section of this paper, Motahharī's thought system is founded on Islamic wisdom which should lead to "true wisdom," with which he sharply contrasts materialism.

It is not difficult to suppose that this contrast emerges from Motahharī's understanding of human existence and human behavior in general, or his pure ethical interest. At the same time, its significance cannot be fully understood without taking into account Iran's social situation from the 1960s to the 1970s, particularly the problem of youth alienation in those days. In the process of the modernization of non-European countries, including Japan, one of the most important questions has been how to respond to Western materialism. Some manage it quite dexterously, as in the case of Japan, and turn the process into a success; but many see serious frictions emerging between traditional culture and values and those from the West, and see themselves having to decide whether to destroy their society's traditional value system or fight the formidable power of materialism and assert themselves.

In this context, it is necessary to address the question as to how to evaluate the Revolution of 1979. I would like to propose on the one hand that Motahharī and other ideologues attempted then a mainly political and economic form of resistance to Western

colonialism, and that from the 1960s to 1970s, on the other hand, they had tried to construct an original ideology—a value system that might enable them to effectively deal with the imminent crisis, salvaging and incorporating the past legacy (of Islamic values) as much as possible and presenting mid- to long-term prospects.

What would be the largest obstacle to a Muslim trying to construct an original value system? That would be the forgetting of oneself and the belief instead in something which is not one's self (*gheir-e khod*) as one's self. Ethics is about man's return to his original self (*khod-e asīl*), his true self (*khod-e vāqe'i*). Motahharī says that this question of great modern-day importance was already mentioned in the Qur'an 1400 years ago.

A decisively important point to consider when addressing the above question is the common Muslim recognition that man is given a special status among the creatures.[22] As remarkably written in Chapter 16 ("The Bee") of the Qur'an, Allah has bestowed blessings on all creatures but given exceptional affection to man. Therefore, it is important to accurately understand the status of man in Islam and, in this connection, the question of free will. Motahharī says that destiny (*qazā o qadar*) and freedom are not at all in contradiction to each other; rather, man's freedom can be discussed only on the assumption that God and destiny exist. What does this mean?

Referring to Sartre's statement that man is a free will (*ensān yek erādeh-ye āzād ast*), Motahharī says that the view that man has no self other than freedom has some truth in it. This is due to the fact that man can change and defeat Nature with his power to overcome it, without being made to surrender to it, and in that sense, man has no natural, pre-determined (*seresht o tabī'at*) form.[23]

While showing a measure of understanding for the existentialist interpretation of free will, Motahharī also gives the notion an Islamic interpretation. Islamic scholars, without knowing the term *esalat-e vojūd* (existentialism), have always contemplated the fact that man is not an ordinary natural being, (*ashiyā-ye tabī'ī*) in that man can create and choose his own existence. Of all the creatures, only man wishes to live an exceptional existence. This does not mean, however, that man has no natural form; it means that man's self is a self that wishes.

Mullā Sadrā (Sadr al-Motālehin)[24] discusses man's self that wishes better than Sartre. According to Mullā Sadrā, the Qur'an shows that man is not forced to be man but he can make himself man or transform himself into a wolf, dog, pig, bear or whatever he wishes, depending on how he thinks.

O, Brother, you are wholly your thought,
The remainders are only bones and roots
Your thought becomes flowers in flower gardens,
if not, dead grass thrown into a furnace

What is man? The answer is in your thoughts. What is "I"? Think of what you are thinking of. If you are thinking of the Truth, you are the Truth. If you are thinking of God, you are like God. If you are thinking of a dog's deed, you are a dog. Thus man is what he wishes for, what he wants; he becomes exactly as he thinks.

If you seek precious stones, a mine.

Therefore, if you seek life, life.[25]

Therefore, Motahharī's argument arrives finally at the question of self-knowledge (*ma'rifat an-nafs*). Someone who knows himself thoroughly is the Perfect Man (*ensān-e kāmel*), the ideal man. It is well known that in Shi'ism the first Imam, 'Alī, is considered to be an exemplar of humanity. Let us examine in the following section what concretely constitutes the Perfect Man in Islam by referring to the hadith collection Nahj al-Balāghah (*Seyr dar Nahj al-Balāghah*).

