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 become part of the international trading system. The Ottoman Empire, which had controlled the trade routes that led to China and India, was weakened by internal conflicts and limited its participation. Muslim merchants and traders established transnational networks and engaged in new forms of commerce, including the slave trade and the tea trade. The Ottoman Empire lost its preeminence in trade to rival powers such as the Dutch and the British.

The Muslim world was also affected by the spread of European colonization. European powers were interested in acquiring wealth and power through trade and the establishment of colonies. They sought to gain control over resources, such as spices and slaves, and to extend their influence over the Muslim world. The Ottoman Empire, which had previously been a major player in the region, was weakened by internal conflicts and limited its participation in trade and politics. Muslim merchants and traders established transnational networks and engaged in new forms of commerce, including the slave trade and the tea trade. The Ottoman Empire lost its preeminence in trade to rival powers such as the Dutch and the British.

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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 repurposing 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.

The 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. . . . In this way, the ruler of the Muslims will be their religious, holy, and divine law. . . . Let me repeat that unlike other religious systems, Islam is concerned not only with the life time. 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.”

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.

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. . . . [Science, in 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 religion, 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.

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 backwardness 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 reappropriate answers from the past, but in light of Islamic principles, to formulate new Islamic responses to the changing conditions of Muslim societies. Reinterpretation of Islam would once again make it a relevant force in intellectual and political life. In this way, Islam would serve as the source of a renewal or renaissance that would restore Muslim 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 reassertion of Muslim identity and solidarity was a prerequisite for the restoration of political and cultural independence. Although he preached a pan-Islamic message, he also accepted the reality of Muslim nationalism. National independence was the goal of reformism and a necessary step in revitalizing the Islamic community both regionally and transnationally.

Jamaal al-Din al-Afghani articulated a cluster of ideas and attitudes that influenced Islamic reformist thought and Muslim anticolonial
Abd al-Qadir ibn Abi Bakr al-Maliki, the successor to the great authorities of the early Islamic period. Al-Maliki was the author of the Tahrir al-Mukhtasar fi al-Fiqh, a comprehensive work on Islamic law. He contributed significantly to the development of Islamic legal thought and practice. His work served as a model for later scholars and was widely used in various Islamic legal schools.

Abd al-Qadir ibn Abi Bakr al-Maliki was born in the mid-2nd century AH (8th century AD). He was known for his deep knowledge of the Quran and hadith and his ability to apply this knowledge to real-life situations. He was the leading authority of his time and was known for his strict adherence to the Sunna and the letters of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Abd al-Qadir ibn Abi Bakr al-Maliki's work on Islamic law, the Tahrir al-Mukhtasar fi al-Fiqh, was widely studied and used in various Islamic legal schools. It was a comprehensive work that covered all aspects of Islamic law and was widely used as a reference text. The work was divided into two parts, with the first part covering the general principles of Islamic law and the second part covering specific topics such as the inheritance, marriage, and divorce.

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Rahibullah Rida believed that the implementation of Islamic law required a nuanced approach and a deep understanding of the Quran and the Sunnah. Like many of his contemporaries, he was concerned with the modernization of Islamic thought and the development of a modern Islamic identity. He advocated for a progressive interpretation of Islamic law that could bridge the gap between the European and Islamic traditions. However, he acknowledged the challenges of implementing such reforms, particularly in the face of the Western influence.

Rida's views were often critical of Western powers, particularly the British, whom he perceived as a threat to the integrity of Islamic law and culture. He believed that the Western powers were attempting to dominate and control the Muslim world, and he was against the use of force in the spread of Western influence. Despite these concerns, Rida was not a monolithic thinker and did not adopt a uniform approach to all aspects of Islamic law.

In conclusion, Rida's approach to Islamic law was characterized by a balance between traditional and modern perspectives. He believed in the importance of adapting Islamic law to the changing times, but he was committed to preserving its essence and values. His work was influential in shaping the modern Islamic thought and contributed to the development of a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic law.
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.