

# Islamic Modernism and Reformism

Islamic Political Thought (BSS474)

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# Background and Introduction

- Historical reaction to „Western supremacy“
  - Response of Muslim intellectuals to European modernity
  - Reaction to salafism, fundamentalism, conservatism
- Defense and modernization of Islam towards Western institutions and social processes
  - Islam, science and progress, revelation and reason are compatible
- Low impact during 19th Century, catalizatin after a disruption of Ottoman empire (WWI)
  - Promotion of secular liberalism (Farag Foda)
  - Islamic politics criticism

# Background and Introduction

- Attempt to reconcile Islamic faith with modern Western values
  - Nationalism (Arabism)
  - Democracy
  - Civil rights
  - Scientific progress...
- Reexamination of conceptions and methods of *fiqh*
- New approach to Islamic theology and Quranic exegesis + skepticism towards *hadiths*

# [ Background and Introduction ]

- Reformism inclines to secularism, liberalism, democracy (following Christian reformism)
- Modernism insists on the importance of religion in public life, but not in a form 1 400 years ago
- Difficult to distinguish from “salafi way” of Islamic reformism and modernism
- Spread among all Islamic regions

# Mission of Modernist Muslim is to...

- According to Mir Zohair Husain
  - define Islam by bringing out the fundamentals in a **rational and liberal** manner
  - emphasize the basic ideals of Islamic brotherhood, **tolerance and social justice**
  - interpret the teachings of Islam in such a way as to bring out its dynamic character in the context of the **intellectual and scientific progress** of the modern world



# Main Thoughts in Isl. Modernism

- Ambivalent attitude toward the West - attraction X repulsion
- Technology misused by the West to exploit Islamic countries can be used to strengthen Muslims
- Support of *maslahah* usage
- Reinterpretation of punishment, jihad, treatment of unbelievers, banning of interest on loans...
  - Jihad only defensive
  - Unbelief was not sufficient cause for declaring jihad
  - Preferable way of conversion is based on education
  - There is a difference between interest and usury

# Main Thoughts in Isl. Modernism

- Reinterpretation of traditional Islamic law
  - Reinterpreting of basic sources by using *ijma* and *qiyas* at standards of scientific rationality and modern social theory
  - Limiting the influence of Quran and Sunnah on Sharia
    - Radical hadith criticism
  - Employing *ijtihad* for critical reasoning, even approving its use by non-jurists
    - *Ijtihad* should reflect the opinion of society and meet its interests
    - Rejecting the closing of the doors of *ijtihad*  
(Muhammad Iqbal, 1877 – 1938)

# Liberalism and Progressivism

- Interpretation and re-interpretation of traditional sources and methods
  - Emphasis on *ijtihad*, abandonment of *taqlid*
- Quranic verses interpretation in allegorical way
- Absolute equality of all humanity is a basic principal
  - Conservative interpretations of Shariah in the most repressive states
  - Secular states are more open and tolerant
  - Muslim should obey the law of a state, not only religious one



# Criticism of Modernism and Reformism

- Mainly from traditionalists and conservatives
  - Blaming for atheism (*ilhād*) and for attempts of Westernization (*taghrib*) of Islam
  - *Takfirism*
- Too much heterogenic and vague
  - Liberal Islam, Reform Islam, Progressive Islam, Neomodernism, etc.
- No unifying figure or movement
  - Ideal concept without any implementation in reality

[ Thank you for your attention! ]