## "Perfect Man" 'Alī

Imam 'Alī is considered singularly special not only by Motahharī but by all Shi'ite thinkers and all Shi'ites. It is only natural, since he represents the very raison d'etre of Shi'ism. Imam 'Alī is the ethical and moral example for all Shi'ites. In this section, I would like to introduce and examine the question of *donya parasti* (loving this world) taken up in *Art of Eloquence* (Nahj al-Balaghah) as mentioned above, because this question is closely related to that of how Muslims should deal with the infiltration of materialism (atheism) from advanced Western countries, and is one of the most important questions for Motahharī.[26]

With regard to the connection between wealth and faith, Motahharī mentions this historical fact: during the era of the third Caliph, Uthmān, the expansion of Islam brought abundant wealth to those who had owned little until then, making them suddenly rich; and as a result, the morality of the Islamic community deteriorated. In other words, he considers material wealth to be the starting point of moral deterioration, a thought-provoking view in consideration of the overheated race for wealth in present-day capitalist society.

As for 'Alī, he described the quest for material wealth as "absorption in wealth" (*sokr-e ne'amat*) and considered it a cause of "the disaster of retaliation" (*bālā-ye enteqām*), which he, being an example of the faithful and ideal man, fought throughout his life, according to Motahharī. It should be noted here that what makes Motahharī's argument appealing is not simply his praise for 'Alī as an ideal person who lived in the past, but his presentation of the ideals 'Alī demonstrated as applicable to all times. He finds commonality between 'Alī's era and his own in the problems facing both societies, and attempts to draw lessons of wisdom for living properly. Motahharī's arguments always reflected the times he was living in.

Nevertheless, Motahharī's argument has its limits since, being a Muslim faithful to Islamic values, he systematically turns to the Qur'an and to the words of 'Alī and other Imams' as conclusive support for it. Let us continue our discussion with this point in mind.

The foundation of Islam is *tawhīd*, the oneness of God, and nothing can occupy the same place as, or a place next to, God. In this worldview, destiny cannot be considered evil. Some say that Islam prohibits the faithful from taking interest in worldly matters. Motahharī says that that can be right or wrong, depending on certain factors. That is to say, the interest in question is wrong if it is *ʾātefi* (sensory) because all human tendencies and senses are created for wise (divine) purposes[27] and are supposed to serve as a kind of connecting channel (*kanāl-hā*) between man and the world.

> The truth is this: taking interest in this world is, in substance, not a natural, instinctive tendency. Interest and attachment (*ta'loq*) mean being bound to the material and worldly (*basteh būdan*), the state of being a slave (*dar esārat-e an-hā*), stagnation and refraining from action; therefore, standstill and void. Taking interest in this world is therefore considered as worshipping this world (*donyā parastī*), and it is this aspect of taking interest in this world that Islam fights hard, for this goes against the order of progress of creation (*nezām-e takāmoli-ye āfarinesh*) and fighting it means progress of creation.[28]

The world created according to divine order is not created without purpose. Certainly, man is created as one who cannot help thinking that self-love (*khish parastandeh*) and oneself are the best (*khīsh taqdīs konandeh*), and so he is naturally disposed to seek that which can satisfy his desires to the fullest.

> If man is not led properly and he does not control himself (*morāqabāt na-konad*), the relationship between him and material things (*ashiya'*) will become attachment and dependence (*vā bastegī*); thus the means will become ends, the relationship (*rabeteh*) will become bondage (*band*) and chains, and movement, effort (*talāsh*) and freedom will become stagnation, (self-) satisfaction (*rezāyat*) and slavery.[29]

In Islam, this world is considered merely as a means to reach a better life or as a place of training, since needless to say, the afterlife is a major pillar of Islamic faith. In this context, then, an argument specific to Islam manifests itself—namely, according to Motahharī, that on the foundation of belief in only one God (*lā ilāh ila al-lāh*), 1) becoming God's slave is equal to becoming free, 2) losing oneself within God is coming to oneself, and 3) this leads to finding one's true self.

