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# ISLAMIC REVIVAL AND MODERNITY: THE CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENTS AND THE HISTORICAL PARADIGMS

BY

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## *Abstract*

The contemporary Islamic movements are both a response to the conditions of modernity—to the centralization of state power and the development of capitalist economies—and a cultural expression of modernity. The emphasis upon Islamic values is not intended as a return to some past era but represents an effort to cope with contemporary problems by renewed commitment to the basic principles, though not the historical details, of Islam. Contemporary movements have predecessors in a similar wave of 18th and 19th century Islamic revival responding to the breakdown of Muslim empires and the economic and colonial intrusions of Europe. Behind these movements lie earlier reformist teachings and the example of the Prophet Muhammad himself, a lasting paradigm for how Muslims cope with changing worldly realities.

The contemporary world-wide wave of Islamic revivalist movements is a direct response to the global changes that constitute modernity. The modernization<sup>1)</sup> of societies, including the formation of national states, the organization of capitalist economies, technological and scientific developments, and the cultural and social changes that accompany these phenomenon, has generated religious movements among Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Hindus, and other populist, nativist, and nationalist movements. Like many of these movements Islamic revival movements may be understood as a reaction against modernity, but more profoundly they are also an expression of modernity. At the same time, the Islamic revival movements are not a new phenomenon. The past history of Islamic societies contains many examples of reform and revival movements that developed as a response to changing political and economic conditions. These movements may be traced back to the example of the Prophet himself whose

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1) The terms commonly used for Islamic revival movements are fundamentalist, Islamist or revivalist. I describe them as revivalist to express the spirit of revitalization implied in the contemporary movements and to echo the term *tajdid* or renewal which is applied to the preceding 18th and 19th century movements. Without going into a lengthy discussion of the meaning of modernization, I use the term to refer the processes of centralization of state power and the development of commercialized or capitalist economies which entail the social and cultural changes we call modernity.

own life constituted an Islamic response to conditions of “modernization” in his own society. Islamic movements today represent the conjunction of contemporary circumstances and historical cultural norms.

### *The Contemporary Islamic Revival*

The contemporary wave of Islamic revival movements has its origin in the 1920s and 1930s with the founding of the Society of Muslim Brothers in Egypt by Hasan al-Banna, and the Jama’at-i Islami in India founded by Mawlana Abu ‘Ala Mawdudi. With the creation of independent states after World War II and the suppression of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt in the 1950s, these movements were eclipsed by the secular and socialist tendencies of the national states. By the 1970s, however, a new generation again advanced the program of Islamic revival set out in the 1930s. The Muslim Brothers and the Jama’at in Egypt, Al-Nahda in Tunisia, FIS in Algeria, the Jama’at-i Islami in Pakistan and elsewhere in South and Southeast Asia, and Shi’i movements in Lebanon such as Amal and Hizbullah, represent the new generation.<sup>2)</sup> The defeat of the Arab states in the 1967 war with Israel, the manifest failure of many development programs, and the revolution in Iran, strengthened the demand for Islamization in Muslim countries.

The basic tenet of these movements is that the salvation of Islamic societies lies in a return by each and every individual to the morality taught in the Qur’ān and the Sunna, the teachings of the Prophet. They call, at least in theory, for a return to the Shari’a, or Islamic law. They call for a stripping away of many of the traditional practices and beliefs of Muslims as a false historical accretion to the pure Islam. They call for a renewed commitment to Islam in the hearts and minds of individuals as the basis of communal solidarity, social justice, and the fair treatment of the poor. They want women to return to family roles. They want to remove corrupt regimes and create Islamic states to be the protectors and enforcers of Islamic morality in Islamized societies.

