
Fourth Edition
**THE MIDDLE EAST
AND CENTRAL ASIA**
An Anthropological Approach

Dale F. Eickelman
Dartmouth College

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PART IV
RELIGION AND EXPERIENCE

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**ISLAM AND
THE “RELIGIONS
OF THE BOOK”**

**WORLD RELIGIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST
AND CENTRAL ASIA**

The key traditions of major world religions remain vital and meaningful through the actions of their carriers, who maintain and shape them over long historical periods and in highly diverse contexts. Thus religious traditions are inextricably linked to the changing relations of authority and domination in which they are shaped and transformed. By definition, world religions are not confined to any one society or cultural tradition. They transcend specific cultures, including their culture of origin. Adherents of world religions are aware, at least in principle, of a diversity of practice and interpretation that ranges well beyond the confines of localized, face-to-face communities. Carriers of world religions often claim that their tradition possesses a core of formative ideals and immutable religious truths, and most share common rituals. Yet these ideals, truths, and rituals must be sufficiently open to reformulation and reinterpretation by their carriers over successive generations and in novel contexts, even if the carriers of these traditions may be unaware that they have been reshaped.

Three world religious traditions have their origins in the Middle East—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—but there are also a number of more highly localized traditions. These include Zoroastrianism (primarily in Iran); the

Druze of Lebanon, Syria, and Israel; and the Kurdish-speaking Yazidi-s of northern Iraq, each with their own traditions of religious identity and practice. The past and present of these religious traditions intricately intertwine, even if some of their carriers are disinclined in some circumstances or unaware in others of how close these interrelationships are. Jerusalem provides perhaps the most poignant symbol of all that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam share and contest in the Middle Eastern context and beyond, and of how the significance given to religious symbols, space, and places ranges well beyond the local carriers of the three religious traditions.¹ The views of Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the Middle East toward gender roles provides an example at a more implicit level of a domain in which they share much in common and argue within each tradition in often parallel ways.² At the same time, the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century of many areas of Muslim rule, quickly followed by the conversion of the Mongol conquerors to Islam, suggests the surprising reversals of directions that world religions can take. In a similar fashion, Europe and North America emerged in the late twentieth century as major centers of creativity in reformulating and "reimagining" the Islamic tradition.

This chapter primarily concerns the Muslim tradition, although the discussion shows that many of the themes often apply equally to Middle Eastern Christians and Jews. From a Western perspective, the Islamic tradition is frequently construed as the least familiar of the three major religious traditions of the area. Yet the Christian and Jewish traditions in their Middle Eastern contexts also contain many unfamiliar elements. Middle Eastern adherents to all three religions have been subject to the same nexus of political and social developments. For example, the "cultural" distance in Israel between Falasha Jews from Ethiopia or Yemeni Jews, on the one hand, and Jews of European origin, on the other, can be greater than in the relations of these groups with their non-Jewish neighbors in their countries of origin.

Thus the Islamic reform or "renewal" movement that got under way in the Middle East in the late nineteenth century had its parallels among the carriers of the region's other religious traditions, including Egypt's Coptic

Christian community and, until the 1960s, Libya's isolated Jewish community. These developments were in part generated by political and economic developments within the Middle East itself, by intellectual and social developments elsewhere in the Muslim world, and—especially in the case of the Christian and Jewish communities—by an intensified contact with their European coreligionists. In all cases there were subtle and sometimes intense links between these various religious communities. In the Arab East, Christians played a significant role in the formulation of modern Arab political and national identity, and in the Arab West, even some members of the Jewish elite participated in the twentieth-century Moroccan nationalist movement.³

As with other great religious traditions, Islam is rich and varied in its creativity and expression. It is a challenge for Muslim believers and scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim, to account for the variations of Islam as it has been expressed over 1400 years and in the context of diverse cultural traditions. As a response to this complexity, some scholars dismiss local practices they consider not in accord with "central" Islamic truths as non-Islamic or as incorrect understandings of Islam, even though people who hold such beliefs consider themselves fully Muslim.

To account for these diversities, anthropologists in the 1940s introduced the notion of "Great" and "Little" traditions. When first applied, the Great Tradition/Little Tradition contrast rekindled an interest in how popular understandings of religion—the "little," localized, traditions—were related to more elite, literary ones. It also encouraged attention to the "carriers" of particular religious interpretations and practices—people influential in their own society or marginal to it—so that links among religion, authority, and influence could be explored.

Critical discussion of what is meant by Islam and the Islamic tradition is needed for both analytic and practical reasons. Especially in recent years, a number of studies of Islam have appeared that combine attention to textual analysis, a venerable tradition in the study of Islam, with analysis of the ethnographic and social historical contexts in which notions of Islam are developed, transmitted, and reproduced. Many earlier studies, based primarily on the study of key religious texts or of certain types of religious experience (formal rituals or mysticism, for example), tended to concentrate on the search for an Islamic "essence." This earlier analytic tradition, which is still vigorous,

¹ See Jonathan Webber, "Religions in the Holy Land: Conflicts of Interpretation," *Anthropology Today* 1, no. 2 (April 1985), 3–9, and Glenn Bowman, "Unholy Struggle on Holy Ground: Conflict and Interpretation in Jerusalem," *Anthropology Today* 2, no. 3 (June 1986), 14–17, for short anthropological accounts of "interpreting" Jerusalem. See also F. E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); and "Jerusalem: Vox Populi, Civitas Dei," *The Economist* (London) (November 7, 1987), 23–26.

² Carol Delaney, "The Meaning of Paternity and the Virgin Birth Debate," *Man* (N.S.) 21, no. 3 (September 1986), 494–513. Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the Middle East and elsewhere possess multiple gender ideologies, making unitary comparisons between each tradition misleading unless comparisons within each tradition and their ongoing debates are also taken into account. For women in the Jewish ultra-Orthodox tradition, for example, see Tamar El-Or, *Educated and Ignorant: Ultraorthodox Jewish Women and Their World* (Boulder, CO, and London: Lynne Rienner, 1994).

³ See E. J. Chitham, *The Coptic Community in Egypt: Spatial and Social Change*, Occasional Papers Series 32 (Durham, England: University of Durham, Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1986), p. 108. On the situation of Copts, see Luc Barbulesco, "Babylone ou Qahira," *Autrement*, no. 12 (February 1985), 192–97. For the Libyan Jewish community, see Mordechai Ha-Cohen, *The Book of Mordechai: A Study of the Jews of Libya*, ed. and trans. Harvey E. Goldberg (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1980); and, for Jews in Middle Eastern societies in general, see Harvey E. Goldberg, ed., *Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries: History and Culture in the Modern Era* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996). On the development of an Arab national identity from the nineteenth century through the present, see Dale F. Eickelman, "Arab Society: Tradition and the Present," in *The Middle East: A Handbook*, ed. Michael Adams (New York: Facts On File, 1988), pp. 765–81.

coincided in part with the ideological premise held by many Muslims that Islamic beliefs and practices are unaffected by historical change.

Recent ethnographic and social historical studies suggest a more complex notion of Islamic tradition than can be extracted by reliance on religious or legal texts. As a consequence, the notion of an Islamic "essence" has been difficult to sustain. The idea of "tradition," after all, need not necessarily imply a fixed or unitary set of principles existing independently of specific political and social conditions. The idea of what is "traditional" changes with generations and between social groups and classes and usually does not involve a unitary set of assumptions. It involves ongoing discussion, debate, and practice. In most contexts, people who have competing notions of religion or tradition coexist. Sometimes they are in opposition, but sometimes the choice between alternatives is not explicit.

Depending on context, carriers of a religious tradition adhere to practices and beliefs that are seen as incompatible by religious authorities or intellectuals (or scholarly observers) and that, therefore, cannot be reduced to a single, cohesive set of principles. In one dimension, these opposing (or complementary) conceptions of Islam are particularistic and significantly intertwined with the local social order. Other conceptions are universalistic, more amenable to generalization and application in a wide number of contexts. These opposing conceptions are co-present and in dynamic tension with one another. Some ideologies, including "reformist" Islam and the beliefs of many educated Muslims, tend to be *universalistic*. Others, including North African "saint" cults (although "saint," for reasons to be explained, can be a misleading gloss), are *particularistic*.

The co-presence of these alternative ideologies and practices, some of which are not formally elaborated, means that the strength of one or another ideological form cannot be attributed *solely* to its relation to a specific social context. Such notions need not be perfectly integrated (and usually are not), nor can the universalistic and particularistic elements be neatly arrayed in terms of center and periphery. Within the Muslim world, there exist multiple linkages among the various ethnic, kinship-based, regional, political, and religious communities that do not arrange themselves into agreed-upon hierarchies. Some pious Muslims claim Mecca as the spiritual center of the Muslim world, which it certainly is from some perspectives. But from other perspectives, the most profound religious innovations do not emanate from the centers, nor are they explicitly planned. In France, for example, labor migration and immigration have brought about more profound religious changes than innovations from traditional religious leaders. New forms of Muslim religious expression in France have had, in turn, a profound impact on Islam as it is practiced in North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, the regions of origin for most immigrant Muslims in France. Far from being marginal to the Muslim world, Muslims in Europe are becoming increasingly central, in terms of the

role they play not only in the Muslim world but also in the European states where they reside.⁴

In reaction to an earlier analytic tradition that largely accepted the ideological premise held by many Muslims of the immutability of "true" Islamic belief and practice, an Egyptian Muslim anthropologist, Abdul Hamid M. el-Zein, suggested replacing the term *Islam* by *islams*. His intent was to emphasize the multiplicity of Islamic expression and to show that the "islams" of elite and nonelite, literate and illiterate, theologians and artisans, tribesmen and peasants are equally valid expressions of a fundamental, unconscious (in the structuralist sense) set of principles.⁵

This "islams" approach was a reaction against both the Orientalist search for an ahistorical Islamic "essence" and the somewhat parallel venture of some Muslim fundamentalists who declare their own beliefs and practices "Islamic," in opposition to the practices of Muslims who do not agree with them. Ironically, by considering all expressions of Islam as transformations based on a single set of principles, the conceptual end product of the *islams* approach likewise reduces Islamic tradition to an essentialist, ahistorical core. Ideas and practices take on radically different meanings, depending on who introduces, advocates, and supports them. Some understandings of Islam are more valued than others because of their identification with certain carriers and groups. The *islams* approach, although it focuses attention on nonelite expressions of Islamic belief and practice, neglects the important dimensions of authority and domination in the transmission and reproduction of ideas and organizations, favoring the emergence of particular institutional arrangements or beliefs over alternative, coexisting ones.

PRODUCING ORTHODOXY FOR ISLAM: THE "FIVE PILLARS"

Nearly half a century ago, Wilfred Cantwell Smith suggested that in the Islamic case it is preferable to talk of *orthopraxy*, a commonality of practice and ritual, rather than of *orthodoxy*, the commonality of belief, on the grounds that Muslims share common rituals, even if they interpret them differently.⁶

⁴ Gilles Kepel, *Les banlieues de l'Islam: naissance d'une religion en France* [Suburbs of Islam: Birth of a Religion in France] (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987). For Britain, see Prina Werbner, "The Making of Muslim Dissent: Hybridized Discourses, Lay Preachers, and Radical Rhetoric Among British Pakistanis," *American Ethnologist* 23, no. 1 (February 1996), 102-22.

⁵ Abdul Hamid el-Zein, "Beyond Ideology and Theology: The Search for the Anthropology of Islam," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6 (1977), 227-54. Michael Gilson, *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Arab World* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), adopts a similar stance.

⁶ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 28.

The notion that Muslims share a common orthopraxy also has its limitations. The notion still implies an authoritative formula that is "taught" to be correct, whether by parents, peers, self-appointed mosque preachers, or leading religious scholars. As Talal Asad writes, a "practice is Islamic because it is authorized by the discursive traditions of Islam, and is so taught to Muslims," a notion that has an advantage over the claim of common, "essential" practices or beliefs because it emphasizes the relationship between belief and authority.⁷

In any consideration of what constitutes Islamic practice, it is important to consider three elements: *time*, or the historical contexts in which given practices are introduced and interpreted; *scale*, or the extent to which given practices or traditions are universalistic or particularistic, deriving their strength from highly localized factors; and *internal debate* over "correct" traditions, a dimension that focuses attention on existing power relations within and impinging on particular societies.

Islam is the only world religion to have had a built-in name from the outset. *Islam* (Ar. *islām*) means "submission," submission to the will of God. Whoever submits is called a *Muslim*. These terms occur repeatedly in the Quran. The word *qur'ān* itself means both "reading" and "recital."⁸ It is the word of God revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad (A.D. 570/80–632), beginning in 610 by the Angel Gabriel. Something is known of how these revelations first came to Muḥammad from verses in the Quran itself. On the first occasion, Muḥammad saw a glorious being standing high in the sky toward the horizon; then this being approached closer and closer to him. Muḥammad's first thought was that the being was God, but later he recognized it as Gabriel. No one is certain which part of the Quran was first revealed to Muḥammad, but many Muslims think it is this verse:

O thou wrapped up (in a mantle),
Arise and warn!
Praise thy Lord
Cleanse thy garments
Shun defilement!
Do not grant blessings
(Expecting) a greater return
For thy Lord, show fortitude.

(Sura 74:1–7, "The Shrouded One")⁹

⁷ Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, Occasional Paper Series (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1986), p. 15.

⁸ Kristina Nelson, *The Art of Reciting the Qur'an*, Modern Middle East Studies 11 (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1986), deals with how modern Egyptian Quranic reciters use their voices to convey the perfection of the words and at the same time communicate moods and sentiments appropriate to various passages and contexts.

⁹ Translation by Dale F. Eickelman.

The idea of the Quran as a fixed text is beginning to be argued and defended rather than taken for granted, in spite of the strong opposition of conservative religious scholars. Thus Egyptian scholar Nasr Abu Zayd, who has published several books in Arabic using standard techniques of literary criticism, was forced in 1995 to leave Egypt and take refuge in the Netherlands. In addition, specialists have long been aware of the issues involved in the collection and writing down of the Quran in the early Islamic centuries. These discussions have been given renewed vigor with the discovery in 1972 of Quranic fragments written in an early Arabic script in the loft of the Great Mosque in Ṣan'ā', Yemen. These fragments are in the form of palimpsests, a parchment on which the original writing has been washed off so that it can be used again. The washed-off script as well as the newer writing display *verse separators*—simple geometrical point patterns used only in the writing of the Quran. Analysis of the texts so far suggests that the arrangement of the Quranic verses may have been altered. For an account of current discussions on the status of the Quran, see Toby Lester, "What Is the Koran?" *Atlantic Monthly* 283, no. 1 (January 1999), 43–56. See an example of the Ṣan'ā' Quran fragments and an explanation of how to read it at <<http://home.t-online.de/home/Christoph.Heger/>>. Also see Gerd-Ruediger Puin, "Observations on Early Qur'ān Manuscripts in Ṣan'ā'," in *The Qur'ān as Text*, ed. Stefan Wild (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 107–11.

Most Muslims hold every word of the Quran to be the word of God. The Quran states that God had earlier communicated His word through other prophets, those recognized by both Jews and Christians, but that over time their messages had become distorted. So Muḥammad was made the "Seal of the Prophets," to warn humankind one last time of their wrong ways and to provide them again with God's word, this time "in clear Arabic."

Any translation from one civilizational tradition to another is treacherous, but a comparison with Christianity is useful here. The Quran should not be seen as the exact equivalent of the Bible. Most Christians see the Bible as a record of the prophets and of Christ, but not directly as God's word, as Muslims see the Quran. This is why many Muslims, even those who do not speak Arabic, regard translations of the Quran as guides to its meaning rather than substitutes for the original. For most Christians the person of Christ, the Son of God, personifies God. In contrast, the Quran insists that Muḥammad is merely the messenger of God. Some Muslims, especially certain mystics, have considered the person of Muḥammad a saintlike figure, but most Muslims consider Muḥammad the most perfect of men. Clearly, belief in the Quran and the eternal nature of its message are important components of the Islamic tradition, but the word of God as embodied in the Quran is made meaningful to



FIGURE 10-1. "How can ordinary men, no matter how much they study . . . understand by themselves the words of the Quran?"—Moroccan *qāḍī*, 1969. [Courtesy of the author.]

Muslims in different political and historical contexts throughout the Muslim world. Much "Islamic" practice depends on *consensus* (*ijmā'a*) of Muslims, especially those considered religious scholars, in any part of the Muslim world. The notion of consensus has precise legal connotations in Islam, but here I am primarily concerned with indicating popular conceptions of religious tradition.

Every Muslim participates in the *umma*, the community of living Muslims everywhere who are committed to what Marshall Hodgson has called the "venture of Islam." The *sharī'a*, the straight path of the ritual observances required of Muslims, is the most visible component of that venture. Muslims differ as to who legitimately succeeded Muḥammad in the leadership of the Muslim world. Sunni Muslims, who constitute about 90 percent of Muslims worldwide, accept the notion that any Muslim could be Muḥammad's successor in all matters except prophecy, whereas the Shi'a, who constitute the remaining 10 percent and are principally located in Iran, East Africa, India, southern Iraq, Lebanon, and parts of the Arabian peninsula, feel that succession rightly belongs to the descendants of Muḥammad through his daughter Fāṭima and his son-in-law 'Alī. There are many variations on these principal themes. Despite these differences, Muslims think of Islam as imparting a tone and style to all aspects of their lives—familial customs, sociability, learning, even styles of personal grooming. *Sharī'a* can be translated as "law," but it is

Some contemporary Middle Eastern states regard the *sharī'a* as a main source of laws, while others regard it as *the* main source. For most Muslims, however, the *sharī'a* refers more broadly to divinely ordained norms and ideals of just conduct that bind rulers and ruled alike—whether or not these principles are embodied in a formal legal code. A case recently brought before an English court helped clarify these complementary spheres of the *sharī'a*.

In the summer of 1996, the State of Qatar initiated litigation in Europe and elsewhere against its former ruler, Shaykh Khalifa bin Hamad Āl Thānī, seeking to recover assets estimated at between \$3 to \$7 billion dollars transferred from the Qatar state treasury to his personal accounts. In an English court, Shaykh Khalifa argued that as a ruler, there were no restraints on his use of state funds. He argued that the *sharī'a* bound him only to the extent that it was explicitly incorporated into the constitution and laws of Qatar. In a letter to *The Economist*,* Qatar's minister of justice, Najeeb bin Mohamed al-Nauimi, argued otherwise and offered one of the clearest recent statements of the relation of *sharī'a* and legal obligation in a modern Muslim society:

In describing the litigation between the state of Qatar and its former emir, Sheikh Khalifah Bin Hamad al-Thani,** you fail to mention Islamic law.

When Sheikh Khalifah recently transferred vast sums from the public treasury to his personal bank accounts in Switzerland, England, and elsewhere, he violated state budget laws enacted during his own term as emir. More fundamentally, he violated *sharia*, the Islamic law that governs all Qatari heads of state and the people they serve.

Contrary to the suggestion made in your article, a legal distinction between the state's purse and that of its ruler is not "radical," and certainly not new. The *sharia* makes it clear that state funds are not the personal property of the *imam* or, in this case, the emir. Indeed, it is his duty to ensure that the public treasury is devoted to public purposes. He may receive enough to provide for the reasonable needs of himself and his family, but if he takes more he is guilty of *ghulul* (theft).

Sheikh Khalifa himself took decisive steps to honour and institutionalise these rules when he deposed his predecessor in 1972. One of his first official acts as emir was to issue a decree halting the practice by which Sheikh Ahmed received payments directly from oil companies operating in Qatar. Sheikh Khalifah ordered that this money be restored to the public treasury for the general budget of the state.

On October 18, 1996, Qatar and its former ruler reached an out-of-court settlement that halted litigation.† Nonetheless, the case publicly reaffirmed the strength and pervasiveness of *sharī'a*, both as enacted in legislation and as generally upheld, in contemporary Muslim political and social life.

* Najeeb bin Mohamed al-Nauimi, "Qatar's Purse Strings," *The Economist*, October 5, 1996, p. 8.

** "Qatar: Whose Cash Is It?" *The Economist*, August 31, 1996, p. 39.

† John Mason and Robin Allen, "Qatar Settles Billion-Dollar Suit," *Financial Times* (London), October 21, 1996, p. 3.

much more than the concept of law in English usage. Religiously speaking, the *shari'a* governs all aspects of one's conduct as a Muslim.

Delineating the basic themes and the five "pillars" (Arabic pl. *arkān*)—the declaration of faith, the five daily ritual prayers, almsgiving, fasting, and the pilgrimage to Mecca of faith—is a useful point of departure for considering how Islam is locally received, understood, and debated. Most Muslims agree on five pillars of faith. I say *most* because many Muslims modify or deny the normative nature of some pillars because of their own interpretations of Islam.¹⁰

The declaration of faith (*shahāda*) is that there is no god but God and Muḥammad is His messenger (*rasūl*). This simple declaration of faith is so elemental that all Muslims can agree on it, whatever other differences they may have had for thirteen and a half centuries.

The second pillar is the *ṣalāt*, or five daily ritual prayers. All Muslims are supposed to cleanse themselves ritually, face Mecca, and pray at dawn, noon, midafternoon, sunset, and dusk. In towns, prayer callers climb to the top of minarets, even when loudspeakers are prevalent, and announce each prayer. Muslims may pray where they want; the use of mosques is not obligatory, although many believers congregate in mosques at least on Fridays for the mid-day prayers. The obligatory prayers are fixed in form and content, although personal invocations to God may be added to them upon their completion. Many Muslims say that the uniformity of these prayers symbolizes humankind's equality before God as well as their submission to His will.

Almsgiving (*zakāt*) is the third pillar. In some countries at certain periods the *zakāt* has been an obligatory tax on all Muslims who can afford to pay it. The Quran enjoins the wealthier to set aside part of their wealth for the destitute of the Muslim community. Most almsgiving throughout the Middle East remains personal; the donor often has a direct contact with his clients, unlike the anonymous pattern of giving that prevails in many Western societies.

