Modern Interpretations of Islam

Though the sultanate period had marked a new and somewhat different beginning after the fall of Baghdad, it began to fall apart by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Political disintegration and social and moral decline once more gripped much of the Muslim world. The internal breakdown of Muslim society was exacerbated by the growing threat from European presence and imperialist designs. Many concerned Muslims and Western observers at that time would have agreed that Islam was a spent force, helpless before the military and political cadres of Europe and rendered religiously impotent by the superstitious and fatalistic tendencies that had infected much of popular Islamic belief and practice. Yet, these internal and external threats to the life of the community proved once again to be stimuli for religious revival and reform. Premodern revivalist movements rose up in the eighteenth century to address the social and moral decline, while the nineteenth and twentieth centuries produced the Islamic modernist movement and Islamic societies like the Muslim Brotherhood, which offered Islamic responses to the challenges of European colonialism and modernization. These movements not only contributed to the revitalization of Islam in their own times, but also left a legacy that has informed much of the temper and mood of contemporary Islam. Understanding the background and context of revival and reform, its leadership, and their interpretations of Islam is essential for an appreciation of Islam's dynamism and diversity.

From Imperial Islam to Islamic Revivalism

The power, prosperity, and dynamic expansionism of imperial Islam had seriously declined by the eighteenth century. Military revolts and

reversals, the decline of a strong central authority, and economic set-backs affected by European competition in trade and manufacturing proved costly. For many of the religiously minded, the causes for this political, military, and economic breakdown were to be found in the spiritual and moral decay that afflicted the community of believers. They believed that the fundamental failure of the community resulted from its departure from true Islam; its revitalization could only come from a return to the straight path of Islam. This call for a moral reconstruction of society did not occur in a vacuum. During the sultanate period, many of the nonofficial *ulama* had concluded that a religious renewal was desirable. This sentiment had an international dimension due to the contacts and exchanges that took place among those scholars who had traveled extensively in their search for knowledge and studied at major Islamic centers of piety and learning in Mecca, Medina, and Cairo (al-Azhar University). At the same time, a new wave of Neo-Sufism arose that sought to restrain and purify the excesses of pantheism and eclecticism that had infected Sufism. Influenced by the thought of men like al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyya, and Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, it reemphasized the importance of divine transcendence and the primacy of the Sharia.[48] These reformist tendencies grew and multiplied with astounding vitality during the eighteenth century, both because the sociohistorical conditions were ripe for reform and because the calls for religious renewal occurred within a religious tradition that had strong revivalist precedents and tendencies.

Revivalism in Islam

From its earliest days, Islam possessed a tradition of revival and reform. Muslims had been quick to respond to what they regarded as the compromising of faith and practice: Kharijite secession, Shii revolts, the development of Islamic law, and Sufism. In succeeding centuries, a rich revivalist tradition expressed itself in a variety of concepts and beliefs, in the lives and teachings of individual reformers, and in the activities of a host of movements.

The concepts of renewal (*tajdid*) and reform (*islah*) are fundamental components of Islam's worldview, rooted in the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet.[49] Both concepts involve a call for a return to the fundamentals of Islam (the Quran and Sunna). *Islah* is a Quranic term (7:170; 11:117; 28:19) used to describe the reform preached and undertaken by the prophets when they warned their sinful communities and called on them to return to God's path by realigning their lives, as

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individuals and as a community, within the norms of the Sharia. This Quranic mandate, epitomized in the lives and preaching of the prophets, especially that of Muhammad, coupled with God's command to enjoin good and prohibit evil (3:104, 110), provides the time-honored rationale for Islamic reformism, however diverse its manifestations in history.

> In so far as it is on the one hand an individual or collective effort to define Islam solely in relation to its authentic sources (i.e. the Kuran and the Sunna of the Prophet) and on the other an attempt to work towards a situation in which the lives of Muslims, in personal and social terms, really would conform to the norms and values of that religion, *islah* is a permanent feature in the religious and cultural history of Islam.[50]

Tajdid is based on a tradition of the Prophet: "God will send to this *umma* [the Muslim community] at the head of each century those who will renew its faith for it."[51] The renewer (*mujaddid*) of Islam is believed to be sent at the beginning of each century to restore true Islamic practice and thus regenerate a community that tends, over time, to wander from the straight path. The two major aspects of this process are first, a return to the ideal pattern revealed in the Quran and Sunna; and second, the right to practice *ijtihad*, to interpret the sources of Islam. Implicit in renewal is: (1) the belief that the righteous community established and guided by the Prophet at Medina already possesses the norm; (2) the removal of foreign (un-Islamic) historical accretions or unwarranted innovations (*bida*) that have infiltrated and corrupted community life; and (3) a critique of established institutions, in particular the religious establishment's interpretation of Islam. Despite the general tendency in Sunni Islam after the tenth century to follow (*taqlid*) the consensus of the community, great renewers or revivalists like al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, and Shah Wali Allah claimed the right to function as *mujtahids*, practitioners of *ijtihad*, and thus to reinterpret Islam in order to purify and revitalize their societies. Both Sufi excesses and prevailing *ulama* interpretations of Islamic law and belief were to be corrected by subordination to pristine Islam. In contrast to the Islamic modernist movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the purpose of reinterpretation (*ijtihad*) was not to accommodate new ideas but to get back to or reappropriate the unique and essentially complete vision of Islam as preserved in its revealed sources. However, Islamic revivalism is not so much an attempt to reestablish the early Islamic community in a literal sense as to reapply the Quran and Sunna rigorously to existing

conditions. Thus, we see its militant, even revolutionary, potential as both a moral and a political force, as witnessed by the wave of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century religiopolitical revivalist movements that swept across the Islamic world from the Sudan to Sumatra. The orientation and diversity of revivalism are demonstrated by the cases of several movements in Arabia, Africa, and India.

Arabia: The Wahhabi Movement

The Wahhabi movement is perhaps the best known of the eighteenth-century revivalist movements. Its significance is due not only to its formative influence on Saudi Arabia but also, and more importantly, to its role as an example for modern revivalism. Its founder, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–92), was trained in law, theology, and Sufism at Mecca and Medina, where he was drawn to the Hanbali school, the strictest of the Sunni law schools, and to the writings of the rigorous revivalist Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328). Ibn Abd al-Wahhab regarded the condition of his society as little better than that of pre-Islamic Arabia, the *jahiliyya* or period of ignorance, with which he compared it. He was appalled by many of its popular religious practices, such as the veneration of saints and their tombs, which he condemned as pagan superstitions and idolatry, the worst of sins in Islam. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab denounced these beliefs and practices as unwarranted innovations. They compromised the unity of God (Islam's radical or absolute monotheism) and the Islamic community, as evidenced by the tribalism and tribal warfare that had returned to Arabia. Living in the Islamic heartland, the homeland of the Prophet and the site of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, made these conditions all the more reprehensible. The diagnosis of ibn Abd al-Wahhab was similar to that of other revivalists. The political weakness of the community and its moral decline were due to a deviation from the straight path of Islam. Its cure was equally obvious; the task was clear. Muslims must return to true Islamic practice. This could be achieved only by a repetition of Islam's first great reformation, the social and moral revolution led by Muhammad, a return to a community life based strictly on the Quran and the example of Muhammad and the Medinan community.

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab joined with a local tribal chief, Muhammad ibn Saud (d. 1765), and a militant reformist movement was set in motion that would subdue large areas of Arabia. Although commonly referred to as Wahhabi, its self-designation was the Muwahiddun ("unitarians," those who uphold and practice monotheism). Religious zeal and military power were united in a religiopolitical movement that waged holy war with an uncompromising, Kharijite-

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like commitment that viewed all Muslims who resisted as unbelievers, enemies of God who must be fought. The tribes of Arabia were subdued and united in the name of Islamic egalitarianism; the Wahhabi missionary-warriors referred to themselves as the Ikhwan, or Brotherhood. In contrast to other revivalists, like the Mahdi of the Sudan and the Grand Sanusi of Libya, who reformed Sufism, ibn Abd al-Wahhab totally rejected it. As Muhammad had cleansed the Kaba of its idols, Wahhabi forces destroyed Sufi shrines and tombs. Their iconoclastic zeal against idolatrous shrines led to the destruction of sacred tombs in Mecca and Medina, including those of the Prophet and his companions. In addition, they destroyed the tomb of Husayn at Karbala, a major Shii holy place and pilgrimage center, an act that has never been forgotten by Shii Muslims and has affected their attitude toward the Wahhabi of modern-day Saudi Arabia.

For ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Islam's normative period was the time of Muhammad and the early community. All subsequent, post-Prophetic developments and the time-honored interpretations of the *ulama* and the law schools were subject to review and reevaluation in the light of Islam's fundamental sources. The purpose of *ijtihad* was a return to a purified Islam by weeding out those un-Islamic beliefs and practices that had infiltrated the law and life of Muslims. Because he was in Arabia, ibn Abd al-Wahhab's mode of revivalism was a more literalist recreation of the life and customs of the early Medinan community, that of the pious forefathers. He equated "Arab" and "Islam." This differed somewhat from revivalist movements outside Arabia, where a return to the Quran and Sunna meant reform through the subordination of Muslim life to God's revelation, not simply the appropriation of Arab Islam in toto. It also differed from the process of reinterpretation espoused by the Islamic modernist movement in the next century, which sought to formulate Islamically acceptable solutions for new situations. For ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the Islamic way of life was to be found in its pure, unadulterated form in the seventh-century community.

The Wahhabi movement influenced other revivalists in Africa and India. In addition, its legacy may be found in the state and society of Saudi Arabia and the ideological worldviews of many contemporary Muslims.

African Jihad Movements

A series of jihad revivalist movements led to the establishment of Islamic states such as those of Uthman Dan Fodio in Nigeria (1754–1817), the Grand Sanusi in Libya (1787–1859), and the Mahdi of the Sudan

(1848–85). A distinctive characteristic was its Sufi leadership—reformist, militant, and politically oriented charismatic heads of Sufi orders. Their posture was in striking contrast to the syncretistic, passive, nonworldly image of mystic orders whose missionaries had brought Islam to much of Africa. Although much of the success of African Sufism had been attributed to its openness to cultural synthesis, blending Islam with indigenous African beliefs and practices, reformers now attempted to bring Sufism into conformity with the demands of Islamic law in order to stamp out what they regarded as idolatrous customs that had led to social and moral decline. Sufism was not suppressed but redefined, emphasizing a spirituality that incorporated militant activism with its willingness to fight and die to establish Islamically oriented states and societies. Prayer and political action were joined together in the earthly as well as the heavenly pursuit of the divine.

The Sanusi and Mahdi Movements

Born in Algeria, Muhammad Ali ibn al-Sanusi (1787–1859) or, as he came to be known, the Grand Sanusi, studied in Cairo and Mecca, where he earned a reputation as a scholar of law and *hadith*. He rejected the political fragmentation of Muslims resulting from tribalism and regionalism and reasserted the need for Islamic unity and solidarity. A student in Mecca of Ahmad ibn Idris, the renowned scholar of Prophetic traditions and revivalist Sufi, al-Sanusi followed in the footsteps of this great Moroccan reformer in calling for the purification of Sufism and much of Islamic law, which, he believed, had been distorted by *ulama* interpretation. This and his claim to be a *mujtahid* (an independent interpreter of Islam) alienated him from many of the *ulama* and Sufi leaders. Al-Sanusi moved from Arabia to what is modern-day Libya after the death of his teacher and established the Sanusiyyah brotherhood, a reformist and missionary movement that created a network of settlements across central and western Africa.