This program is a response to the accumulated changes of the last century. Muslim populations, including those of the Arab world, the Indian subcontinent, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia were geographically defined and administratively organized into states by the colonial powers. When they became independent they were commonly ruled by military elites, as in Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan and other cases. The new states made their goal economic development defined in state capitalist or socialist terms. These programs rep-

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2) Some of the more important works on the world wide profusion of Islamic movements are: Ayyub 1980; Cudsi and Dessouki 1981, pp. 107-118; Esposito 1992; Kepel 1985; Mitchell 1969; Nasr 1994; Abu Rabi’ 1996; Roy 1994; Ruedy 1994; Sivan 1985.

resented the interests of the political elites including the military and attached professional and administrative cadres who ran the state, and sometimes land-owning or merchant interests. Development, however, did not mean mass prosperity. It always left substantial populations unemployed or underemployed.

Moreover, the national regimes commonly promoted the deliberate de-Islamization, if not outright secularization, of their societies. Turkey and Tunisia were most committed to secular forms of modern national society, but in almost all cases the establishment of national states meant the disestablishment of Islam. Islamic educational and legal systems were marginalized by the creation of secular state schools and courts. The new states defined themselves in nationalist terms even though many of them tried to subsume or absorb Islamic loyalties into the national identity. Even Pakistan, which appealed to Islam as the ideological basis of state cohesion, abstracted Islam from its historical religious content and reduced it to a symbol of political identity.

With state formation came massive changes in the fabric of society. A vast cultural gap opened between elites and the common people; elites adapted a western style of living while the common people persisted in traditional mores. At the same time the lives of the masses were profoundly disrupted. Colonial and then independent states helped to break down traditional forms of social solidarity. Guilds disappeared; sufi brotherhoods evaporated; migrants flooded from countryside to cities looking for work; village communities were shattered.

Modern states have also had a powerful impact on families and the relations of men and women. The new states intervened in family and community affairs to promote women's education and employment. The states also became direct patrons and caretakers of women through their schools, clinics, and welfare programs. The media promoted an image of the liberated woman and of consumer values, as peoples everywhere were made aware of the western materialistic lifestyle and its luxuries. Women have become less and less dependent upon their fathers and husbands for income, for social services, and even for their values and views of the world.

The Islamic revivalist movements are a response to these changes by the parts of Muslim populations that do not share in political power or in the consumer culture of modernity. They draw their support primarily from *bazaaris*—people working as craftsmen, peddlers, shopkeepers and workers in the old fashioned economy; *maktabis*—minor clerks, school teachers, students, displaced or unemployed intellectuals; migrants from villages to cities, and students, usually in the technical faculties such as pharmacy or engineering, who have a good education and high hopes but do not find adequate employment and remuneration.<sup>3)</sup>

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3) Ibrahim 1980; Roy 1994.

The Islamist movements express precisely the grievances of these milieus. They oppose consumer and individualistic gratification as social values in favor of moral commitment and community loyalty. They are communities organized for worship and discussion meetings. They sponsor social clubs, debating societies, lecture series, sport clubs, coops, schools, clinics, workshops and small industries, and professional associations. The Islamist movements work to reintegrate uprooted migrants from the countryside into an urban environment, provide neighborhood organization and social services, support indigent families, assist students, and represent them to the authorities.<sup>4)</sup> Schools and colleges which serve to integrate science and other secular subjects with religious learning, are particularly important. They train new militants who combine Islamic commitments and technical training. The Islamist movements are an important force for creating a viable community life. Furthermore, they call for economic justice, reform of the place of women in society and the protection of the traditional family. They call for the integration of state and society under an Islamic regime that will reverse the secularization of the state, and replace it with an Islamic state—a state that would be devoted to the application of Islamic law—the Shari'a, that would regulate the economy in accord with Islamic principles, see to a more equitable distribution of income, and uphold the symbolic and moral principles of Islam. Thus the revival movements see in Islam the blueprint for a total modern society, an ideological and political alternative to liberalism, socialism or communism. Their program provides at once for moral guidance, social justice, solidarity, work cooperation, and political goals.