The fourth pillar of Islam is fasting (*ṣawm*), which occurs each lunar year during the month of Ramaḍān. Adult Muslims in good health are expected to fast, and despite the fact that many people privately may choose not to do so, public fasting is observed almost everywhere. During Ramaḍān, Islam is consciously brought into daily activities; religious lessons are given nightly on the radio and television and in mosques. Ramaḍān is the month of repentance and purification. Some Muslims rationalize the fast by praising its supposed medical virtues in cleansing the vital organs of the body. Yet, as indicated in Chapter 9, its more important meaning is the ability of Muslims to follow the code

¹⁰ The codification of orthopraxy into "five pillars" is an internal development of the Muslim community, not just an "Orientalist" convention. See, for example, an "authoritative" handbook written for English-speaking Muslims, *Introduction to Islam*, enlarged edition, ed. Muhammad Hamidullah, Publications of the Centre Culturel Islamique (Paris), 1 (Hyderabad, India: Habib & Co., 1959). The following account of the formal steps in the pilgrimage, the fifth pillar, is based primarily on Gustave E. von Grunebaum, *Muhammadian Festivals* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1951), pp. 15–49; and *Aramco World Magazine* 26, no. 6 (November–December 1974).



FIGURE 10-2. Pilgrims often visit local shrines before departing for Mecca. Tunisia, 1973. [Courtesy Nicholas S. Hopkins.]

of conduct fixed by Islam and thus to demonstrate their self-discipline and control over self. The fast carries a variety of elaborate interpretations, as Lloyd and Margaret Fallers indicate in their account of the fast in Turkey, Richard Antoun in his account of rural Jordan, and Marjo Buitelaar in her account of women and Ramaḍān in Morocco. The public manifestation of the community's ability to observe the fast is a key and universal aspect of belief and practice.¹¹ Eating, drinking, smoking, and sexual intercourse are prohibited between dawn and sunset, and, more significantly, Muslims are expected to engage in spiritual self-renewal. At night, in contrast, sociability is in many ways increased; visiting among friends and relatives is intensified, and the practical meaning of what it is to be a Muslim is enhanced for the entire community.

The fifth pillar is the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca, obligatory once in a lifetime for every Muslim who is economically and physically able to do so. Even more than the month of fasting, the pilgrimage is an obligation that removes Muslims from the constraints of ordinary, particular obligations. From the moment pilgrims set out on the journey, they are removed from ordinary society and become "liminal" in the sense of the term made popular by Victor

¹¹ L. A. Fallers, assisted by M. C. Fallers, "Notes on an Advent Ramadan," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 42, no. 1 (March 1974), 35–52; Richard T. Antoun, "The Social Significance of Ramaḍān in an Arab Village," *Muslim World* 58 (1968), 36–42, 95–104; and Marjo Buitelaar, *Fasting and Feasting in Morocco: Women's Participation in Ramadan* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1993).

Turner.¹² Pilgrims agree to dedicate their lives to Islam and must be in a state of ritual consecration to make a valid pilgrimage. They may not uproot plants or shed blood; if they do so, they must atone for it by ritual means. Sexual intercourse is also forbidden. If pilgrims die while on pilgrimage, they are thought to enter paradise immediately.

During the pilgrimage, ordinary social relationships with kinsmen, neighbors, and others assume diminished importance. One's identity as a Muslim and brotherhood in Islam are of paramount significance. Every step of the way becomes highly symbolic of the pilgrim's wider identification with Islam; the web of particularistic social relationships is supposed to be transcended. Ritually speaking, some Muslims regard the Ka'ba as the symbolic center of the world, however peripheral it might be in terms of the ordinary social and political systems in which pilgrims are otherwise enmeshed.

In recent years, more than a million pilgrims annually have made the voyage. Its timing changes each year, for as with other key Islamic rituals, the time of the pilgrimage is set by the lunar calendar. In the past, as with equivalent rituals in Europe, the pilgrimage was a long and arduous journey from which many never returned. Every step of the way was fraught with danger, but this enhanced its spiritual richness. A voyage of a year or longer was not uncommon for pilgrims coming from North Africa, so that before they left on the *hajj*, they set their affairs in order in case they failed to return. Even in the mid-nineteenth century, when modern sea transport and relative peace and security made the pilgrimage easier, it still had its uncertainties. For many, it was a voyage of intellectual, and even commercial, discovery. Religious scholars at Mecca and along the way had contact with major intellectual currents elsewhere. Merchants could use the pilgrimage as an occasion to establish bonds that were of use in the conduct of international trade.

There are many descriptions of the transformation that the pilgrimage effects in Muslims, and of its ritual significance. In most parts of the Muslim world, it is a pious act for pilgrims to write an account of their journey for the guidance of others, although it is the unusual pilgrims whose accounts best reveal the intense meaning that the pilgrimage carries for the community of the faithful. Indeed, changes over time in how these accounts are written provide important indicators of altered social conceptions of person and self.¹³

Malcolm X was one such unusual pilgrim. Given the bitterness of his experience with race issues in America, his remarks are especially poignant. He remarked on the fact that the tens of thousands of pilgrims "were of all colours, from blue-eyed blondes to black-skinned Africans. But we were all

participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe could never exist."¹⁴ He observed color patterns in the crowds—like stayed with like—but concluded that "true brotherhood" existed when these patterns implied no hierarchies of superiority and inferiority.

The claim of some Muslims that Mecca is the spiritual center of the Muslim world is subject to political interpretations, a point to which we shall return. For the moment, it suffices to note that Muslims possess identities in addition to that of Muslim. These coexisting identities were implicit in the attitude of Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918–1970), Egypt's leader in the heyday of the Arab nationalist movement in the 1950s and 1960s. In his speeches and political acts, Nasser encouraged participation in the *hajj* as a demonstration of the power of the nonaligned nations in world politics and, in particular, of the strength of Arab nationalism. Nasser's endorsement of the pilgrimage also displayed to the leaders of conservative Arab states such as Saudi Arabia his view that most Arab pilgrims were not only committed Muslims but also Arab nationalists, both Sunni and Shi'a, sympathetic to his political message. It would be difficult to ascribe primacy to any one of these identities at a given time or to separate "religious" from political and other sensibilities. It is equally difficult to assign a hierarchy of motivation to all Muslims or to the adherents of other religions in the fulfillment of their religious obligations.

There are nine ritual steps to the pilgrimage itself.¹⁵ Here my intent is not to present a structuralist explanation of the significance of these events but to outline them and to suggest some aspects of their symbolic richness. (1) First is the donning of the *ihrām*, a white seamless garment that for many Muslims symbolizes the pilgrims' search for purity and their separation from the ordinary world. The *ihrām* may be donned anywhere along the route up to the fixed points marking the confines of Mecca. No jewelry or other personal adornment may be worn, nor are pilgrims supposed to engage in disputes. Provided that the pilgrims have declared their intention (*niyya*) of making the pilgrimage, they are ready to enter the *haram*, the sacred enclosure of Mecca itself, thought to have been established by Abraham and confirmed by Muhammad. Non-Muslims are not allowed within its confines. Then (2), on the eighth day of the lunar month of Dhū l-Hijja, the month of the pilgrimage, pilgrims proceed to Mina, a small uninhabited village five miles east of Mecca. There they spend the night meditating and praying.

¹² Victor Turner, "The Center Out There: Pilgrim's Goal," *History of Religions* 12, no. 3 (February 1973), 191–230.

¹³ See Barbara D. Metcalf, "The Pilgrimage Remembered: South Asian Accounts of the Hajj," in *Muslim Travelers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, Comparative Studies in Muslim Societies 9 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 85–107.

¹⁴ Malcolm X, with the assistance of Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Grove Press, 1966), pp. 338–39.

¹⁵ See, in particular, the sensitive, beautifully illustrated account by the Turkish scholar Emel Esin, *Mecca the Blessed, Madinah the Radiant* (London: Elek Books, 1963), which cites copiously from literature concerning Mecca and the pilgrimage. See also Muhammad Abdul-Rauf, "Pilgrimage to Mecca," *National Geographic* 154, no. 5 (November 1978), 581–607. Numbers in the following discussion, identifying the stages in the pilgrimage, are keyed to Figure 10–3.

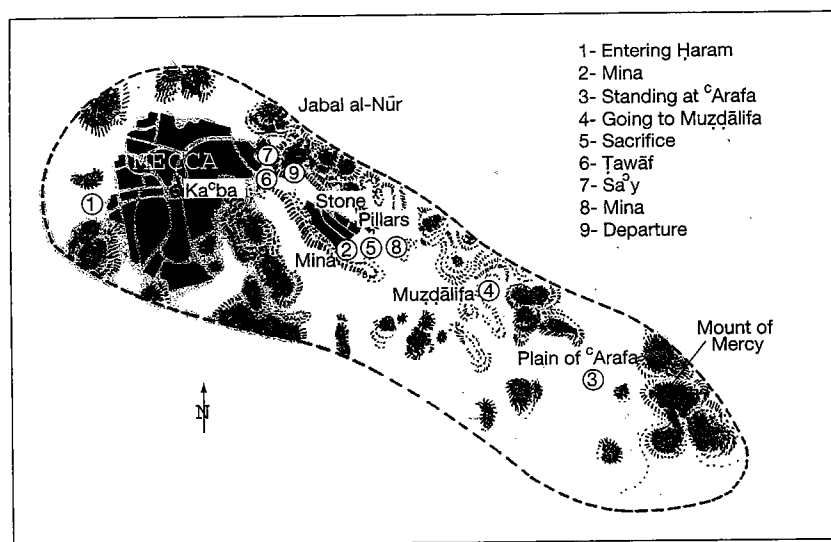


FIGURE 10-3. Principal steps of the *hajj*. [Based on an illustration in *Aramco World Magazine*, November–December 1974.]

The next morning, the pilgrims move as a group to the plain of 'Arafa for the central rite of the pilgrimage, the (3) "standing" before Mount 'Arafa, the Mount of Mercy. They face Mecca, meditate, and pray. Many stand from noon to sunset. Some climb almost to the summit of the 200-foot mountain, at the foot of which the Prophet is supposed to have delivered his last sermon.

Just before sunset, a cannon sounds and the pilgrims proceed to (4) Muzdālifa, a few miles back toward Mina. There they worship and sleep under the stars, after gathering a number of pebbles for use on the following day. The next morning, before daybreak, they return to Mina, where they throw the pebbles at three white-washed masonry pillars, especially the one thought to represent Satan, who three times tried to persuade Abraham not to obey God's command to sacrifice his son. Throwing the pebbles symbolizes the repudiation of evil.

(5) For the Feast of the Sacrifice (*Īd al-Kabīr*), all pilgrims who can afford to do so buy a sheep or other animal for sacrifice and give away part of it to the poor, although given the quantity of meat sacrificed, most of it is not consumed (the Saudi government arranges for its shipment to needy Muslims throughout the world). This sacrifice has a range of meanings. It commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son; it symbolizes the readiness to give up what is dearest to the pilgrim if commanded by God; it offers thanksgiving to God for having communicated with humans, and it reminds pilgrims

to share their blessings with the less fortunate. Muslims throughout the world vicariously share in the elation of the pilgrims by performing their own sacrifices on the same day.

Once pilgrims have offered their sacrifices, they have completed a major part of the pilgrimage. Men shave their heads and women cut off a lock of their hair to symbolize their deconsecration. Pilgrims are now free to bathe and remove the *ihrām*, although the prohibition on sexual intercourse remains.

The pilgrims next proceed directly to Mecca and perform (6) the *tawāf*, the circling. They circumambulate the Ka'ba seven times on foot, reciting a prayer on each circuit. This circling is said by some to symbolize the unity of God with man and of heaven with earth and reminds believers of the importance attached to the Ka'ba by the Patriarch Abraham, his son Ishmael, and Muhammad. During the circling, many pilgrims try to touch the black stone that is embedded in one corner of the Ka'ba.

The key ceremonies of the pilgrimage are now completed, and pilgrims have the right to call themselves *hājjī*-s. Most pilgrims, however, proceed to the "Place of Abraham," where Abraham is supposed to have offered his devotions to God. Then pilgrims reenact (7) the "running" (*sa'y*), the search for water by Hagar, the wife of Abraham (and Sarah's rival in the Bible). Hagar ran back and forth desperately searching for water for herself and her child until the Angel Gabriel appeared, stamped the ground with his heel, and brought forth water from the well of Zamzam for them. Pilgrims drink from this well before starting the running; many return home with bottles of water from it.

Pilgrims then customarily return for a third and last time (8) to Mina, where they cast their remaining pebbles at each of the three pillars—seven stones at each pillar for each day of the pilgrimage. This is also a time to visit with other pilgrims and to bid farewell to friends. Their final visit is to Mecca again, where pilgrims again circumambulate the Ka'ba (9) before returning home.

There is a rich tradition of myths associated with each step of the pilgrimage, and these myths have been variously interpreted throughout the Muslim world. If the pilgrimage is intended to convey the unity of the Muslim world, it also underscores its diversity. The *hajj* may hold the same significance for all Muslims, but the visit (Ar. *ziyāra*) to neighboring Medina where the Prophet set up the first Islamic government, carries a special significance for Shi'i Muslims, whose beliefs are discussed in detail in the next section. The al-Bāqī cemetery near the city is supposed to contain the grave of Fāṭima, the Prophet's daughter, and four of the twelve Shi'i imams. In 1924 the Saudis banned access to the cemetery, but as a major concession to Iranian pilgrims, they reopened it in 1986 for visitation and prayer.

Over the past few centuries there have been repeated conflicts over Shi'i access to these tombs. Since the Iranian revolution, conflict has intensified. In part, the Iranian Shi'a have been denied access to other revered Shi'i shrines in southern Iraq since the outbreak of the Iran–Iraq war in 1980, and there were

incidents throughout the 1980s in Mecca involving Iranian pilgrims (some 18 percent of the annual total), culminating with a violent confrontation on July 31, 1987, in which 402 people died, including 275 Iranian pilgrims.¹⁶ One reason for the violence is the political undercurrent challenging the legitimacy of Saudi custody of the holy shrines and conservative Saudi claims to leadership of the Muslim world. The fact that the Saudi monarch officially changed his title from "His Majesty" to "Servant of the Two Sacred Shrines" (*khādim al-ḥaramayn al-sharīfayn*) in 1986 suggests the importance the Saudi leadership attaches to its Islamic identity.

THE SHI'Ā

The Iranian revolution of 1979 dramatically demonstrated the continued vitality of the Shi'ī tradition and its political influence in the modern world. Shi'ī belief and practice constitute a *source of motivation* to social action, not just a convenient vehicle for expressing social and economic discontent.¹⁷ Said Amir Arjomand asserts that Shi'ism constitutes a world religion in its own right in a *sociological* sense—he is fully aware that most Shi'ā, like other Muslims, assert the unity of Islam and the integrity of the Muslim community. Nonetheless, the Shi'ā know that their beliefs and practices set them apart from Sunni Muslims in how they interpret Islam and express their belief.

The word *Shi'ā* means "party" or "sect." This label reflects the origin of Shi'ism as a political movement in seventh-century Arabia. 'Alī (r. 656–661), the son-in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad, was the fourth of Muḥammad's caliphs (*khalīfa*-s), or successors.¹⁸ 'Alī was assassinated by his opponents, as was Ḥusayn, the Prophet's grandson, in 680. The Shi'ā consider both men martyrs. After 'Alī's assassination, the party of 'Alī in Kufa, in southern Iraq, demanded that succession be vested in 'Alī's descendants alone. This legitimist claim continues to be a principal Shi'ī belief. One contributing factor to Shi'ism, at least in its formative years, was the tension between newly conquered non-Arabs and their Arab rulers. In doctrinal terms, the Shi'ā hold that the only legitimate successors to Muḥammad were his descendants through his son-in-law 'Alī and his daughter Fāṭima. Yet adherents of Shi'ā Islam are no more homogeneous than those of Sunni Islam. At the beginning of the Islamic era, most politically active Shi'ā engaged in movements of protest and

awaited the return of a *mahdī*, or "rightly guided one," to redress injustices and return the Muslim community to its proper course.¹⁹

With the exception of the Zaidi Shi'ā of northern Yemen, one component of Shi'ī doctrine is *taqīya*, or "concealment." In the face of persecution, the Shi'ā are allowed to dissimulate their real beliefs if their expression would result in grave physical danger or a threat to the community. Thus 'Alī, whose caliphate was contested throughout his lifetime, "concealed" his belief in the right of his descendants to be Muḥammad's successors because of such a threat. This doctrine has allowed the Shi'ā to adjust to diverse situations. This is the case for the Alevi (Ar. 'Alawī) Muslims of Turkey, Iran, and Syria (where the current president is an 'Alawī). Their rituals and formal beliefs are such that some of their Sunni, and other Shi'ī, neighbors have not accepted them as Muslims.

Religious leadership in the Shi'ī community relates closely to the level of popular support. Strictly speaking, there are no formal, appointive patterns of institutional leadership among the Shi'ā, but pervasive informal ones enable Shi'ī men of learning to mobilize their followers. Because the patterns of leadership are informal and not centrally directed, they have been difficult for hostile governments to penetrate and suppress.

Mullah-s, or village preachers, are associated with each mosque, as are a number of lesser religious figures. At the higher level are the *mujtahid*-s, scholars and leaders who by study and personal piety are recognized by their followers and peers as capable of making independent judgments and interpreting Islamic tradition. In contemporary Iran, *mujtahid*-s acquire recognition by publishing books outlining their methods and views for public comment. At a level above *mujtahid*-s are scholars called *āyatullāh*-s, a term that literally means "sign of God"; and at the very apex of the hierarchy of deference is a scholar called the "Supreme" *āyatullāh*, the *āyatullāh al-'Uzma*, considered the most learned scholar of his age and one whose piety is beyond question. Recognition at this highest level has been in the hands of a group of 30 or 40 religious scholars residing at Qum, one of Iran's holy cities, many of whom are related by intermarriage and common studies or are descendants of leading religious scholars of the past. Leadership still depends in the end on a contemporary reputation for religious learning.²⁰

¹⁶ For an account of this confrontation and prior ones, see Martin Kramer, "Behind the Riot in Mecca," *Policy Focus*, Research Memorandum 5 (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1987).

¹⁷ Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 3.

¹⁸ See Marshall G. S. Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shi'ā Become Sectarian?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75, no. 1 (January–March 1955), 1–13, for an account of how the "basic principles" of Shi'ī thought and practice came into being.

¹⁹ The notion of a *mahdī* is not unique to the Shi'ā. The takeover of the Great Mosque at Mecca in November 1979 by a band of armed militants, mostly Sunni, who proclaimed that one of their number was the *mahdī*, indicates the continuing political potential of such a belief and its challenge to traditional religious authorities. See Joseph A. Kechechian, "The Role of the Ulama in the Politics of an Islamic State: The Case of Saudi Arabia," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18, no. 1 (February 1986), 53–71, esp. 58–63.

²⁰ Leonard Binder, "The Proofs of Islam: Religion and Politics in Iran," in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), pp. 118–40. On the complex social and familial ties among leading Shi'ī scholars, see Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980). Even in Iran of the late 1980s, not all clerics agreed that Khomeini was the best living *āyatollah*. See A. V. Khan, "Ayatollah Attacks Khomeini Regime as Worse Than Shah's," *The Independent* (London), November 11, 1987, p. 10.



FIGURE 10-4. The Iranian cabinet, Tehran, August 1987. A common and highly effective vehicle for communicating government policy is the Friday sermon, often delivered by senior officials who are also clerics. [Photograph courtesy of the Islamic Republic News Agency.]

Although some posts have revenues built into them, most of the higher members of the clergy depend on voluntary contributions from supporters, who have usually been large landowners and major merchants. Individual Shi'a often have considerable latitude in selecting the *mujtahid* from whom they will seek guidance and counsel, which creates room for independent entrepreneurs. Moreover, followers often can vote with their feet, so to speak, and shift allegiance from one *mujtahid* to another. Religious hierarchy among the Shi'a in Iran, as in Lebanon and the Arab Gulf states such as Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Oman, have independent leadership, although transnational lines of influence are not uncommon, given the shared training of Shi'i men of learning and shared shrines—a pattern disrupted, however, by hostilities between Iran and Iraq.

A key ritual and symbolic focus is the annual mourning (*ta'ziya*) in commemoration of the death of Husayn, the Prophet's grandson and one of the Shi'i *imām*-s, at Karbala, Iraq, in the lunar month of Muḥarram in A.D. 680. Michael Fischer refers to this event as the "Karbala paradigm," and William O.

Beeman argues that Khomeini's success is due to his "having been able to use the symbolism of the martyrdom of Hosein and to project it onto the struggle between the throne and the people."²¹ As Gustave E. von Grunebaum wrote: "It would be incorrect to say that Husain stands in the center of Shi'a dogma, but it is unquestionably true that contemplation of his personality and fate is the emotional mainspring of the believer's religious experience."²²

In the Shi'i tradition, Husayn's death is interpreted as a voluntary sacrifice in the face of treachery and betrayal by Sunni and other opponents, so that, through his suffering, the Shi'i faithful could enter paradise. Elizabeth Fernea, who was in Karbala in 1957, describes the event as it then took place.²³ Pilgrims arriving during Muḥarram swelled the population of Karbala, then a town of 30,000 people, to over 1 million, with many of the pilgrims living in black tents erected for them. From the first of the month, when the commemoration began, pilgrims donned mourning clothes; they refrained from bathing and shaving and adopted a simple diet. Pulpits were placed in the street, from which the story of Husayn's martyrdom was recited, often with many added details and commentary on current political events. Listeners broke out in tears. Also during this period, at least through the 1950s, groups of men seeking penance, with their bodies stripped to the waist and dyed black or red, roamed the streets, pulling out their hair, inflicting sword wounds upon themselves, and dragging chains behind them. Not infrequently, fights with non-Shi'a developed.

