

Can women become 'Minister' in Islam?

Throughout Islamic history the majority of prominent religious authorities have excluded women from the right of issuing religious verdicts (*Fatwa*). However some prominent theologians and Jurists like Mutahhari oppose that belief.

Sareh Ardeshir Larijany

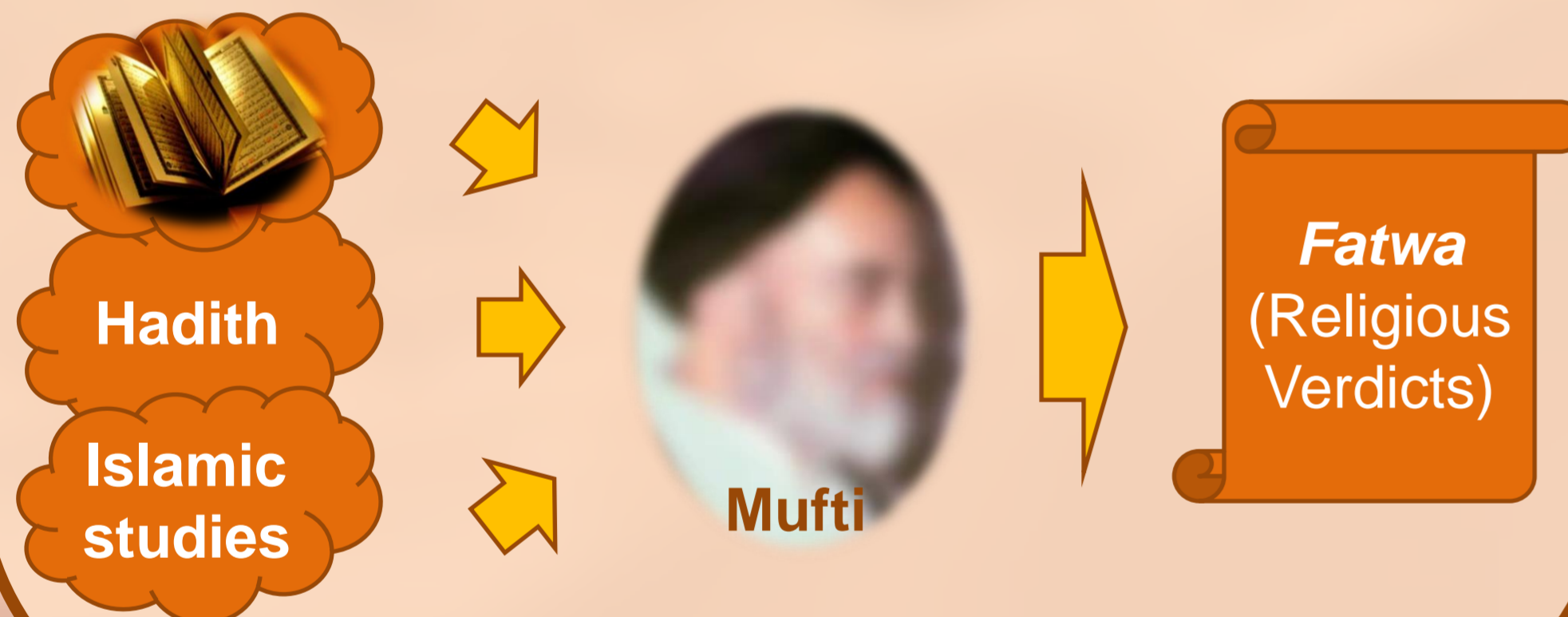
School of Theology and Religion

SXA210@bham.ac.uk

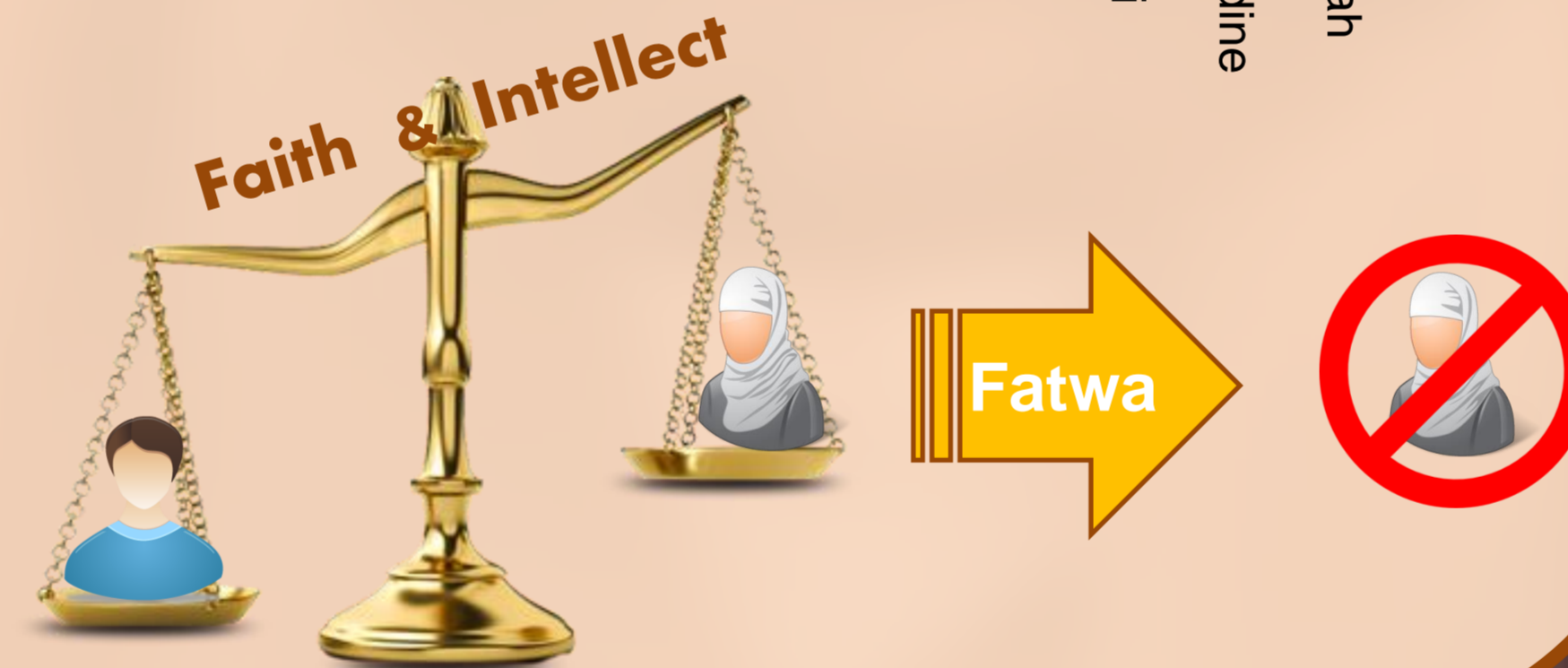
Introduction

Women's participation in socio-political activities has been a disputable matter throughout Islamic history. One of the most controversial issues was their right to issue fatwa (religious verdict). Shia jurists took two approaches. The majority of religious authorities exclude women from this domain while a minority believe that 'masculinity' is not the necessary condition. Mutahhari as the top rank Shia theologian scrutinizes the arguments that tend to favour the idea of women's deficiency in intellect, faith and justice. He emphasizes that, there is no rational or juridical reason to deprive women from this sphere.