The revival movements have two strategies to reach these ends. One is education and community organizing to build an Islamic society from the bottom up which, as it grows in power and mass appeal, will simply take over the state. The other strategy calls for political violence to overthrow corrupt and/or foreign dominated governments by the direct seizure of the state. Attached to the broader movements are political and military units. Small, militant, often violent, conspiratorial groups within, on the fringe of, and outside of the main movements abound. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive and indeed may be pursued at once or substituted for each other as tactical situations require.

Despite the frequent comment that Islamic religious revival movements are a return to the past, and despite their exhortatory rhetoric about the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān and the principles of the Prophet, they are not in fact backward looking. Typically the leadership of these movements are not the *ulama*, the traditional learned elite, but a new intelligentsia of preachers, community organizers, intellectuals, and missionaries. They no longer cultivate the historical forms of legal, theological and philosophical knowledge. The Islam they envision is not a return to Caliphs,

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4) Mitchell 1969; Roy 1994; Peacock 1978.

Imams and holy men, nor a revival of historical political concepts, but is a new Islam of commitment to an abstract concept of community and moral authority.<sup>5)</sup>

Their real point is to define a modern Islamic ethic based on generalized values that allow people living in new social conditions to reorganize their daily lives. This is a return to the Qur'ān in the way that the Protestant Reformation was a return to the Bible—a turn to the past to look for inspiration for adaptation to current and future conditions. The contemporary stress upon political solidarity, political goals and political symbols is also a new version of Islam, and not typical of the historical discourses.

Thus, the Islamist movements are an effort to find a legitimate basis for the construction of a modern state and a modern economy in the environment of contemporary technologies and sciences. For good reason they appeal to technical and professional students, bureaucrats, engineers, medical personnel, skilled workers and others who have some contemporary education. The people attracted to these movements and the strata of society that support them are typically the product of modern national states, national educational systems, and partially modernized economies.<sup>6)</sup> “Rather than a reaction against the modernization of Muslim societies, Islamism is a product of it.”<sup>7)</sup>

### *Tajdid: Islamic Revival in the 18th and 19th Centuries*

These movements, so typical of the mid- and late 20th century have their counterparts, perhaps their predecessors, in the 18th and 19th centuries. In that era too there was a world wide wave of Islamic reform and revival movements, called *tajdid* or renewal. They arose in the context of global political and economic changes, and however diverse in their specific teachings held, as do the contemporary Islamic revival movements, certain common religious and ideological views. They were a reaffirmation of the what I have called the Sunni-Shari'a—Sufi synthesis—the integration of Islamic legal teaching and mysticism that constitutes the mainstream of Sunni Islam.<sup>8)</sup> This synthesis includes a commitment to the Qur'ān and *hadith* (the sayings of the Prophet) as the scriptural sources of Islam, to the four schools of Islamic law, to the mystical teachings in the tradition of al-Ghazali which emphasize correct ritual and legal practice joined to an ethical and pious inner life, and to the theological schools that balance reason and faith. Institutionally this religious position was represented by the schools of law and numerous “conservative” Sufi brotherhoods.

5) Donohue and Esposito 1982; Esposito 1983; El Guindi 1983.

6) This paragraph is quoted from Lapidus 1996, p. 397.

7) Roy 1994, p. 50.

8) See Lapidus 1988, pp. 192-224.

Commonly, the reformers laid special emphasis upon the Qur'an and the earliest texts of hadith, the most authentic representation of the teachings of the Prophet. However, they preferred *ijtihad* or independent exercise of legal judgment to the unquestioning acceptance of the four authoritative schools of law. They espoused the teachings of al-Ghazali and Sufism as a collective mission to improve the conditions of Muslim life, as opposed to the veneration of shrines, the pantheistic ideas of Ibn al-'Arabi and other forms of intuitive, illuminationist, gnostic, and contemplative Sufism. Out of reformist circles also came the commitment to militant action to destroy the corrupt versions of Islam and to create a just and truly Islamic community. In all these respects, the imitation of the Prophet was their ideal.