The pattern of mourning for Husayn's martyrdom is an integral part of the life cycle of most Shi'a, and it provides the Shi'i community with a sense of self-renewal and victory over death. The ceremonies are replicated on a reduced scale for the deaths of all Shi'a on the third, seventh, and fortieth days after a death and thereafter on the anniversary of the death date. This replication gives the event even more personal significance to individual believers.

The intensity of such public commemorations of Husayn's death, especially when elaborated in the context of other paradigmatic religious events, provides the Shi'i clergy in Iran with a means of mobilizing public opinion. In the last years of the Shah's rule, political demonstrations were often planned to coincide with the cycle of Shi'i religious activities. In the Islamic Republic, public events are carefully keyed to religiously significant events and thus motivate people to define contexts and perceive events in similar ways.

²¹ Fischer, *Iran*, pp. 19–26; William O. Beeman, *Language, Status, and Power in Iran* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 71.

²² Von Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals*, p. 87.

²³ Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday/Anchor, 1965), pp. 194–208. Since the 1980 Iraqi invasion of Iraq, which was followed in the aftermath of Iraq's retreat from Kuwait in 1991 by an uprising in the Shi'i-majority south, the Muḥarram celebrations have been significantly curtailed.

The tendency of Western and many Sunni Muslim writers has been to portray Sunni Islam as "orthodox" in contrast to Shi'ism, a view that distorts the Islamic tradition. A personal report might indicate how I first began to be aware of intersectarian misperceptions within the Muslim community. Shortly before my arrival in Iran for a month's visit in 1968, a Sunni colleague from a neighboring country warned that I would probably encounter Shi'i hostility, especially in the smaller towns. For example, I was cautioned that the Shi'a would undoubtedly break any glasses or plates I had used. I encountered no hostility and left Tehran for Baghdad by a bus on which most of my fellow travelers were Shi'i pilgrims on their way to visit the shrines of southern Iraq. The bus stopped regularly for collective prayers; the pilgrims sang together and shared their food with me. Later I mentioned to an Iranian *mujtahid* what I had been told about the breaking of dishes and glasses. He laughed and replied that such objects were too expensive to break each time a nonbeliever was offered hospitality. My direct contact with Shi'i Iran was brief but sufficient to suggest caution toward accepting at face value the often distorted images of "others" generated within the Islamic community among differing sectarian groups or by outside observers.

AN IDEOLOGICAL FRONTIER? THE ALEVI

The Alevi Muslims of eastern Turkey, Syria, northern Iraq, and Lebanon (where a number of Alevi took refuge in earlier years to avoid repression in their countries of origin) are perceived ambiguously by "other" Muslims. These perceptions dramatically underscore the difficulty of defining Islam in terms of a supposed orthodoxy without taking relationships of domination and authority into consideration. Thus the "official" recognition of Lebanon's Alevis ('*Alawī*') as part of the Shi'a community has less to do with a change in Alevi beliefs than with changing political relationships.²⁴ Although a minority, the 'Alawī are politically dominant in Syria. However, one leading analyst of Syrian politics cautions against assuming that Syria's 'Alawī are politically unified as a sect, and instead suggests that the intertwined alliances developed through family ties, common schooling, and region explain more about patterns of political alliance than does religious identity alone.²⁵ In Chapter 8 we discussed how identity as Alevis and as Kurds is often difficult to distinguish in the Kurdish-speaking regions of eastern Turkey. From the 1920s until very

²⁴ James A. Bill and Carl Leiden, *Politics in the Middle East*, 2nd ed. (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1984), p. 38.

²⁵ Hanna Batatu, "Some Observations on the Social Roots of Syria's Ruling Military Group and the Causes for Its Dominance," *Middle East Journal* 35, no. 3 (Summer 1981), 331-44. See also Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

recently, Turkey's secular leadership has sought to limit the role of religion in public life. Nur Yalman, a distinguished Turkish anthropologist, avers that Social Darwinism became the dominant ideology of the Turkish upper classes and a justification for "embracing" Western culture.²⁶

In the 1980s, secular-minded Turks began to acknowledge, if not always to welcome, the pervasive and continuing influence of religion in public life.²⁷ Their caution was due to the role of religious orders (T. *ṭarikat*, Ar. *ṭarīqa-s*) in the past, when some orders, such as the Bektishīya, had enjoyed a privileged status. This order, founded in the thirteenth century, was closely associated with the Janissaries, a professional military body that played an important part in the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire until the early nineteenth century. The order continued to be regarded warily by Ottoman officials and later by those of the Turkish Republic. The influence of this order was such that an estimated 10 to 20 percent of Turkey's adult male population, including many Alevi, belonged to it in 1925, when religious brotherhoods were outlawed in Turkey. (This prohibition has subsequently been relaxed.) Yet, as orders such as the Bektāshīya declined, religious movements with different organizational bases came to the fore. One of these was Turkey's Nurculuk ("Light") movement. It attracted an especially large following among provincial civil servants, and it has continued to sustain a large following, with supporters even in California.²⁸

The principal region of Alevi settlement in eastern Turkey forms part of the "shatter zone" of complex religious groupings. Most of the population is Muslim, at least from an external perspective, since the Sunni, Alevi, Bektashi, and Nuseyri communities of the region do not always acknowledge one another's practices and beliefs as Muslim. To some extent, sectarian divisions coincide with linguistic ones: the Nuseyri speak Arabic, many Bektashi speak Turkish, and the Alevi speak both Turkish and Kurdish. But Kurdish-speaking Alevis sometimes claim they are Bektashis, as do Turkish-speaking Turkomen from western Anatolia. Members of both these groups might go to the annual festival at Hacı Bektash village held each August. The dividing lines between

²⁶ Nur Yalman, "Islamic Reform and the Mystic Tradition in Eastern Turkey," *European Journal of Sociology* 10, no. 1 (May 1969), 41-60. See also Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964).

²⁷ For example, a major political scandal occurred in Turkey in early 1987 when the government reluctantly acknowledged that it had accepted funds from a Saudi-backed foundation to pay the salaries of government-employed Muslim clerics who preach to Turkish migrant workers in Western Europe. Many Turks saw such payments as a fundamental challenge to the principles of the Turkish Republic.

²⁸ John Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (London: Luzac & Co., 1937), describes the order's role in consolidating opposition to the government. On the Nurculuk movement, see Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi*, SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). See also "Said Nursi and the Turkish Experience," ed. M. Hakan Yavuz, a special issue of *The Muslim World* 89, nos. 3-4 (July-October 1999).

groups are often ambiguous and shift situationally.²⁹ But the correlation between sect, language, and community is likewise ambiguous. Ruth Mandel, who has worked extensively with the Alevi, conveys this complexity:

The majority of the Alevi in the east speak Zaza, and the Sunni speak Kurmanci, but there are Kurmanci-speaking Alevi and Zaza-speaking Sunni. Many people, I think, believe that both Zaza and Kurmanci are Kurdish dialects or languages, and this belief is motivated by social, cultural, or political considerations. From a formal, linguistic perspective, Zaza is an Iranian, not a Kurdish, language. It gets quite complicated, for some of the Zaza-phones claim not to be Kurdish, and say that Kurmanci and Zaza are not mutually intelligible. Others dispute this. To some Zaza Alevi, "Kurd" means Sunni . . . so they don't want to be labeled that. In other contexts the same people might say that they speak Kurdish; still more confusing, they might call the Sunnis "Muslims." Clearly, it depends upon who is the salient "other" in a given context.³⁰

I cite Mandel at length because she clearly conveys how assertions of sectarian identity depend on highly nuanced perceptions of Muslim (and, to a lesser extent, non-Muslim) "others," especially when one is member of a nondominant group.

Many Shi'a (and Sunni) reject the Alevi as non-Muslims and do not make the distinctions that Alevi do among various groups. Nonetheless, as the name *Alevi* implies, their beliefs and practices have much to do with the role of 'Ali in Islam. Moreover, because the Alevi are primarily village-based and have been regarded as politically suspect in recent years, they lack a tradition of formal religious scholarship and jurisprudence to produce the sort of "authoritative" discourse that is possessed by the Sunni and most Shi'i groups.

To understand the context of Alevi beliefs and practices in eastern Turkey, Nur Yalman describes a small, bleak peasant village of some 67 houses. He writes that the first thing a visitor notes about the village is the lack of any building showing a minaret and that "there was no call to prayer and no mosque." At the time of his visit, in the 1960s, men had mustaches that covered their upper lip to symbolize the secrecy of their creed, as opposed to the more clipped mustaches of other sectarian groups.³¹

Alevi ritual practices differ markedly from those of the Sunni of the region. A brief contrast of ritual and belief from the perspective of the "five pillars" of Islam indicates the singular nature of Alevi beliefs from the dominant

Sunni perspective.³² In terms of the declaration of faith, Alevi, like the Shi'a, emphasize the role of 'Ali in addition to the oneness of God and the prophecy of Muḥammad. Sunni Muslims of the prevalent Ḥanafī rite of the region pray five times daily, with a total of forty bowings (*rak'a*-s)—there are eight bowings in each of the five prayers. For the Alevi, two bowings annually in the presence of their spiritual leader (*dede* or *pīr*) suffice. Sunni-s fast for the entire month of Ramaḍān; Alevi consider this a fetish. They fast in the month of Muḥarram for 12 days in memory of the 12 *imām*-s and call this fast *yas*, or "mourning" (for the martyrs of Karbala), not *ṣawm*, as the Ramaḍān fast is known. The Alevi consider the pilgrimage to Mecca "external pretense"; for them, the real pilgrimage takes place in one's heart.

From the dominant Sunni (or even the Shi'i) perspective, such Alevi interpretations of the Muslim tradition are unacceptable. Yalman delineates other points of contention: Alevi are reputed by their Sunni neighbors not to perform ablutions correctly after sexual intercourse, and their secretive religious organization is regarded with suspicion. Most scandalous of all, from a Sunni perspective, is an annual Alevi feast called *ayin-i cen*, which appears to be as important for the Alevi community as the Feast of Abraham (Ar. *ʿĪd al-Kabīr*; Turk. *Kurban Bayramı*) for Sunni Muslims.³³

In the village studied by Yalman, this feast occurred when the village's *dede* visited from a neighboring town. Like the Shi'a, the Alevi practice *taqīyya* or the dissimulation of their beliefs and practices, and the *ayin-i cen*, at least in Turkey, takes place only when outsiders are not present. This is the time of year when community disputes are resolved, often with the mediation of the *dede* (instead of before the formal services of the state). Members of the community approach the *dede* in pairs, hand in hand, kneeling down and walking on all fours, like lambs, to kiss the hem of his coat. This is when the only obligatory Alevi prayer is performed. *Semah* music, accompanied by a *saz*, a sort of long-necked flute, is performed, and the men and women dance. Some dancers go into trance. Alevi mystical poetry commemorating the martyrs of the Alevi community is recited and, outside of Turkey, the event re-creates or "reimagines" Alevi history in line with contemporary claims to identity. The climax of the festivity is the "putting out of the candle" (*mum söndürmek*),

²⁹ Ruth Mandel (personal communication, 1987) writes: "All Alevi claim to 'love Hacı Bektash'—does that make them Bektashis? I'm not sure; it has more to do with [such factors as] the lineage of which their *pīr* (spiritual leader) claims to be a part . . . in any case, it is a very fuzzy line, and I certainly wouldn't want to be the one to draw it."

³⁰ Mandel, personal communication, 1987 (used by permission).

³¹ Yalman, "Islamic Reform," p. 50. The Alevi visited by Yalman were clearly certain of their political status since they displayed such a clear marker of sectarian identity.

³² The following account is based primarily on Yalman, "Islamic Reform," pp. 51–55. For contemporary developments, see M. Hakan Yavuz, "Media Identities for Alevi and Kurds in Turkey," in *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 180–99.

³³ For a speaker of Arabic, the word *cem* appears associated with *jam'a* or "gathering," as in *yawm al-jum'a*, literally, "the day of gathering," for Friday, the day of collective prayer. Another connotation, explicit in Iran according to Richard Tapper (personal communication, January 13, 1988), is *jam*, or "wine cup." Some scholars link the term with "*Cemshid*, the Iranian king of epic tradition associated with the creation of society, wine and Bacchanalian attributes." On Kurdish religious doctrines in Iran, see Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "Inner Truth and Outer History: The Two Worlds of the Ahl-i Haqq of Kurdistan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 2 (May 1994), 267–85.

which some Sunni claim is associated with "communal sexual intercourse and incest."³⁴ Contrary to non-Alevi fantasy, this rite culminates with water thrown on 12 burning candles to extinguish them in front of officiating elders. Each candle represents one of the 12 *imām*-s and martyrs. People moan and weep and curse those responsible for the assassination of 'Alī and the other martyrs.

As Mandel reports, Alevi practices have thrived in West Germany, because there the Alevi need not be concerned about government interference. In the German "diaspora," in fact, Alevi migrants have established community-wide networks and elaborate the rituals and the historical sense of self and community through their performance. These wider networks have also facilitated a greater sense of collective political identity. Only in the 1970s did the Alevi began consciously to identify themselves as a political group on the basis of shared religious identity.³⁵ The factionalism that is publicly expressed on occasions such as *ayin-i cen*, especially in the West German context, is a form of "internal discourse" over defining the Alevi community, its "authoritative" discourse, and its sense of limits vis-à-vis the wider Muslim community.

Three main conclusions can be drawn from this discussion of Alevi identity. First, it serves as a reminder that orthodoxy and orthopraxy are situationally defined and linked to relationships of dominance and authority. Second, it points to the internal debate within the Muslim community itself and the tendency to maintain distorted perceptions of significant "others." The Alevi, like the Druze of Lebanon and Syria (who, like the Alevi, have a reputation for maintaining a reserve as to the exact nature of their beliefs), may be regarded as particularly extreme examples. Yet similar ranges of perceptions and misperceptions prevail between the Sunni and Shī'a, between the Ibādiyya of Oman and North Africa and their neighbors, and the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan. Finally, the strength of the Alevi tradition and the capacity of its carriers for self-renewal indicate the persistence of particularistic traditions within the Muslim community. The Alevi community for the most part has lacked high scholarship and carriers of "high" formal learning (although with rising educational levels this situation is rapidly changing) but has compensated for this in the strength of its shared local traditions and interpretations of Islamic belief and practice. These "particularistic" interpretations (as seen from a sociological perspective) are not waning in the face of "modernization" but maintain their vitality every bit as much as the Muslim traditions with a wide spectrum of carriers, from highly literate religious intellectuals to peasants and tribesmen.

³⁴ Yalman, "Islamic Reform," p. 55.

³⁵ Şerif Mardin, "Centre-Periphery as a Concept for the Study of the Social Transformation of Turkey," in "Nation" and "State" in Europe: *Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. R. D. Grillo (London: Academic Press, 1980), pp. 186-87; and Ruth Mandel, "Foreigners in the Fatherland: Turkish Immigrant Workers in Germany," in *The Politics of Immigrant Workers: Labor Activism and Migration in the World Economy Since 1830*, ed. Camille Guerin-Gonzalez and Carl Strikwerda (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1993), pp. 288-90.

The impossibility of formulating at any given moment the irreducible elements of Muslim identity was expressed after the 1953 riots against the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan, when the Pakistani government asked a commission of inquiry to define "Muslim." They reported that the country's religious scholars were unable to agree on a definition. The commission remarked: "If considerable confusion exists in the minds of our [religious scholars] on such a simple matter, one can easily imagine what the differences on more complicated matters will be." [Punjab Government, *Report on the Court of Inquiry* (Lahore: Government Printing Office, 1954), p. 215.]

THE SUFI TRADITION

Any world religion involves multiple levels of belief and experience, prismatic in their richness and not easily reducible to a set of "basic" principles. One dimension of Islam, which crosscuts both the Sunni and the Shī'a traditions, emphasizes the formal elaboration of belief and practice, what Marshall Hodgson has termed a *sharī'a*-minded Islam, concerned principally with outward, public credos and behavior (an extreme example of which might be the Saudi religious police, who see that all secular activities cease at the hours of prayer and that all Muslims perform their prayers on time) and with the elaborate body of Islamic scholarship and jurisprudence that has been constructed over the years.

Another dimension of the Islamic experience has been glossed as "mysticism" (Ar. *taṣawwuf*), or Sufism, although the notion of mysticism is an elastic one and carries connotations throughout the Islamic world much wider than the intensely personal and often esoteric pursuit of religious truths commonly associated with the term in the West.³⁶ A mystic—the ambiguities of this term must be kept in mind—is known as a *ṣūfī*. The word *ṣūfī* is sometimes said to originate from the Arabic word for "wool," referring to the coarse wool garments that early Sufis wore to symbolize their lack of concern for the things of this world. Some people also think that *ūfī* derives from a word meaning "to be pure." If *sharī'a*-minded Islam was concerned primarily with outward, socially perceived behavior and the well-being of the Islamic body politic, then Sufism in the abstract represents more of a concern with the social and spiritual life of the individual (and, as will be seen, in some cases of specific social groups). Nor are the various manifestations of Sufism best seen as an alternative to *sharī'a*-minded Islam, although at some places and times within the Muslim community, some have argued that certain doctrines and practices are beyond the pale. Rather, it is an intense, personal complement to more formal

³⁶ Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971 [orig. 1968]), p. 24.

doctrines, which has resonated in powerful and diverse ways in different contexts and situations.

Sufism encompasses both the highly sophisticated poetry and prose of the elite and practices that, although attracting elite adherents, are also understood and elaborated in more popular forms. Arjomand argues that after the adoption of Shi'i Islam as the state religion in Iran in 1501, popular Sufism was ruthlessly suppressed for "reasons of state," because it was seen as a potential threat to political and religious authority. Hence in Iran, Sufism continued primarily in its highly cultivated form among the elite.³⁷

In Morocco, on the other hand, to provide an example of popular religiosity, the monarchy remains linked to popular, implicit, and locally sustained conceptions of Islam, only some of which are formally articulated by traditionally educated men of learning, reformists, or modernists. The monarch's public image is constantly associated with the nation's religious and material welfare, and his formal statements and actions are scrupulously consistent with Islam, as interpreted by an educated elite. Yet other elaborations of religious practice, particularly the notion of marabouts, or "the pious ones" (*al-ṣāliḥūn*; sing. *al-ṣāliḥ*), are never directly challenged. "The pious ones" are people, living or dead (dead, that is, only from an outside observer's perspective), who, together with their descendants, work as efficacious intermediaries in securing God's blessings (*baraka*) for their clients and supporters.

Belief in the efficacy of the pious ones as saintly intermediaries is usually an implicit ideology expressed more in a set of sustained practices and associated myths than in explicit theology. Pious ones are often thought to be descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad (as is the Moroccan dynasty), 'Umār ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 634–644; the second caliph in Islam), or other religious leaders attributed with *baraka*. Tribes and urban neighborhoods often have special ties with particular pious ones or their descent groups, such as the Sharqāwa of western Morocco. The shrines of the pious ones can be seen throughout North Africa, and the significance of such figures is acknowledged in a variety of ways. In North Africa, it is common for pilgrims to Mecca to first visit the shrines or sanctuaries of local pious ones and to do so again upon their return (see Figure 10–2). Such ritual activities suggest an integrated vision among believers of "local" religious practices linked with more universally accepted rituals such as the pilgrimage to Mecca. Further, there is an array of religious brotherhoods (*ṭarīqa-s*) and lodges (Ar. *zāwiya*; Per. *khānqāh*; Turk. *tekke*) associated with "mystic" practices. As with North African regard for the pious ones, these orders are seen by many Muslims as complementing and enhancing, rather than detracting from, the vitality of the Muslim community, although this view is also subject at times to vigorous internal debate.

Sufi practices do not appear to have been emphasized in the early development of Islam. From the seventh to the ninth centuries, Sufism seems to

The term "the pious ones" (*al-ṣāliḥ*) is less familiar to non-Moroccans than "marabout," a term accepted as English usage. "Marabout" has accumulated a baggage of misinterpretation over the years, although it is derived from *murābiṭ* (lit. "the tied one"), a perfectly acceptable Arabic term that, in North Africa, signified pious Muslims who established themselves in tribal territories when the region was not yet thoroughly Islamized. Marabouts constituted the "tie" between Islam and the tribes surrounding them. The term is no longer current and is retained here only when it unambiguously refers to "the pious ones" serving as intermediaries in earlier historical periods. "The pious ones," on the other hand, conveys intact the multivalence of current Moroccan usage. For educated Muslims, a *ṣāliḥ* is revered solely for outstanding piety, and many speak of saint, or maraboutic, "cults" as "pre-Islamic" practices. For many of the nonelite, however, in both towns and in rural areas, recognition of the piety of "the pious ones" is complemented by a belief in their mystical powers. Participants in practices honoring the pious ones or seeking their support are fully aware of the disapproval of some of the elite but nonetheless regard their vision of Islam as realistic and appropriate. Use of "the pious ones" instead of "marabout" or "saint" evokes the multiplicity of the Moroccan concept and the fact that participation in such a "cult" does not constitute evidence of an alternative, independent interpretation of Islam.

have remained largely an individual phenomenon; but gradually it developed a mass appeal.³⁸ The first Sufi gatherings were reputedly informal meetings for religious discussions, especially among literati. These gatherings were sometimes associated with the repetitions of the names of God, called *dhikr-s*, but these could also properly be recited in mosques. Hence Sufism was not at this stage considered a challenge to the formal practices of *sharī'a*-minded Muslims. A later development was the addition of elaborate rituals, music, and dancing to accompany the *dhikr*. Some Muslims regarded these practices as a threat to the integrity of Islam.

At first, organized Sufism appears to have gained ground among an intellectual elite constrained by the exigencies of a *sharī'a*-minded Islam. Despite its stated apolitical objectives, Sufism was regarded from the outset as politically suspect (because of its potential for charismatic leadership), with political authorities sometimes using Sufi organizations for their own purposes or regarding them, often with cause, as being so used by others. The Sufi doctrine of the "inner way" or the "spiritual itinerary" toward greater religious experience was regarded as especially suspect, as, by its very nature, it claimed a privileged religious insight independent of the community. As a consequence,

³⁷ Arjomand, *Shadow*, pp. 109, 244.