The Sanusi program pursued a path of militant activism, consciously emulating the example of Muhammad. It involved the unification of tribal factions in the name of their common Islamic brotherhood and the establishment of Sufi centers, or lodges, which served as places of prayer and instruction as well as of military training and social welfare. They were committed to both the creation of an Islamic state and the spread of Islam. Although not hostile to the outside world, descendants of the Grand Sanusi resisted European colonialism. His grandson led the Sanusi resistance to Italian colonial rule and at independence became King Idris I of Libya.

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In contrast to the Grand Sanusi, Muhammad Ahmad (1848–85), the founder of the Mahdiyyah in the Sudan, proclaimed himself Mahdi in 1881. Although Sunni Islam, unlike the Shii, does not have a formal doctrine of the Mahdi, popular lore did accept the notion of a *mahdi* ("divinely guided one"), a messianic figure who will be sent by God to rescue the community from oppression and to restore true Islam and a just society. This eschatological belief should be distinguished from the more specific Shii expectation that the twelfth Imam will return at the end of time as the Mahdi. Unlike the renewer of Islam who claimed the status of *mujtahid* (one who is qualified to interpret Islam), the Sudanese Mahdi claimed to be the divinely appointed and inspired representative of God. He shared with other revivalist leaders the belief that he was reenacting the paradigmatic drama of early Islam—establishing, as the Prophet had done in the seventh century, God's rule on earth. As with Muhammad's victories, the gains of the Mahdi's forces were attributed to divine guidance and interpreted as divine validation of his mission. He established an Islamic community-state, and in common with other reformers, called for the purification of Islam and the unity of Muslims. Accomplishing this mission meant not only reforming Sufism, but also uniting his followers, who, like the Prophet's companions, were called the Ansar, in a struggle against fellow Muslims. Like the early Kharijites, the Mahdi justified waging holy war against other Muslims, in this case the Sudan's Ottoman Egyptian rulers, by declaring them infidels who

> disobeyed the command of His messenger and His Prophet . . . ruled in a manner not in accord with what God had sent . . . altered the Sharia of our master, Muhammad, the messenger of God, and blasphemed against the faith of God.[52]

Alcohol, gambling, music, and prostitution were all denounced as foreign (Ottoman Egyptian) and indigenous, un-Islamic practices that had corrupted Sudanese Islamic society.

When the Mahdist forces finally triumphed over Egyptian forces in 1885, an Islamic state was established in Khartoum, governed by Mahdist religious ideology. The Mahdi had supreme power as God's delegate, and the Sharia was its only law. The Mahdist state, which many regard as the forerunner of the modern Sudan, lasted until 1899.

The Indian Subcontinent

Two men in particular stand out in the premodern era of Muslim India: Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564–1624) and Shah Wali Allah of Delhi

(1702–62). Both provided the foundation for Indian revivalism and were formative influences on modern Indian Muslim thought.

Shah Wali Allah lived during a critical period for Indian Muslims. The power of the Mughal empire was in decline. A Muslim minority community faced not only the disintegration of its political rule, challenged by Hindu and Sikh uprisings, but also the internal disunity of conflicting factions: Sunni and Shii, *hadith* and legal scholars, *ulama* and Sufis. Educated in Mecca and a contemporary of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Wali Allah was also a member of the revivalist-oriented Naqshbandi order. He followed in the footsteps of the great revivalist of seventeenth-century India, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi. Like Shaykh Ahmad, he asserted the need for Muslims to purge their lives of un-Islamic practices and to reform popular Sufi practices, which he believed were responsible for much of the religious syncretism that threatened the identity, moral fiber, and survival of Indian Islam in its multiconfessional setting. As with other revivalists, the purification and renewal of Islam were contingent on a return to the pristine Sharia, grounded in its two infallible sources, the Quran and Sunna, which encompassed all areas of life. For Wali Allah, the revivification of Muslim society was a prerequisite for the restoration of Mughal power.

The genius of Wali Allah was his method of reconciliation. He eschewed the rigid, confrontative style of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and Sirhindi. His surgery was less radical than that of the Wahhabi. Instead of rejecting the current to restore the past, he sought to modify and refashion present belief and practice in light of early Islamic practice. Like Sirhindi, he sought to reform rather than, as the Wahhabi had done, suppress or eradicate Sufism. Sirhindi's condemnation of error as unbelief was offset by Wali Allah's penchant for a synthesis of contending ideas. In reforming Sufism, Sirhindi had enthusiastically declared Ibn al-Arabi an infidel; Wali Allah softened the condemnation. He resolved the contradictions between the ontological monism of Ibn al-Arabi's unity of being, which denied all existence except God's and declared the ultimate unity of God and the universe, and Sirhindi's "unity of experience," which maintained that Ibn al-Arabi's pantheistic union with God was experiential (based on a subjective experience of illumination or ecstasy) rather than an ontological reality (a union with the divine reality). Wali Allah taught that the seemingly contradictory teachings of Ibn al-Arabi and Sirhindi were two different ways of speaking about the same underlying reality. He denied that there was any substantial difference between the two; instead, the problem was one of semantics. As a result, Shah Wali Allah

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was able to reconcile contending camps within Indian Sufism and to couple this reconciliation with an appeal to Sufi leaders to cleanse their practices of un-Islamic, idolatrous, and antinomian tendencies.

The great legacy of Wali Allah and his major contribution to Islamic modernist thought was his condemnation of blind imitation and his emphasis on reopening the gates of *ijtihad*, the right to reinterpret Islam. As he had used his principle of reconciliation to resolve differences among Sufis and between Sunni and Shii, his teaching regarding *ijtihad* was pivotal to the resolution of a long-standing conflict between jurists and traditionists.

From the tenth century, two opposing trends had developed among the scholars of India. One emphasized strict and exclusive adherence to a particular school of law, and the other opposed this method and instead stressed rigorous following of the clear meaning of the Sunna of the Prophet as found in the accepted compendia of Prophetic traditions (*hadith*). Competition and bitter clashes had become the norm rather than the exception. Wali Allah criticized the partisanship of jurists, which had hardened into a belief that their leaders' interpretations or rulings were infallible and resulted in a rigid doctrine of blind imitation (*taqlid*). He distinguished between blind imitation, which was prohibited, and a more flexible imitation, for those incapable of *ijtihad*, which was subject to change in light of a new understanding of the Quran and Sunna. Wali Allah followed Ibn Taymiyya in calling for the opening of the gates of *ijtihad*, since the rulings of the old jurists were open to correction in light of the Quran and the Sunna. He maintained that the nature of interpretation itself was susceptible to error because of human limitations or because new evidence might arise. In practice, wherever possible, he resolved questions of law by seeking a synthesis of points of agreement among the law schools. However, ultimately he sided with the traditionists, for in doubtful cases he subordinated the fallible opinion of the jurist to Prophetic tradition, since the Sunna of the Prophet, unlike legal opinion, was an infallible source of law.

Shah Wali Allah has often been regarded as the father of modern Indian Islamic thought because of his condemnation of blind imitation of the past and his advocacy of personal interpretation. In this, he opened the door for many reformers who followed, from modernists like Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Iqbal to neorevivalists like Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi. While he established the acceptance in principle of the need for reinterpretation and reform, it is important to distinguish his meaning from that of others who later broadened and extended its use. For Wali Allah, as for other premodern revivalists,

the purpose of reinterpretation was not to formulate new answers but to rediscover forgotten guidelines from the past. Thus, when Wali Allah spoke of the use of *ijtihad* to avoid the rigid particularistic following of one school of law, he did so with the objective of obtaining an answer solely from the "purified past," from a Sharia that was complete and final in its Arabian form, although in need of periodic purification from historical accretions by Islamic reformers or revivalists (*mujaddids*).

Wali Allah believed that the restoration of Mughal power, and thus assurance of Muslim rule, was dependent on the social and moral reform of Muslim society. It was Sayyid Ahmad Barelewi (1786–1831), a disciple of Wali Allah's son, who transformed a reformist school of thought into a jihad movement. For Sayyid Ahmad, effective response to the breakup of the Mughal empire required a jihad against the military threat of Sikh armies, and later, the colonial ambitions of the British. Loss of Muslim power meant that India was no longer an Islamic land but an abode of war. Thus, jihad was obligatory.

Sayyid Ahmad combined a program of religious purification with military power to establish an Islamic state based on social justice and equality for its Muslim citizens. He emphasized pristine monotheism and denounced all those practices (Sufi, Shii, and social customs borrowed from Hinduism) that compromised it. Patterning his revivalist movement on the example of Muhammad, he led a group of his followers on pilgrimage to Mecca. At Hudabiyya, the place where Muhammad's followers had sealed a pact to fight the Meccans, Sayyid Ahmad administered an oath of jihad to these new holy warriors for Islam. Revered as a renewer of Islam, he returned to India where, in 1826, he led his holy warriors 3,000 miles to the Northwest Frontier Province (Pakistan) to wage war against Sikh armies that had taken control of the area. Sayyid Ahmad regarded both a holy war against a non-Muslim regime that ruled a predominantly Muslim population and the restoration of Muslim rule as Islamically required and legitimate. After the Muslim warriors defeated the Sikhs at Balakot, they established a religiopolitical state based on Sharia law. Like the early caliphs, Sayyid Ahmad was proclaimed commander of the believers. Although he was killed in battle in 1831, Sayyid Ahmad's movement continued for some years, his followers waging jihad against the British.

Islamic revivalist movements sought to revitalize their societies through a process of moral reconstruction that transformed not only the religious but also the sociopolitical life of their communities. Despite some considerable differences, their strength and legacy included an ideological framework and example that strongly influenced sub-

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sequent developments in the history of Islam. This ideological worldview included belief that: (1) the process of renewal requires a reenactment of the first and paradigmatic Islamic revolution or reformation of the Prophet Muhammad; (2) religion is integral to state and society; (3) departure from this norm leads to the fragmentation of the community and a decline in its fortunes; (4) only a purging of un-Islamic behavior and a return to the straight path of Islam, a life governed by Islamic law, can restore the community to its rightful place of ascendancy and power; (5) major causes of Muslim decline are the unchecked cultural syncretism of popular Sufism and the uncritical acceptance of tradition; (6) the reform of Sufism must be accompanied by the practice of *ijtihad*; (7) renewal is the task of both individuals and the community; (8) true believers, like the early Muslims, may need to separate themselves to preserve their faith and form a righteous society or brotherhood; (9) the struggle (jihad) to reassert the rightful place of Islam in society requires moral self-discipline and, where necessary, armed struggle; and (10) those Muslims who resist are no longer to be regarded as Muslim but numbered among the enemies of God.