The *tajdid* movements were provoked by the extraordinary flourishing of the "alternative" forms of Islamic belief, worship and community in the period from the 13th to the 18th centuries. In this broad period, Shi'ism spread throughout the Indian ocean basin; the Safavids made Shi'ism the official religion of Iran. Sufism also gained ever wider acceptance among Muslims. Magical types of Islam became ever more common. The conversion of new populations to Islam led to the spread of faith in saints as miracle workers and the veneration of shrines as Sufism formed syncretisms with the beliefs, rituals, and identities of non-Muslim or newly converted but unassimilated peoples.<sup>9)</sup> Among intellectuals, Sufi theosophy and gnosticism was a bridge between universal religious attitudes and the particular commitments of Muslims.

Furthermore, Muslim political authorities developed their own syntheses of Islamic cultural symbols and local cultures. In India, Southeast Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa, Islamic regimes integrated the pre-Islamic elite cultures of their regions into new forms of Islamic court culture.<sup>10)</sup> Each of these posed a religious and socio-political challenge to the upholders of the Sunni-Shari'a-Sufi consensus. Conservative ulama and sufis took the lead of movements that sought to stem the tide toward the more florid forms of Sufism, to counter-act court syncretisms, and push back the advance of Shi'ism.

The internal struggle within Muslim societies to define the correct beliefs and practices of Muslims came to be closely tied to the "modernization" processes, the global political and economic transformation, of that era. In the course of the 18th century Islamic regimes everywhere collapsed or were in decline. The Safavid dynasty which had ruled Iran since 1500 was destroyed by Afghan and other tribal forces. The Ottoman empire was in course of disaggregation as Ottoman provincial officials, warlords, tribal chiefs, landlords, religious leaders,

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9) Lapidus 1988, pp. 208-218 and *passim*.

10) Lapidus 1988, pp. 253-267 and *passim*.

and other notables established their locally based authority and small scale independent governments. Mughal suzerainty, challenged in the 18th century by Sikh, Maratha and other provincial separatist movements, and by the rise of British power in Bengal, gave way to British paramountcy and was liquidated altogether after the Mutiny of 1857. In Southeast Asia, the Mataram empire of Java came under direct Dutch economic and indirect Dutch political control. In North Africa, Muslim states were being subverted by their declining commercial position in the Mediterranean. The Sudanic states had long passed the peak of their commercial prosperity, though Muslim communities were growing in influence in other parts of Africa.

The decline of the Muslim empires can be understood in terms of the internal life cycles of such regimes, but the conjunctions suggest a common external factor: the rise of the capitalist economy and the progressive capture of world trade by European nations. Though the decline of organized Muslim states sometimes preceded, sometimes intersected with, and sometimes was precipitated by the rising power of European states, in general it may be fair to say that the growing control of Europe over world trade, though not absolute, undermined the economic productivity, trading profits and the revenue base of the Muslim empires, induced inflationary change, and opened the way to internal political conflicts for control of the domestic economies of Muslim regions.<sup>11)</sup>

The relation of the reform movements (*tajdid*) to these global, political, and economic changes is complicated. In some instances, such as the Wahhabi movement in Arabia and the *jihads* of 'Uthman don Fodio, *tajdid* seem to have preceded European intervention. Yet many other parts of the Muslim world were already attuned to the problems posed by European expansion. Morocco, for example, faced Portuguese and Spanish pressures as early as the fifteenth century. Ottoman expansion had come to an end by the seventeenth century and severe economic problems were being felt in Anatolia. In India and the Indies Dutch and English interventions also made themselves felt in the 17th century.

Whatever the precise relation to the world economy, the breakdown of the Islamic state system precipitated a Muslim world-wide religio-political crisis. Tribal populations on the periphery of the great empires began to press against the frontiers and war with each other. In regions of economic change, commercial crop growing, increased trade, migration and resettlement induced social unrest. By the end of the eighteenth century, *tajdid* was being adopted all over the Muslim world as a response to declining Muslim states, overt internal struggles for power, and as the banner of resistance to European economic competition.