³⁸ See Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 359–409; vol. 2, pp. 201–54.

Sufis began to develop formal disciplines and standard, stylized ways of depicting their experiences. Regular stages in spiritual development were formulated in the classical theories of mystical thought, each called a *ṭarīqa*, or "path." The same term also designates Sufi orders or brotherhoods.

In some versions of "classical" Sufi doctrine, the way consists of seven stages of ascending spiritual insight. Most members of religious orders remain at the lower rungs of these spiritual paths. The upper level is reached when a mystic, in a state of exaltation (*ḥāl*), comprehends the divine attributes. Such people are considered *wālī*-s, or saints, in the classical literature and often were popularly credited with the ability to perform miracles.

By the eleventh century, particularly in the person of the great scholar and mystic al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111), a synthesis of intellectualized Sufi doctrine and *sharīʿa*-minded Islam was reached. At the level of an educated elite, a beautiful poetry and literature developed around the notions of mysticism, particularly in the principalities of Muslim Spain and in the Persian-speaking regions of the Islamic world.

In many of the accounts of Sufism written by Muslims and by Western scholars concerned primarily with textual analysis, there is an unfortunate tendency to consider Sufi doctrine as practiced and elaborated by the educated elite as "pure" Sufism and later, popular developments as a corruption of this purer vision. The resulting distorted view of religious development led an earlier generation of historians to write of the "decline" of the Muslim world. They might instead have recognized the multiple levels of religious experience in which the "spiritual" aspects of Sufi practice, as interpreted by an elite, were balanced by its functions as a sociopolitical movement intimately tied to other aspects of society. A proliferation of Sufi "paths" developed that were internally differentiated and that appealed to different groups and social classes.

In North Africa, for instance, the Tijāniya order had numerous government officials among its adherents,³⁹ as did the Bektāshi order in Turkey. Other orders were associated with particular crafts or trades. Some were considered highly respectable; others, such as the Ḥamadsha and the Ḥaddāwa in Morocco, were associated with the use of drugs, trances, and activities considered marginal by the urban bourgeoisie.⁴⁰ Until the 1920s, the strength of these orders was such that the majority of adult urban males and many villagers belonged to a brotherhood in most parts of the Middle East. A popular saying was: "He who does not have a Sufi master as his guide has Satan to guide him."

The organizational backbone of these orders is important to consider. At its core was the relation of the Sufi master (Ar. *shaykh*; Per. *pīr*) to his disciple (*murīd* in both languages). In formal doctrine, the disciple was supposed to be

under the total authority of the shaykh, like a dead body in the hands of its cleanser. Additionally, local religious lodges were organized in a loose hierarchy ordered by the prestige of their shaykhs. But the larger these organizations grew, the more difficulty they had in controlling their members. Subsidiary lodges constantly broke away, with their leaders acting on their own. The dyadic, or two-person, chains of personal authority inherent in the organization of the brotherhoods thus had a built-in weakness. Despite this fact, colonial ethnographers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially in North Africa, conceived of the organization of these orders as monolithic "pan-Islamic" conspiracies that could be used by the Ottoman regime and rival colonial powers to weaken colonial rule. In practice, the authority of shaykhs over their followers was usually less than total, as is indicated by the fact that many individuals belonged to more than one order and that only a few orders required that their members join no other. On the whole, however, the hierarchies of dominance established by the religious orders formed a pervasive and popularly understood template for organizing political activities and a metaphor for political authority.⁴¹ In many parts of the Muslim world, including among the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, Sufi orders have also played an important role in spreading Islamic knowledge.⁴²

There is no single or pervasive Sufi "way." Bryan S. Turner has suggested distinctive contrasts between saints in Christianity and in the Muslim world. In early Christianity, sainthood was at first a local and spontaneous phenomenon that gradually became tied to the institutional needs of a bureaucratized church. By the medieval period, saints became officially recognized only after a lengthy process of canonization. There were three implications to this process: First, because of the length of the canonization proceedings, individuals became saints only after they died. Second, because there were stringent tests of piety required by ecclesiastical authorities, most saints were recruited from monasteries and nunneries. Finally, because trained theologians conducted canonization proceedings, theologians had a much better chance than illiterates for canonization.

Becoming a pious one, or marabout, in the Muslim world stands in marked contrast to the Christian tradition. First, with no formal body of orthodoxy accepted throughout the Muslim world, the recognition of sanctity is local, although some pious ones acquire widespread prominence. Second, whereas Christian saints tend to be orthodox, there is no orthodoxy to which their Muslim counterparts can adhere. Finally, because there are no formal

³⁹ Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World*, Middle Eastern Monographs 7 (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1965).

⁴⁰ See Vincent Crapanzano, *The Hamadsha: A Study in Moroccan Ethnopsychiatry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

⁴¹ Abdellah Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), links Sufi ideas of authority to contemporary political ones.

⁴² Hamid Algar, "Shaykh Zaynullah Rasulev: The Last Great Naqshbandi Shaykh of the Volga-Urals Region," in *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change*, ed. Jo-Anne Gross (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), pp. 112-33; and Alexandre Bennigson and S. Enders Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985).

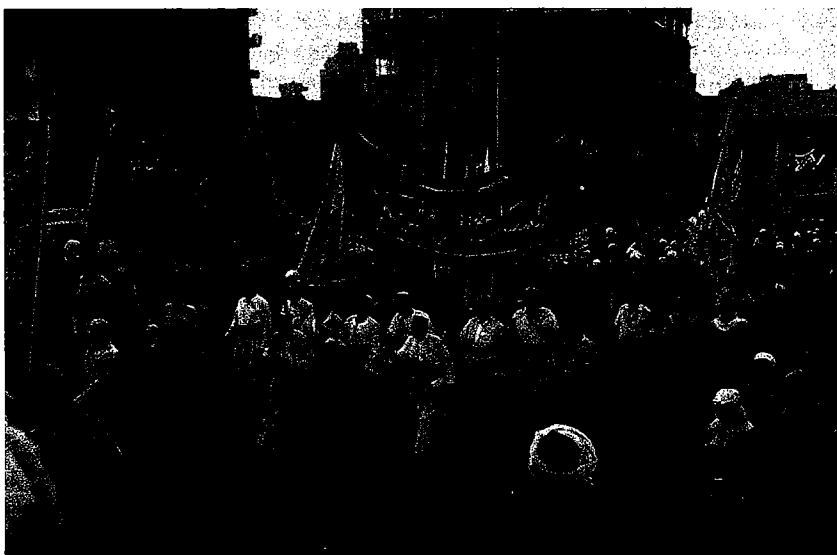


FIGURE 10-5. Members of the Rifā'iya order parading in Cairo, Prophet's birthday, 1987. [Courtesy Kazuo Ohtsuka.]

bodies for deciding who are "pious ones," the process of labeling them varies widely. A person may be considered a pious one on the basis of descent from religious leaders, performing uncanny acts or feats of scholarship, achieving political success, or any combination of these and other attributes.

Michael Gilsenan suggests the reasons for the general decline of many of these orders by the early part of this century. In 1964–1966 he studied a twentieth-century Egyptian religious order that continues to thrive, the Hāmidiya Shādhiliya.⁴³ This order was established in the first decades of the twentieth century and was formally recognized by the government in 1926. In the early 1960s, it had between 12,000 and 16,000 members, concentrated for the most part in Cairo and in the larger towns of the Nile Delta.

Gilsenan argues that until the 1920s, religious orders in Egypt provided an "organized associational life" otherwise absent in many Islamic societies.

⁴³ Michael Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt: An Essay in the Sociology of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973). As in all such sociological arguments, the element of historical context needs to be emphasized. Kazuo Ohtsuka, a Japanese anthropologist, has studied what he calls "salafi," or reformist, Sufism in Cairo from 1986 to 1988. Ohtsuka (personal communication, December 27, 1987) found that many Sufi orders, responding to criticisms from other Muslims arguing for a purification of Islam and a return to "original" (salafi) practices, are regaining adherents. Other practices remain closely associated with local politics in Egypt. See Edward B. Reeves, *The Hidden Government: Ritual, Clientelism, and Legitimation in Northern Egypt* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990).

As such, they served as intermediaries between the highborn and the lowborn, rulers and ruled, as well as between people at the same level of society.⁴⁴ As a result of basic changes in Egypt's political economy, the heads of the Sufi orders gradually lost their public and political influence. Professional politicians, landowners, lawyers, and journalists took over some of their functions, and mutual aid societies were established to fulfill others. Additionally, the economic position of most of the orders was undermined as a result of government confiscation of some pious endowments (*waqf*-s) and the declining value of others on which they depended. This deprived the leaders of the orders of the resources with which to entertain and aid their followers. Moreover, Sufi teachings and ethics in their conventional form had become less and less responsive to the values of modern society.

Gilsenan observes that the Hāmidiya Shādhiliya order was an exception to this general decline. Its founder, Salāma ibn Ḥasan Salāma (1867–1939), was a minor civil servant, and, as such, he was familiar with the demands of modern bureaucratic organization. He was largely self-taught but popularly respected for his religious learning and his claim to descent from the Prophet. Salāma was a charismatic figure to his followers, and a number of miracle stories circulated during his lifetime. He was claimed capable of confounding the religious scholars opposed to him, known for his understanding of the "secrets" of Islamic mysticism, and charitable and generous to his followers.

Organizationally, the Hāmidiya Shādhiliya differs from other orders. Salāma tested his early initiates, so that he had a hard core of knowledgeable and devoted subordinates. He required that his followers join no other brotherhood. Also, the order attracts a white-collar following as well as workers and peasants. Its doctrines and firm organization provide a sense of personal worth and security to middle-class people blocked from occupational advancement (as are many educated Egyptians). Many individuals who have had their occupational advancement blocked can find alternative satisfaction, he argues, in the order.⁴⁵ It offers the fraternal certitude and security that presumably were once provided by the "traditional" social order, yet it is organizationally adapted to the exigencies of modern society.

Gilsenan writes that each role in the Hāmidiya Shādhiliya is carefully defined by written charter. Formal reports are periodically required from its branches, and members of the order exhibit discipline and restraint in their public performances, distancing themselves from the ecstatic behavior of some other orders. Because of this bureaucratic structure, the order tracks members as they move from town to town and facilitates their adjustment to new locations. Gilsenan suggests that adherence to the primary religious values of the order enables its followers to resolve the frustrations and contradictions they encounter in other aspects of their lives. In Weberian fashion, Gilsenan argues

⁴⁴ Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi*, p. 11.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 150–51.

that the order's hierarchical control, lacking in most other orders, enables it to avoid internal schisms, maintain discipline among its members, and emulate the form of valued, "modern" organizations of bureaucracies or industries in which a significant component of its membership participates.

"PIOUS ONES" AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS

One factor in the proliferation of Sufi brotherhoods is the contrast between the requirements of formal, community-minded religion and the more personalized, often emotionally intense patterns of belief provided by some of the religious orders. Other elements include local conceptions of the social order and the popular understanding of religion, which can be just as creative as elite producers of religious values and practices. The way in which North Africans perceive pious ones, or marabouts, suggests the implicit tension between certain Quranic doctrines and local understandings of religion and the social order.

A key Quranic understanding is that all people are equal before God, despite the inequalities found in the social order. Yet the activities of some religious brotherhoods, and the often lavish offerings given to pious ones and their descendants in North Africa and to similar figures elsewhere, suggest that some Muslims act as if they implicitly accept a hierarchical conception of



FIGURE 10-6. Interior of the Mosque of Ibrāhīm in Hebron. In the Middle East and North Africa, the significance of many shrines transcends the immediate locality and religious tradition. Many shrines are venerated by Muslims and Jews alike. Similarly, many religious places in the Indian subcontinent are shared by Muslims and Hindus. In this photograph, the *qibla* (prayer niche) facing Mecca, toward which Muslims pray, is seen in the background. The tomb of Rebecca is at the left, and that of Isaac at the right. [Manoug. Courtesy of Sonia Alemian. All rights reserved.]

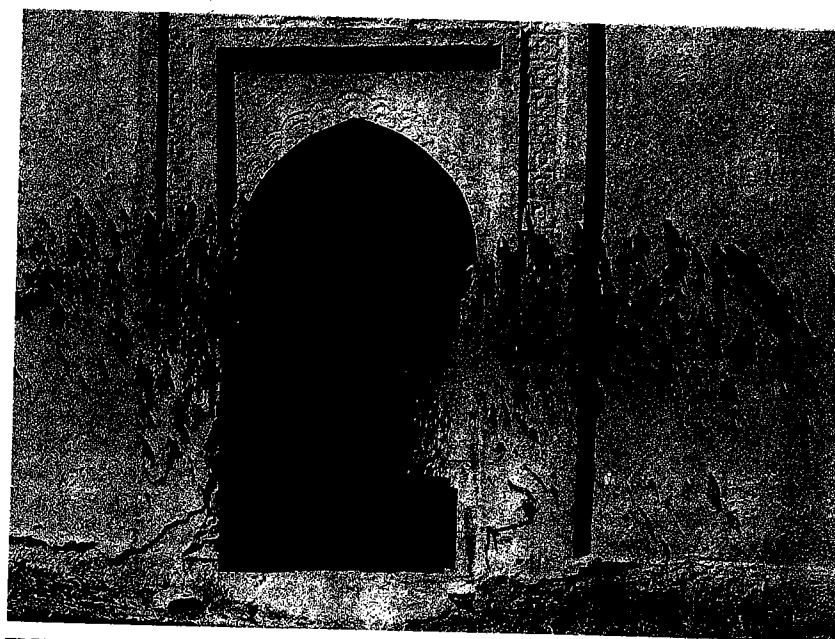


FIGURE 10-7. Women often tear strips from their clothing to "remind" pious ones of their requests. Shrine near Boujad, Morocco. [Courtesy of the author.]

the relations between people and divinity. In a formal sense, the tenet of the equality of believers before God cannot be reconciled with the notion of access through intermediaries. Yet these two perspectives are reconciled at the level of practice, in spite of theological contradictions. The powerful imagery of the role of Morocco's ruling dynasty in this respect has already been raised.

In essence, belief in the efficacy of the pious ones as intermediaries with divinity involves the assumption that whatever might be formally stated about Islam, human relations with the supernatural work in almost the same way as relations among people.⁴⁶ In the Moroccan case, the implicit assumption concerning the social order is that people are related in personally contracted dyadic bonds of inferiority and superiority. In a nearly analogous fashion, pious ones are thought to have a "special" relation toward God and with particular people or groups. For Moroccans and other North Africans who implicitly accept such beliefs, the issue is not the existence of marabouts—that is taken for granted—but whether particular pious ones will

⁴⁶ See Dale F. Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam: Traditional Society in a Pilgrimage Center* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1976), pp. 155–82, for further discussion of saints, or marabouts, as intermediaries in popular Muslim thought.

exercise their powers on one's behalf. They are more likely to do so if a client can claim "closeness" (*qarāba*) to a pious one or his descendants. Moroccans who hold this belief are aware that there is no place for it in "official" Islam—"radio Islam," as one Moroccan put it:

Of course the radio says that everything comes directly from God. But just as the king has his ministers, God has his [pious ones]. If you need a paper from the government office, which is better? Do you go straight to the official and ask for it? You might wait a long time and never receive it. Or do you go to someone who knows you and also knows the official? Of course, you go to the friend, who presents the case to the official. Same thing . . . if you want something from God.

Various offerings and sacrifices are made to marabouts and their descendants. Some, such as the sacrifice of bulls or sheep at the annual festival of a marabout, are annual obligations that ensure that the social groups involved "remain connected" with the marabout and can count on his blessings (*baraka*). Individuals or groups give other gifts in exchange for specific requests. These offerings often are contingent. For instance, it is common for women to go to

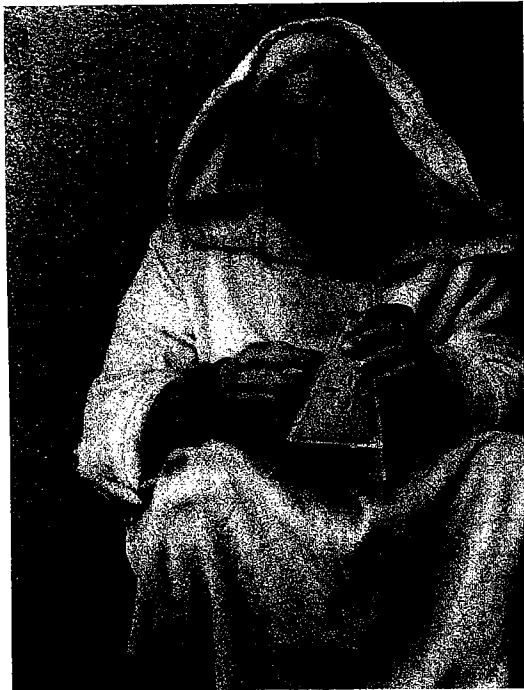


FIGURE 10-8. Preparing amulets for sale at a shrine, Boujad, Morocco. [Courtesy of the author.]

certain shrines asking for a marabout's help in becoming pregnant. They may tear a strip of cloth from their dress and attach it with henna to the door of a shrine to "remind" the pious one. If the request is granted, then a sheep or other payment is made. At the larger shrines, where descendants of the marabout act as custodians, lodging and food may be provided for "visitors" (*zawwār-s*). (The Arabic word for "pilgrim," *hajj*, is not used to describe such visits; the pilgrimage to Mecca is considered conceptually separate.) The modest offerings made by women on their own or their placing of "reminders" at larger shrines is discouraged in favor of more substantial offerings in line with the "rank" of the marabout.

Such offerings are thought of in North Africa in terms of the ideology of "obligation" (*ḥaqq*), which informs most other social relationships. As the descendant of one marabout explained: "You must bring a gift to 'open' a matter with God." Offerings and sacrifices create a bond of obligation between the pious one and his client. Just as with other patterns of obligations, those between pious ones and their clients, even if sometimes discussed in terms of the ideology of "blood" relations, are subject to vicissitudes. The reputations of pious ones living and "dead" are as subject to revaluation on the part of the clients as are other concepts of social obligations. Personal and collective ties with pious ones rest on a similar ideological base, but collective ties merit particular attention because of the emphasis lavished on them by anthropologists. Many tribal collectivities are specifically mentioned in popularly known myths, which serve to legitimate the ties between particular maraboutic descent groups and their clients. Such covenants are represented as being maintained through annual sacrifices, the giving of women to prominent leaders of maraboutic patronymic associations, the claim of a common, distant ancestor between pious ones or their descendants and their clients, and the claim of mere physical propinquity in the distant past.⁴⁷

So pervasive are the basic assumptions concerning the social order on popular religious conceptions that notions partially parallel to the Muslim pious ones can be found in North African Judaism. Accounts of North African Jewish communities from the 1930s to the 1950s document saints' shrines, local festivals (called *ḥillūla-s* instead of *mūsīm-s*, as among Muslims), and sacrifices.⁴⁸ Many of these communities continued these practices in modified, and greatly enhanced, form after emigration to Israel. Some North African Jews aver that their *saddiq-s* (Ar. *ṣadīq* or "friend") emigrated with them. The

⁴⁷ For an example of such a myth, see *ibid.*, pp. 163–68. An analysis of that particular text in the wider context of the relation between oral narratives and Middle Eastern social forms is provided by Michael E. Meeker, *Literature and Violence in North Arabia*, Cambridge Studies in Cultural Systems 5 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 214–44. Michael A. Marcus, "The Saint Has Been Stolen: Sanctity and Social Change in a Tribe of Eastern Morocco," *American Ethnologist* 12, no. 3 (August 1985), 455–67, illustrates how mythic discourse plays a role in contemporary local political activity.

⁴⁸ See L. Voinot, *Pèlerinage judéo-musulman du Maroc* [Judeo-Muslim Pilgrimages in Morocco: (Paris: Éditions Larose, 1948)], for a listing of these shrines and a map of their locations.

dreams and other events legitimizing these practices appear to parallel their Muslim counterparts.⁴⁹ At least one *rebbe* of Moroccan origin has a substantial following both in Israel and in New York.⁵⁰

The understanding of Islam represented by the practices surrounding the pious ones is like other aspects of belief and practice transformed and reinterpreted by changing economic and political conditions. In the past, pious ones and their descent groups served as mediators between tribes and the sultan's court, secured the safe passage of commerce in disturbed areas, and at the same time were often (although not necessarily) respected as religious scholars. Their popular reputations as miracle workers and intermediaries in no way diminished the respect that was accorded their religious learning. Pious ones in tribal areas frequently had extensive contact with religious scholars in principal towns and elsewhere; they in some cases even tutored members of the royal family. There frequently was tension between royal and maraboutic authority, but the relationship was often one of complementarity. Recent research, carried out largely by Moroccan scholars attuned to describing and eliciting the *cultural* understandings of royal and saintly authority, suggests a closer linkage between marabouts and royal authority than had been recognized by colonial scholarship and earlier sociological accounts. In addition, far from being in opposition to urban-based religious scholars and their supporters, many tribally based marabouts or pious ones were respected by them and shared similar interpretations of Islam. This despite the fact that popular understanding of the roles of saints or pious ones, both rural and urban, was often at variance with the formal Islamic precepts of the elite. There was no sharp urban/rural dichotomy of belief and ritual practice but rather a continuum between the two.⁵¹ In spite of the diminished political authority exercised by pious ones during the colonial and postcolonial periods, many tribal collectivities and individuals continue to maintain links with them. The festivals of major saintly figures continue to attract tens of thousands of clients annually.