Sermon 32 in the *Art of Eloquence* says[30] that there are two categories of people: people of this world (*ahl-e donyā*) and people of the next world (*ahl-e ākherat*), and the former is divided into the following four types:

1) Those who are as meek as lambs; they are incorruptible.

2) Those who strive for their desires and rights; they crave wealth and power, and they experience all forms of corruption.

3) Those who are "wolves disguised as lambs"; they are of this world but pretend to belong to the next world.

4) Those who have a burning desire (*hasrat*) for asceticism (*riyāzat*) but whose miserable state of soul casts a veil over their humility; they appear in the garb of ascetics.

'Alī considers those four types as one in terms of happiness (*bar khordari*), deprivation (*mahrūmiyat*), actions and soul (spirit) because they seem to him to share one characteristic: they are people who are like slaves, (*asir o bardeh*) or like birds that seek and act in this world's materialistic ways. In other words, for 'Alī, paying for one's deeds in this world with one's own character, thereby equating the value of all matters in this world with one's own character, is inappropriate dealing.

Motahharī says in conclusion: Islam does not lower the value of this world but raises the value of man; Islam needs this world for the sake of man, not man for the sake of this world; Islam aims at restoring man's value, not at undermining this world's value.

## Self-knowledge (*ma'rifat an-nafs*)—Perfect Man

People who are in the situation described above are said to have lost themselves (*bāzandeh*) and forsaken themselves (*khod farāmūshī*).

> I have come to understand the following. People sometimes confuse "their self that is not their true self" with their "true self" and take the former for the latter. Therefore, they do something thinking they obey their "self," but in reality, they do it for their "self that is not their true self." They then end up forsaking their true self, separating (*mahjūr*) it and even disposing of it.[31]

Here I quote another poem by Rumi, whom I cited earlier in the section "ethics based on theosophy (*'irfān*)":

> People who look for their lost objects but do not look for their lost selves, they shock me.[32]

It should be noted here that forsaking oneself does not mean merely mistaking one's true nature (*huiyyat*) by, for example, considering oneself as a physical body or a hellish (*barzakhī*) body (refer to the section on mysticism); rather, it involves real deviation from one's true self. Essentially, all creatures are expected to move forward on the path of perfection (or progress,

*takāmol*), shifting from the weak self to the strong self, whereas real deviation from one's true self occurs when one goes off the path of true perfection and moves toward a self that is not one's true self. This deviation often occurs to free people capable of independent, voluntary choices (*mokhtār*). Such people are not aware of the deviation that is occurring; as a result, they end up forsaking their true self and abandoning themselves.

> People crowd around what they like, even if it is a stone.

> Seeking a treasure, it is in itself a treasure, seeking life, life
> I shall clarify the Truth being sought

> Whatever is being sought, it is that.[33]

Knowing oneself and knowing God are, after all, knowing the cause (*ʿellat*) of self: that is, knowing the Creator (*khāleq*), for man cannot contemplate or know himself correctly while separate from the cause of his self and from the Creator. The true cause of the existence of all beings exists before them and nearer to themselves.

> And certainly We created man, and We know what his mind suggests to him, and We are nearer to him than his life-vein.* [*a metaphor for something that is the nearest and the most intimate to someone] (Qaf 50: 16)

I believe that the question of self knowledge belongs to the sphere of ultimate questions not only for Motahharī but for all Islamic sages, including his teacher Khomeinī. The basic understanding of Islamic mystics is that knowing oneself (*ma'refat an-nafs*) and knowing Allah (*ma'rifat al-Lāh*) are inseparable. I shall refrain from discussing this point further in this paper, as I intend to take it up in the final chapter of my study of Motahharī's thought.