Three examples will help clarify the connection between Islamic reformism

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11) Owen 1981; Wallerstein 1980, 1989; Braudel 1986.



and 18th and 19th century global economic and political change. The first illustrates the role of revivalist teaching in a Pathan tribal society in the Northwest Frontier Province of India in the context of the breakdown of the Mughal Empire. In the transition from Mughal to British rule, Pathans, Afghans, and Sikhs were struggling for control of the Punjab. Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (1786-1831), who had studied in Mecca, set about to preach the reform program among the Yusufzai Pathans. He preached belief in the unity of God, the elimination of polytheism, shrine Sufism, and Shi'ism, and sought to restore the true Islam by repudiating the ordinary Indian Muslim mystical and ritual practices. The Pathans seem to have responded to his preaching in order to unify their cause under a single leadership. In 1827, Sayyid Ahmad claimed the title *imam* or supreme religious leader, and led his people to war. He was killed at Balakot in 1831 and the barely achieved unity of the Pathans in their resistance to the Afghans and Sikhs was lost. The religious legacy of Sayyid Ahmad, however, remained in the form of the *tariqa Muhammadiya* which would later influence Muslim reform movements in Bengal and other parts of India.<sup>12)</sup>

A second milieu in which reformism became important was that of agricultural and town communities undergoing commercialization. In Bengal, British administration introduced important economic and social changes. The British tax system was based on farming out the collection of revenues to the highest bidders, but in 1793 they allowed the revenue collectors to dispose of the lands, whether by sale or inheritance, as if they were its owners. Thus the British made *zamindar* revenue collectors hereditary proprietors whom they subjected to fixed payments. They also deprived landowners who did not have formal legal documents of their customary rights. The effect of these changes was to favor capital rich, Hindu, Calcutta-based, British East India Company allied merchants and moneylenders, and British settlers, and to displace Muslim *zamindars*, peasant proprietors and sharecroppers. The influx of British manufactured textiles also put local weavers and oil pressers out of work. These people found themselves under increased pressure from Hindu and British landlords, deprived of customary rights and subject to taxation which they felt was both illegal and a religious insult in that the revenues went to support Hindu religious activities.

The declining position of Muslims made Bengal ripe for reform preaching. One was the movement led by Titu Mir, who began his career as a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi and a proponent of the *tariqa Muhammadiya*. He too had studied in Mecca and returned to Bengal to preach the primacy of Qur'an and *hadith* and to oppose the ceremonies at sufi shrines. Titu Mir's reforms became a political cause in 1830 when the local *zamindars* and indigo planters

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12) Bari 1965.

tried to resist the spread of his teachings by imposing a tax on his peasant followers. In reaction Titu Mir and his followers defiled a Hindu temple, the authorities were called in, and he was killed by the police in 1831.<sup>13)</sup>

A third context in which *tajdid* was influential were anti-colonial movements. The Sanusi movement in Libya, Kurdish revolts against Ottoman rule, the Achenese wars against the Dutch, Muslim militancy in the Philippines, resistance in Daghestan to Russian conquest, and opposition to Chinese rule in Yunnan and Xinjiang were all inspired by reformist leaders.<sup>14)</sup>

The anti-colonial role for *tajdid* was carried over into the formation of 20th century nationalist movements. In Algeria Muslim renewal, here called *islah*, was adapted to the needs of an incipient nationalist movement. Muslim reformism reached Algeria as a result of contacts between Muhammad 'Abduh and Muslim reformers in Tunisia and Algeria who felt the need of a Muslim press and religious associations to compete with Catholic organizations and French schools. 'Abd al-Hamid ibn Badis became the principal leader of the Algerian reform movement. Following the principles of returning to Qur'an and *hadith*, faith in the unity of God, and opposition to the veneration of saints and popular religious festivals, the reformers combatted the social ills of modern societies including alcoholism, gambling, and other immoral activities forbidden by Islam. Their purpose was not only to define a new doctrine but to create a social movement through which the new ideas could become part of Algerian Islamic culture. The reformers sponsored a strong scout movement, founded schools which taught Qur'an, Algerian history, patriotic songs, French, arithmetic and geography. They also founded the Association of Muslim 'Ulama in 1931 to sponsor preaching, publications, and schools.