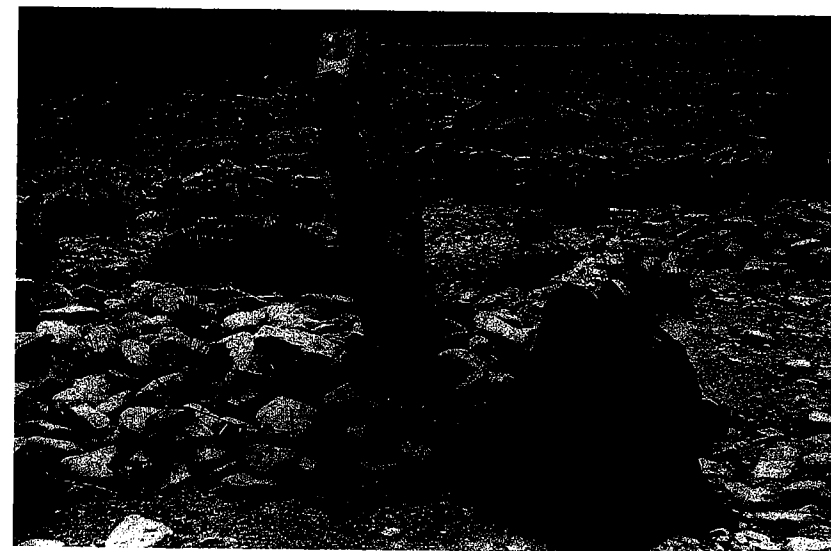


FIGURE 10-9. Women at a grave-shrine, Afghanistan, 1971. Note the miniature cradle on the shrine, lower left. [Courtesy of Nancy Lindisfarne-Tapper.]

Belief in the ability of pious ones to serve as intermediaries with divinity is only one of a range of popular religious understandings. In southern Morocco, for instance, resistance to the French as late as 1919 was led by a religious figure from a marginal social group claiming to be a *mahdī*, who continued to organize attacks upon the French even after more established religious figures sought to accommodate the colonial power. After the *mahdī* died, the resistance he initiated continued to oppose the French until it was finally defeated in 1934.⁵² The significance of such popular religious leaders has been overlooked. In part this is because "establishment" religious scholars—those who define local orthodoxies—have been reluctant to acknowledge the strength of popular religious movements independent of them. Other factors were the uneasiness of French military intelligence in the early part of this century in comprehending the force of such religious beliefs and the lack of ready access to the documentation on such leaders, most of which is in Arabic. As social anthropology increasingly becomes a "native" enterprise, significant modifications in how popular religious currents are depicted will continue to take place.⁵³

⁴⁹ In addition to the sources on North African Judaism in the Maghrib and in Israel mentioned in Chapters 8 and 9, see Alex Weingrod, "Saints and Shrines, Politics and Culture: A Morocco-Israel Comparison," in *Muslim Travellers*, ed. Eickelman and Piscatori, pp. 217–35. On visitational dreams by *saddiqim*, see Yoram Bilu and Henry Abramovitch, "In Search of the Sadiq: Visitation Dreams Among Moroccan Jews in Israel," *Psychiatry* 48, no. 1 (February 1985), 83–92. The dreams and their interpretations as reported by the authors strongly resemble their Moroccan Muslim counterparts. See also Eyal Ben-Ari and Yoram Bilu, "Saints' Sanctuaries in Development Towns," in *Israeli Judaism*, ed. Shlomo Deshen, Charles S. Liebman, and Moshe Shokeid, Studies of Israeli Society 7 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1995 [1987]), pp. 255–84.

⁵⁰ C. T. Bari, *Baba Sali: Our Holy Teacher (Rav Yisrael Abuchatzzeirah)*, trans. Leah Dolinger (New York: Judaica Press, 1986), a hagiography that strongly resembles its Muslim counterparts in style. The Hebrew newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* (Brooklyn), November 14, 1986, last page, carried an announcement of a regular meeting of "The American Friends of Yeshivat Baba Sali" at a Central Park South address.

⁵¹ For incisive rethinking of religious authority in Morocco from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries, see Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

⁵² Abdellah Hammoudi, "Aspects de la mobilisation populaire à la campagne, vus à travers la biographie d'un mahdi mort en 1919," in *Islam et politique au Maghreb*, ed. Ernest Gellner and Jean-Claude Vatin (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1981), pp. 47–55.

⁵³ See, for example, Abdellah Hammoudi, *The Victim and Its Masks: An Essay on Sacrifice and Masquerade in the Maghreb* (Chicago: University of California Press, 1993).

THE AUTHORITY OF LEARNING

Some studies of Islam in rural and tribal milieus depict a single, dominant pattern of religious belief and practice. Earlier in this chapter I presented some of the reasons why it is more accurate to regard belief and practice as prismatic, generating and reflecting multiple influences in both urban and rural contexts. This is why it is misleading to speak of firm divisions among various types of religious leaders—including scholars (Ar. *‘ulamā*, sing. *‘ālim*), Sufis, and *mahdī*-s. In practice these categories overlap. A scholar can become popularly regarded as a pious one for his learning and piety, and an unlearned person similarly can acquire a popular reputation for religious insight. One pervasive element in Islam as a religious tradition is respect for those aspects of belief and ritual that are considered fixed and enduring. Thus in religious learning in North Africa, there is a valued cognitive style, "a set of basic, deeply interiorized master-patterns of language and thought," that emphasizes the accurate memorization and transmission of knowledge, which is considered fixed. Elsewhere, as in Iran, the cognitive style associated with religious learning places greater emphasis on developing a certain style of argument and questioning.⁵⁴ The key exemplar of fixed cognitive style in North Africa is the memorization of the Quran.

Respect for knowledge that is fixed and enduring pervades not only religious knowledge (*‘ilm*) but also knowledge of secular subjects and skills (*ma‘rifa*). This attitude produces a particular respect for the exact use of the spoken word and of set verses from the Quran, proverbs, and poetry, and it influences much of the popular music, rhetoric, art, and oral literature (both religious and secular) throughout the Muslim Middle East. Prior to Western economic and colonial penetration, a major source for the inculcation of this style was the mosque—universities at which advanced students learned the Islamic religious tradition and perpetuated it. Schools such as the Qarawiyyin in Fez, the Yūsufiyya in Marrakesh, the Zitūna in Tunis, the Azhar in Cairo, and their equivalents in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, the Ibāḍī interior of Oman, Najaf in Iraq, and Qum in Iran were all well known throughout the Middle East.

Central Asian equivalents also existed, but from 1928 through 1941, the state carried out a frontal assault on Muslim institutions, closing thousands of mosques and "liquidating" or imprisoning most religious scholars, who were accused of being "spies, saboteurs, counter-revolutionaries and parasites."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Part of the discussion in this section was first presented in Dale F. Eickelman, "The Art of Memory: Islamic Education and Its Social Reproduction," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20, no. 4 (October 1978), 485–516. The quotation defining cognitive style is from Pierre Bourdieu, "Systems of Education and Systems of Thought," *International Social Science Journal* 19 (1967), 343. See also Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco: The Education of a Twentieth Century Notable* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

⁵⁵ Alexandre Benningsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 11.

Only two religious schools existed after the purges of the 1930s. One was opened in Bukhara, Uzbekistan, in 1945, and graduated 10 to 15 students annually. A higher-level school was founded in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in 1971. As of 1978, it had only 30 students. Graduates secured places within the official administration that the Soviets had set up for Muslim institutions, dividing the regions of significant Muslim populations into four "spiritual directorates": Central Asia and Kazakhstan, Muslims of European Russia and Siberia, the North Caucasus and Daghestan, and the Transcaucasian Muslims.⁵⁶

Many observers have commonly assumed that the Soviet repression of 1928–1941 and occasional antireligious campaigns since (for example, in the Khrushchev era) fragmented and ruptured Muslim institutions, practices, and learning. Since Central Asia's sudden independence, though, it is increasingly clear that the official Soviet religious establishment was significantly overshadowed by pervasive and informal "underground" institutions, most of which required official complicity to function. One long-time observer notes the major role of

the enormous network of unrecognized and frequently untrained "volunteer" clerics, who established Qur'an schools, preserved shrines, presided at burials, weddings and other rituals and, in the urban Muslim settings at least, monitored the observation of "traditions"—most of which were Islamic. In Uzbekistan this last function was served through neighbourhood *mahallas* [urban quarters], while in Turkmenistan the watchdogs of traditional Islamic practice were *elats*, or kinship groups of twenty to forty families.⁵⁷

Olcott notes that "Soviet sources generally concealed the information that several religious 'dynasties' flourished in Central Asia, among both the officially recognized clergy and the unofficial clergy."⁵⁸

Such compromises are not unknown in the Middle East, where, for instance, Egyptian efforts to control religious private voluntary organizations by imposing government bureaucrats on their administrative boards have not prevented religious groups from co-opting them. On paper, the state has achieved its purpose, but in private its efforts at regulation can often be held in check.⁵⁹ Such official complicity is clear in the case of Uzbekistan in the 1970s, where clandestine religious schools opened, "missionaries traveled to other cities and rural areas," and books and pamphlets were secretly printed on state-owned (and heavily monitored) presses. For example, Abdujabar Abdvakhitov reports that he saw a book of the writings of the Pakistani religious

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 14–15, 19.

⁵⁷ Martha Brill Olcott, "Islam and Fundamentalism in Central Asia," in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro'i, Cummings Center Series (London: Frank Cass, 1985), p. 24.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ See Denis J. Sullivan, *Private Voluntary Organizations in Egypt: Islamic Development, Private Initiative, and State Control* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994), pp. 18, 57–98, 164.

reformer Abū-l A'lā al-Mawdūdī "bound in the cover of a book entitled *Materials of the XXVth Conference of CPSU*" and distributed free.⁶⁰ In Turkmenistan, President Saparmurad Niyazov, closely associated with Soviet antireligious campaigns in the pre-1991 era, now sponsors mosques and religious schools, "many of which bear his name," and he has "even erected a large statue of himself making pilgrimage, on the site where [the] main Lenin monument once stood."⁶¹

Beginning in the nineteenth century in the Middle East (and during the Soviet era for Central Asia and the Caucasus), the financial base on which many of these institutions depended was increasingly undermined both by "native" regimes such as Muḥammad 'Alī's in Egypt and by colonial regimes such as that of the French in Algeria. Moreover, as European-style schooling, first provided only for specialized military training, rapidly expanded in scope and attracted students from the privileged social strata and more ambitious poorer ones, Islamic schools were left to students of a modest and often rural origin. Some mosque-universities were "reformed," ostensibly to improve their curricula and standards but also to bring them firmly under government control, but these moves only accelerated their decline. Some mosque-universities continued to thrive until fairly recent dates—those of Morocco until the 1920s and early 1930s, those of the Yemen (Ṣan'ā') and the Sultanate of Oman until the middle of this century. Still, the social networks of influence and patronage formed in part through such mosque-universities have remained remarkably intact in many countries, and the "cognitive style" conveyed by Islamic education retains a popular legitimacy.

The cultural idea of religious knowledge has remained remarkably constant over time throughout the regions of Islamic influence. Writing specifically of medieval Islamic civilization, Marshall Hodgson states that education was "commonly conceived as the teaching of fixed and memorizable statements and formulas which could be learned *without any process of thinking as such.*"⁶² This remarkable phrase raises the crucial issue of the meaning of "understanding" associated with such a concept of knowledge. The supposedly fixed and memorizable statements conveyed by education constitute the religious sciences, the totality of knowledge and technique necessary in principle for a Muslim to lead the fullest possible religious life. These memorizable statements also constitute the most valued knowledge. The paradigm of all such knowledge is the Quran; its "mnemonic domination" (*malaka l-ḥifẓ*) is the starting point for the mastery of the religious sciences. To facilitate the task of memorizing other key texts of grammar and law, many are written in rhymed verse.

⁶⁰ Abdujabar Abduvakhitov, "Islamic Revivalism in Uzbekistan," in *Russia's Muslim Frontiers: New Directions in Cross-Cultural Analysis*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman, Indiana Series in Arab and Islamic Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 83.

⁶¹ Olcott, "Islam and Fundamentalism," p. 22.

⁶² Hodgson, *Venture*, vol. 2, p. 438. (Emphasis added.)

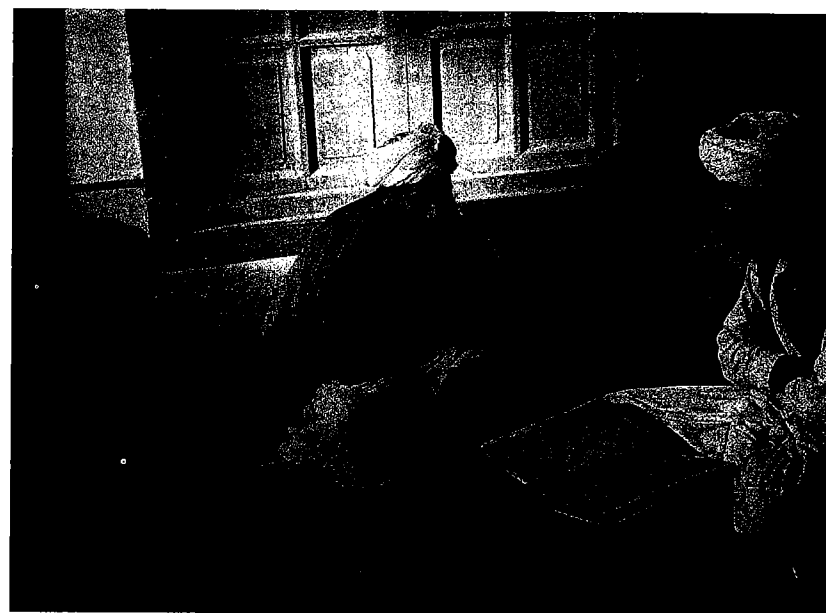


FIGURE 10-10. Discussing a Quranic commentary, Ghazni, Afghanistan, 1971. [Courtesy of Jon W. Anderson.]

Two linked propositions can be made concerning the form of Islamic knowledge. The first is that an intellectual tradition that emphasizes fixity and memory, as is characteristic of many other traditions of religious knowledge, can still be capable of flexibility. In practice there is considerable variation over time and place throughout the Islamic world as to the exact bodies of knowledge to be included in the religious sciences. Once this shifting is recognized, the interesting issue is the circumstances under which redefinitions occur regarding what constitutes the proper scope of the religious sciences. The notion of what is meant by "tradition" in Islam, even the "high" tradition of scholarship and learning, may be fixed as to form and style (as the notion of what constitutes "valued" knowledge may be fixed in form and style in any educational system) but not as to content. Former students of mosque-universities have become not only scholars but also politicians, ministers of state, merchants, and financiers who are quite capable of dealing with contemporary economic and political problems. Hence one must look beyond the mere scope of such learning to understand its significance.

The second proposition is that the cognitive style associated with Islamic education is closely tied to popular understandings of Islam, and it has important

analogues in nonreligious spheres of knowledge. This formal congruence has served to enhance the popular legitimacy of religious knowledge and its carriers, but at the same time, it has shaped the ways in which changes are perceived. Earlier in this chapter I indicated how a Moroccan religious judge (*qāḍī*) explained the notion of Islamic law in its jural sense and as a code for personal conduct. Everything within the two parallel lines he drew on a sheet of paper was fixed—the content of Islamic law; everything else constituted innovation. Yet not all innovation is negative; it is tolerated so long as it does not contradict the principles of Islamic law. This formula is one of the several means by which the fixity of tradition can be maintained while accommodating political and economic change. Most Muslims do not possess an exact knowledge of the religious sciences but nonetheless share the assumption that religious knowledge is fixed and knowable.

Two features consistently associated with Islamic education in its earlier style are its rigorous discipline and its lack of explicit explanation of memorized material. Both features are congruent with the concept of knowledge as essentially fixed and, of course, with the notion of reason (*qāl*) as the ability to discipline one's nature, as explained in Chapter 9. The firm discipline of Quranic education was one of many ways in which the respect for the unchanging word of God could be inculcated in students. In Morocco, many people believe that any part of a student's body struck in the course of memorizing the Quran will never burn in hell; the same notion applies to beatings given by a craftsman to his apprentice.

"Understanding" in the context of such concepts of learning was not measured by any ability to "explain" particular verses. Such explanation (*tafsīr*) was considered a science in itself. Instead, the measure of understanding consisted of the ability to make appropriate use of particular Quranic verses. Originality was shown by working Quranic references into novel but appropriate contexts, just as knowledge and manipulation of secular oral poetry and proverbs were signs of good rhetorical style. This notion of style continues to hold in many parts of the Muslim world.

Mnemonic "possession" of the Quran and related texts was considered a form of cultural capital for those few who achieved its full memorization. Aside from small traditional gifts by the parents of the children to their teachers, Quranic education was free. Yet most students dropped out after a short period. They were obliged to contribute to the support of their families or they failed to receive parental support for the arduous and imperfectly understood process of learning. In practice, memorization of the Quran was accomplished primarily by the children of relatively prosperous households and households in which the fathers or guardians were already literate. Moreover, these children had more opportunities to observe gatherings where the proper use of educated rhetorical style was employed than did poorer students. The biographies of men of learning repeatedly stress the importance of their family milieu in successfully mastering the traditional texts.

As in any educational system with diffuse, implicit criteria for success, and in which essential skills were not fully embodied in formal learning, the existing elite was favored and certain families often became distinguished for their learning over generations. Despite the great respect in which religious learning and men of learning are held in many parts of the Islamic world, the majority of students at traditional mosque-universities rarely ever used such knowledge in more than an iconic fashion. A student's years at the mosque-university secured ties with people within and without the community of learning, ties that often were of later use in facilitating commercial, political, and entrepreneurial activities. No other preparation, except perhaps association with the sultan's entourage, enabled a person to acquire such a wide range of potential associations, at least so long as there were no major alternatives to Islamic higher education.

In many contexts throughout the Middle East until recent times, Islamic men of learning were at the heart of political affairs. Popular protest often began at the mosque-universities, even if men of learning rarely initiated it themselves. Because men of learning tended to be members of the social elite and at the same time appropriated for themselves the symbols of legitimacy provided by religious scholarship, they often represented the will of the population to the government and the intentions of the government to the populace. If the government performed acts that men of learning considered outside the bounds of Islam and if the men of learning were capable of withstanding the ruler's displeasure, the ruler was often compelled to change his course of action. Albert Hourani uses the term "patrician politics" to characterize the nature of their influence.⁶³ This characterization continues to apply to the officially recognized men of learning of Morocco, Egypt, and the various countries of the Arabian peninsula. Although politically significant, for the most part they take their lead in political matters from state authorities, but at the same time, as in Saudi Arabia, they can on occasion act as a significant constraint on the state.⁶⁴

With the rise of state-supported schooling and the access it provided to employment and government sinecures, the authority of traditional Islamic education was progressively undercut. Nonetheless, the authority of its graduates remains significant, although not unchallenged. Secular state schooling has been available throughout most of the Middle East (and Central Asia) for most of the twentieth century, but only since midcentury has it become mass education. The timing has varied throughout the region. Mass education began in Egypt shortly after its 1952 revolution, so that large numbers of students reached the university, or tertiary, level only in the late 1960s and early

⁶³ Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," in *The Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 41–68.

⁶⁴ Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton, NJ, and London: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 60–63.



FIGURE 10-11. Tahrir Square, Cairo. With mass education, many people consider the inexpensive books and pamphlets sold from a sidewalk kiosk just as authoritative as those written by conventionally educated religious scholars. [Courtesy Gregory Starrett. Copyright © 1989.]

1970s. In Morocco, which gained its independence in 1956, mass education was implemented somewhat later. Indeed, in the 1960s many teachers had to be imported from Egypt until a sufficient number of Moroccans could be trained. In some parts of the Arabian peninsula, such as Oman, mass schooling began only after 1970.

The result in each case has been to encourage new forms of religious—and political—authority.⁶⁵ The shift of religious knowledge from that which is mnemonically possessed to material that can only be consulted in books suggests a major transformation in the nature of knowledge and its carriers. It may still be ideologically maintained that religious knowledge is memorizable and immutable, as is certainly the case for the word of God as recorded in the Quran, but the lack of concrete embodiment of this premise in the carriers of such knowledge indicates a major shift. One consequence is that socially

⁶⁵ See Dale F. Eickelman, "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies," *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 4 (November 1992), 1–13.

recognized carriers of religious learning no longer consist only of those who have studied authoritative texts in circumstances equivalent to those of the mosque–universities, with their bias toward members of the elite. Those who can interpret what Islam "really" is can now be of more variable social status than was the case when traditional learning was essential to legitimize religious knowledge. A long apprenticeship under an established man of learning is no longer a necessary prerequisite to legitimizing one's own religious knowledge. Carriers of religious knowledge increasingly can be anyone who can claim a strong Islamic commitment, as is the case among many of the educated urban youth. In Uzbekistan's Ferghana Valley, for example, one of the leaders of the Islamic movement in the 1980s and early 1990s was a former garage mechanic.⁶⁶ Freed from traditional patterns of learning and scholarship, religious knowledge can be interpreted in a more flexible and directly political fashion by more people. Photocopied tracts and the clandestine dissemination of sermons on cassettes now rival the mosque as the center for Islam and challenge those sanctioned by the state.

REFORM AND RADICALISM: SELF-RENEWAL AND INTERNAL DEBATE

The dates in the title of Albert Hourani's *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* suggest that the main impetus for reform in Islamic thought was Western encroachment upon the area.⁶⁷ In the preface of the book's reissue, he acknowledged that most studies of Arab intellectual movements, including his own, "did not say enough" about those for whom "the dominant ideas of modern Europe" carried little or no importance. This was in contrast to the ongoing internal debates within Muslim societies that were often phrased in religious terms. Egypt was one center for such reformist activities, and Constantinople (Istanbul) another. The influence of nineteenth-century intellectuals on the Islamic body politic was profound, and such activities as the "organization" (*nizām*)—the word *reform* was scrupulously avoided—of the al-Azhar mosque–university at the instigation of state authorities, ostensibly to "modernize" it, had a profound if delayed impact.

The greatest popular momentum of the reform movement was from the end of the nineteenth century through the 1930s. In Morocco, for example, its growing popularity was linked to the impending threat of European penetration. Reformist thought spread among intellectuals connected with the sultan's court and educated urban merchants informally linked with the milieu of the leading mosque–universities. The movement disseminated the ideas of

⁶⁶ Abdujabar Abduvakhitov (personal communication, September 28, 1991). See also his "Islamic Revivalism," pp. 79–97.