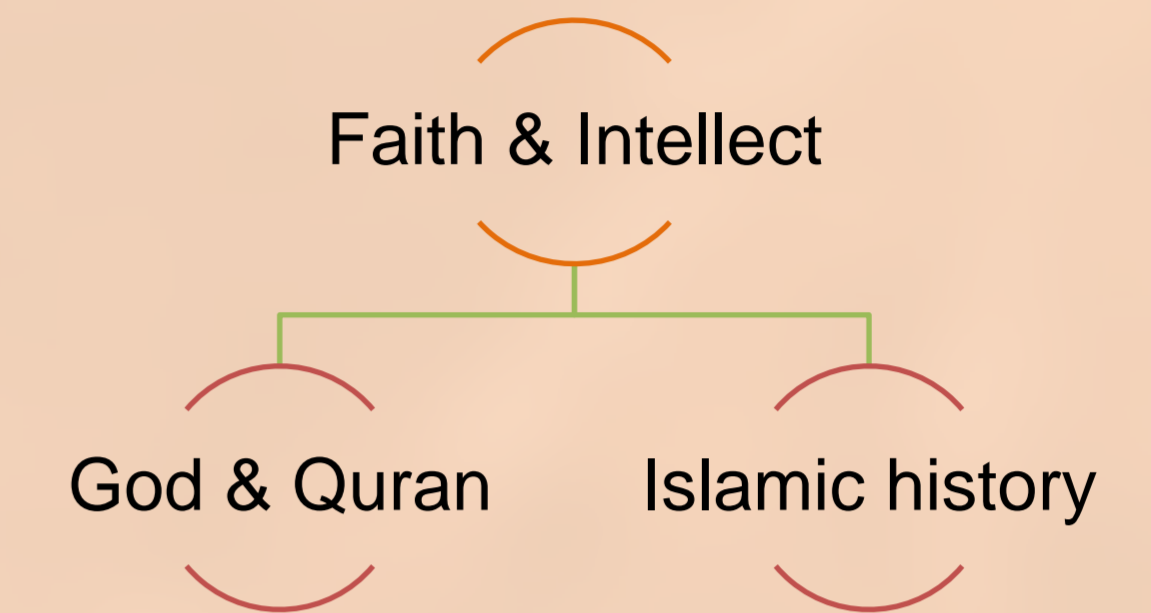
Fatwa & Mufti?



Background



Discussion



In The Quran

- (9:13) Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most god-fearing of you.
- Story of Queen of Saba (Sheba).
- (16:43) Question the people of the Remembrance, if it should be that you do not know.

In Islamic history

- Sayyidah Fatima (615-632 AD), daughter of the prophet Muhammad.
- Sayyidah Zaynab (682 AD), Prophet Muhammad's grand daughter.
- Sayyidah Fatima Masumeh (790-816AD), daughter of the seventh Shia Imam.
- Hakimah Khatoon daughter of the tenth Shia Imam.
- Hamideh Mosaffah, mother of the seventh Imam.

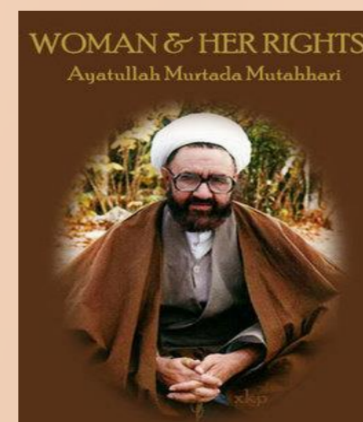
Aim

Examine the legitimacy of women's right of issuing fatwa based on the primary religious sources and Islamic history with respect to Mutahhari's writings.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative research based on text analysis. The approach of this research is thematic because it takes one question; how female's rights of issuing Fatwa can be obtained from Mutahhari's writings particularly his book 'Woman and Juridical and Political Issues'.

Who is Mutahhari (1919-1979)?



- Contemporary Shia philosopher and theologian.
- Named by other intellectuals 'an architect of modern Islamic theology.'
- He changed the traditional style of discussion on women's issues from specialized jurisprudence to a socio-rational argument.
- He brought novel interpretations suggesting that women could objectively take part in socio-political activities and occupy top-ranking religious authority.
- His idea on women's right to issue fatwas suffered a wave of criticism from the religious authorities that continues today.

Conclusion

Mutahhari states "definitely there is no reason to confine the right of issuing fatwa to men's authority. Thereby, if a woman has the same qualifications as men, she deserves to obtain high religious authority. If we suppose a situation in which there is a woman who is more knowledgeable than men and she is just and well qualified in other required conditions [for this position], based on jurisprudential principles, not only is the imitation of this woman allowed but it is also compulsory".

References

- 1- Arbery, A.J. (1955) The Koran Interpreted: A Translation. New York: Touchstone.
- 2- Mutahhari, M. (2012) Woman and Juridical and Political Issues. Tehran: Sadra.
- 3- Sajjadi Amin, M. (2012) Marjaiyat e zan.