Ben Badis also elaborated an Algerian Muslim political conception. He distinguished cultural from political nationality and thus allowed for a conception of a Muslim community as universal in principle and yet divided into politically and culturally distinct regional or national groups. By distinguishing religion from political nationality, he allowed for the emergence of an Algerian identity even under French domination. His movement popularized the idea that religiously, linguistically, and culturally Algerians were a separate people whose ultimate destiny was political independence. Though Ben Badis died in 1940 and the reform movement lost its dynamism, its contribution to the creation of an Algerian national consciousness was an important factor in the eventual emergence of an independent Algerian state.<sup>15)</sup>

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13) Khan 1965; Metcalf 1982. For a parallel case, Islam and the coffee economy of Sumatra see Dobbin 1983.

14) The Naqshbandi tariqa was involved in many of these anti-colonial movements. See Lapidus 1988, pp. 563-568, relevant chapters and bibliography.

15) Merad 1967; Gellner 1981.

Thus, reformist teaching appealed to people in very different milieus. In lineage societies, it functioned as an ideology of mobilization for tribal conquests and the formation of new states; in agricultural or trading areas undergoing commercialization as in Bengal and Sumatra, it attracted merchants, peddlers, and commercial farmers. It became the banner of anti-colonialism in China, Russia, and North Africa and supported the formation of national states.

What gave *tajdid* an affinity for so many and such diverse social and political environments? First is the appropriateness of the *tajdid* ideology for network formation, integration of diverse populations, and political mobilization. Most Islamic societies were divided among family, tribal, regional, and ethnic communities, but *tajdid* was a more universalistic and international form of Islam which could appeal to Qur'ān and Sunna, as opposed to local, particularistic forms of veneration of saints and details of religious law. In fragmented societies *tajdid* provided the basis of commitment to a common cause, and helped transcend fragmentation in favor of religious and ideological unity.

In commercializing societies the reform movements served several purposes. One was the formation of new communities out of mobile persons on the basis of Islamic solidarity. These communities looked to a more standard universal and less parochial form of Islam—an Islam which could serve as the basis of trust in commerce, solidarity in politics, and provide the universal ethos needed in mobile commercial communities. Reform also provided the motivation and justification for struggles against economic and political rivals whether Muslim or non-Muslim. In commercializing peasant societies reform Islam played a critical role in providing leadership, religious morals, ideological identity, and political motivation to populations involved in economic and political change.

Furthermore, *tajdid* provided a mechanism for political organization. The *sufi tariqa* provided the structure, the networks, and the bases for the organization of political action in such cases as the Sanusi and the Sumatran *padri* movement. In such cases as the *jihads* of 'Uthman in West Africa<sup>16</sup>) or in the Fara'idi movement in Bengal, religious reformers appealed to the concept of the Caliph state and organized a hierarchical territorial structure under their authority. In either case Islamic religious belief provided authoritative images of social and political organization.

Another factor in the utility of *tajdid* for political mobilization, whether tribal, commercial, or national, was its psychological orientation. Underlying the great Islamic debates over the proper form of Islam were two totally different concepts of the nature of religious life. One orientation derived from popular sufi Islam. This is the form of Islam that minimizes the importance of knowledge, law, and ethical discipline, and stresses attachment to the person and to

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16) Hiskett 1973 and 1976; Johnston 1967; Last 1967; Willis 1967.