Modern Islamic Movements

While premodern revivalist movements were primarily internally motivated, Islamic modernism was a response both to continued internal weaknesses and to the external political and religiocultural threat of colonialism. Much of the Muslim world faced a powerful new threat— European colonialism. The responses of modern Islamic reformers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the impact of the West on Muslim societies resulted in substantial attempts to reinterpret Islam to meet the changing circumstances of Muslim life. Legal, educational, and social reforms were aimed at rescuing Muslim societies from their downward spiral and demonstrating the compatibility of Islam with modern Western thought and values. Because of the centrality of law in Islam and the importance of the Muslim family, Islamic modernists often focused their energies on these areas. In many modern Muslim states, governments used Islamic modernist thought to justify reform measures and legislation. For some Muslims, neither the conservative, the secular, nor Islamic modernist positions were acceptable. Their reaction to the "Westernizing" of Islam and Muslim society led to the formation of modern Islamic societies or organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-i-Islami (the

Islamic Society), that combined religious ideology and activism. These organizations served as catalysts for Islamic revivalism in the middle decades of the twentieth century and have had a major impact on the interpretation and implementation of Islam in recent years.

Islamic Modernism

European trade missions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries progressively expanded so that by the eighteenth century many areas of the Muslim world had felt the impact of the economic and military challenge of Western technology and modernization. A major shift in power occurred as declining Muslim fortunes reversed the relationship of the Muslim world to the West, from that of ascendant expansionism to one of defensiveness and subordination. By the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Europe (in particular, Great Britain, France, and Holland) had penetrated and increasingly dominated much of the Muslim world from North Africa to Southeast Asia (the French in North Africa, the British and French in the Middle East and South Asia, and the Dutch and British in Southeast Asia).

Western imperialism precipitated a religious as well as a political crisis. For the first time, much of the Muslim world had lost its political and cultural sovereignty to Christian Europe. Although the Muslim world had endured the Mongol conquests, in time the conquerors had embraced Islam. Colonial rule eclipsed the institutions of an Islamic state and society—the sultan, Islamic law, and *ulama* administration of education, law, and social welfare. Muslim subjugation by Christian Europe confirmed not only the decline of Muslim power but also the apparent loss of divine favor and guidance. For the believer, it raised a number of religious questions. What had gone wrong in Islam? Was the success of the West due to the superiority of Christendom, the backwardness of Islam, or the faithlessness of the community? How could Muslims realize God's will in a state governed by non-Muslims and non-Muslim law? In what ways should Muslims respond to this challenge to Muslim identity and faith?

A variety of responses emerged from Muslim self-criticism and reflection on the causes of decline. Their actions spanned the spectrum, from adaptation and cultural synthesis to withdrawal and rejection. Secularists blamed an outmoded tradition. They advocated the separation of religion and politics, and the establishment of modern nation-states modeled on the West. Islam should be restricted to personal life, and public life should be modeled on modern, that is, European, ideas and technology in government, the military, education, and law. Conservative religious leaders, including most of the *ulama*, attributed

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Muslim impotence to divergence from Islam and deviation from tradition. Many advocated withdrawal, noncooperation, or rejection of the West. Western (Christian) ideas and values were as dangerous as their governments and armies, for they threatened faith and culture. Some concluded that where Muslims no longer lived under Islamic rule in an Islamic territory, they were now in a land of warfare which, following the example of the Prophet, necessitated either armed struggle (jihad) or emigration (*hijra*) to an Islamically governed land. In India, the son of Shah Wali Allah, Shah Abdul Aziz, issued a *fatwa* declaring India a non-Islamic territory, a land of warfare in which to fight or to flee were Islamically appropriate responses. While some attempted to emigrate, more joined jihad movements. However, the majority of religious leaders advocated a policy of cultural isolation and noncooperation. They equated any form of political accommodation of Western culture with betrayal and surrender.

A third major Muslim response, Islamic modernism, emerged during the late nineteenth century. It sought to delineate an alternative to Western, secular adaptationism on the one hand and religiously motivated rejectionism on the other. A group of reform-minded Muslims sought to respond to, rather than react against, the challenge of Western imperialism. They proclaimed the need for Islamic reform. They blamed the internal decline of Muslim societies, their loss of power and backwardness, and their inability to respond effectively to European colonialism on a blind and unquestioned clinging to the past (*taqlid*). Islamic reformers stressed the dynamism, flexibility, and adaptability that had characterized the early development of Islam, notable for its achievements in law, education, and the sciences. They pressed for internal reform through a process of reinterpretation (*ijtihad*) and selective adaptation (Islamization) of Western ideas and technology. Islamic modernism was a process of internal self-criticism, a struggle to redefine Islam to demonstrate its relevance to the new situations that Muslims found themselves in as their societies modernized. The Middle East and South Asia produced major modernist movements. Their themes and activities are illustrated in several key figures—in the Middle East, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and his disciples, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida; and in South Asia, Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Iqbal.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–97) was an outstanding figure of nineteenth-century Islam and a major catalyst for Islamic reform. A tireless activist, he roamed the Muslim world, calling for internal reform in order to defend Islam, strengthen the Muslim community, and,

eventually, drive out the West. An orator, teacher, journalist, and political activist, he lived and preached his reformist message in Afghanistan, Egypt, Turkey, Persia, India, Russia, France, and England. Afghani attempted to bridge the gap between secular modernists and religious traditionalists. He believed that Muslims could repel the West not by ignoring or rejecting the sources of Western strength (science and technology), but instead by reclaiming and reappropriating reason, science, and technology, which, he maintained, had been integral to Islam and the grand accomplishments of Islamic civilization. He was an ardent advocate of constitutionalism and parliamentary government to limit the power of rulers. Such statements appealed to many of the young who had had a traditional upbringing but were now also attracted by modern reforms. Afghani also appealed to the *ulama* with his assertion that Muslims needed to remember that Islam was the source of strength and that Muslims must return to a more faithful observance of its guidance.

Afghani rejected the passivity, fatalism, and otherworldliness of popular Sufism as well as the Western secular tendency to restrict religion to personal life or worship. He countered by preaching an activist, this-worldly Islam: (1) Islam is a comprehensive way of life, encompassing worship, law, government, and society; (2) the true Muslim struggles to carry out God's will in history, and thus seeks success in this life as well as the next.

> [T]he principles of Islamic religion are not restricted to calling man to the truth or to considering the soul only in a spiritual context which is concerned with the relationship between this world and the world to come. . . . There is more besides: Islamic principles are concerned with relationships among the believers, they explain the law in general and in detail, they define the executive power which administers the law. . . . Thus, in truth, the ruler of the Muslims will be their religious, holy, and divine law. . . . Let me repeat . . . that unlike other religions, Islam is concerned not only with the life to come. Islam is more: it is concerned with the believers' interests in the world here below and with allowing them to realize success in this life as well as peace in the next life. It seeks "good fortune in two worlds." [53]

Like the revivalists of the previous century, Afghani maintained that the strength and survival of the *umma* were dependent on the reassertion of Islamic identity and solidarity. He exhorted Muslims to realize that Islam was the religion of reason and science—a dynamic, progressive, creative force capable of responding to the demands of modernity:

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> The Europeans have now everywhere put their hands on every part of
> the world. The English have reached Afghanistan; the French have
> seized Tunisia. In reality this usurpation, aggression, and conquest
> have not come from the French or the English. Rather it is science
> that everywhere manifests its greatness and power. . . . [S]cience, is
> continually changing capitals. Sometimes it has moved from the East
> to the West, and other times from West to East . . . all wealth and
> riches are the result of science. In sum, the whole world of humanity
> is an industrial world, meaning that the world is a world of science.
> . . . The first Muslims had no science, but, thanks to the Islamic reli-
> gion, a philosophic spirit arose among them. . . . This was why they
> acquired in a short time all the sciences . . . those who forbid science
> and knowledge in the belief that they are safeguarding the Islamic
> religion are really the enemies of that religion. The Islamic religion
> is the closest of religions to science and knowledge, and there is no
> incompatibility between science and knowledge and the foundation of
> the Islamic faith.[54]

Therefore, science and learning from the West did not pose a threat to
Islam; they could, and should, be studied and utilized.

Central to Afghani's program for Islamic reform was his call for a
reopening of the door of *ijtihad*. He denounced the stagnation in Islam,
which he attributed both to the influence of Sufism and to the back-
wardness of the *ulama*, who lacked the expertise required to respond
to modern concerns and discouraged others from obtaining scientific
knowledge, erroneously labeling it "European science." The process of
reinterpretation and reform that he advocated went beyond that of
eighteenth-century revivalism. While he talked about a need to return
to Islam, the thrust and purpose of reform were not simply to reappro-
priate answers from the past, but in light of Islamic principles, to for-
mulate new Islamic responses to the changing conditions of Muslim
societies. Reinterpretation of Islam would once again make it a rele-
vant force in intellectual and political life. In this way, Islam would
serve as the source of a renewal or renaissance that would restore Mus-
lim political independence and the past glory of Islam.

In Afghani's holistic interpretation of Islam, the reform of Islam was
inseparably connected with liberation from colonial rule. The reasser-
tion of Muslim identity and solidarity was a prerequisite for the resto-
ration of political and cultural independence. Although he preached a
pan-Islamic message, he also accepted the reality of Muslim national-
ism. National independence was the goal of reformism and a necessary
step in revitalizing the Islamic community both regionally and trans-
nationally.

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani articulated a cluster of ideas and attitudes
that influenced Islamic reformist thought and Muslim anticolonial

sentiment for much of the first half of the twentieth century. His disciples included many of the great political and intellectual leaders of the Muslim world. He is remembered both as the Father of Muslim Nationalism and as a formative influence on Egypt's Salafiyya ("pious ancestors," the early founding fathers of the Muslim community) reformist movement and later, the Muslim Brotherhood.

Muhammad Abduh and the Salafiyya. If Afghani was the catalyst, his disciples Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905) and Rashid Rida (1865–1935) were the great synthesizers of modern Islam. Their Salafiyya movement was to influence reform movements from North Africa to Southeast Asia. Muhammad Abduh was one of the earliest and most remarkable disciples of al-Afghani, destined to become one of Egypt's leading *ulama*, a reformer of al-Azhar University, and the Mufti (chief judge of the Sharia court system) of Egypt, and to be remembered as the Father of Islamic Modernism in the Arab world. During the 1870s and early 1880s, Abduh enthusiastically collaborated with Afghani in writing reformist articles, publishing a journal, and participating in the nationalist movement. He was exiled with Afghani to Paris after they participated in an unsuccessful nationalist revolt against British influence in Egypt. When Abduh returned, he turned his attention away from politics and focused instead on religious, educational, and social reform.

Abduh's theology and approach began with the unity of God, the cornerstone of Islamic belief and the source of the Muslim community's strength and vitality. One of his major reformist works was *The Theology of Unity*.[55] The basis for Abduh's reformist thought was his belief that religion and reason were complementary, and that there was no inherent contradiction between religion and science, which he regarded as the twin sources of Islam. The bases of Muslim decline were the prevalence of un-Islamic popular religious beliefs and practices, such as saint worship, intercession, and miracles, and the stifling of creativity and dynamism due to Sufi passivity and fatalism as well as to the rigid scholasticism of the traditionalist *ulama* who had forbidden fresh religious interpretation. He attributed the stagnation of Muslim society to blind imitation (*taqlid*), the dead weight of scholasticism:

> We must, however, believe that the Islamic religion is a religion of unity throughout. It is not a religion of conflicting principles but is built squarely on reason, while divine revelation is its surest pillar . . . the Quran directs us, enjoining rational procedure and intellec-

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tual inquiry into the manifestations of the universe. . . . It forbids us to be slavishly credulous. . . . Well is it said that traditionalism can have evil consequences as well as good. . . . It is a deceptive thing, and though it may be pardoned in an animal [it] is scarcely seemly in man.[56]

Abduh was convinced that the transformation of Muslim society depended on a reinterpretation of Islam and its implementation through national educational and social reforms. His writings and *fatwas* reflected his underlying message that Islam and science, revelation and reason, were compatible, and thus Muslims could selectively appropriate aspects of Western civilization that were not contrary to Islam.