In any case, looking squarely at oneself (*khod-rā shahūd kardan*) cannot be discussed separately from knowing God by intuition. In this connection, the following episode is cited in *Art of Eloquence* (Sermon 178):

> When people asked ʿAlī if he had seen God, he asked how it would be possible to believe in what you had never seen, and went on to say the following:
> He (God) can never be seen with the eyes, but His (God's) manifestation can be seen with the true faith of the heart (*lā tarā-hu al-ʿuyūnu bi-mushāhadati al-ʿiyāni, wa lākin tudriku-hu al-qulūbu bi-haqā'yeqi al-'imāni*)[34]

Sermon 213 says the following:

> (Allah has) determined that remembering His Supreme Self (*yād-e khod*) is the source (*maye*) of purity and brilliance of the heart. By remembering God, the heart learns to hear after stubbornness (*sangīnī*) and learns to see after blindness. It also passes from obstinacy (*sar keshī*) to meekness. Like this, Allah is with us at a distance and whispers to them through their thoughts and talks to them through their reason.[35]

Therefore, there is in the ultimate sphere of Motahharī's ethical system the equation that "knowing God is knowing oneself." God and man do not exist separate and unrelated; rather, God's existence is the major premise for man's self knowledge. This is the position that Motahharī supports with its slightly Cartesian implication. It should be noted here that his argument does not drift in the metaphysical world. As I have pointed out repeatedly, Motahharī's ideology has behind it realistic problems specific to the times he was personally living in, problems causing spiritual turmoil to his fellow Iranians. The critical situation mainly caused by the indiscriminate introduction of an "advanced" Western culture manifested itself as, among others: 1) a threat to Islamic values, of which he was a leading representative, 2) a threat to the traditional social ties of Iran, and 3) a fear of the alienation (*nā-khodi*) of youth, society's future leaders.

Motahharī presented his argument as a remedy to the serious problems of his times. This point should not be overlooked, lest he should be evaluated erroneously. Furthermore, a careful look at Motahharī's reaction to those problems suggests, it seems to me, that his argument can be widely applied beyond the limited sphere of Islamic values and Iran, to other societies—including Japan—facing a range of serious problems, for it provides effective pointers for examining such problems.

## Conclusion

I have discussed the Islamic ethical question of self knowledge through the works of Motahharī. Islamic ethics in general can be most characteristically observed in the Shari'a laws, particularly in the commercial regulations. All aspects of a Muslim's life are governed by ethical rules with regard to conscience (*vejdān*) and motivation (*nīyya*). Items 2-4 of the five categories listed in the Sharia—i.e., 2) deeds that should be recommended, *mostahab*; 3) deeds that should be neither recommended nor avoided, *mobāh*; 4) deeds that should be avoided, *makrūh*)—serve as the standards of conduct whose violation does not result in punishment and which appeal solely to each Muslim's conscience, as rules that are valid only on the premise of God's existence. Motahharī's ethics as discussed in this paper, generally premised likewise, possess an Islamic ethos, so to speak. Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked that his argument is put forward from a philosophical perspective.

To be more specific, Motahharī's argument is characterized, first of all, by his deep and solid knowledge of modern and present-day Western thought. His criticism of Western civilization, supported by his extensive knowledge, clearly differs from the narrow-minded view that anything of Western origin should be repudiated, which is often found among religious conservatives. Needless to say, it is undeniable that Motahharī was an '*ālem* (religious scholar) who embraced Islam and believed in only one God. This fact notwithstanding, he took a strictly rational approach to the object of his criticism while even showing a good understanding of the position taken by those whom he criticized. This attitude is quite noteworthy.