the objects associated with a particular saint who is regarded as a personal guide, bearer of miraculous and magical powers, and intercessor between ordinary men and God. This magical and mystical form of religion allows people to appeal for their worldly needs, financial or social, or for psychological support, to the person of the saint, and to obtain immediate religious and emotional gratification from restored faith that God's power will be at one's disposal. As Max Weber has pointed out, this type of immediate religious gratification relieves psychological tension, reduces the motivation for worldly action, and gives comfort instead of determination to resolve problems.<sup>17)</sup>

The Islam represented by the Sunni-Shari'a-Sufi synthesis is totally opposed. This form of Islam stresses intellectual knowledge, emotional self-discipline, and communal responsibility. It creates an external framework of legal and social norms and an internal personal framework of intellectual knowledge and ethical self-control that inhibits emotional release. A believer in this frame of mind is prepared to direct his energy toward rationally defined causes and to adapt relatively rational means of action to reach his goals. Pent-up emotional force can be directed into commitment to ideals and to worldly activity to remake the world in the image of the truth. *Tajdid*, then, is the type of religion which directs the believer toward commitment to abstract symbols and to social action in the interests of reform. It turns highly developed intellectual and moral capacities and unfulfilled emotional needs into commitment to worldly action. However, this is not quite the same as the "Protestant Ethic." *Tajdid* favors dynamic worldly activity, but such activity is not directed to economic accumulation. Rather it is channeled in prescribed ways into religious devotion, control of emotion, pious good works, and the dynamic aggrandizement of the Muslim community, or warfare to expand the realm of Islam. The worldly activity called for by the Islamic ethos is not the systematic reconstruction of the world, but the correct practice of Islam and the extension of the boundaries of Islamic domination.

The parallel to 20th century Islamic revival movements is striking. Eighteenth century reformism resembles later revivalist movements in its emphasis upon the fundamental teachings of the faith, its rejection of medieval scholasticism and the proliferation of endless ritualistic considerations, and its opposition to magical intercession with God as a response to life's hardships. Reformism, like the 20th century revivalist movements, rejected magical dependence upon mysterious powers, and contemplative absorption into Being. In the modernization

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17) Weber 1958.

crises of both the 18th and 19th centuries and the 20th century, a major Islamic response has been to reaffirm the fundamentals of Islamic morality, purify the practice of Islam from later additions, motivate people to enter communal and political movements to defend the interests of the community, and establish Islamic states in place of corrupt local leaders or foreign rulers. Earlier reformism and contemporary revivalism represent a parallel response to the deeper forces transforming the world order in the 19th and 20th centuries. In both cases Islamic revivalism represents not a return to the past but a form of modernity in Islamic terms.

### *Earlier Precedents*

The Islamic movements of the 18th and 19th centuries in turn have their predecessors in still earlier movements of religious renewal and political action. The Hanbali movement in Baghdad and Syria in the 9th and later centuries was an antagonist to Muslim "alternatives." With its strict insistence on literal acceptance of *hadith*, avoidance of theology, repression of popular sufi practices, and intense criticism of corrupt Muslim states, Hanbalism was an active reformist force. In the 13th century Ibn Taymiya was particularly important as the leader of a local resistance to Christian invaders, Shi'i minorities, and the perpetrators of corrupt religious practices. His writings became an important source for reform and revival from the 18th century to the present.<sup>18)</sup>

Revivalist movements were also important in North Africa where the Almoravids and the Almohads attempted to reconstruct a Caliphal type of state, define Islamic doctrinal purity, and integrate tribal peoples into Islamic societies. Reformist attitudes also emerged in Mughal India. While florid forms of Sufism flourished, the syntheses of Muslim and Hindu practices abounded, and the Mughal state pursued a policy of conciliation among Muslims and Hindus, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, who claimed to be the *mujaddid*, the renewer of Islam in his century, waged an unrelenting struggle to persuade the Mughal authorities to adopt policies befitting an Islamic state. He called for the imposition of the poll tax on the Hindus and insisted on the obligation of Muslims to subordinate rather than to integrate non-Muslims into an Islamic society. He also opposed the insinuation into Islam of Sufi and Hindu practices such as veneration of saints, sacrifice of animals, and religious festivals. Thus he represented the Sunni consensus point of view against several levels of cultural syncretism, aristocratic