Abduh sought to provide an Islamic rationale for the selective integration of Islam with modern ideas and institutions. He distinguished between Islam's inner core or fundamentals, those truths and principles which were unchanging, and its outer layers, society's application of immutable principles and values to the needs of a particular age. Therefore, he maintained that while those regulations of Islamic law that governed worship (*ibadat*, such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage) were immutable, the vast majority of regulations concerned with social affairs (*muamalat*, such as penal, commercial, and family laws) were open to change. As historical and social conditions warranted, the core of Islamic principles and values should be reapplied to new realities and, where necessary, the old layers of tradition discarded. Abduh believed that the crisis of modern Islam was precipitated by Muslim failure to uphold the distinction between the immutable and the mutable, the necessary and the contingent. Abduh followed this approach by championing reforms in law, theology, and education. His reformist ideas were incorporated in his legal rulings and set forth in a journal, *al-Manar* ("The Beacon" or "Lighthouse"), which he published with his protégé, the Syrian Rashid Rida. In education, he worked for national reforms and modernized the curriculum at al-Azhar University during his tenure as its rector. Employing the Maliki law school's principle of public welfare, he gave *fatwas* that touched on everything from bank interest to women's status.

Abduh was particularly critical of the lack of educational opportunities for women and the deleterious effects of polygamy on Muslim society. His handling of the issue reflects his methodology, which combined a modernist interpretation of Scripture and its employment in the name of the public interest. Abduh argued that polygamy had been permitted, not commanded, in the Prophet's time as a concession to prevailing social conditions:

> If you are afraid that you will not treat orphans justly, then marry such women as may seem good to you, two, three or four. If you feel that you will not act justly, then one. (Quran 4:3)

He maintained that the true intent of the Quran was monogamy because marriage to more than one wife was contingent on equal justice and impartial treatment of each wife, which the Quran notes, subsequent to verse 4:3, is not possible: "You will never manage to deal equitably with women no matter how hard you try" (4:129). Abduh maintained that since this was a practical impossibility, the Quranic ideal was monogamy. Abduh's Quranic interpretation and his use of public interest as an Islamic justification for legal reform were adopted by reformers in Egypt and in other Muslim countries to introduce changes in family law.

Rashid Rida has been called the "mouthpiece of Abduh." [57] He traveled from his home in Syria to Cairo in 1897 to become Abduh's close protégé. In 1898, they published the first edition of *al-Manar*, a periodical that became the principal vehicle for Abduh and Rida's Salafi reformism. Rida continued to publish *al-Manar* after Abduh's death (1905) until his own death in 1935. Although regarded as a journal devoted to Abduh's reformist thought, in fact it was greatly affected by Rida's interpretation of his master and Rida's own growing conservatism in later years. It covered the range of reformist concerns—Quranic exegesis, articles on theological, legal, and educational reform, *fatwas* on contemporary issues.

In general, Rida adopted and carried on the Afghani–Abduh legacy of calling for a reinterpretation of Islam. The development of a modern Islamic legal system was a fundamental priority, given the challenges and requirements of the modern world. Rida, too, rejected the unquestioned authority of medieval formulations of law and regarded much of the social sphere as subject to change. Reform in Islam required more than the eclectic selection of appropriate regulations from one of the established schools of law. New regulations were necessary. He utilized a number of sources to justify this claim. Following Abduh, Rida relied on the Maliki principle of the public interest or general welfare. In classical jurisprudence public interest was a subsidiary legal principle used in deducing new laws by analogy from the Quran and Sunna. Reformers now employed it as an independent source of law to formulate regulations where no clear scriptural text prevailed. Rida also relied on Hanbali law and Ibn Taymiyya. Although Hanbalism is normally regarded as the most rigid of the law schools, its strict formalism pertains to acts of worship, the unchanging essence of Islam based on the Quran and Sunna, as distinct from social laws that are

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> Creed and ritual were completed in detail so as to permit neither additions nor subtractions, and whoever adds to them or subtracts from them is changing Islam and brings forth a new religion. As for the *muamalat* (social laws), beyond decreeing the elements of virtue and establishing penalties for certain crimes, and beyond imposing the principle of consultation, the Law Giver delegated the affair in its detailed applications to the leading ulama and rulers.[58]

Rashid Rida believed that the implementation of Islamic law required an Islamic government, since law was the product of consultation between the ruler (caliph) and the *ulama*, the guardian-interpreters of law. Like Afghani, Rashid Rida concerned himself with the restoration of the caliphate and pan-Islamic unity. He also shared the modernist belief that the *ulama* were backward and ill-equipped to understand the modern world and to reinterpret Islam. Therefore, he advocated the development of a group of progressive Islamic thinkers to bridge the gap between the conservative *ulama* and Westernized elites.

Rida shifted the Salafi movement's orientation toward a more conservative position during the thirty years after the death of Abduh in 1905. Although strongly drawn to Afghani and Abduh, Rida had a much more limited exposure to the West. He neither traveled much in the West nor spoke a Western language. He remained convinced that the British continued to be a political and religious threat: "The British government is committed to the destruction of Islam in the East after destroying its temporal power." [59] He became more critical of the West with the growing influence of Western liberal secular nationalism and culture in Egypt, ironically at the hands of former students of Afghani and Abduh, who wished to restrict religion to private life. An admirer of the Wahhabi movement in Arabia, he was more inclined to emphasize the self-sufficiency and comprehensiveness of Islam. Muslim reformers must not look to the West, but single-mindedly return to the sources of Islam—the Quran, the Sunna of the Prophet, and the consensus of the Companions of the Prophet. Rida's conservatism was reflected in his more restricted understanding of the term *salaf*, ancestors or pious forefathers. For Abduh, it was a general reference to the early Islamic centuries; Rida followed eighteenth-century revivalism's restriction of the term to the first generation of Muslims, the Companions of the Prophet, whose example was to be emulated.

During the post–World War I period, Rida became more wary of modernism and more drawn to the *ulama*. The example of Egyptian nationalism reinforced his fear that modernist rationalism in the hands

of intellectuals and political elites would degenerate into the secularization and Westernization of Muslim societies. As a result, he cast his reformism more and more in the idiom of a defense of Islam against the dangers of the West. His rejection of Western secular liberalism and emphasis on the comprehensiveness and self-sufficiency of Islam aligned him more closely with eighteenth-century revivalism and influenced the thinking and ideological worldviews of Hasan al-Banna (1906–49), founder of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, and other contemporary Islamic activists.

THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

Two men dominate the Islamic modernist movement in India—Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–98), a contemporary of al-Afghani and Abduh, and Muhammad Iqbal (1875–1938). As the eighteenth century had produced Islamic revivalists like Shah Wali Allah and Sayyid Ahmad Barelewi, the aftermath of the "Mutiny" of 1857, what some Indian historians have called the first war of independence, proved a turning point in Indian Muslim history. The threat to Muslim power, the decline of its society, the question of whether India was any longer a Muslim empire, were all moot points now. The war resulted in British rule and the end of Muslim dominance of India. The Muslim community stood defeated, powerless, and demoralized. Although both Hindus and Muslims had participated in the uprising, the British held the Muslims primarily responsible. In the aftermath, they questioned the loyalty of Muslims in a non-Muslim state. At the same time, the majority of the *ulama* would have nothing to do with these "enemies of Islam." Both British doubts about the loyalty of Muslims and Muslim withdrawal undermined the future of Indian Muslims vis-à-vis their British masters and the Hindu majority. Into the void stepped Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Like al-Afghani and Abduh, he was convinced that the survival of the Muslim community necessitated a bold reinterpretation of Islam and the acceptance, not rejection, of the best in Western thought. However, unlike al-Afghani and Rida, Ahmad Khan preached acceptance of the political reality of British rule and restricted his Islamic concerns to the Muslims of India. He was convinced that both political resistance and appeals to pan-Islam were impractical, given the political reality.

Like his Salafi coreligionists in the Middle East, Sayyid Ahmad Khan believed that the survival of Islam depended on the rejection of unquestioned acceptance (*taqlid*) of medieval interpretations of Islam and the exercise of *ijtihad* in order to produce fresh interpretations of

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Islam to demonstrate its relevance and validity for modern life. On the one hand, he placed himself within the revivalist tradition of Shah Wali Allah by maintaining that a return to pristine Islam necessitated purifying Islam of many of the teachings and interpretations of the *ulama*. His goal was to

> justify without any wavering, what I acknowledge to be the original religion of Islam which God and the messenger have disclosed, not that religion which the ulama and the preachers have fashioned.[60]

On the other hand, he differed with Shah Wali Allah and other eighteenth-century revivalists in his method. His exercise of *ijtihad* was not simply to use reason to get back to original interpretations of Islam covered over by *ulama* scholasticism, but to boldly reinterpret Islam in light of its revealed sources.

The extent of his use of reason, the degree to which he reinterpreted Islam, and his borrowing from the West marked him off from revivalists of the previous century. However, Ahmad Khan did see a continuity between his own work and that of previous scholars. Just as in the past Muslim theology had developed out of the need to respond to a social context, so the Muslims of modern India required a new interpretation of Islam to demonstrate the compatibility of Islam and modern science: "Today we need, as in former days, a modern theology by which we either render futile the tenets of modern sciences or [show them to be] doubtful, or bring them into harmony with the doctrines of Islam." [61] Ahmad Khan's use of reason was far more rationalist than that of Muhammad Abduh. Muhammad Abduh believed that there was no necessary contradiction between true religion and science, but he believed that religion and reason functioned on two different levels or in two different spheres. Ahmad Khan, influenced by nineteenth-century European rationalism and natural philosophy, much of which he regarded as consonant with the rationalist principles of the Mutazila and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), believed that Islam was the religion of reason and nature. There could be no contradiction between the word of God and the work of God (nature): "If that religion is in conformity with human nature . . . then it is true." [62] Islam was in total harmony with the laws of nature and therefore compatible with modern scientific thought. These premises, reason and the laws of nature, governed Ahmad Khan's interpretation of the Quran and Sunna and his treatment of such questions as evolution, miracles, and the existence of angels. Though he maintained that the Quran was the final authority, in practice his rationalist approach meant that where a seeming conflict existed between text and reason, reason prevailed. Quranic texts

that contained miraculous or supernatural language were interpreted metaphorically or allegorically, since miracles were contrary to the laws of nature. Yet, even here, he used his interpretation of the Quran to support his rationalist position: "I do not deny the possibility of miracles because they are against reason, but because the Quran does not support the happening of events or occurrences that are against the laws of nature or violate the usual course of things." [63] Ahmad Khan also took a hard, critical look at the traditions of the Prophet. He questioned the historicity and authenticity of many, if not most, traditions, much as the noted scholars Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht would later do. He advocated a critical reexamination of the *hadith*, including those in the two major collections of Muslim and Bukhari, and the acceptance of only those that could be traced directly to the Prophet himself.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan's approach to Islamic reform was both theoretical and practical. In addition to his prolific writings, which included a multivolume commentary on the Quran, he recognized the need for practical implementation through educational reforms. He established a translation society to make Western scientific thought more accessible, and founded the Anglo-Muhammadan Oriental College at Aligarh (renamed in 1920 Aligarh Muslim University), modeled on Cambridge University. Through these and other educational societies and journals, he promoted Western education in Muslim India. Like al-Afghani and Abduh, he realized that the future of the Muslim community depended on the ability to produce a new generation of leaders equipped to face the challenges and demands of modernity and the West. However, his strong affinity for the West, symbolized by his adoption of a European lifestyle and his acceptance of knighthood from Queen Victoria of England, undermined his influence. Many of the *ulama* and anticolonialists dismissed "Sir" Sayyid's loyalism and reformism as political and cultural capitulation to the British.

