CONCLUSION

The views and ideas expressed by Mutahhari on various social, political and religious aspects of human life constitute a distinct area in Islamic philosophy. Mutahhari’s ideology has played a decisive role in bringing out the Revolution of 1979. Mutahhari’s ideology was a middle path and was a moderate one. His was a successful attempt to appeal to the modern educated youth by using the traditional Islamic values. In his treatment of the issues and acceptance to the masses, he differs from Khomeini and Ali Shariati. Khomeini was a mass leader, and he addressed the masses by using political issues. Imperialist policy and the friendly attitude to Israel of the Shah, the arms deal with foreign governments and the large scale purchase of arms for Iran and the failure of the government to solve the social and political grievances of the people, were the important issues Khomeini used to rouse the people. He used Islamic principles and historical events as tools to infuse revolutionary spirit in the people against the government. His words and ideas had mass appeal. However, he could not satisfy the intellectual questions of the educated youth, who were the products of the new socio-economic developments of the 1960s and 1970s.

The new generation of Iranians was influenced mainly by two scholars - Shariati and Mutahhari. However, their method and nature of the treatment of the issues were different. Both asserted the Islamic superiority over western thought and believed in the necessity of combating the latter with a sound and powerful knowledge system. But both were different in their strategies. Mutahhari used the weapons of Islamic philosophical tradition, whereas Shariati often used terminology and concepts borrowed from western culture.
In short, Mutahhari developed a distinct socio-political system of
analysis, quite different from the line of Khomeini and that of Shariati.
Unlike Khomeini, he could influence the youth by giving them a logical
solution to their intellectual apprehensions by using Islamic scriptures, and
unlike Shariati who appealed to the youth by giving an sociological
interpretation of Islam, he influenced them through the contemporary and
comprehensive reading of traditional Islam.

On the aspects of *jihad* and *shahadath*, Mutahhari enters new areas by
asserting that fighting for one’s life, property family, and for the preservation
of the universal human values can be considered as a part of *jihad*. Combating all types of injustice is incumbent on all Muslims, and hence a war
against oppressive and despotic governments becomes justifiable. If the
warrior is killed in the course of this holy struggle such a person is sanctified,
and becomes a ‘martyr’, a position where the incumbent will enter heaven
without interrogation. Mutahhari shattered the widely-held notion that *jihad*
is the war of Muslims to impose their faith on non-Muslims, rather he
explains that such a war is oppressive and unjust, and that none should be
coerced to accept Islam. War is allowed only for defensive purposes.

Regarding the system of government, Mutahhari has a sound opinion
of its form, nature and functions. According to him a government should be
Islamic. It must be just and establishing justice and administering impartial
treatment of the people’s issues are the foremost duties of the government.
The administrator should be the trustees of the people. The government
should acknowledge people’s right of freedom of expression. People should
be allowed to express their opinions freely. Freedom of expression is
considered the cornerstone of the survival of a government. The most
important feature of Mutahhari’s concept of government is its legitimacy on
the consent of the people. Consulting the people before taking decisions is
mandatory for the government. However, he does not believe in popular sovereignty. He recognizes the concept of *vilayat-e faqih*, but insists that the cleric should be an ideologue, an advisor not the ruler. Nevertheless, he believes that only the clergy are entitled to handle the executive functions of the state.

Regarding historical materialism, Mutahhari tries hard to prove that it is incompatible with Islam. According to him, materialism emerged in Europe challenging the tenets and beliefs of Christianity. This was due to the inadequacies of the church in presenting their views. In Iran he chastises the ignorant and inefficient *ulama* for the spread of the ideology. The *ulama* were too inefficient to meet the challenges of materialism. Mutahhari sticks to his stand that Islam is opposite to materialist principles. With the help of Quranic verses and the other philosophical points he concludes that both are contradictory to each other. Instead of materialistic interpretation of history, he propound the Islamic view of history, which also believes in the struggle between two forces, but not the struggle between two classes as envisaged by materialists like Marxists, but between good and evil forces or the troops of Allah and those of Devil. He dismisses economic determinism of Marxism and maintains that not external factors, but humans themselves are responsible for their destiny. They are the mover of historic events. Thus, Mutahhari is placing humans at the centre-stage of history.