⁶⁷ Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970 [1962]), p. viii.

religious reformers from the Arab "East," such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1839–1897) and Muḥammad ‘Abduh (1849–1905), both of whom attracted disciples throughout the region. Certain religious brotherhoods with modernist tendencies appealed significantly to members of the mercantile and administrative elite.⁶⁸

Muslims in Central Asia and Russia also experienced a vigorous reform movement. Part of this was spearheaded by a talented Tatar journalist and thinker, Ismail Gasprinsky (1851–1914), who resigned as mayor of his Crimean town to devote his life to pan-Islam and pan-Turkism. Writing primarily in Russian, he sought to provide Russia's Muslims with a sense of common identity and, by educating them in their own culture and civilization as well as that of Russia, to bring about a rapprochement between Russian Muslims and other Russians.⁶⁹ The movement associated with his name and with other early reformers became known as the *jadīdī* ("new") movement, introducing a religious education combined with secular subjects, such as history, geography, and arithmetic, in Turkish rather than Persian in regions where Turkic languages predominated. Islam thus would be refocused as a cultural force, and the economic stagnation of Russia's Muslims would end. As in other parts of the Muslim world, newspapers and publishers played a major role in disseminating these ideas among the intelligentsia of small towns, including schoolteachers and minor functionaries. After the 1917 revolution, the Soviet state sought to co-opt the Pan-Islam movement but after 1928 decided to destroy it as a political force.⁷⁰

The distinction between reformist and "radical" Muslim thought and movements is more a fine gradation than a sharp boundary and centers on the disposition toward political action. Reformists have placed greatest emphasis on Islamic thought and practice; "radical" Muslim movements are more disposed to participation in the political arena. It would be tempting, but misleading, to see nineteenth-century reform movements as the precursors of subsequent radical thought. The radical vision has coexisted with reformist thought, except that it has become more salient since the early 1970s, and it became most visible in the aftermath of the 1978–1979 Iranian revolution. Yet there are antecedents. Although the Palestinian resistance has been thought of

since the 1960s as one of the more secularized political movements in the Arab world, populist Muslim leaders in the 1920s and 1930s were the primary carriers of Palestinian nationalism, displacing an earlier, locality-centered politics of notables. Within Palestine, the major challenge to PLO leadership has been from radical Muslim groups. In this case, as in others, it is not possible to discern a unilineal trajectory of political thought from reformism to radical Islam and secular nationalism.⁷¹

Ideologically, the reformist movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sought to divest Islamic practice of what the reformers considered its particularistic accretions and to return to the essential principles of faith; hence the name of the movement in Arabic, *salafiyya*, which suggests a return to the practice of the venerable forebears. In the Muslim world it is common for both modernists and conservatives to justify their ideological position by emphasizing a "return" to original principles, even if the proposed reforms are radically innovative. In western Morocco, I found that the major popular spread of reformist ideas to that region came in the 1930s. The principal carriers were urban merchants, many of whom had been associated with mosque-universities. Reformist Islam gave them an ideological and organizational base from which to challenge the domination of a maraboutic family in the region that controlled much of the commercial activity. In other regions as well, reformist Islam became, in part, a vehicle for asserting autonomy from the dominant groups of earlier generations and a prototype for the nationalist movement. Organizationally, it was common in the 1930s for merchants and craftsmen caught up in the reformist movement to set up loosely knit, often ephemeral committees to negotiate with the local administration on matters such as the construction of schools or road improvements. Reformist Islam had few adherents outside the major cities in this period, but those few were members of influential families.

The popular spread of Algeria's reformist movement is well documented. As Ali Merad has written, before the emergence of the reformist movement, virtually no Algerian Muslim thought that Islam was anything

⁶⁸ On Afghānī, ‘Abduh, and their disciples, see *ibid.*, pp. 103–92. *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, ed. John J. Donahue and John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), provides translations of and introductions to key reformist and radical writings. See also *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), a collection of analytical writings on reformist and radical thought.

⁶⁹ Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 146–47, and his *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 7–28.

⁷⁰ Edward J. Lazzerini, "Beyond Renewal: The Jadid Response to Pressure for Change in the Modern Age," in *Muslims in Central Asia*, ed. Gross, pp. 151–66; and Abduvakhitov, "Islamic Revivalism," pp. 79–81.

⁷¹ For the 1920s and 1930s, see Nels Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism* (London and Boston: Kegan Paul International, 1982). One of the best studies of the growth of radical Muslim movements in the occupied Israeli territories is Jean-François Legrain, "Islamistes et lutte nationale Palestinienne dans les territoires occupés par Israël," *Revue Française de Science Politique* 36, no. 2 (April 1986), 227–47. Legrain portrays the internal diversity of radical Muslim thought, its carriers (primarily a younger generation, educated and disillusioned with the ineffectiveness of secular nationalism), and its shifting support, including Israeli military authorities, who at one time viewed religiously based movements as a counter against those expressing sympathy for the PLO (p. 246). For a summary of these developments in both Israel and the occupied territories, see Thomas L. Friedman, "An Islamic Revival Is Quickly Gaining Ground in an Unlikely Place: Israel," *New York Times*, April 30, 1987, p. A6. See also Shaul Mishal and Reuben Aharoni, eds., *Speaking Stones: Communiqués from the Intifada Underground* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994), which contains translations of leaflets distributed by underground secular and religious groups during the *intifada* ("uprising" or "shaking off") against the continued Israeli occupation.

except maraboutism.⁷² "Pious ones" were the only religious spokesmen for most Algerians, and the only alternative to them was a French-subsidized "clergy," allowed to conduct Friday prayers in the mosques. An initial impetus for the reform movement was a brief visit by the Egyptian reformer Muḥammad 'Abduh to Algeria in September 1903. 'Abduh's local contacts, although few, were Algerians influential in religious circles.

The popular impact of the reformist movement accelerated after the return of Algerians who had fought with the French in World War I and who were disillusioned about resuming their subservient status. Algerians from all parts of the country began to recognize their common situation despite linguistic and regional differences. (An unintended by-product of French rule was to bring "natives" of different regions into more contact with one another.) Distant problems became more familiar as "Young Algerians"—a term that consciously paralleled the earlier "Young Turks," for the Ottoman province of Anatolia—recognized their common status. The small Algerian cadre of French-trained schoolteachers, doctors, journalists, and attorneys formed the movement's vanguard, but their direct influence was limited by their inability to communicate effectively with the vast majority of Algerians. Because marabouts and the "official clergy" had supported the French against the Ottoman Empire (allied with the Germans) during the war, they rapidly lost popular support.

A number of Algerian religious reformers emerged, of whom 'Abd al-Ḥamid ibn Bādīs (ben Badīs) (1889–1940), from a leading family of Constantine, was the key leader. A religious scholar, he was influenced by reformist ideas from the Arab East and maintained active ties with Algerians from many walks of life. The elite status of these reformers meant that the French dealt circumspectly with them. Reformists began to visit mosques throughout Algeria, emphasizing in their preaching the unity of Islam, charity, worship, and mutual assistance. While avoiding direct confrontation with the marabouts, who were often strongly embedded in local political networks, they challenged the maraboutic claim of communication with the Prophet, their power of intercession, miraculous healing, and magic, and sought to convince Algerians that these were not part of Islamic doctrine. By 1933, the French administration placed restrictions on the reformists, especially as some of them had become directly involved in the incipient nationalist movement.

Merad makes two major points. First, maraboutism was the backdrop against which reformist ideologies in Algeria were forged and elaborated. No matter how many educated Muslims deride the implicit assumptions of

maraboutism today, the maraboutic interpretation of Islam was a major force in the 1930s, and in many parts of North Africa, it continues to play a significant role. Second, reformism mounted an offensive of educated urban Islam, "intelligible and simple," against a tribal and rural religious orientation. Merad argues that, consciously or not, urban values impregnated the religious conceptions of the reformist movement and paved the way for "rationalist" conceptions of Islam. He goes so far as to say that the carriers of reformist Islam secularized Islam by conveying it as doctrines and practices set apart from other aspects of life.⁷³

There has been a tendency in the Muslim world, as in the Christian one, for religious traditions that once were "coterminous with human life in all its comprehensiveness" to become transformed so that now "the religious seems to be one facet of a person's life alongside many others."⁷⁴ The reformist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not just a movement of traditionally educated men of learning. It included educated people exposed to other intellectual currents. They changed the terms of discourse as well as the basis for religious authority so that the traditionally educated were no longer the most likely to be the "authoritative" carriers of Islamic thought and practice. Religious discourse could encompass nationalist and anticolonial sympathies and reach wider audiences than its secular counterparts.

The Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*), founded in Egypt in 1927 or 1928, grew rapidly because, in place of the religious authority and discourse of traditionally educated men of learning, it offered an alternative that seemed directly related to modern conditions. By the 1930s, it had become a significant religious and political force. By 1948, after the defeat of the Arabs by the new Israeli state, the movement had at least one million active participants, with many more sympathizers, and could be considered the only genuinely popular mass political movement in twentieth-century Egypt.⁷⁵ The Brotherhood soon spread to other countries, and similar movements were modeled on it. Its founder, Ḥasan al-Bannā (b. 1906), was assassinated in 1949, perhaps by agents of the Egyptian monarchy, at the height of his career. From the time he entered primary school (and not a religious institution), Ḥasan al-Bannā was involved in various religious societies and became strongly influenced by reformist teachings. As with other educated youth of the 1920s, he constantly discussed with his associates the state of Islam and the nation and was concerned with the defection of many of the educated from the Islamic

⁷³ Merad, *Réformisme*, pp. 437–39.

⁷⁴ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 124.

⁷⁵ The Brotherhood was outlawed in 1948, legalized again in 1951, tolerated after the 1952 revolution (because the Free Officers thought they could successfully co-opt it), but then was ruthlessly repressed from 1954 until the death of Nasser in 1970. See Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969). For a recent discussion of the variety of political currents within the Muslim Brotherhood, see Sana Abed-Kotob, "The Accommodationists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27, no. 3 (August 1995), 321–39.

⁷² Ali Merad, *Le réformisme musulman en Algérie de 1925 à 1940*, Recherches Méditerranéennes, Études 7 (Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1967), discussed at length in Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 149–73. See also Pessah Shinar, "Ulamā, Marabouts and Government: An Overview of their Relationships in the French Colonial Maghrib," *Israel Oriental Studies* 10 (1980), 211–29, who depicts the internal debate within the Muslim community during this period.

way of life. His followers came to regard him as a charismatic figure. Ikhwān members had to swear complete obedience to the movement, although there were degrees of membership and punishment for negligent members. The Ikhwān's built-in discipline set them apart from most other religious associations (an exception being the order described by Gilsenan, which, however, avoided political activities). Because the Muslim Brotherhood made no distinction between the political and social order and called for the purification of society, successive governments in Egypt and elsewhere saw it as a revolutionary force.⁷⁶ The organization was frequently suspected of political violence and has experienced a fair share of political violence from a succession of regimes.

Richard P. Mitchell, the leading scholar on the Brotherhood, has characterized it "as the first mass-supported and organized, essentially urban-oriented effort to cope with the plight of Islam in the modern world."⁷⁷ Mitchell sees a continuity between it and earlier reform movements, including the Wahhābi movement of eighteenth-century Arabia. Members of the movement see themselves as practical successors to the reformist ideas of earlier leaders such as al-Afghānī. The goals of the Muslim Brotherhood have included renewed unity of the Muslim community (Ar. *umma*) and an appeal for personal reform as a prelude to allowing the Muslim community to realize its full potential for development in the modern world. Western influences and institutions are not excluded, provided that they can be harnessed to the service of Islam. At times, such ideological notions have been very much in line with the political goals of conservative Arab and other states. Thus the Saudis supported the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s, in part as a counterforce to the pan-Arabism of Egypt's Nasser and the secular Ba'ṭh parties of Syria and Iraq. In a similar manner in the 1980s, the Saudis, through covert aid to Turkey, supported conservative Turkish preachers among Turkish migrants in West Germany.⁷⁸

It is difficult to ascertain the social origins of quasi-secret movements, especially when they have been declared illegal for significant parts of their

existence. Nonetheless, there is a consensus that the Muslim Brotherhood is dominated by the urban middle class. Mitchell attended many open meetings of the Brothers between 1953 and 1955 and reports that he saw a fairly regular pattern of attendance: servants, merchants, craftsmen. There were a few graduates of al-Azhar mosque-university in Cairo, but the overwhelming majority of Muslim Brothers were students, civil servants, office workers, and professionals in Western dress. In short, they were "an emergent and self-conscious Muslim middle class" hostile to imperialism and its "internal" (i.e., indigenous) agents and interested in conservative reform and the implementation of religious life as they conceive it.⁷⁹

Political conditions in Egypt have often been regarded as a bellwether for the Arab Muslim world. The Egyptian revolution in 1952 was thought to exemplify the decline of religious factors and movements in public life, a notion in accord with the assumptions of modernization theory so prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s.⁸⁰ Nasser felt sufficiently confident by 1954 that he ordered the arrest of thousands of Muslim Brothers, crushing the movement as a formal political force in Egypt. After the poorly conceived expedition against the Suez Canal in 1956 by Britain, France, and Israel, and the subsequent precipitate withdrawal of these powers, secular Arab nationalism, with its dream of Arab unity, reached its apogee, which lasted until Israel defeated the Arabs in the June 1967 war.

The vigorous repression of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the 1950s and the destruction of its leadership, retrospectively seen as moderate, created amenable conditions for fostering more radical religious interpretations and for recruiting a younger generation of radicalized militants unwilling to compromise with existing state authorities. As Gilles Kepel notes, the prisons and prison camps of Nasser's Egypt became vivid metaphors for the moral bankruptcy of existing government and incubators for radical religious thought.⁸¹ *Jāhil* is a Quranic term evoking the state of ignorance, violence, and self-interest that presumably existed prior to the revelation of the Quran and that, for radicals, continues to hamper realization of a full Islamic community. Islamic militants and many other Muslims consider existing state organizations "barbaric" (*jāhili*) because they do not govern in accordance with Islamic principles.

One of the principal radical ideologues was Sayyid Quṭb (1906–1966). He was born in a village near Assiut, in Upper Egypt, and was educated at a teacher's college. He taught and contributed to various newspapers, went to the United States—his English was good enough so that in 1955 he reviewed the English translation of one of his books—for further training in education,

⁷⁶ Mitchell, *Muslim Brothers*, p. 312.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 321.

⁷⁸ As with other political movements, the Muslim Brotherhood is subject to the vicissitudes of circumstances and external support. In Palestine territories, its strength was among an older generation, especially in Bethlehem and Hebron. In the 1948 war for Israel's independence, Egyptian volunteers with Muslim Brotherhood sympathies were stationed in these two towns. In Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood was tolerated and at times encouraged because of its opposition to Nasser's pan-Arabism and its avoidance of criticism of the Jordanian monarchy. After Brotherhood leadership implicitly criticized the monarchy in late 1985 for seeking a rapprochement with Syria, which strenuously opposes the Brotherhood (at least 30,000 lives may have been lost when Syrian government forces crushed a mini-rebellion led by the Muslim Brotherhood in al-Hama in early 1982), the Brotherhood quickly found that Jordanian tolerance had vanished (Legrain, "Islamistes," pp. 223, 245). By the 1980s it was again tolerated, and it won 22 seats in Jordan's 1989 parliamentary elections. See Laurie Brand, "In the Beginning was the State . . . : The Quest for Civil Society in Jordan," in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, vol. 1, ed. Augustus Richard Norton (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), pp. 163–65.

⁷⁹ Mitchell, *Muslim Brothers*, pp. 328–31.

⁸⁰ See Leonard Binder, "The Natural History of Development Theory," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28, no. 1 (January 1986), 3–33.

⁸¹ Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh*, rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993 [orig. 1986]). Kepel describes his study as a "grammar and rhetoric" (p. 23) of contemporary radical thought in Egypt.

and joined the Muslim Brotherhood upon his return in 1951. Like al-Bannā, he could not claim the credentials of a traditional man of learning. From 1954 until his execution in 1966, he spent all but eight months (1964–1965) in prison.

His death in prison was precipitated by an alleged assassination attempt against Nasser. While visiting Moscow in August 1965, Nasser announced that the authorities had uncovered a vast plot against the regime. The result was a major roundup of Muslim Brotherhood supporters and, a year later, the hanging of Sayyid Qutb and others. Whether the regime's strike against the radicals preempted a real plot or was contrived is uncertain, but the authorities, who assumed they had virtually eliminated religiously based opposition, discovered that it had deep roots not only among the peasantry, which the regime had anticipated, but among "lawyers, scientists, doctors, businessmen, university professors, school teachers, and students," for whom Sayyid Qutb had an almost messianic appeal and therefore constituted a major threat to the regime.⁸² In spite of international appeals for clemency, his execution was carried out.

The majority of Sayyid Qutb's writings were produced in prison. These include a six-volume commentary on the Quran, an abridgment of which, *Signposts (Ma'ālīm fī al-tarīq)* (c. 1965), is one of the most influential radical Muslim texts. Prior to the 1950s, the Muslim Brotherhood never attacked the Egyptian or other Arab Muslim governments as un-Islamic; subsequently, at least the radical elements of the Brotherhood identified the rulers of Egypt and many other Arab states with the Pharaohs of the Quran. A major appeal of Sayyid Qutb's writings is their ability to offer their readers an explanation in Islamic terms of contemporary political and economic developments and of the shortcomings and perceived injustices of existing regimes. When Qutb's Quranic commentary was published shortly after his execution, in 1966, it was vigorously attacked by several religious spokesmen on behalf of the government. This response, though, only underlined how significant the regime considered his commentary.⁸³

The elements of radical discourse have complex origins. Some can be traced back to radical medieval thinkers such as Ibn Taymiya (d. 1328), who argued that it is the duty of rulers to provide the spiritual and material conditions necessary to lead a truly Islamic life. Ironically, Ibn Taymiya's ideas engendered widespread debate and popular support only in the 1970s.⁸⁴

⁸² Adeed Dawisha, *The Arab Radicals* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1986), p. 89. For an annotated translation of one of Qutb's key texts and an account of his career, see William E. Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia 54 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996).

⁸³ Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, p. 61.

⁸⁴ Emanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1985); and, on both secular and religious contemporary politics, Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

(Sayyid Qutb's originality in part lies in concluding that rulers who do not rule by "Islamic" principles are not Muslims at all but illegitimate "Pharaohs.") Another source of Qutb's writings, and through him a number of radical Muslim thinkers, was the prolific Pakistani neo-fundamentalist intellectual Mawlānā Mawdūdī (1903–1979).⁸⁵

If Sayyid Qutb emerged in the 1960s as a key ideologue of the radical Islamic movement in Egypt, the organizational muscle of the militants was provided by the developments of the 1970s, especially after the political liberalization that accompanied the latter part of the rule of Anwar al-Sadat (r. 1970–1981). The ideas of most extremist groups are known only through hostile, usually governmental, sources, so it is necessary to exercise caution in evaluating their beliefs and discerning their social origins. Even the names of these groups are subject to distortion. The group headed by Shukri Muṣṭafā, who assassinated Sadat in October 1981, called itself the Society of Muslims (*jamī'at al-Muslimīn*) but became known in the press as The Society of Repentance and Emigration (*jamī'at al-takfīr wa-l-hijra*).⁸⁶ The group's own name made the government uneasy, although it correctly indicated the group's belief that Muslims who did not adhere to its principles were infidels. Radical beliefs and a dedication to violence kept the numbers of these extremist groups restricted, but their small size and the lack of formal connections among radical groups also kept them outside the effective reach of Egypt's ubiquitous security services.

The appeal of such movements was undoubtedly heightened by a conjuncture of events: Sadat's bold visit to Jerusalem in 1977, a dismal economic situation, and the political unrest in many Muslim states in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution. Such short-term factors are undoubtedly important, although other, long-term ones should be kept in mind. One such factor is the changing face of mass education. Most participants in the radical groups of the 1970s were in their twenties and thirties, the first generation to benefit from the revolution's commitment to mass education. The vast increase in numbers and lowered status of educational credentials meant that diplomas no longer provided the same benefits of prestige and employment that they had earlier. However, one long-term effect of modern mass education was to convey at least the principle (as opposed to pedagogic practice) of individual authority in evaluating written word and doctrine. It facilitated a different notion of religious authority from that conveyed by traditional men of learning.

It is difficult to establish with precision a relationship between belief and social background for those most disposed to support or participate in radical movements. In Egypt, for example, a leading Egyptian sociologist claims that

⁸⁵ For Pakistan and the Indian subcontinent, see Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁸⁶ Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, p. 70.