While Ahmad Khan did not produce the integrated curriculum to educate his version of the new Muslim leader or the new science of theology he had deemed so necessary for the future survival of the Muslim community, he did contribute to the spirit of reform in the subcontinent. An heir to the heritage of Wali Allah, he expanded and, in the end, took Islamic reform in new directions, extending its scope to include a rationalist reinterpretation of the Quran and a reevaluation of Prophetic traditions and the law. The issues that his work raised regarding the relationship of Islam to modern Western thought, the place and role of reason in interpreting religion, and the relationship of the Muslim community to the Hindu community were real

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questions that future generations would continue to grapple with. His modernist orientation remained a major alternative influence to that of the more traditional *ulama*, influencing the education and outlook of many Muslim elite leaders in the subcontinent.[64] Ahmad Khan's place and importance in the chain of Indian reformist thought was acknowledged by the man whose name would come to be synonymous with Islamic reform in the twentieth century, Muhammad Iqbal:

> [Ahmad Khan was the] first modern Muslim to catch a glimpse of the positive character of the age that was coming. . . . But the real greatness of the man consists in the fact that he was the first Indian Muslim who felt the need for a fresh orientation of Islam and worked for it.[65]

Muhammad Iqbal (1875–1938) represented the next phase in modern Islam. He combined an early Islamic education with advanced degrees from Cambridge and Munich in philosophy and law. In a sense, he represented the best of what Sayyid Ahmad Khan might have wished. Although by the twentieth century the situation in the Indian subcontinent had changed from that of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's age, Muslims, who were now obtaining modern educations, still lived in a society whose *ulama* generally preached an Islam that did not adequately address modern realities.

> No wonder then that the younger generation . . . demand a fresh orientation of their faith. With the reawakening of Islam, therefore, it is necessary to examine, in an independent spirit, what Europe has taught and how far the conclusions reached by her can help us in the revision, and if necessary, reconstruction of theological thought in Islam.[66]

Muslim corporate identity also continued to be an important issue. However, it was not one of loyalty to the British raj, but instead, independence and national identity. The Muslim community was divided over the question of Muslim participation in the Indian independence movement. Many had joined with Hindus in the Congress party and pressed for the creation of a single, secular nation-state. Others increasingly argued that, given strong communal sentiments and politics, India's Muslim minority would face a serious threat to its identity and survival in a predominantly Hindu secular state. As with much of Islamic history, and certainly the history of Islamic revival and reform movements, religious reflection and interpretation were conditioned by and intertwined with the political life of the community.

Muhammad Iqbal's profession was the law; his passion, writing poetry and prose; his lifelong concern, Muslim religious and political sur-

vival and reform. From the time he returned from his doctoral studies in Europe, he devoted himself to the revival of Indian Islam. He did this both as a poet-philosopher, and more reluctantly, as a politician. He placed himself within the revivalist tradition of Ahmad Sirhindi, Shah Wali Allah, and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, while addressing the questions of Islamic modernism. Islam and the Muslim community were in danger; they remained in decay and decline, were politically powerless, morally corrupted, and culturally backward. All of this, for Iqbal, stood in sharp contrast with the inner nature of Islam, which was dynamic and creative. Drawing on his Islamic heritage and influenced by his study of Western philosophy (Hegel, Bergson, Fichte, Nietzsche), he developed his own synthesis and interpretation of Islam in response to the sociohistorical conditions and events of his time. Nowhere is this synthesis of East and West more evident than in Iqbal's dynamic concept of the self. Rejecting Plato's static universe and those aspects of Sufism that denied the affirmation of the self in the world, Iqbal, utilizing the Quran, developed a dynamic *Weltanschauung* in his theory of selfhood that embraced all reality: individual self, society, and God. For Iqbal, the relationship of God to Islamic society and the Muslim to society incorporates both permanence and change. God, the ultimate or absolute self, has a creative, dynamic life that is both permanent and changing, as creation is the unfolding of the inner possibilities of God in a single and yet continuing act. The individual, the basic unit of Muslim society, is Quranically (2:30) charged as God's vicegerent with the mission of carrying out God's will on earth. Muslims share in this ongoing process of creation, bringing order out of chaos, by endeavoring to produce the model society to be emulated by others. An interdependence exists; the individual is elevated through the community, and the community is organized by the individual.

At the heart of Iqbal's vision of Islam is the unity of God (*tawhid*). The oneness of God applies not only to the nature of God but also to His relationship to the world. As God is the one creator, sustainer, and judge of the universe, so too His will or law governs every aspect of His creation and is to be realized in every area of life. This belief is the basis for Iqbal's view of the community as a religiopolitical state and of the supremacy of Islamic law in Muslim society. Based on the Prophetic tradition that "the whole of this earth is a mosque" and on Muhammad's role as Prophet as well as head of the Medinan state, Iqbal concluded, "All that is secular is therefore sacred in the roots of its being."[67] There is no bifurcation of the spiritual and the temporal.

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Church and state are not two sides of the same thing, for Islam is a single, unanalyzable reality.[68] Nowhere is this more evident than in Islamic law. Iqbal reasserted the Sharia's role as the comprehensive guideline for a society of believers and the need for it to be reintroduced into Muslim societies. During the nineteenth century, Islamic law, with the exception of family law, had been displaced in many Muslim countries by European codes. In the Indian subcontinent, the interaction of Islamic law and British law had produced Anglo-Muhammadan law, much of which was based on British common law. For Iqbal, Islamic law was central to the unity and life of the Muslim community: "When a community forsakes its Law, its parts are severed, like scattered dust. The being of the Muslim rests alone on Law, which is in truth the inner core of the Apostle's faith."[69]

Convinced that the survival of Islam and the Muslim community's role as a political and moral force in South Asia were dependent on the centrality of Islamic law, Iqbal emphasized to his friend and coworker Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League party and the founder of Pakistan, the need for a Muslim state or states in India. However, Iqbal did not have in mind the simple restoration of law as it was delineated in the doctrines of the law schools. For Iqbal, just as God has a creative, dynamic life that is both permanent and changing, Islam's way of life as interpreted in Islamic law is itself dynamic and open to change: "[T]he early doctors of law taking their cue from this groundwork evolved a number of legal systems. But with all their comprehensiveness, these systems are after all individual interpretations and as such can not claim any finality."[70]

Iqbal distinguished between eternal, immutable principles of the Sharia and those regulations that were the product of human interpretation and thus subject to change. He regarded the condition of Islam as a "dogmatic slumber" that had resulted in five hundred years of immobility due to the blind following of tradition and believed that the restoration of Islamic vitality required the "reconstruction" of the sources of Islamic law. While acknowledging the role of the *ulama* in the past, Iqbal blamed them for the conservatism that had characterized Islam since the fall of Baghdad. With their perpetuation of what he called the fiction of the closing of the door of *ijtihad*, these scholar-guardians of Islam, who were the followers of those who had developed Islamic law, stopped the dynamic process of reinterpretation and reapplication of Islamic principles to new situations. Instead, they were content to simply perpetuate established traditions. Iqbal rejected the centuries-long tendency to regard Islamic law as fixed and sacrosanct. Like other Islamic revivalists

and modernists, he believed that Muslims must once again reassert their right to *ijtihad*, to reinterpret and reapply Islam to changing social conditions. This right belonged to all qualified Muslims and not just the *ulama*. He believed that the traditional criteria used to designate one as an interpreter was both self-serving and shortsighted. The failure of the *ulama* to broaden their training left them ill prepared for resolving many new, modern issues. For these reasons, Iqbal extended and redefined *ijtihad* and *ijma*. He suggested that the right to interpret and apply Islam for the community be transferred from the *ulama* to a national assembly or legislature. This collective or corporate *ijtihad* would then constitute the authoritative consensus (*ijma*) of the community. In this way, he also transformed the meaning of consensus of the community from its traditional one, the agreement of the religious leaders and scholars, to the consensus of modern legislative assemblies, the majority of whose members would have a better knowledge of contemporary affairs. In addition, he recommended that, because of the complex nature of many modern problems, the legislature should seek the advice of experts from traditional and modern disciplines. Shortly after its establishment, Pakistan would establish such a council of experts, the Islamic Ideology Council. Iqbal's approach proved attractive to modernists as a way to enhance the legitimacy of parliamentary government and reforms in family law. However, threatened by an outlook that diminished their status and power in society, the *ulama* were resistant.

While Iqbal admired the accomplishments of the West—its dynamic spirit, intellectual tradition, and technology—he was critical of its excesses, such as European imperialism and colonialism, the economic exploitation of capitalism, the atheism of Marxism, and the moral bankruptcy of secularism. Therefore, he turned to the past to "rediscover" principles and values that could be employed to reconstruct an alternative Islamic model for modern Muslim society. This resulted in the discovery of Islamic versions of democracy and parliamentary government, precedents in Islamic belief that, through reinterpretation, could be used to develop Islamic equivalents to Western concepts and institutions. Thus, for example, Iqbal concluded that because of the centrality of such beliefs as the equality and brotherhood of believers, democracy was the most important political ideal in Islam. Though history, after the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, had prevented the community from realizing this Islamic ideal, it remains a duty for the Muslim community. That Iqbal did not believe that he was creating an Islamic rationale for simply copying Western values and institutions is strikingly evident in his conclusion that England embodied this "Muslim" quality:

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> Democracy has been the great mission of England in modern times . . . it is one aspect of our own political ideal that is being worked out in it. It is . . . the spirit of the British Empire that makes it the greatest Muhammadan Empire in the world.[71]

The very bases for Islamic democracy—the equality and brotherhood of all Muslims—militated against Iqbal's acceptance of the concept of nationalism. Although as a young man he had been an Indian national-ist, he returned from his studies in Europe committed to pan-Islamism. In addition to considering territorial nationalism as antithetical to the universal brotherhood established by Muhammad and embodied in the caliphate, he regarded nationalism as the tool used by colonialism to dismember the Muslim world. The political ideal of Islam was a trans-national community that transcended ethnic, racial, and national ties; it was based on an inner cohesion that stemmed from the unity of the community's religiopolitical ideal. As with al-Afghani and others, Iq-bal's pan-Islamic commitment was tempered by political realism. He accepted the need for Muslims to gain national independence, but be-lieved that as a family of nations based on a common spiritual heri-tage, common ideals, and a common law—the Sharia—they should form their own League of Nations. He applied this rationale to the situation of Indian Muslims and in 1930 reluctantly concluded that internal Hindu–Muslim communal harmony was impossible. Iqbal be-came convinced that the threat of Hindu dominance in an independent India necessitated the establishment of a separate region or state for the Muslims of India in order to preserve their identity and distinctive way of life:

> The nature of the Prophet's religious experience, as disclosed in the Quran, is wholly different [from that of Christianity]. It is individual experience creative of a social order. Its immediate outcome is the fundamentals of a polity with implicit legal concepts whose civic sig-nificance can not be belittled merely because their origin is revela-tional. The religious ideal of Islam is organically related to the social order which it has created. The rejection of the one will eventually involve the rejection of the other. Therefore the construction of a pol-ity on [Indian] national lines, if it means a displacement of the Islamic principles of solidarity, is simply unthinkable to a Muslim.[72]

If Sayyid Ahmad Khan had been the traditionally educated Muslim who sought to make modern Western liberal thought Islamically ac-ceptable, Muhammad Iqbal was the modern, Western-educated Mus-lim who reinterpreted Islam in conjunction with Western thought to demonstrate its relevance as a viable alternative to Christian European and Marxist ideologies.

