

Introduction

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Islamic Political Thought: An Introduction contains 16 chapters adapted from articles in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, a reference work published in 2013. This volume, shorter and more streamlined than the parent work, presents broad, comprehensive discussions of central themes and core concepts. These chapters were designed to integrate and contextualize the contemporary political and cultural situation of Islam while also examining in depth the historical roots of that situation.

The Islamic World in Historical Perspective

In 2014, the year 1435 of the Muslim calendar, the Islamic world was estimated to account for a population of approximately a billion and a half, representing about one-fifth of humanity. In geographical terms, Islam occupies the center of the world, stretching like a big belt across the globe from east to west. From Morocco to Mindanao, it encompasses countries of both the consumer North and the disadvantaged South. It sits at the crossroads of America, Europe, and Russia on one side and black Africa, India, and China on the other. Historically, Islam is also at a crossroads, destined to play a world role in politics and to become the most prominent world religion during the 21st century. Islam is thus not contained in any national culture; it is a universal force.

The cultural reach of Islam may be divided into five geographical blocks: West and East Africa, the Arab world (including North Africa), the Turco-Iranian lands (including Central Asia, northwestern China, the Caucasus, the Balkans, and parts of Russia), South Asia (including Pakistan, Bangladesh, and many regions in India), and Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and minorities in Thailand, the Philippines, and, by extension, Australia). Particularly in the past century, Islam has created the core of a sixth block: a diaspora of small but vigorous communities living on both sides of the Atlantic, in Europe (especially in France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Spain), and North America (especially in Canada, the United States, and the Caribbean).

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Islam has grown consistently throughout history, expanding into new neighboring territories without ever retreating (except on the margins, as in Sicily and Spain, where it was expelled by force). It began in the seventh century as a small community in Mecca and Medina in the Arabian Peninsula, led by its messenger the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632), who was eventually to unite all the Arab tribes under the banner of Islam. Within the first two centuries of its existence, Islam came into global prominence through its conquests of the Middle East, North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, the Iranian lands, Central Asia, and the Indus valley. In the process and aftermath of these conquests, Islam inherited the legacy of the ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations, embraced and transformed the heritage of Hellenistic philosophy and science, assimilated the subtleties of Persian statecraft, incorporated the reasoning of Jewish law and the methods of Christian theology, absorbed cultural patterns of Zoroastrian dualism and Manichean speculation, and acquired wisdom from Mahayana Buddhism and Indian philosophy and science. Its great cosmopolitan centers—Baghdad, Cairo, Córdoba, Damascus, and Samarqand—became the furnace in which the energy of these cultural traditions was converted into a new religion and polity. These major cities, as well as provincial capitals of the newly founded Islamic empire, such as Basra, Kufa, Aleppo, Qayrawan, Fez, Rayy (Tehran), Nishapur, and Sanaa merged the legacy of the Arab tribal tradition with newly incorporated cultural trends. By religious conversion, whether fervent, formal, or forced, Islam integrated heterodox and orthodox Christians of Greek, Syriac, and Latin rites, and included large numbers of Jews, Zoroastrians, Gnostics, and Manicheans. By ethnic assimilation, it absorbed a great variety of nations, whether through compacts, clientage and marriage, persuasion, threat, or through religious indifference, social climbing, and self-interest of newly conquered peoples. It embraced Aramaic-, Persian-, and Berber-speaking peoples, accommodated the disruptive incursions of Turks and the devastating invasion of Mongols into its territories, and sent out its emissaries, traders, immigrants, and colonists into the lands beyond the Indus valley, the semiarid plains south of the Sahara, and the distant shores of the Southeast Asian islands.

By transforming the world during the ascendancy of the Abbasid Empire (750–1258), Islam created a splendid cosmopolitan civilization built on the Arabic language; the message of its scripture, tradition, and law (Qur'an, hadith, and shari'a); and the wisdom and science of the cultures newly incorporated during its expansion over three continents. The practice of philosophy, medicine, and the sciences within the Islamic empire was at a level of sophistication unmatched by any other civilization; it secured pride of place in such diverse fields as architecture, philosophy, maritime navigation and trade, and commerce by land and sea, and saw the founding of the world's first universities. Recuperating from two centuries of relative political decentralization, it coalesced about the year 1500 in three great empires, the Ottomans in the West with Istanbul as their center, the Safavids in Iran with Isfahan as their hub, and the Mughals in the Indian subcontinent with Agra and Delhi as their axis.