Secondly, Motahharī's philosophical argument accurately reflects his times, the situation in which Iran found itself in the 1960s to 1970s. His argument is not purely theoretical, completely void of consideration of the social, political and economic conditions of the times, because he intended to present, through his argument, some kind of response to the serious problems facing Iranians in those days. The Iranians, particularly the youth, were suffering from a grave case of alienation. Motahharī strove to find a way to help Iranian youth under the rampant influence of Western materialism to restore their true selves and make them independent. Being an Islamic scholar, Motahharī proposed solutions to their problems on the basis of the Islamic tradition, to be sure. Yet, he was not merely advocating the tradition stubbornly, as can be seen from the first characteristic mentioned above. With his feet firmly planted on the ground of Islamic tradition, which explains the superiority of Islam, he employed terminology and examples which were easy for Iranian youth to understand and identify with.

The third characteristic of Motahharī's argument, which interests me particularly, is that it serves as a serious yet sincere warning against the excessive materialism manifest in advanced capitalist countries, including Japan. He does this by pointing out the adverse effects of Western materialism on Iranian society. His argument can ultimately be summarized as moderation—or, to put it in a more Islamic way, *'adl,'adālat*. He examined a variety of problems facing the modern world and his advice was not to go to extremes either way. In a way, he repeats the rather common conclusion that all sages of the East and West have arrived at thus far.

Still, the validity of this conclusion is difficult for anyone to deny. What matters more is the manner and timing of presenting this conclusion. With capitalism reaching a stage of "maturity" and the majority of people adamantly believing that satisfying their own desires is the key to happiness, problems in society continue to grow in number and gravity, except for a handful of "successful" people. In such a situation it is important, I believe, to criticize the materialist position's identification of ultimate value with the fulfillment of material desires from the perspective of the superiority of the spirit, as well as from the position of seeking balance between the material and the spiritual so as to correct the existing imbalance. This interpretation may be viewed as a selfish opinion that could come only from someone

(including the author) who lives "in peace" in some advanced capitalist country; the Iranians may have a totally different view of the matter.

In any case, there is no sign that a position like Motahharī's will be given serious consideration or review in the West, at least for the time being; however, in my opinion its implications are grave. Moreover, considering Motahharī's role as an ideologue in the Revolution of 1979, studying him can lead to a fundamental re-evaluation of the Revolution itself.

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**NOTES**

1) On October 6, 2005, I read a paper on modern European ethical thought at the Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheist Religions (CISMOR) at Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan ("Western Way of Thinking and Islamic Way of Thinking [Observation as Premise] – Ethical Thoughts of B. Russell and M Motahharī."). In preparation for this paper, I referred to the following texts to understand Motahharī's thinking: Japanese translations of works by Rene Descartes: *Discours de la methode*, trans. Takuzo Obase (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1969), trans. Taro Ochiai (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989); *Meditations metaphysiques*, trans. Kiyoshi Miki (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970); *Principes*, trans. Hirokazu Katsura (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989); works on Descartes: Katsuhiko Ito, *Descartes no Ningenzo (The Human Image according to Descartes)* (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1970); works by David Hume in *Locke, Hume*, ed. Haruhiko Otsuki ("Chuko Backs Sekai-no Meicho"; Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1998); *The Natural History of Religion*, ed. H. E. Root (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1957); *A Treatise of Human Nature* ("Penguin Classics"; London: Penguin Books, 1985); *A Treatise of Human Nature*, trans. Haruhiko Otsuki (3rd ed.; Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006); Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, trans. Hideo Shinoda (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996); W. K. Clifford, *The Ethics of Belief and Other Essays* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1999); J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*, ed. George Elizabeth Rapaport (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); *Utilitarianism*, ed. George Sher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (revised ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); B. Russell, *Fact and Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1994); *History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2000); *Human Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1997); *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963); *Why I am not a Christian* (London: Routledge, 1999); W. James, *Essays in Pragmatism* (Alburey Castell: Hafner Press, 1948); Teruo Kurube *et al* (ed.), *Rinri-gaku towa nanika - Sono Rekishi to Kanousei (What is Ethics? – Its History and Possibilities)* (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1981). Yoshiharu Hakari, *Seiyo Kinsei Tetsugaku-shi (History of Modern Western Philosophy)* ("Kodansha Gakujutsu Bunko"; Tokyo: Kodansha, 2005). Yoshifumi Hamada (ed.), *Kant Dokuhon (Kant Reader)* (Tokyo: Hosei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1989); I read the chapters by Hakari and Zenitani with particular interest. Toshiaki Watabe, *Hume Shakai Tetsugaku-no Kozo (Structure of Hume's Social Philosophy)* (Tokyo: Shinhyoron, 1990), often refers to those thinkers in his texts, particularly Russell and Kant; therefore a certain level of knowledge of those thinkers would be necessary to read Motahharī.