Legacy to Modernity

The legacy of Islamic modernism has been mixed. Islamic modernists were trailblazers who did not simply seek to purify their religion by a return to an Islam that merely reappropriated past solutions. Instead, they wished to chart its future direction through a reinterpretation of Islam in light of modern realities. They were pioneers who planted the seeds for the acceptance of change, a struggle that has continued. While their secular counterparts looked to the West rather uncritically and traditionalists shunned the West rather obstinately, Islamic modernists attempted to establish a continuity between their Islamic heritage and modern change. On the one hand, they identified with premodern revivalist movements and called for the purification of internal deficiencies and deviations. On the other, they borrowed and assimilated new ideas and values from the West. For some, like Sayyid Ahmad Khan, this was accomplished by maintaining that Islam was the religion of reason and nature par excellence. For others, like Afghani and Iqbal, the rubric was the reclaiming of a progressive, creative past whose political and cultural florescence demonstrated that the very qualities associated with the power of the West were already present in Islam and accounted for its past triumphs and accomplishments. Thus, the belief that Muslims already possessed an Islamic rationale and the means for the assimilation of modern science and technology was strengthened. For all, the key was to convince their coreligionists that stagnation and decline were caused by blind imitation of the past and that continued survival and revitalization of the Islamic community required a bold reinterpretation of Islam's religious tradition.

Islamic modernists, like secular modernists, represented a minority position within the community but with less direct influence to implement change at a national level. In general, it would not be unfair to characterize modernism as primarily an intellectual movement, though activist reforms were initiated. Modernists sought to inspire and motivate a vanguard within the leadership or future leadership of their communities and had to contend with the resistance of a more conservative religious majority. The religious establishment was often alienated by the reformers' rejection of their traditional authority as the sole interpreters of Islam. They bridled at modernists' claim to independent interpretation and their attempts to chart the course for modern reforms. Abduh's educational reforms, while welcomed by younger *ulama* and students, were resisted by many of the more established religious leaders. Sayyid Ahmad Khan's favorable evaluation of evolution caused *ulama* to condemn him as an infidel. Though he gave

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As noted earlier, Islamic modernism engaged in a process of interpretation or individual investigation (*ijtihad*) that was qualitatively different in its methodology from that claimed by premodern revivalists, who had wished simply to reclaim and implement authentic teachings of the Quran and Sunna. However, modernists, while agreeing with revivalists about the need to reform Sufism and purge Islam of un-Islamic practices in law, also felt free to suggest that many practices acceptable in the past were no longer relevant. Moreover, they claimed the right and necessity to formulate new regulations. Instead of simply engaging in a restoration of the practice of Muhammad and the early community, they advocated an adaptation of Islam to the changing conditions of modern society. In effect, this meant new laws and attitudes toward religious and social reforms. Traditionalists criticized such changes as unwarranted innovations, an accommodationism that permitted alien, un-Islamic, Western Christian practices to infiltrate Islam. Reforms were condemned as deviation from Islam (*bida*). Reformers criticized the *ulama* for being out of touch with the modern world, incapable of adequately leading the community, and for being in need of reform; this deepened the resistance of many, though not all, of the religious establishment to Islamic modernism.

What were the effects and accomplishments of Islamic modernism? First, modernists implanted an outlook or attitude toward the past as well as the future. Pride in an Islamic heritage and the achievements of Islamic history and civilization provided Muslims with a renewed sense of identity and purpose. This countered the sense of religiocultural backwardness and impotence engendered by years of subjugation to the West and by the preaching of Christian missionaries. At the same time, emphasis on the dynamic, progressive, rational character of Islam enabled new generations of Muslims to embrace modern civilization more confidently, to regard change as an opportunity rather than a threat.

Second, the example and writings of modernists inspired many like-minded Muslims in other geographic areas. Belief in the absolute relevance, compatibility, and adaptability of Islam to the twin challenges of colonialism and modern culture influenced modernist movements in many other parts of the Muslim world. In North Africa, the influence of al-Afghani and Abduh on the thought and outlook of reformers like Morocco's Bonchaib al-Doukkali (Abu Shuayb al- Dukkali) and Allal al-Fasi, Tunisia's Abd al-Aziz al-Thalabi, and Algeria's Abd al-Hamid ibn Badis (Ben Badis) was such that Islamic reformism in North

Africa is often simply referred to as Salafiyya or neo-Salafiyya movements. Salafiyya reformism extended across the Islamic world to Indonesia, where it influenced the Muhammadiyya and Sarekat Islam movements. While these organizations had significant differences, they were similar in their desire to respond to internal decline and external encroachment. All rejected blind adherence to tradition and un-Islamic popular religious practices, and advocated Sufi reform, modernist reinterpretation (*ijtihad*) of the sources of Islam, and educational and social reforms. Most, like the Muhammadiyya, established schools that combined Islamic studies with a modern curriculum and ran social-welfare programs. They published reform-oriented newspapers and journals, such as *al-Islah* ("The Reform") and *al-Muntaqid* ("The Critic") in Algeria. Many modernists were anticolonialist and thus participants, often leaders, in nationalist movements that were rooted in religion and harnessed Islam for mass mobilization. Allal al-Fasi organized the Istiqlal (Independence) party in Morocco, combining Islamic reformism with the organization of Sufi orders. Islamic reformers in Algeria joined with some *ulama* and established the Algerian Association of Ulama, whose motto was "Islam is my religion; Arabic is my language; Algeria is my Fatherland."

Third, reformers' espousal of a process of reinterpretation that adapted traditional concepts and institutions to modern realities resulted in a transformation of their meaning to accommodate and legitimate change. As a result, subsequent generations, whether modernist or traditionalist, have come to speak of Islamic "democracy" and to view traditional concepts of consultation and community consensus as conducive to parliamentary forms of government. Similarly, it became quite common for many, including the religious establishment, to accept the use of *ijtihad*.

Fourth, the holistic approach of al-Afghani, Rida, and Iqbal, which viewed Islam as a comprehensive guide for private as well as public life, became part of the modern understanding or interpretation of Islam. Their emphasis on Islam as an alternative ideology for state and society, coupled with the example of eighteenth-century revivalist movements, has been a major influence on modern Islamic activists and movements throughout the twentieth century.

However, the record of Islamic modernism is mixed. Though it was able to prescribe, it proved less successful in implementation. Al-Afghani, Abduh, Rida, Ahmad Khan, and Iqbal failed to provide a systematic, comprehensive theology or program for legal reform. Conservative Muslims continued to see reformism as less an indigenous Islamic movement than an attempt to accommodate Islam to Western

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thought and culture. Though they attracted a circle of followers, the
reformers were not succeeded by comparable charismatic figures, nor
did they create effective organizations to continue and implement
their ideas. After their deaths, their followers went in many directions.
While Rida continued the work of al-Afghani and Abduh, Abduh's as-
sociates Saad Zaghlul and Taha Hussein became secular nationalists.
Though Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his Muslim League party rallied
mass support for the creation of an independent Pakistan through the
appeal to Islam, he did not follow Iqbal and implement Islamic law.
Islamic reformism tended to become a legacy that was not developed
and applied systematically, but instead employed or manipulated on
occasion, in a diffuse and ad hoc fashion, when convenient by individ-
uals, nationalist movements, governments, and Islamic organizations.
The influence and limitations of Islamic modernism are evident in the
interpretations of Islam employed in Muslim family law reform, which
became the primary arena for Islamic modernist reform, and in the
creation of major organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood and the
Jamaat-i-Islami.

MUSLIM FAMILY LAW REFORM

Muslim family law provides the primary example of the implementa-
tion of Islamic reform in the first part of the twentieth century. Re-
flecting the centrality of the family in Islam and in traditional Muslim
society, family law had been the heart of the Sharia and the major area
of Islamic law that had remained in force to govern the lives of Mus-
lims throughout the Islamic world.

Modern legal change occurred in many parts of the Muslim world
during the nineteenth century, when most areas of Islamic law were
replaced by modern codes based on European law. Secular courts were
created to handle civil and criminal law, and as a result, the jurisdic-
tion of religious (Sharia) courts was severely restricted. As with educa-
tional reform, the modernization of law further eroded the role and
authority of the *ulama*, as their tasks were now taken over by
Western-educated officials and civil servants. However, the one area
that remained essentially untouched and in force was family law, the
law governing marriage, divorce, and inheritance. The situation
changed in the twentieth century when this important and sensitive
area of Islamic tradition was subjected to change. Thus, family law
reform constitutes a major example of modern religious reform in
Islam.

The rationale for Islamic reform had been established by early mod-
ernists, such as Muhammad Abduh and Ahmad Khan. Their disciples,

Qasim Amin in Egypt and Mumtaz Ali in India, developed the social dimension of their programs, in particular as it related to women. Both focused on the plight of Muslim women as a primary cause of the deterioration of the family and society. In his *The Emancipation of Women* and *The New Woman*, Qasim Amin criticized lack of education, child marriages, arranged marriages, polygamy, and easy male-initiated divorce as causes of the bondage of Muslim women. Mumtaz Ali took a similar position. Ali refuted the antifeminist Quranic exegesis of some classical legal scholars, maintaining that their interpretations did not reflect the meaning of Quranic texts but the customs and mores of the exegetes' own times. Fundamental reforms were required. These ideas informed the positions of feminist movements and political elites a generation later in the 1920s and 1930s. While the modernization of law in the nineteenth century had been accomplished by simply replacing traditional Islamic law with Western-derived legal codes, change in family law was rendered through a process of reinterpretation that sought to provide an Islamic rationale for reforming tradition. Selective changes were introduced through legislation that modified traditional law in order to improve the status of women and strengthen the rights of the nuclear family. Laws were passed to restrict polygamy (polygyny) and to limit a male's unfettered right to divorce. Women were granted additional grounds for divorce. Child marriages were discouraged by raising the minimum ages of spouses.

