

## Dr Christopher Pooya Razavian – University of Birmingham



Dr Christopher Pooya Razavian's research is focused on the relationship between autonomy and tradition in Shi'ism. He argues that greater attention needs to be paid to the discursive nature of autonomy and tradition within Shi'i thought. His PhD was under the supervision of Professor Sajjad Rizvi at the University of Exeter. He has also spent many years in Iran, at both the Islamic Seminary and the University of Tehran. His last conference paper was titled 'Autonomy and the Internalization of Shi'i Tradition' presented at the Religion in Public Life Conference at the University of Exeter.

### **ABSTRACT: "Motahari, Social justice and fiqh"**

The Islamic revolution of Iran was one of the defining moments in global political history. It not only revolutionized Iran's political structure but also the way religion and modernity can coexist. Morteza Motahari was one of the most influential clerics active before the revolution. His books and speeches influenced many. A central effort of Motahari was to create a modern *Weltanschauung*, world view, or *jahān bīnī* in Persian. This world view was the foundation for his political ideology, and the center of this political ideology was his concept of justice. Given Motahari's influence, it is surprising that such little attention has been given to his works in Western academic literature. While his books in Iran have been popular, Motahari's stances on legal issues have been sparsely discussed within the Persian literature. This paper will help to fill this lacuna by examining how Motahari's understanding of social justice impacted his views on jurisprudence. The difference between Motahari's understanding of social justice and the traditional understanding of justice will be examined first. This will highlight how Motahari's understanding of social justice is founded on the two notions of equality and freedom, and how he understood justice to be relative to time and place. This will provide the framework to understand how Motahari employed the concept of justice in *fiqh*. Motahari used the concept of justice as a primary principle to evaluate various laws. This paper will examine a few of the practical issues that Motahari discussed. It will be shown that Motahari's conception of justice influenced his views on Women's rights, financial transactions, and freedom of thought. He argued for more rights for women in divorce, argued against the use of legal loopholes (*hiyal*), and that Islam has provided room for freedom of conscience.