2) For example, in Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of his *Human Society in Ethics and Politics*, Russell demonstrates with many examples that ethical values are not absolute; refer also to Hume's *A

*Treatise of Human Nature*, IV.

3) About Motahharī's life, I gave a detailed account in my "*Mortazā Motahharī no shogai*" (Mortazā Motahharī's life) in *Osaka Gaikokugo Daigaku Ronshu* (Journal of Osaka University of Foreign Studies), No. 31, 2005, pp. 215-249. *The Political Thought of Ayatollah Mortazā Motahharī, An Iranian theoretician of the Islamic state*, Routledge Curzon, 2005 by my dear friend Dāvarī is, as far as I know, the best work on Motahharī written in English. The author does not, however, discuss Motahharī's ethical views in this work.

4) It is known that following Motahharī's assassination on May 1, 1979, Khomeinī wrote a letter in mourning for him, referring to him as his "*hasel-e 'amar*" (life-time harvest) and giving him the highest praises. 'Abd al-Lāh Nasrī published *Hāsel-e 'Amar—Seyr dar Andīsheh-hā-ye Ostād Motahharī, Daftar-e Nashar-e Farhang-e Islāmī* in 1383/2005. The Iranian publishing house Enteshārāt-e Sadrā, run by one of Motahharī's sons, has this title framed and hung on the wall of its office. For Motahharī's teacher, refer also to my above-mentioned "*Mortazā Motahharī no shogai*" (Mortazā Motahharī's life), pp. 219-229.

5) In addition, I also referred to the following texts to understand Islamic ethics: Āyatollāh Mahdavī-ye Kanī, *Kholāseh-ye Noqteh-hā-ye Āghaz dar Akhlāq-e 'Elmī* (Tehrān: Daftar-e Nashar-e Farhang-e Islāmī, 1377 (1999)); Khomeinī, *The Greatest Jihad, Combat with the Self*, (Tehrān: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeinī's Works, 2003); Muhammad Hosein Vātheqi-ye Rad, *Akhlāq va Tabriyat-e Islāmī* (Qom: Chapkhaneh-ye Soleimanzadeh, 1382 (2004)); Muhammad 'Ali Shomālī, *Self Knowledge*, (Tehrān: International Publishing Co., n.d.).

6) Shimamoto, "*Mortazā Motahharī no shogai*" (Mortazā Motahharī's life), pp. 221-226.

7) I discussed Motahharī's interest in education and related issues, particularly the problem of the alienation of the younger generation, in Shimamoto, "*Chi no Imisurumono*" (What Intelligence Means), Center for Japanese Language and Culture, *Nihongo, Nihon Bunka (Japanese Language and Culture)* (Osaka: Osaka University of Foreign Studies, 2001), pp. 10-16.

8) For the situation in Iran in the 1960s, I referred to works such as: *Hiroshi Kagaya, Iran Gendaishi* (A Modern History of Iran) (Tokyo: Kondo Shuppansha, 1975) and Nikki Keddie, *Roots of Revolution, an Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), Baqer Moin, *Khomeinī—Life of the Ayatollah*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), among others.

9) I discussed Motahharī in connection with socialist-based ethics in detail in "*Shiteki Yuibuturon to Islam – M. Motahharī no Islam-teki Sekaikan*" (Historical Materialism and Islam – M. Motahharī's Islamic World View) in *Osaka Gaikokugo Daigaku Ronshu* (Journal of Osaka University of Foreign Studies), No. 30.