To justify their departure from tradition, governments relied on Islamic modernist thought and strategies, employing legal doctrines and methods to establish the Islamic character of their reforms, thus forming a link between legal modernization and traditional jurisprudence. Reforms were proclaimed as resulting from the right to reinterpret (*ijtihad*) Islam. The principle of public interest or social welfare, originally regarded as a subsidiary legal source of law by the Maliki school, was pressed into service to legitimate reforms. Abduh's modernist exegesis of the Quran was used to limit polygamy. Other subsidiary sources of law were used to select a legal doctrine from one school and apply it to another or to patch together laws from different law schools or jurists and create a new regulation. For example, the grounds for divorce were substantially broadened in countries that followed Hanafi law (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, India, Pakistan) by borrowing additional provisions from Maliki law, such as desertion, cruelty, and failure to maintain. Thus, traditional authorities were marshaled or reinterpreted to justify reforms.

Despite the relative success of family law reform, many issues were skirted and remained unresolved. Whereas classical law was the product of the *ulama*, modern reforms were undertaken by governments

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through the action of parliaments or national assemblies whose members were laymen who lacked the training to qualify as traditional interpreters of law. In most instances, the *ulama* felt disenfranchised and viewed the process of modern legal reform as un-Islamic. They charged that a Western secular elite had used its political power to tamper with Islam and force unwarranted innovations on Muslim society. In some instances, the *ulama* mounted a counterattack. In Pakistan, the *ulama* rejected the findings of the Family Law Commission of 1956, charging that the majority of its members (six out of seven) were not *ulama* and thus were unqualified to exercise *ijtihad*, to reinterpret Islam.

The modernist majority had argued that as the Quran and Sunna could not:

> comprehend the infinite variety of human relations for all occasions and for all epochs, the Prophet of Islam left a very large sphere free for legislative enactments and judicial decisions. . . . This is the principle of *ijtihad* or interpretive intelligence working within the broad framework of Quran and Sunna.[73]

The modernist majority also denied that the *ulama* had any special role and authority and maintained that all informed Muslims had the right to interpret Islam:

> Islam never developed a church with ordained priests as a class separate from the laity . . . some may be more learned in the Muslim law than others, but that does not constitute them as a separate class; they are not vested with any special authority and enjoy no special privileges.[74]

The *ulama* countered, reaffirming their traditional role as the qualified expert-interpreters of the Sharia and accusing the modernists of wishing to ape the West because they had an inferiority complex and were ashamed of their religious tradition. Although they were not able to prevent the passage of reform legislation, they did limit the extent of the reforms. Similarly, many of the *ulama* in Iran had objected to the Shah's passage of the Family Protection Act and had criticized regulations to prohibit women from wearing the veil. While some *ulama* accepted the reforms, the majority were willing to bide their time until a more favorable period when traditional Islamic law might once more be implemented. Differences regarding the authority of traditional law, the need for social change, and the authority of the *ulama* as the sole official interpreters of Islam remained critical issues for the majority of the *ulama* and their traditionalist followers. Their voices would be heard in the 1970s.

Muslim family law reform underscores the basic issue underlying Islamic reform in general, the authority of tradition vis-à-vis the need for reinterpretation and reform in Islam. For more conservative traditionalist Muslims, the classical interpretations of Islam, preserved in the legal manuals developed by the law schools, constitute the blueprint for society. They provide the revealed pattern or norm to be followed. The extent to which there was a dichotomy between law and society did not indicate a need for legal reform but society's departure from the straight path of Islam. The remedy was not adaptation and change but a return to established, sacrosanct norms.

However, reformers maintained that a good portion of past legal practice, the regulations in legal manuals, represented the understanding and interpretation of early jurists who had applied the principles and values of Islam to their societies. They argued that changing conditions required that Muslims once again respond to the needs of society. While acknowledging the immutability of Sharia principles and laws found in the Quran and Sunna, modernists distinguished between Sharia, God's revealed law, and its extrapolation and delineation in the corpus of classical law (*fiqh*, understanding), emphasizing the contingency and relativity of the latter. Their position rested on the distinction employed by early Islamic modernists between the eternal validity of religious duties and the flexibility of much of social law. Thus, they asserted that Islamic reform was both necessary and possible.

A major factor undermining the credibility of reformers in the eyes of traditionalists is that the prime movers of reform have been Western- educated or -oriented rulers and political elites, a minority in society legislating for the more traditional majority. Similarly, feminist movements were regarded as organizations of upper-class women who wished to discard the veil in order to adopt Western dress and lifestyles. Although modernizing elites skillfully appealed to Islam for their methodology, and hence justification, in fact their approach was often superficial and piecemeal. They did not pursue a systematic review and assessment of Islamic law, fearful of its consequences. Because of the considerable resistance to reforms, compromises were often necessary. Indeed, in most Muslim countries, if a man takes a second wife or divorces his wife contrary to reform laws, the action is illegal but not invalid. This tentative approach toward legal reform was denounced as a manipulation and exploitation of Islam. The significance of these unresolved issues and the hold of tradition will be seen in those Muslim countries where the contemporary resurgence of Islam has led to calls for the implementation of Islamic law and the repeal of family law reforms.

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Neorevivalist Movements

Parallel to modernist reforms initiated in the first half of the twentieth century was the emergence of a neorevivalism, new religious societies, in particular Hasan al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Maw- lana Mawdudi's Jamaat-i-Islami (the Islamic Society) in the Indian sub- continent. These movements saw the Islamic community of the twen- tieth century at a critical crossroads. Like secular and Islamic modernists, they acknowledged the internal weakness of the commu- nity, the external threat of Western imperialism, and the value of sci- ence and technology. However, the Brotherhood and the Jamaat were more sweeping in their condemnation of the West and assertion of the total self-sufficiency of Islam. While secularists rejected Western polit- ical hegemony, they still looked to the West in charting their present and future. They adopted Western dress, manners, music, and movies, and appropriated Europe's political, economic, educational, and legal institutions. Islamic reformers struggled to provide an Islamic ratio- nale for selective borrowing from the West. However, neorevivalist movements like the Brotherhood and the Jamaat saw their options more clearly and simply. Both capitalism and Marxism represented man-made secular paths that were alien to the God-ordained, straight path of Islam. If Muslims were to remain faithful to God and His di- vine will, they must reject Western secularism and materialism and return solely to Islam, whose perfection assured guidance in all aspects of life:

> Until recently, writers, intellectuals, scholars and governments glori- fied the principles of European civilization . . . adopted a Western style and manner. . . . Today, on the contrary, the wind has changed. . . . Voices are raised . . . for a return to the principles of Islam . . . for initiating the reconciliation of modern life with these principles, as a prelude to a final Islamization.[75]

For the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-i-Islami, Islam was not restricted to personal piety or simply a component in social or political life—it was a comprehensive ideology for personal and public life, the foundation for Muslim state and society.

Hasan al-Banna (1906–49) of Egypt and Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903–79) of India were both raised in the shadow of British colonial- ism in societies where anticolonial national independence movements were active. They were pious, committed Muslims whose upbringing and education exposed them to Islamic education, modernist thought, and Western learning. Hasan al-Banna had studied in Cairo, where he

came into contact with Rashid Rida and the Salafiyya movement. He was influenced by the reformist thought of al-Afghani and Abduh, but as channeled through the more conservative, revivalist phase of Rida's life and *al-Manar* in the 1920s, with its emphasis on the dangers of Westernization and the complete self-sufficiency of Islam. He established the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. Mawlana Mawdudi, on the other hand, had been given a traditional Islamic education in which modern education was assiduously avoided. It was only later that he learned English and taught himself modern subjects. In 1938, at the invitation of Muhammad Iqbal, he moved to Lahore and in 1941 founded the Jamaat-i-Islami. Despite distinctive differences in their movements due to local conditions, both Hasan al-Banna and Mawlana Mawdudi combined religion with social activism. They shared a revivalist ideology and established activist organizations that remain vibrant today and have served as an example for others throughout much of the Muslim world.

Both the organization and the ideological outlook of the Brotherhood and the Jamaat were modeled on the example of the Prophet Muhammad and his first Islamic religiosocial reformation or revolution. The Islamic paradigm was reinterpreted and reapplied by these modern religious societies as it had been by revivalists and reformers in the past. Like Muhammad, they established communities of true believers who were distinguished from the rest of society and were totally committed to the struggle (jihad) to transform society. They did not leave (*hijra*) their societies but instead organized their followers into an Islamically oriented community or party within the broader (un-Islamic) society, forming a group of committed, like-minded Muslims who were to serve as the dynamic nucleus to transform society from within. In a sense, they were the vanguard of a religiously motivated elite. They were not a political party, but an ideological fraternity, as their names, the Society of Muslim Brothers (Jamaat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin) and the Jamaat-i-Islami (Islamic Society), signified. Each developed a well-knit socioreligious organization with a network of branches and cells. Members were trained and reinforced in their faith and commitment to create a more Islamically oriented state and society; this was their reformist struggle or jihad. They were carefully selected and underwent a period of training and ideological indoctrination that emphasized religious knowledge and moral fitness, and concentrated on moral and social programs. Religious instruction, youth work, schools, hospitals, religious publications, and social-welfare projects were among the activities utilized to create a new generation of leaders in a morally strong society.

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The Muslim Brotherhood grew rapidly as a mass movement, soon expanding beyond its rural lower- and lower-middle-class background to include many members of the new middle class in urban areas. It attracted a broad following: clerks, policemen, merchants, teachers, lawyers, physicians, civil servants, soldiers, and university students. At its height, its membership was estimated at from five hundred thousand to 1 million. In contrast, the Jamaat had a more restricted membership, focusing on developing a new elite leadership. For Mawdudi, change resulted from a vanguard working within society, and therefore, in contrast to the Brotherhood, the Jamaat was primarily an elite rather than a populist organization, concerned with training a core of well-educated and Islamically committed leaders. Although an activist, Mawdudi focused on a systematic presentation of Islam. A gifted and prolific writer, he attempted to provide a theoretical blueprint for the revival of Islam, or what he termed the process of Islamic revolution. His books and articles discuss such themes as the Islamic way of life, Islam and its relationship to the state, law, marriage, and the family, veiling and the seclusion of women, and economics.

Under the leadership of the Supreme Guide, Hasan al-Banna (and later, its prolific and influential ideologue Sayyid Qutb), and Mawlana Mawdudi, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-i-Islami reinterpreted Islamic history and tradition to respond to the sociohistorical conditions of the twentieth century. Both regarded Islam as the all-embracing ideology. The union of religion and society, the relationship of Islam to all aspects of life, followed from the doctrine of God's unity (*tawhid*) and sovereignty over all creation as embodied in the comprehensive nature of the Sharia: "The sharia is a complete scheme of life and an all embracing social order." [76] As they looked at their societies, and the Muslim world in general, both Hasan al-Banna and Mawlana Mawdudi attributed the impotence of their communities to political disunity, social dislocation, moral laxity, and a growing indifference to religion. Western secularism, with its separation of church and state, and the unbridled materialism of capitalism and Marxism were regarded as the major culprits. In contrast, they argued, Islam's organic relationship among religion, politics, and society distinguished it from the West. The separation of religion from the state represented for the Brotherhood and the Jamaat the inherent fallacy of Western secularism. Withdrawal of divine guidance would be the basis for its moral decline and ultimate downfall. Western culture, and all who do not follow Islam, exist, as did pre-Islamic society, in a state of ignorance and darkness.