Islamic activists responsible for violent acts against the state tended to be from modest backgrounds and were first-generation city dwellers.⁸⁷ Kepel stresses the professional middle- and upper-class backgrounds, whereas still another scholar argues that the most successful activist groups contained people of varying social backgrounds and that this mixture across regional and class divides accounted for their success.⁸⁸ Similar difficulties face scholars looking at the social origins of participants in fundamentalist movements elsewhere.⁸⁹

The tactics of Sadat's assassins, who justified their act by asserting the *jihili* nature of Sadat's rule, profoundly shocked most Egyptians, but denial of the regime's legitimacy on religious grounds had more widespread support. The state's efforts to claim Islamic legitimacy, even at the cost of alienating Egypt's large Coptic minority, suggests the importance attached to it.⁹⁰

Egypt had at least 40,000 "independent," privately financed mosques in 1981 (when all mosques were at least nominally placed under government supervision), as opposed to only 6000 controlled by the state. The presence of so many privately financed mosques in a country as poor as Egypt suggests the extent to which Islamic thought and practice is a vehicle for expression and a potential organizing force for significant elements of the population. An especially sensitive study is provided by Patrick D. Gaffney in *The Prophet's Pulpit*.⁹¹ He studied local preachers, their sermons, and their followings in Minya, Upper (southern) Egypt, between April 1978 and August 1979, a period that "encompasses the first wave of open Muslim militancy." Gaffney contrasts the styles of local preachers, from the traditional to the militants, and follows their sermons over extended periods of time, so that their styles and followings are not merely distilled into "types" but shown as they relate, respond to, and define local, national, and international political events. Much of this discourse is poorly reflected in the Egyptian national press and broadcast media, so

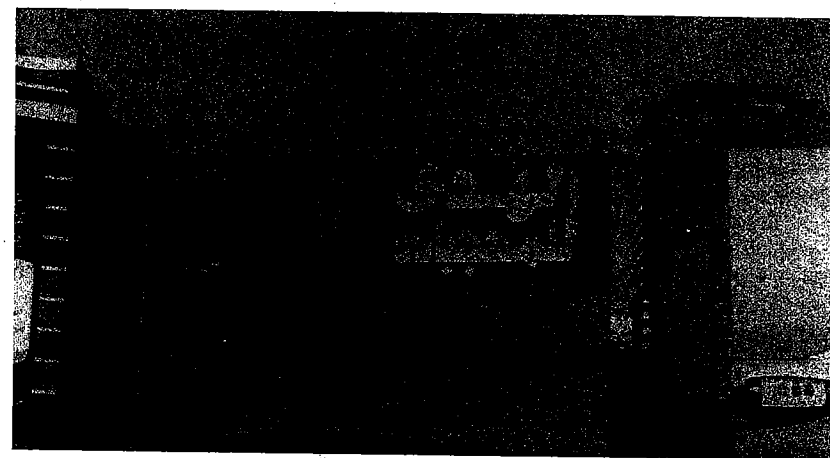


FIGURE 10-12. Advertising in Cairo is adjusting to the "Islamic" look. A billboard near the Muṣṭafa Maḥmūd private mosque in an upscale district of Cairo reads: "Al-Huda [store] for muhajjabat [proper Islamic attire]. All the requirements for the muhajjaba lady. Elegance and dignity." [Courtesy Gregory Starrett. Copyright © 1989.]

Gaffney's study is useful in showing the contexts in which internal debate occurs and "authoritative" discourse is established.

In Morocco, as in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East, some religious interpretations and practices are repressed or held in official disfavor, so an analysis of the strength of Muslim radical activists, let alone those sympathetic to their message, presents a major challenge. Thus estimates of membership in "militant" Islamic associations, even among such definable groups as university students, must remain tentative.⁹² In the early 1970s, the Moroccan state tolerated Islamic groups in secondary schools and universities, possibly because political authorities saw them as a counterfoil to leftist political parties. After demonstrations against the presence in Morocco during February and March 1979 of Iran's ex-Shah, such groups were increasingly perceived as a threat by the state. Since then, the Moroccan monarchy has taken firm action to contain the minority "Islamic" opposition, in part by co-opting the militants in rhetoric and action. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the monarchy emulated the

⁸⁷ Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups: Methodological Note and Preliminary Findings," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12, no. 4 (December 1980), 438-39.

⁸⁸ Kepel, *Muslim Extremism*, Table 5, p. 221.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Henry Munson, Jr., "The Social Base of Islamic Militancy in Morocco," *Middle East Journal* 40, no. 2 (Spring 1986), 267-84; and the profiles of 125 (out of approximately 160) alleged activists arrested by Omani security authorities in May and June 1994 in Salem Abdullah, *Omani Islamism: An Unexpected Confrontation with the Government*, Occasional Papers Series 8 (Annandale, VA: United Association for Studies and Research, 1995), pp. 25-33. These were convicted by a state security court, meeting in secret session in November 1994. Amnesty International received no responses to various inquiries, but all prisoners were released in November 1995.

⁹⁰ Hamied N. Ansari, "Sectarian Conflict in Egypt and the Political Expediency of Religion," *Middle East Journal* 38, no. 3 (Summer 1984), 397-418, deals with Sadat's efforts to placate fundamentalist Muslims by adopting policies that exacerbated sectarian conflict between Copts and Muslims.

⁹¹ Patrick D. Gaffney, *The Prophet's Pulpit: Islamic Preaching in Contemporary Egypt*, Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies 20 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994). Emmanuel Sivan, "The Islamic Republic of Egypt," *Orbis* 31, no. 1 (Spring 1987), 43-53, analyzes an essay, subsequently banned in Egypt, by an Egyptian intellectual who imagines what an Egyptian "Islamic Republic" would be like.

⁹² For a valuable study, similar to Gaffney's on Egypt, that provides a careful reading of the religious discourse and counterdiscourse, see Mohamed Tozy, *Monarchie et Islam politique au Maroc* [Monarchy and Political Islam in Morocco] (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1999). An earlier version of this discussion of Morocco can be found in Dale F. Eickelman, "Religion in Polity and Society," in *The Political Economy of Morocco*, ed. I. William Zartman (New York: Praeger, 1987), pp. 84-97. On Jordan, see Quintan Wiktorowicz, "The Salafi Movement in Jordan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32, no. 2 (May 2000), 219-40.

language of the political left; since the late 1970s, religious slogans have come to the fore.

In the hands of radical Muslim thinkers such as Morocco's 'Abd as-Salām Yasin, the militant argument provides an ideology of liberation. Like his predecessors elsewhere, including Egypt's Sayyid Qutb, Yasin insists that, except for rule by the Prophet and his first successors, there have been no Islamic governments, only government by Muslims. Yasin argues that contemporary Muslim societies have been de-Islamicized by imported ideologies and values, the cause of social and moral disorder. Muslim peoples are subjected to injustice and repression by elites whose ideas and conduct derive more from the East and West than from Islam.⁹³

Yasin's argument is necessarily circumspect on how Muslims should liberate themselves from present-day polities, except to argue that the state should allow militant Muslims (*rijāl ad-da'wa*) the right to speak in exchange for the "official violence" inflicted on them.⁹⁴ He aims to set co-religionists on the "right path" toward a new era, not to directly confront the state. The content of Yasin's sermons and writings suggests that his principal audience is made up of educated younger people who are already familiar with the secular, "imported" ideologies against which he argues. His key terms, derived from Quranic and Arabic phrases, are more evocative for his intended audience than the language and arguments of the secular political parties.

Predictably, Morocco's late monarch, Hasan II (1929–1999), advanced a contrasting view of Islam and polity in Morocco. (Hasan II was succeeded by his son, Mohamed VI, in July 1999.) Like Yasin, the late monarch regularly invoked, in a very different way, key religious terms and concepts. Thus, in a 1984 speech opening a new session of parliament and intended in part to counter fundamentalist arguments, Hasan II directly linked the monarchy with the lineage of the Prophet, still an important means for claiming popular religious legitimacy in Morocco, and with the Prophet's conduct of state affairs:

In all modesty, Hassan's school is the school of [my father] Mohammed, . . . and the school of Mohammed V is that of the Prophet. . . . Most of us only know the Prophet as messenger of God, preacher and lawgiver; his political and diplomatic life remain unknown and we await the day when someone firmly attached to his religion and proud of its teachings will write on this subject. . . . You have only to knock on our door and ask for our advice.⁹⁵

Hasan II also took measures so that he could claim that key officials in the Ministry of the Interior were well versed in Islamic law, appointed religious

officials to advise provincial officials, and in other ways sought to link the governmental machinery with religious principles and organization. While many other regimes seek to identify with religious principles to co-opt religious opposition, Morocco is one of the more successful in challenging the militants' claim to authority in interpreting how Islam is supposed to apply to politics and economics.

Less successful, but also indicative of the popular appeal of claims to Islamic legitimacy, are those of Libya's teacher-leader, Mu'ammār al-Qadhafī, who declared that the 1969 coup was an Islamic revolution. Yet, as John Davis points out, Islam did not figure significantly in Qadhafī's speeches until 1975. Before that date, however, alcohol was banned, Libyans were ordered to use the Muslim lunar calendar alongside the Western one, and Qadhafī (in 1970) declared that many religious scholars saw only the "outer coat" of Islam, while he, as an arbiter of doctrine, wanted the "essential part of Islam to be applied."⁹⁶ Yet Qadhafī's slim *Green Book*, three pocket-sized tracts of small pages and large type concerning social justice and economy, never uses the word "Islam" in either the English or Arabic versions.⁹⁷ The language of the Arabic version makes clear his reliance on many of the key themes of Islamic modernism but not on formal Islamic doctrine, or its recognized men of learning. Davis reports that, by 1976, when Qadhafī's claims for Islamic justification of his decrees and statements (such as that Islam condemns private trading) met with resistance from religious leaders, he removed those men from mosques and deprived them of independent incomes from religious endowments. In 1977 he altered the Muslim calendar, as it is used in Libya, so that years were counted not from the time of Muhammad's emigration (*hijra*) to Medina (A.D. 622) but from the time of the Prophet's death (A.D. 632), making Libyan years about a decade behind the rest of the Muslim world.⁹⁸

As bizarre as many of these activities may appear—and Davis reports that they are erratic to many ordinary Libyans—they are part of an overall pattern of major shifts in styles of religious authority. Qadhafī's efforts to establish his Islamic credentials have been less successful than the efforts of some other Muslim heads of state, but in basing his thoughts on a claim to "direct" interpretation of the message of Islam not filtered through an authoritative scholarly tradition, Qadhafī breaks with earlier forms of religious authority. In this he is not alone; the Ba'ṯh regime in Iraq has used a similar tactic. In 1975, when the regime's relations with Syria deteriorated substantially, government rhetoric invoked many images of the Shi'a in order to shore up its support in southern Iraq. Beginning in 1977, the state even participated in the *'ashūra* ceremonies commemorating the martyrdom of Ḥusayn. Similarly, Iraq's public

⁹³ Abdassalam Yassine, *La révolution à l'heure de l'Islam* (Marseille: Presses de l'Université, 1979), p. 11, translated into French by Yasin himself. See also <<http://www.yassine.net>>, which often contains translations of his writings into English and French.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁹⁵ Hasan II, speech on the opening of parliament, October 15, 1984. French version provided by Maghreb Arabe Presse.

⁹⁶ Quoted in John Davis, *Libyan Politics: Tribe and Revolution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1987), p. 50.

⁹⁷ Muammar al-Qadhafi, *The Green Book*, circa 1975 (for the first two booklets) and 1979 (for the third). Neither the Arabic nor the English version contains date or place of publication. Copies are available from most Libyan People's Bureaus, formerly known as embassies.

⁹⁸ Davis, *Libyan Politics*, pp. 44–58.

statements became progressively more Islamic as the crisis following its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait deepened. In December 1990, Saddām Ḥusayn went so far as to imply that he was a new *mahdī* "whose sacred mission is to purge the Arab and Islamic world, reform Islam and lead the way to a new age."⁹⁹

PARALLELS: CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Chapters 8 and 9 have suggested the close, if not always amicable, relationships prevailing among the various communities of the Middle East's three "religions of the book." It is tempting to say that an account of the history and recent political development of non-Muslim sectarian groupings, such as Lebanon's Maronite Christians, with its specifically Christian identifying characteristics removed, would lead many readers unfamiliar with the Middle East to presume that it was a Muslim sect. It displays many of the same "exotic" features—intense, inward-looking ties of loyalty and leadership, opportunistic alliances with other groups, and distorted perceptions of one's sectarian neighbors coexisting with a mix of Western-oriented cosmopolitanism and knowledge of the West and its languages.¹⁰⁰

Such an interpretation would be highly misleading on several counts. Surely Northern Ireland represents a parallel example of current "Western" sectarian unrest, and it is a salient, but not isolated, example, as ex-Yugoslavia reminds us. For the Middle East as for these "Western" cases, it would be equally misleading to think of sectarian unrest as due to religious factors alone or to discount religious belief as a "dependent variable" ultimately explained by other factors. The factors that figure in understanding the Muslim component of Middle Eastern societies apply equally to other Middle Eastern religious communities and are often remarkably parallel. This does not mean that they are "dominated" by "religious" perceptions to the exclusion of all others, even if some carriers of these religious traditions claim that their particular tradition is a "total" way of life. Economic and political considerations, among others, remain as important in this region as in others.

The subtitle of this section specifies Christianity and Judaism in the Middle East rather than Middle Eastern Judaism or Christianity. In matters of

belief and faith—in Judaism and Christianity, as with Islam—such presumably unintended distortions remain common. Perhaps only as Islam begins being perceived as a "Western" religion—now that about 5 percent of France's population, for example, is Muslim—can such unintended exoticism become a matter of the past in Western perceptions.¹⁰¹ One scholar comments that "until recently, the discipline of Jewish historiography tended to promote a Eurocentric view of Jewish civilization," with Jews under Muslim domination removed to the fringes of research and teaching.¹⁰² Indeed, the term "Middle Eastern" or "Oriental" Judaism unintentionally evokes "experience-distant" Western perceptions. It creates a tenuous category unrecognized by the people of the region itself (except, perhaps, when "Oriental" Jews in Israel, where the term is current in political circles, act as a coalition against Jews of European origin). Nor will the term "Sefardi" Judaism do. *Sefardi*, as Ross Brann explains, means originating in Spain ("Sefarad"), whereas its counterpart term, *Ashkenazi*, means originating in Germany ("Ashkenaz").

Historically speaking, a Middle Eastern Jew is Sefardi only if claiming descent from a family of Spanish emigrants, as do some of the Jewish communities in Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, and of course Israel. It does not encompass the Jews of Morocco's High Atlas, the Jews of Yemen, Iraq, or Central Asia (and even China and India). During what Brann calls the "High Middle Ages" (A.D. 900–1200), direct and indirect interaction among Jews of different Middle Eastern countries was strong. One impulse was a localizing one. Thus one of the leading intellects of medieval Judaism, Moses Maimonides (1138–1204), forced to flee Spain, settled in Cairo and was appointed head of the Egyptian Jewish community, but he continued to consider himself a Spaniard.

The bonds among Jews from different countries were also intense. Across the Muslim-dominated Middle East, "interaction with the new [Islamic] culture in its courtly-scribal, traditionalist, scholastic and folkloristic forms forged a different type of Jew whose outlook and self-expression were to alter the course of Jewish history."¹⁰³ Sometimes the parallels were indirect. Thus, as Muslim scholars debated the authenticity of the traditions of the Prophet, the "expressive forms and theological issues" found their parallels among Jewish scholars becoming more intensely concerned "about Jewish tradition and the reliability of its guardians." Arabization (as distinct from Islamization) also

⁹⁹ Amatzia Baram, "Re-Inventing Nationalism in Ba'ṭhi Iraq, 1968–1994: Supra-Territorial and Territorial Identities and What Lies Below," *Princeton Papers*, no. 5 (Fall–Winter 1996).

¹⁰⁰ For a short introduction to the different Christian sects in Lebanon, see Jonathan Randal, *Going All the Way: Christian Warlords, Israeli Adventurers* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), pp. 25–60. Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986), does not deal with the modern period, but indicates historical shortcomings in current Maronite claims for the sect's origin.

¹⁰¹ The existence of a "French Islam," to use Kepel's term, still comes as a surprise for many French. Publication of his *Suburbs of Islam* was greeted on the cover of the magazine supplement to the Paris newspaper *Le Nouvel Observateur*, October 9–15, 1987, under the title "L'Islam en France: Une enquête-événement de Gilles Kepel" [Islam in France: The Investigative "Happening" of Gilles Kepel]. The book itself was termed a "happening" (*le livre événement*).

¹⁰² Ross Brann, *The Experience of Judaism under the Orbit of Medieval Islam*, Occasional Papers on the Near East 3 (New York: New York University Center for Near Eastern Studies, 1985), p. 1.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

played an important role in shaping the style of discourse of religion, commerce, and ideas of the person.¹⁰⁴

Similar parallels exist, of course, with the Christian communities in the Middle East. Rarely have the contemporary parallels been more evident than in the apparition in Egypt of the Virgin Mary over a Coptic church in Zitūn, a suburb of Cairo, from April 2, 1968 until several years later. Thousands of pilgrims, both Coptic and Muslim, flocked daily to the site hoping to see the miracle. As Cynthia Nelson relates, the Virgin commands the respect of both Muslims and Christians in Egypt. Soon after the first apparition, the Coptic Patriarch of Egypt and All Africa announced at a press conference that the Virgin's appearance was genuine. The government subsequently took formal notice of the event. What is significant about the apparition is that it served as a symbol of unity for both Muslims and Christians. Most Egyptians connected the apparition of the Virgin with the Six-Day War of June 1967, "a military defeat that left the country in despair and its people confronting perhaps the severest crisis in their contemporary history."¹⁰⁵ Both Muslims and Copts saw the Virgin as having come to extricate them from their crisis. Copts interpreted her appearance as reaffirming their role in the future of Egypt to the Muslim community. Many of the educated, Christian and Muslim, interpreted the event as a ruse of a foreign intelligence agency (presumably the ubiquitous CIA) or as a warning to unbelievers to restore their faith in the nonvisible and nonrational. Again, the form the transcendent takes is tied to political and social realities, the common elements of which can overshadow differences in the Coptic and Muslim communities.

Two Israeli examples of Jewish movements whose participants are generally not of Middle Eastern origin suggest the need for specificity of time and place in discussing religious doctrines and their carriers. Shlomo Deshen notes that Israel's Orthodox Jews are estimated at less than 5 percent of the nation's Jewish population, yet they have a political significance far beyond their numbers. Although they have not necessarily offered viable solutions to Israel's major political and economic crises, no other version of Judaism has been identified as closely with the symbols of tradition and religious legitimacy central to Israel's national identity.¹⁰⁶

The development of Israel's ultra-Orthodox (*haredi*; pl. *haredim*—the Hebrew term connotes "God-fearing") communities since the late 1940s, as stud-

ied by Menachem Friedman, is particularly significant.¹⁰⁷ A major part of socialization in Israel is compulsory military service for most Jewish youth of both sexes: three years of full-time service upon reaching the age of 18, unless deferred, and at least a month a year thereafter of reserve duty until the age of 55. The only excluded groups are Israeli Arabs (although Druze and bedouin can join the armed forces) and the ultra-Orthodox. The ultra-Orthodox tradition is Eastern European in origin and was almost wiped out during the Holocaust. When communities of the ultra-Orthodox were reconstituted after World War II, David Ben-Gurion was instrumental in exempting them from military service, one of a number of "special inducements" to encourage young men to undertake years of Orthodox study. The ultra-Orthodox were regarded as "protected" communities by wider Israeli society, to be nurtured and allowed to thrive once more. Yet, because of the new circumstances in which the *haredi* communities were reconstituted in Israel, the nature of their "traditional" learning and their relationship to wider society had significantly altered.

Friedman writes that the traditional Orthodox community in Eastern Europe felt threatened with the erosion of its values through contact with modern society, especially as Jewish youth sought assimilation into "modern" European society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *Haredi* religiosity emerged in the form of voluntary communities, called "publics" or "circles." These "publics" are voluntary in the sense that they are "not imposed but chosen," and the *haredim* consider themselves "freed" from religious responsibility to the larger Jewish community, an elite dedicated to Torah study "and to the yeshiva [religious school] from which Jewish existence would draw sustenance."¹⁰⁸

In Eastern Europe in earlier eras, economic necessity confined specifically religious studies to a select few of the ultra-Orthodox. There were levels of understanding of religious texts, ranging from a rudimentary understanding of ritual forms, legends, and popular stories (*enyakob*) to the study of codified discussions of oral tradition and the study of the Talmud proper. Few students could devote themselves entirely to religious studies. At best, they did so for several years prior to marriage and intermittently thereafter. Only a restricted minority of a community's men could commit themselves completely to religious studies, and the secular world was seen as a threat to their values. However, from the first years in Israel after 1948, the ultra-Orthodox soon found that they could turn relations with the wider Jewish community to their advantage.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 8. The most comprehensive study of Judaism under Islam in the medieval world is S. D. Goitein's highly readable *A Mediterranean Society*, 5 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967–1988).

¹⁰⁵ Cynthia Nelson, "Religious Experience, Sacred Symbols, and Social Reality: An Illustration from Egypt," *Humaniora Islamica* 2 (1974), 253–66. For an account of Egypt's Copts 15 years later, and after the June 1981 Coptic-Muslim riots, which left at least 100 dead, see Barbulesco, "Babylone," and Chitham, *Coptic Community*.

¹⁰⁶ Shlomo Deshen, "Israeli Judaism: Introduction to Its Major Patterns," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9, no. 2 (May 1978), 141–69.

¹⁰⁷ Menachem Friedman, "Haredim Confront the Modern City," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 2, ed. Peter Y. Medding (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 74–96; and discussions with Friedman in Bene Berak, February 20, 1985.

¹⁰⁸ Friedman, "Haredim," p. 80.

One of the major settlements for the ultra-Orthodox in the Tel Aviv area is Bene Berak, where the various *haredi* publics, who share similar lifestyles if not ritual interpretations, live together. Everyone living within the geographic bounds of the community is considered a part of it. An observer entering the community for the first time is struck by the nearly total absence of television antennas. Televisions are discouraged among the ultra-Orthodox as a distraction and for the profane images they carry. One also notes a proliferation of wall posters, in contrast to other Israeli communities. Although some *haredi* news is carried in the national press, most debates are too arcane to concern outsiders, so posters provide community news, announcements of marriages, and, quite often, positions taken in ritual debates. These posters are frequently changed.¹⁰⁹ Friedman, a sociologist engaged in a long-term study of the *haredim*, visits the community twice a week to photograph these posters and follow the internal debates. Finally, both the men and women of the community have a distinctive dress, in which slight variations suggest the particular "circle" to which a wearer belongs.