10) EK, p. 248.

11) For the notion of Islamic *jihad* (holy war), refer to my article "*Islam to senso – M. Motahharī no Dai-jihād to Sho-jihād*" (Islam and War – M. Motahharī's Theory of Major *Jihad* and Minor *Jihād*) in *Ho-no Riron 25* (Judicial Theory 25), (Tokyo: Seibundo, 2006), pp. 69-89; in this article, I presented Motahharī's position that Muslims' *jihād* against external enemies is essentially defensive, while true war (major *jihād*) is fought against oneself, rather than against enemies of the faith.

12) In "*Kami no Kosei no Gendaiteki Imi* – M. Motahharī (1919-1979) *no Shinseiron*" (The

Contemporary Significance of "*Adl-e Elāhī*" [Divine Justice] – The Theory of Divine Justice of M. Motahharī (1919-1979)) in *Osaka Gaikokugo Daigaku Ronshu* (Journal of Osaka University of Foreign Studies), No. 23, 2000, pp. 123-139, I gave a multifaceted discussion on the significance of fairness and justice.

13) Motahharī took a strong interest in theosophy, as demonstrated in EK (pp. 169-234), IH (all volumes) and *Āshenā'ī bā 'Olūm-e Islāmī*, (Tehrān: Chāpkhāneh-ye Sepehr, n.d.; pp. 70-155). He also demonstrated his deep interest in the 14th-century Iranian mystic and poet Hāfez by editing a collection of his poems (*dīwān*).

14) EK, p. 205.

15) Quotations from the Qur'an in this paper are all taken from M. H. Shakir's English translation available from the University of Virginia's Electronic Text Center, http://etext.virginia.edu/koran.html.

16) In writing this section, I referred to *Self-Knowledge* by Shomālī (Qom: International Publishing Co., 2003). I had the pleasure of meeting Shomali in Qom in the winter of 2006. On that occasion, we had a pleasant talk, during which he gave me a copy of *Self-Knowledge* and told me that he had been largely inspired by Motahharī's works when writing this book. My understanding is that Shomali has views quite similar to Motahharī's on many points.

17) FA, p. 175.

18) Ibid, p. 177.

19) Ibid, pp. 180-181.

20) Ibid, pp. 205-206.

21) For example, FA, pp. 318-323 and AJ, pp. 24-26, among others.

22) Shomali, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-122. Shomali uses a large part of the second half of this work to discuss man's status.

23) FA, pp. 216-217.

24) On Mullā Sadrā, the following works are available: Ja'far Sobhānī, *Hastī Shenāsī dar Maktab-e Sadr al-Dīn Motālehin*, (Qom: Entehsārat-e Tawhīd, 1398/1977); Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī & His Transcendental Theosophy* (Tehrān: Imperial Iranian Academy, 1978); Rahman, Fazlur, *The Philosophy of Mullā Sadrā (Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī)*, (Albany: State University of New York, 1975).

25) FA, pp. 218-219.

26) I discuss the first Imam 'Alī in detail in Chapter 3 of my *Shiia-ha Islam – Shinwa to Rekishi* (Shi'ism of Islam – Mythology and History) (Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Gakujutsushuppankai, 2007). In this work, I describe Imam 'Alī as uniquely important since he could be presented both logically and emotionally to appeal to the believers' imagination, and I state that most of the understanding of Shi'ism is about understanding this person.

27) In my "*Kami no Kosei no Gendaiteki Imi* – M. Motahharī (1919-1979) *no Shinseiron*" (The Contemporary Significance of "*Adl-e Elahi*" [Divine Justice] – The Theory of Divine Justice of M. Motahharī (1919-1979)), *op. cit.*, pp. 131-135, I demonstrate that everything created by God is good in the divine order (*nezam-e elahi*) and even evil and death have positive meanings in that order.

28) NB, p. 553.

29) Ibid., p. 557.