Both the Brotherhood and the Jamaat incorporated the ideology, symbols, and language of revivalism within their reformist interpretation of Islam. There were two historic options—ignorance and Islam. Modern Muslim society was compared with that of pre-Islamic Arabia, a period of ignorance (*jahiliyya*), disunity, exploitation, and superstition. They felt that much of the Muslim world was gripped by factionalism, Sufi excesses, and acculturated, alien European institutions, practices contrary to Islam. The unity of the brotherhood of believers must replace the religious, political, and socioeconomic factions that divided and weakened the *umma*. Following revivalist logic, they called for a return to the Quran, the Sunna of the Prophet, and the practice of the early community to establish an Islamic system of government. Like Islamic revivalists and modernists, they rejected *taqlid* and upheld the right of *ijtihad*. They followed modernists in their acceptance of change through legal reform, though not accepting its application in modern family law reforms, which they regarded as Western in inspiration and intent. Unlike Islamic modernists who looked to the West and provided an Islamic rationale for the appropriation of Western learning, these contemporary revivalists emphasized the perfection and comprehensiveness of Islam and, hence, its self-sufficiency. All that Muslims needed could be found in or derived from the Islamic tradition. While open to science and technology, they denounced Muslim intellectuals and governments for their dependence on the West. They believed that the renewal of Muslim society and its social transformation or modernization must be rooted in Islamic principles and values. Thus, instead of speaking of democracy as such, the Brotherhood and Jamaat accepted the modernist reinterpretation of traditional concepts of consultation and community consensus, but noted that in an Islamic democracy the will of the people remained subordinate to the divine will. Mawlana Mawdudi called this a theo-democracy to distinguish it from a theocracy, or a clergy-run state, which he rejected. In an Islamic state, democracy could never mean that the majority had the power to legislate laws that contradicted religious belief regarding alcohol, gambling, prostitution, and so forth. Emphasizing the universality of the *umma* and its mission, they rejected nationalism and European-inspired legal codes, which they regarded as un-Islamic and a threat to Islamic identity, and called instead for an Islamic state to be governed by the Sharia. However, both Hasan al-Banna and Mawlana Mawdudi tempered their idealism with a realistic pragmatism. Mawdudi had rejected both Hindu and Muslim nationalism in India and initially refused to support the establishment of Pakistan as a separate homeland for Muslims. Like al-Afghani, Rida, and

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Iqbal, pan-Islamic aspirations gave way to a reluctant acceptance of political reality, and thus al-Banna and Mawdudi focused on Egypt and Pakistan respectively, while remaining committed to the eventual restoration of worldwide unity and involved in the broader concerns of the *umma*.

Although they were not political parties, their holistic vision, their belief that the Islamic community was to exist in a state and society governed by Islamic law, drew the Brotherhood and the Jamaat into the political arena. Both had understood their social revolution or reformation as occurring within society; their paths differed as a result of differences in political conditions. The Muslim Brotherhood's dissatisfaction with the failure of Egypt's government to establish an Islamic state escalated into violence, armed conflict, and the assassination of its founder in 1949. Government repression drove the Brotherhood deeper underground and subsequently led to a series of confrontations, imprisonment, executions, and, finally, its suppression and proscription in Egypt in the mid-1960s. In Pakistan, the Jamaat often found itself in opposition to governments and resorted to political action and participation in elections. Although Mawdudi and his followers were sometimes imprisoned for their activities, by and large they were able to work within the system.

The Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-i-Islami demonstrate the strength and attractiveness of neorevivalist movements. After the Brotherhood was banned in Egypt and apparently crushed as its leaders were executed, imprisoned, or driven into exile, Muslim Brotherhood organizations continued to grow in many other parts of the Muslim world—the Sudan, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Kuwait. Similarly, the Jamaat-i-Islami established organizations in India, Afghanistan, and Kashmir as well as Pakistan. What was the basis of the appeal of neorevivalists? First, they presented themselves as an indigenous movement. Although similar to modernists in their critique of Sufi excesses, saint worship, and the backwardness of the *ulama* and in their appeal to the process of premodern revivalism, neorevivalists did not seek to address modern life by demonstrating the compatibility of Islam with the West. Instead, they claimed that Muslims could adapt to the demands of modernity by reference to Islam alone. There was no need to go outside Islam's way of life, no need to be dependent on the West and run the danger of Westernizing Islam. Second, the organization and activism of neorevivalists contrasted sharply with the tendency of modernism to consist of a loose circle of intellectuals. Their emphasis on discipline, loyalty, and training as well as social-activist programs resulted in more cohesive and effective organizations. Third, though

criticizing blind adherence to medieval Islam and claiming the right to *ijtihad*, neorevivalist condemnation of Western values (Westernization) and insistence on the self-sufficiency of Islam proved more attractive to many of the *ulama* and the more traditional sectors of society. This was more akin to the traditional interpretation of Islam that they had learned and the lifestyle and values they cherished. Quite simply, the degree of change advocated by neorevivalists seemed less radical than that of the modernists, less of a departure from tradition. While neorevivalists and modernists advocated legal change, in practice, in sensitive areas like family law reform, the Brotherhood and the Jamaat made common cause with the majority of the traditionalist-oriented *ulama*. They also tended to agree in their condemnation of the free mingling of the sexes, Western dress and manners, movies, and banking interest. The Islamic credentials of modernists, on the other hand, were eroded by the tendency of many of the colleagues or students of early modernists to follow a liberal, Western secular path.

Neorevivalism blended the worldview that informed the activism of premodern revivalist groups, like the Wahhabi and Mahdi movements, with the holistic vision of Islam articulated in theory by modernists like al-Afghani, Abduh, and Iqbal. The result was an ideology grounded solely on Islam, an Islamic alternative that presented Islam as a timeless, rational, comprehensive faith whose transcendent message was relevant to this life as well as the next. Islam was identified with the everyday lives and concerns of Muslims. Poverty, illiteracy, economic exploitation, education, and health care were all issues to which the Islamic message was relevant. The transcendent was made immanent not by Sufi withdrawal or indifference to the material world but by involvement in it. For the Brotherhood and the Jamaat, Muslim submission to God implied the molding of the individual and society. The Quranic teaching that human beings were God's representatives or vicegerents on earth, charged with realizing and spreading His will for humankind, became the theological basis for the social and moral reformism that characterized the work of the Brotherhood and Jamaat. The preaching of Islam was not just a propagation of the faith among non-Muslims, but a revivalist call or mission to those born Muslim to awaken and become better Muslims. The message or interpretation of Islam that they preached and practiced addressed the totality of the human experience.

The strengths of neorevivalism also implied distinct weaknesses. Establishing the appropriateness, indeed superiority, of Islam often degenerated into a one-sided attack on the ills of Western culture. The worst characteristics or social problems (prostitution, alcoholism, high

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lemic that selectively compared Western realities with Islamic ideals,
Western Christendom at its worst with Islam at its best. Secularism
was equated with godlessness, an absence or denial of religious values,
rather than a separation of church and state in order to guarantee reli-
gious freedom in pluralistic societies. Women's emancipation move-
ments were dismissed as Western-inspired, anti-Islamic attacks on the
sanctity of the family. Instead of adequately reexamining issues related
to the real status of Muslim women (education, employment, divorce),
traditional patterns were simply reaffirmed without a serious consider-
ation of changing social realities. The source of these problems goes to
the heart of the relationship between faith and history, divine revela-
tion and human interpretation.

Neorevivalists have tended to follow conservative traditionalists in
their tendency to equate the historical interpretation they inherited
from their elders with revelation. They accept a rather romanticized,
static notion of the development of Islamic belief and practice. This
posture is understandable, given their perception and experience of
modernity as the threat of Western political and cultural domination
and assimilation. It resulted from the state of siege posed by both Euro-
pean powers and Muslim secular elites, who were regarded as indige-
nous domestic colonizers responsible for the Westernization of Mus-
lim society: "The faction which works for the separation of Egypt from
Islam is really a shameless, pernicious, and perverse group of puppets
and slaves of Europe." [77] The need to respond to this internal and ex-
ternal threat motivated revivalists to assume a defensive posture, to
defend Islam and its way of life against Westernization, instead of to
adequately reexamine and reinterpret Islam. Both Islamic revivalism
and modernism failed to produce an integrated, new synthesis or inter-
pretation of Islam. Yet, this did not mean that the Brotherhood and the
Jamaat were not open to change. Nothing could be more mistaken
than to stereotype their goals as a simple, literalist return to the sev-
enth century. However, the interpretation of Islam implicit in the
ideological worldview of revivalism was limited by its failure to reex-
amine Islamic history more thoroughly. Lacking an awareness of the
actual historical (as distinguished from the idealized) development of
their faith, revivalists could not fully appreciate the dynamic, creative
process of Islamization that characterized the development of Islamic
law and theology. They were unable to realize the extent to which
human reasoning and sociohistorical conditions affected the formula-
tion of belief and practice: the role of local customary practice in law,
social practice as a source of *hadith*, the influence of political consider-

ations on theological doctrine. The breadth of the process of Islamization by which Muslims had adopted and adapted foreign social and cultural practices, integrating them within a framework of Islamic principles and values, remained forgotten. (In contrast, the failure of modernists to produce a systematic reconstruction of Islam meant that their isolated, ad hoc reforms were not seen as part of an integrated whole, but instead as the result of an eclectic borrowing from the West. Therefore, modernists came to be regarded as Westernizers.) For revivalists, as for traditionalists in general, history provided *the* authoritative interpretation of revelation rather than *an* authoritative interpretation open to subsequent reinterpretation and reform as circumstances change. Although revivalists advocated change through *ijtihad*, they tended to accept past practice and undertake change only in those areas not already covered by Islamic law.

Conclusion

Revival and reform have been dominant themes in Islam since the eighteenth century, as Muslims responded to internal and external forces that challenged their faith and social order. Islam was used effectively in the formation of Islamic sociopolitical reform organizations and Islamic modernist movements. Revivalist movements in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries demonstrated the power of an appeal to Islam in providing a rationale for community decline and initiating religiopolitical movements bent on social and moral reform. Despite their differences, premodernist movements left a legacy to modern Islam in their ideological interpretation of Islam and their activist methods and organization. Islam proved a potent force in both the response to internal decline and the reaction to European imperialism. Islamic modernists reinterpreted Islamic sources to obtain new answers and to assimilate some Western ideas and institutions. Islamic modernism influenced attitudes toward Islam regarding both its past significance and its modern relevance. Its emphasis on Islam as a progressive, dynamic, rational religion generated a sense of pride, identity, and conviction that Islam was relevant to modern life. Though Islamic modernism did not produce a systematic reinterpretation of Islam and splintered in many directions, its outlook and modernist vocabulary penetrated Muslim society and enabled a new generation of Muslims to confidently embrace modern civilization with the belief that Islam was compatible and adaptable to the demands and challenges of modernity. However, some of these Muslims—neorevivalists—who grew

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up during the independence struggles of the post–World War I period rejected the accommodationist spirit of Islamic modernism. They combined a holistic interpretation of Islam and an organizational activism, calling for a social order based not on modernist acculturation but on a self-sufficient Islamic alternative. The struggle to produce viable Islamic responses to the new demands of modernity has continued to preoccupy many Muslims in the latter half of the twentieth century, as evident in the contemporary resurgence of Islam.