Because of outside support, religious studies became more widespread in the 1950s and 1960s than in prior years. Talmudic studies are now the central activity of male youth from the age of five until their late twenties. From the age of five until age thirteen, youth attend first-level yeshiva, supported by the community. Plaques on many of these buildings indicate outside financing, in some cases from institutions in which the *haredim* cannot participate for religious reasons but from which they can benefit, such as the Israeli National Lottery. In the first years, students return home at night, but by the age of thirteen, they live full-time in hostels away from their families. There are no uncontrolled meetings with the opposite sex, and marriages are eventually arranged. Even after marriage, men spend their days in *kollel*-s. Friedman reports that it is a matter of pride for a woman to support a husband engaged in Torah study. In nineteenth-century Europe, these were small-scale institutions for post-yeshiva studies, intended, in the words of one rabbi, for the "spiritually sublime few."¹¹⁰ After the 1950s, however, the *kollel* became a place where almost anyone who had studied in a *haredi* yeshiva could stay on after marriage, delaying entry into a business or occupation for as long as a decade. As a transitional institution, the *kollel* was ideal. If a student had difficulty in finding an outside job, he could return for part of the day to the *kollel* for continued studies.

Major transformations emerged in both the content of Torah learning and the nature of the *haredim* community as the time available for studies became longer and more intense. The lower levels of study, such as legends and miracles, disappeared by the mid-1950s. In general, studies engaged in by students at both the lower and higher levels have become more oriented toward the

Talmud, which earlier was reserved for a few. And the commentaries now are becoming more involuted and complex than previously. In contrast to the despair of some *haredi* leaders in the late 1940s that the traditions of their fathers were no longer carried on, rabbis by the 1980s commonly expressed the belief that the younger generation was more interested in learning than earlier generations. Some Bene Berak *kollel*-s, such as the "Great Yeshiva" of the Ponavitchers, have up to 450 students at any one time.

There are no entrance examinations to *haredi* yeshivot, but senior rabbis ask students wishing to join what they have read and have them explain a few passages. From such brief interviews, students are placed by level. Once admitted, students determine how to proceed. All students work in pairs. One student reads from the book to be commented on, and the other interrupts with challenges or questions of interpretation. Precision in language and expression is highly valued, and less able or serious students, or those who do not attend regularly, find it difficult to work with better students. There are no formal levels or examinations, however. Learning is an end in itself.¹¹¹

Another major development among the *haredim* is the creation of an educational network for girls (*Beit Yaakov*). The *haredim* stress that religious laws lay down no limitations to women's education, except that the Talmud be studied. So ultra-Orthodox women train to be teachers, an occupation they can carry out under the supervision of *haredi* institutions and readily adjustable to their household tasks. Women's work outside the home is considered a necessity in current economic conditions, and together with women's desire to learn, it is beginning to transform family roles among the *haredim*.¹¹²

Men's education prepares them for few outside jobs. However, unskilled and unspecialized work in Israel is so low in status that it is unacceptable to the *haredim*. Moreover, because yeshiva training is so specialized, the opportunities for breaking away from the system, which Friedman points out usually means cutting family ties, become increasingly few and make revolt against ultra-Orthodox society unrealistic. Hence today the young are more likely to remain within the "cloister" of the *haredi* community than they were in the past.

The narrow training also limits the economic roles that men can play. Work that demands a high level of skill is generally unrealistic because of the low level of general education. Some men go into commercial niches, where the success of a few (such as in international diamond trading) creates wealth that is often used to support the community's religious leaders. But increasingly, the *haredim* find their specialized "niche" in providing religious services and accessories (phylacteries, Torah scrolls, wine goblets, and the like) to the wider Jewish community and in salaried state occupations such as army

¹⁰⁹ Friedman, personal communication, February 20, 1985.

¹¹⁰ Cited in Friedman, "Haredim," p. 88. Friedman estimated the number of participants in *haredi kollel*-s in Israel at 24,000 in 1986 (personal communication, April 3, 1986).

¹¹¹ For a sensitive account of a sociologist's participation in *lernen* at more advanced stages in Jerusalem, see Samuel Heilman, *The Gate Behind the Wall: A Pilgrimage to Jerusalem* (New York: Viking/Penguin, 1984).

¹¹² Friedman, "Haredim," pp. 82-84.

chaplains, judges in the religious courts, supervisors of kosher food preparation, and teachers within state-supported *haredi* schools. Just as a few successful traders keep alive the notion that yeshiva preparation is as good as any other for the "practical" world, so the appointments of a few *haredim* to posts as judge (*dayan*) in the state rabbinical courts reinforce "the idea that Torah study in *haredi* yeshivot is eminently practical, in the long run." Wider society, writes Friedman, perceives the *haredim* "as a kind of living museum of the past, in whose continued existence the nation has an interest," thus facilitating both private donations and Israeli government assistance.

The fact that ultra-Orthodox institutions are expanding and prospering suggests sustained external funding from state and private sources. At the same time, crime, drugs, and other problems of the "secular" world are absent from *haredim* communities. The more they feel alienated from the "secular" society and its perceived ills, the more their sense of religious superiority increases. Yet the maintenance and development of *haredi* institutions, including the unintended intensification of ultra-Orthodox concentration on religious studies, is only made possible by a wider society that supports it but is unable to emulate it (even if it wanted to) without destroying itself.¹¹³

Another scholar assesses the emergence of "Jewish fundamentalism," which he terms "the single most important force in Israeli politics" since the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Ian Lustick defines Jewish fundamentalism "as a Jewish belief system that requires urgent efforts by its adherents radically to transform Israeli society in conformance with transcendental imperatives," thus excluding such groups as the *haredim*. Lustick claims that Jewish fundamentalism, advocating maximum territorial demands and the rejection of a negotiated settlement with the Arabs, expresses the beliefs and powerful commitments of 20 percent of Israeli Jews and appeals to an additional 20 to 30 percent of them.¹¹⁴ He regards this movement as most comprehensively represented by Gush Emunim (The Bloc of the Faithful), a network of more than 10,000 activists. They constitute a skilled political cadre, who, like other fundamentalists, believe "that they possess special and direct access to transcendental truth and to the future course of events." Gush Emunim, Lustick writes, is an umbrella organization for several overlapping groups, officially nonpartisan, but represented in the national political arena by "half a dozen cabinet ministers and more than 35 percent of the Knesset, representing five political parties."¹¹⁵

In contrast to the original nineteenth-century Zionist ideology, which Lustick argues was intended to transform Jews into a "normal" people occupying their own land and accepted by other peoples on equal terms, the Gush Emunim arose after the June 1967 war and grew even stronger after the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict. It argues that God ordained a unique and historic purpose for the Jewish people. The movement reflects "a deep-seated belief that nearly the only distinction worth making among human groups is that between Jews and Gentiles," and that the destiny of Jews can be fulfilled only by liberating the entire land of Israel.¹¹⁶ A few members see the possibility of coexistence with Arabs, but most do not.

Handicaps to the movement include cutbacks in subsidies for settlement, a reduction in the flow of new recruits, failure to find meaningful employment for most settlers, and a continued reliance on Arab labor. Most serious of all is the basic problem of a leadership vacuum, since the death in 1982 of the movement's first charismatic spokesman, the Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook. The movement became bitterly divided after the arrest in the 1980s of underground Jewish terrorists and following the activities of its "vanguardist" elements intent on destroying Muslim shrines on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in order to accelerate the Redemption process for the Jewish people and destroy chances for peace negotiations.¹¹⁷ Political pragmatists in the Gush Emunim movement, intent on building a consensus among its diverse elements, recognized that any such destruction would turn a significant body of Israeli Jewish opinion against them.

Lustick stresses that the worldview of the Gush Emunim differs radically from that of most Israelis. However, the bloc is sufficiently committed, organized, and financed (with large donations from private Americans) for it to have influenced Israel's political life far beyond its numbers and to have contributed to a hardening of positions between Israel's secular Jewish community and its religious extremists. The movement's perceptual and ideological categories serve not only some symbolic purpose but also combine an elaborate exegesis of religious texts with the analysis of contemporary political and historical events in order to guide the continuing struggle toward redemption. For Jewish fundamentalists, "political trends and events contain messages to Jews that provide instructions, reprimands, and rewards."¹¹⁸

A similar point can be made about radical Muslim movements. The worldview of both Islamic and Jewish radicals and the nature of their organization bear some similarities. The contemporary radical movements of both religions seek to interpret contemporary events in terms of unique religious categories not necessarily shared even by other religious people in their respective societies. Likewise, they see the need for a radical political

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 85–92.

¹¹⁴ Ian S. Lustick, "Israel's Dangerous Fundamentalists," *Foreign Policy*, no. 68 (Fall 1987), 118–39, esp. 120. For an authoritative recent account, see Gideon Aran, "Jewish Zionist Fundamentalism: The Bloc of the Faithful in Israel (Gush Emunim)," in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, The Fundamentalisms Project 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 265–344; and, comparing extremist movements among world religions, Emanuel Sivan, "The Enclave Culture," in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 11–68.

¹¹⁵ Lustick, "Israel's Dangerous Fundamentalists," 119, 127.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 122, 125.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 131, 134–36.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 127–28.

transformation of society and are prepared to use force and illegality to achieve their goals. Finally, and perhaps fortunately for the majority of Jews and Muslims who, however disenchanted they may be with the conduct of state authorities, fail to be enthused by the agendas of religious radicals, radical groups lacking charismatic leadership are subject to a high level of internal dissent. To some extent, this curbs their ability to unite in the face of opposition or indifference to their programs.

Religion in the civil societies of the Middle East, as elsewhere in the world, is a significant factor in motivating people to perceive events and take actions. The appeal of particular religious interpretations and movements cannot be "read" directly from particular conjunctures of politics and economics, although certain settings are more conducive to the spread of certain movements than others. It would be a mistake, however, to try to explain the popularity of specific ideologies and movements on the basis of political and economic factors alone. Much depends on the presence or absence of effective formulators of ideas and organizers and on the availability of potential followers. Radical religious interpretations may be more likely to emerge in periods of sustained economic or political crisis. Thus, to many Arabs, the defeat of the Arab states in the war with Israel in 1967 was interpreted as a bankruptcy of secular Arab nationalist movements and of state authorities. An opening was created for radical religious movements with their own vision of the conduct of state affairs. There was no direct chronological parallel with the intensification of radical Judaism in Israel, but after 1973, and especially after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, a much greater disposition to the ideas and programs of radical Judaism emerged.

Each world religious tradition represented in the Middle East is prismatic, and at no time would it be appropriate to see in each a dominant ideology or organizational form to the exclusion of others. Subordinate forms of discourse and action are present in each of the traditions, and in unexpected ways they can reemerge. With talented innovators and organizers at all levels of society, they can take new forms and achieve positions of dominance.

FURTHER READINGS

On the Zoroastrians, see Shahin Bekhradnia, "The Decline of the Zoroastrian Priesthood and Its Effect on the Iranian Zoroastrian Community in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 23, no. 1 (Hilary 1992), 37–47. The Yazidis, now numbering about 150,000, have been characterized as "devil worshippers" by Muslim neighbors, but they share many common beliefs with Christianity and Islam. Their self-representation is that Azazel, chief of the seven angels, was banished by God (like Satan for Jews and Christians) for disobedience but was subsequently pardoned, so veneration of him is not devil worship. See John S. Guest, *The Yazidis: A Study in Survival* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1987). Many small sects, including Nestorian

and Chaldaean Christians, coexist in northern Iraq. On the complexities of Lebanon's sectarian groups, see Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), esp. pp. 1–37.

Representative but necessarily selective books dealing with understanding Islam include Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971 [1968]). For commentaries on Geertz's approach to the study of religion, see Richard C. Martin, "Clifford Geertz Observed: Understanding Islam as Cultural Symbolism," in *Anthropology and the Study of Religion*, ed. Robert L. Moore and Frank E. Reynolds (Chicago: Center for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1984), pp. 11–30; and Henry Munson, Jr., *Religion and Power in Morocco* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993). Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*, Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology 32 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), is a collection of essays as valuable for Gellner's own views—note that "society" in the title is singular, not plural—as for his discussion of other scholars. See also Michael Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Arab World* (New York: Pantheon, 1982); Dale F. Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam: Traditional Society in a Pilgrimage Center* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1976), and my *Knowledge and Power in Morocco: The Education of a Twentieth Century Notable* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); Clifford Geertz, Hildred Geertz, and Lawrence Rosen, *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society: Three Essays in Cultural Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); Michael M. J. Fischer and Mehdi Abedi, *Debating Muslims: Cultural Dialogues in Postmodernity and Tradition*, New Directions in Anthropological Writing (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Henry Munson, Jr., *The House of St Abdallah* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1984); and Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh*, trans. Jon Rothschild (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993 [1984]). Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994 [1992]) traces the rise and decline of Islamic militancy as an ideology in the latter half of the twentieth century. See also Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: Expansion et déclin de l'Islamisme* [Jihad: The Spread and Decline of Islamism] (Paris: Gallimard, 2000). An English translation is expected to be published in 2002. On the implications of rising levels of education and the new communications media for religion and politics, see *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

For anthropological essays on the study of Muslim societies, see Dale F. Eickelman, "Changing Interpretations of Islamic Movements," in *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning*, ed. William R. Roff (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 13–30; and Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, Occasional Paper Series (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1986); and Asad's *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). The idea of an "Islamic anthropology," which differs from the anthropology of Islam, is further discussed in the last section of Chapter 11 of this book, "Writing Middle Eastern Anthropology," and in Merryl Wyn Davies, *Knowing One Another: Shaping an Islamic Anthropology* (London and New York: Mansell, 1988). Abdallah Hammoudi, *The Victim and Its Masks: An Essay on Sacrifice and Masquerade in the Maghreb* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), reviews different twentieth-century approaches to understanding the rituals of the "Great Feast" in North Africa and related "secular" rituals. His study offers valuable insight into both the anthropological study of ritual and how to study Islam. For studies that highlight gendered differences and complementarities in religion, see

Nancy Tapper and Richard Tapper, "The Birth of the Prophet: Ritual and Gender in Turkish Islam," *Man* (N.S.) 22, no. 1 (March 1987), 69–92; Janice Boddy, *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zar Cult in Northern Sudan* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Locality, and Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults*, ed. Prina Werbner and Helene Basu (New York: Routledge, 1998); *Women and Islamization: Contemporary Dimensions of Discourse on Gender Relations*, ed. Karin Ask and Marit Tjomsland (Oxford: Berg, 1998); and Nadia Abu-Zahra, *The Pure and the Powerful: Studies in Contemporary Arab Society* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1997), dealing primarily with Egypt and Tunisia.

The most seminal scholarly study of the historical Islamic tradition to date remains Marshall G. S. Hodgson's three-volume *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). See also Charles J. Adams, "Islamic Religious Tradition," in *The Study of the Middle East*, ed. Leonard Binder (New York: Wiley, 1976), pp. 29–95, a bibliographic essay; and Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).

An anthropologically oriented semantic analysis of the Quran is provided by Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung*, Studies in the Humanities and Social Relations 5 (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964), and his *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*, McGill Islamic Studies 1 (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1966). Izutsu's linguistic approach is paralleled for the contemporary Arab public by Muḥammad Shahrūr, *al-Kitāb wa-l-Qur'ān: Qirā'a Mu'āsira* [The Book and the Quran: A Contemporary Reading] (Damascus: Al-Ahili li-l-Ṭabī'a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi'a, 1990). Shahrūr's book is banned in many Arabic countries, but this has not kept it from becoming a best-seller throughout the Arab world. See Dale F. Eickelman, "Islamic Liberalism Strikes Back," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 27, no. 2 (December 1993), 163–68. For a critical sampling of new thinking about the Islamic tradition within the Muslim world, see Charles Kurzman, ed., *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

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On the significance of the pilgrimage and other forms of travel to the religious imagination, see *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); and (for the implications of labor migration on religion and society), Prina Werbner, *The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts, and Offerings among British Pakistanis* (New York: Berg, 1990).

The best overall introduction to the Shi'a is Yann Richard, *Shi'ite Islam: Polity, Ideology, and Creed*, Studies in Social Discontinuity (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995 [1991]). Richard W. Bulliet, *Islam: The View from the Edge*, breaks with older conventions and offers an introduction to Islamic history and politics based on people, including the Iranians, who were never under Ottoman domination. For a brief sketch of divisions among the Shi'a, see Nikki R. Keddie and Juan R. I. Cole, eds., *Shi'ism and Social Protest* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986). For an account of the dissident Babi sect

in nineteenth-century Shi'i Islam in Iran, from which the Baha'i faith emerged, see Peter Smith, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions: From Messianic Shi'ism to a World Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). For Shi'i practice at the village level in Iran, see Reinhold Loeffler, *Islam in Practice: Religious Beliefs in a Persian Village* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988). Roy P. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), through the eyes of contemporary mullah, evokes Iran immediately before and after the revolution. For Iraq, see Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). On the Shi'a in Afghanistan, see Robert L. Canfield, "Ethnic, Regional, and Sectarian Alignments in Afghanistan," in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics: Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan*, ed. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986), pp. 75–103. On Lebanon's Shi'i leadership, see Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*, Modern Middle East Series 13 (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1987), pp. 37–58; and Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1986).

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On Islam in tribal settings, see *Islam in Tribal Societies: From the Atlas to the Indus*, ed. Akbar S. Ahmed and David M. Hart (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984). This volume includes a reprint of I. M. Lewis, "Sufism in Somaliland," pp. 127–68 [1955]. For an earlier historical period, Devin De Wesse, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tukles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), is essential reading. A classic study of religious leadership in a tribal milieu is Fredrik Barth, *Political Leadership Among Swat Pathans*, L.S.E. Monographs on Social Anthropology 19 (London: Athlone Press, 1959), esp. pp. 92–109. Talal Asad, "Market Model, Class Structure and Consent: A Reconsideration of Swat Political Organization," *Man* (N.S.) 7, no. 1 (March 1972), 74–94, offers a critique of Barth, as does Akbar S. Ahmed, *Millennium and Charisma Among Pathans*, International Library in Anthropology (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976). An outstanding recent monograph, especially incisive in exploring the "gendered" expression of religious symbolism and practice in a tribal milieu, is Ladislav Holy, *Religion and Custom in a Muslim Society: The Berti of Sudan*, Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 78 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Paul Dresch and Bernard Haykel, "Stereotypes and Political Styles: Islamists and Tribesfolk in Yemen," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27, no. 4 (November 1995), 405–31, avoid the stereotypes by which both tribes and "Islamist" politics are often represented, including by nontribal Yemenis.

Religion is closely linked to many aspects of expressive popular culture. Until the mid-1970s, there were few anthropological studies of expressive language, poetry, music, and other forms of artistic expression in the Middle East. For a time, Jacques

Berque's *Cultural Expression in Arab Society Today*, trans. Robert W. Stookey, Modern Middle East Series 3 (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1978), stood almost alone as a comprehensive evocation of the relation of language and artistic expression to society. Even when some modern forms of musical and graphic expression have sought to break away from more traditional art forms, they must do so on the basis of popular understandings, at least if their creators seek a wide audience. A sensitive account of how musicians develop styles in response to their audiences is Philip D. Schuyler, "Berber Professional Musicians in Performance," in *Performance Practice: Ethnomusicological Perspectives*, ed. Gerard Behague, Contributions in Intercultural and Comparative Studies, 12 (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 1984), pp. 91–148. See also his "The *Rwais* and the *Zawia*: Professional Musicians and the Rural Religious Elite in Southwestern Morocco," *Asian Music* 17, no. 1 (Fall–Winter 1985), 114–31. This particular issue of *Asian Music* is devoted entirely to music in the Muslim world. One can see and hear the music Schuyler discusses in the 1983 film *Master Musicians of Jahjouka*, available from Mendizza and Associates, Long Beach, CA. Hiromi L. Sakata, *Music in the Mind: The Concepts of Music and Musician in Afghanistan* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1983), discusses the cultural role of the musician in Afghanistan. For Central Asia, Theodore Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God: Musical Travels in Central Asia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), explores the changing mix of secular and religious influences and the relationship between performers and their audiences. For the Middle East, see *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*, ed. Walter Armbrust (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000). Finally, Brian Spooner, "Weavers and Dealers: The Authenticity of an Oriental Carpet," in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 195–235, explores how the craft of carpet weaving and hand-woven carpets are subtly and continuously transformed by the contexts in which they are produced. The transmission of many such crafts—and music is considered a craft, as opposed to an art, in many parts of the Middle East—has important parallels with the form in which religious knowledge was transmitted. For a discussion of dance and religion in the Muslim world, see Anthony Shay, *Choreophobia: Solo Improvised Dance in the Iranian World* (Cosa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1999).

On Islamic learning, in addition to the studies cited in Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power*, see Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For medieval Iran, see Richard Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972). For the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in addition to studies mentioned earlier, see *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East Since 1500*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972). Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), is especially good in comparing Sufism in Islam with comparable developments in Christian Europe.

A critical assessment of Islam and politics throughout the Muslim majority world is *Islam in the Political Process*, ed. James P. Piscatori (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); for Turkey, see Richard Tapper, ed., *Islam in Modern Turkey* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1991). Islamic movements have been less important than ethnonationalism in most of Central Asia, but they are nonetheless politically and socially significant in many regions. See Abdujabar Abduvakhitov, "Islamic Revivalism in Uzbekistan," in *Russia's Muslim Frontiers: New Directions in Cross-Cultural Analysis*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman, Indiana Series in Arab and Islamic Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Martha Brill Olcott, "Islam and Fundamentalism in Independent Central Asia," in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed.

Yaacov Ro'i, Cummings Center Series (London: Frank Cass, 1995), pp. 21–39; Nancy Lubin, "Islam and Ethnic Identity in Central Asia: A View from Below," in *Muslim Eurasia*, ed. Ro'i, pp. 53–70; and Muriel Atkin, "Religious, National, and Other Identities in Central Asia," in *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change*, ed. Jo-Ann Gross (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), pp. 46–72.

For politics in general, see Eickelman and Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, which includes annotated references and an extensive bibliography on current developments. See also Gregory Starrett, "The Political Economy of Religious Commodities in Cairo," *American Anthropologist* 97, no. 1 (March 1995), 51–68; and his "The Margins of Print: Children's Religious Literature in Egypt," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 2, no. 1 (March 1996), 117–39.