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18) Laoust 1939; Makdisi 1963; Makdisi 1981.

and popular, then current in Indian Islam. His successor, Shah Waliullah (1702-1763) set in motion a series of reform movements including the Delhi, Patna and Deoband schools, the Barelwis, the Tablighi Islam, and other movements, that last to the present.<sup>19)</sup>

In the Ottoman Empire reform-minded religious scholars opposed popular ceremonies for the dead, Sufi dancing and singing, and the consumption of coffee and tobacco. The legists, supported by *madrassa* students and tradesmen, won political support for a narrow definition of Islamic learning and practice. Qadizade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1635) formed a party to exert control over religious endowments and to persuade the authorities to enforce a Shari'a-oriented form of Islamic practice. Under the influence of this party, sufi *tekkes* were closed, and Sufis were imprisoned.<sup>20)</sup>

By the late 17th and early 18th centuries these earlier religious and political tendencies—Hanbalism, North African Sufism, Indian Naqshbandi Islam, and Ottoman conservative religious views found a common forum in Mecca and Medina (the *Haramayn*). Here a group of important seventeenth and eighteenth century teachers including Ahmad al-Qushashi, Ibrahim ibn Hasan al-Kurani, Muhammad Tahir ibn Ibrahim al-Madani, Abu'l Hasan Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi al-Sindi and Muhammad Hayya al-Sindi made Mecca and Medina the capital cities of the reform teaching.<sup>21)</sup> In the eighteenth century, Cairo, under the influence of the Haramayn and with direct inputs from travellers and pilgrims coming from Yemen, North Africa, and other places, also became an important center of hadith studies and of the Sufi brotherhoods committed to the reform style. From this core—Mecca, Medina, Cairo, and Yemen—reform influences radiated throughout the Muslim world. Many of the movements discussed above were led by people who had studied in these places.

Nonetheless, in these earlier periods the connection of revivalist or reformist ideology to political activism is not consistent. Many of the early religious reformers such as Sirhindi, Shah Waliullah and Qadizade Mehmed still worked within the framework of existing states, trying to persuade or force their rulers to adopt pro-Islamic policies rather than creating independent political movements. In India, Indonesia, and sub-Saharan Africa reformist movements were sometimes aimed at inculcating newly converted peoples with the true teachings of Islam. In other cases Sufi led political movements, such as the post-Saljuq Sufi movements in Iran, typified by the Safavids, did not adopt a reformist position but adhered to syncretic Sufi and Shi'i beliefs. Also in many early cases it is hard to find a persuasive connection between reformism and "modernization"

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19) Friedman 1971; Rizvi 1980; Waliullah 1980; Metcalf 1982.

20) Zilfi 1988.

21) Voll 1994.

though more general nexus between political and social stress and the rise of religious movements can be widely demonstrated.

Underlying all of these movements was the example of the Prophet whose teachings and whose life became the model of Islam. He brought religious truth, formed a socio-political movements in a conflicted society in the midst of important changes that were breaking down the traditional family and clan solidarity. In a cultural atmosphere rife with competing pagan, shrine based, and monotheistic religious views, he brought a clarifying religious vision. As a response to the political and economic stresses of the time he organized the first of the Islamic "reform" movements, set the precedent for waging war and forming an Islamic state in the name of Islamic ideals and in the interests of Muslim peoples. The example of the Prophet is explicitly recognized in the movements called the *tariqa* Muhammadiya, but implicitly underlies all revivalist tendencies throughout Islamic history. The revivalist movements of the present era, then, are a response to and an expression of Muslim modernity, but they are also rooted in a deep historical and cultural paradigm for how Muslim peoples should cope with changing political, economic and cultural realities. Islam is in this sense a religion of "modernization."

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