The nationalist ideology proposed by the secular intellectuals and encouraged by the Shahs was severely criticized by Mutahhari. According to him, nationalism was invented in Iran to undermine the Islamic credentials of the country. The nationalists had the claim that Islam came to Iran as an invader and Islamization was responsible for the cultural decadence of the country. The Arab conquest was hailed as a heavy blow to Iranian civilization. Mutahhari objects their argument by clearing the misconceptions
regarding the book burnings in *Gundi Shapur* and Alexandria. The nationalists had alleged that Muslims were responsible for the burnings of these libraries, because they were hostile to learning and culture. Also, they claimed that Islam was imposed on Iran by the Arabs and Shi’ism was the Iranian response to it. Thus, by acquitting the Arabs on the charges of these heinous acts, Mutahhari destabilizes the foundations of the Iranian nationalism. Regarding the argument that Shi’ism was the national response to the Arab foreigners, he put forward the view that Islam was not imposed on Iranians, rather they embraced it willingly. Thus there is no scope for any hostile response to the Arabs. He rules out the theory of nationalism, on its classical terms, and envisions that the unity should be on the basis of faith. The common factors like territory, religion, traditions, race and language are not the elements for unity, rather unity in faith is the only factor that can bring people together. He proposes *tawhidi* unity instead of national unity.

Regarding the status and rights of women in Islam, Mutahhari has a logical stand compared to other traditional scholars. Though he is not free from the orthodox notions on limiting their freedom, his views seem to be comparatively positive. According to Mutahhari, Islam gave human status to women. He defines Islamic equality of women as giving them rights and duties commensurate with their natural abilities. There are differences between the two sexes, not due to any partiality or discrimination, but as sources of attraction, which is necessary for the well-being of the posterity. About the usual criticisms against Islam, regarding veiling, polygamy, inheritance, etc., Mutahhari defends the orthodox view, however approaches them in a novel way. Veiling was viewed not for imprisoning women, but to protect her chastity, polygamy was considered preferable to the practice of ‘free life’. *Mut’a* or temporary marriage also is justified by Mutahhari as a contract between consenting parties. As a traditional scholar, Mutahhari is not free from the orthodox beliefs of Islam. He justifies all the traditional views
regarding women. Polygamy is justified provided that there is excess of women fit to be married in the society. Thus it is not meant for fulfilment of sensual pleasures. And he considers monogamy as the ideal system. However, though he was defending the traditional system, he could reform the contemporary views of Iranians on many social practices.

Mutahhari has a vision of an ideal human being and an ideal society in his philosophy. Among the various creatures in the world, only humanity has the ability to attain perfection. He/she is the vicegerent of God on earth and he/she can be higher than the angels. The criteria for this perfection and exalted position are faith and science. His ideal human being is called the *insane-e kamil*. The harmonious development of all human values in an individual makes him/her perfect. Faith in Islamic tenets, purification from ailments, complexes and ignorance, devotion, freedom and service to the people is the values one has to cultivate for attaining perfection. Such a person has free will and is not coerced by pre-destination. Mutahhari is a progressive scholar when he deals with the freewill of humankind. According to Mutahhari, human being is free to choose the right or wrong path according to his/her wishes. He/she also has the freedom of thought. Mutahhari went on to such an extent that an individual should use reason and rational thinking even in religious beliefs. He has developed a new outlook of the world which is known as *tawhidi* world-view. It envisions unity and brotherhood of all the Muslims of the world on the basis of faith. Belief in the unity of God has been extended to the society, and an egalitarian system with no discrimination, deprivation, tyranny and false gods is proposed for humanity. To attain perfection and realize *tawhidi* society, he recommends *zuhd* as a balanced social life.

To sum up, Mutahhari has constructed a new socio-political ideology based on Quran, the traditions and other religious scriptures in the turbulent
socio-political conditions of the Pahlavi period. His attempt to reform and regenerate Islam by throwing light to the classical scriptures and offering answers to criticisms could convince the people of Islam’s potentials for a better social and political system. Consequently, many Iranians who were attracted to western ideologies and philosophical schools turned to Islam, and used its traditions and metaphors in their struggle against the decadent and despotic regime of the Shah.