As the Islamic world witnessed the emergence of these three empires, European powers began to expand their influence over the world during the age of global discoveries, westward across the Atlantic into the Americas, and eastward by charting a navigational route around Africa into the Indian Ocean, there entering into fierce competition with regional powers along the long-established network of trade routes between China on the one hand and the Mediterranean and East Africa on the other. The European exploration of the East and the growing ability to exploit an existing vast trade network, together with the inadvertent but eventually lucrative “discovery” of the New World, were to result in Europe’s economic and political hegemony over the Islamic world, with which it had rubbed military and mercantile shoulders since the early Muslim conquests. The early modern Islamic world (and much of the rest of the world) fell definitively behind the West economically and politically with the advent of the Enlightenment in the 18th century and the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century.

By about 1800, small European nations (e.g., England, France, and Holland) had established rule over large regions of the Islamic world. Their trading companies and imperial outposts in distant Muslim lands were transformed into colonies of European supremacy that were eager to benefit from Western industrialization. It took until the end of World War II for the global geopolitical map to become reorganized into an array of discrete nation-states on the European model. Muslim nations perceived Islam not only as the way of life led by the majority of the population but also as the source of normative principles for social order.

In the 19th century two diametrically opposed trends would preoccupy the Muslim intelligentsia in their effort to effect social and religious renewal. Modernism proposed adapting Islam to Western ideals, while revivalism advocated restoring the vigor of the original dynamics of Islam; neither approach would lead to the utopia of a Pan-Islamic caliphate. Islam was now challenged to express itself within the framework of independent nations, with their focus on ethnicity, territoriality, and culture.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Islamic world witnessed the explosion of Turkish secularism; in its middle period, it sought sovereignty and honor in Arab, Iranian, Pakistani, and Indonesian nationalism; at the end of the 20th century, it became increasingly dominated by militant trends. “Islamism,” a fundamentalist reaction to Western ascendancy, calls for an Islamic state rigorously based on Islamic law; its public image is dominated by marginal yet high-profile extremists advocating the use of terrorist attacks and suicide martyr missions to achieve this end. Both Sunni and Shi’i expressions of Islamism—in Algeria, Sudan, Iran, or Afghanistan—were inspired by their belief that if only Muslims were to return to their religious roots, God would grant them success in this world and bliss in the next. The past glory of the Islamic world would be restored, and the West would again study at its feet.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the world has drawn closer together through the power of advanced technology, the speed of global communication,

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and ubiquitous access to mobile phones and the Internet, including social networking services. Those advances enabled the annihilation of the Twin Towers in New York City on September 11, 2001, and other acts of terror that have occurred since that date. Yet they also may be nurturing a different response of Islam to the modern world, as rumblings of freedom, cries for liberation from corrupt regimes, and calls for democratic forms of government echo from Muslim lands through cyberspace.

The Evolution of Islamic Political Thought

The development of Islamic political thought tracks the differing positions Islam has occupied during its political expansion over the course of 14 centuries. Just as Islamic history both preserved its tradition and reshaped its internal culture consistently over this period of expansion, so did Islamic political thought maintain certain principal foundations while undergoing successive stages of evolution. The foundations of Islam neither allow for distinctions between spiritual and temporal, ecclesiastical and civil, or religious and secular categories, nor envisage the same duality of authority accepted in Western political thought as standard, such as God and Caesar, church and state, and clergy and laity. Over the centuries, Islamic forms of state and government, power and authority, and rule and loyalty have exhibited great diversity. Although they were all based on the premise of a unity of religion and state, it has nonetheless been impossible for Islam to formulate a norm of political thought that would stand above and apart from its various cultural permutations.

In contrast to the West, the respective realms of religion and state are intimately intertwined in Islam and subject to a process of fluid negotiation; the concepts of authority and duty overshadow those of freedom and the rights of the individual. Islamic political thought deals not only with matters of government, politics, and the state, but also addresses questions of acceptable behavior and ethics of both the ruler and the ruled before God. Islamic political thought cannot be measured by Western criteria and standards of political theory. It must be understood from within its own tradition, characterized by a vibrant integration of the secular and sacred in obedience to God and His Prophet. In its very nature, Islam is dynamic, not static, both as a way of life and a way of monotheistic worship. It is a living reality rather than a frozen system.

Rudimentary but enduring foundations for Islamic political thought were laid beginning with the Prophet's career in Medina. Significant divisions, however, came to the fore under the Umayyad caliphs (658–750), the first Arab dynasty ruling from Damascus. Arabic, the language of Muhammad and his early successors (632–61), was propagated by the conquests of Islam and became established as the language of high Islamic culture and political thought during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik (685–705). On the criterion of its scripture (*kitāb*), Islamic political thought enforced the basic principle of obedience to God and His Prophet. That

principle was articulated in the nucleus of its creed, the *shahāda*, and extrapolated in oral tradition by the early practice of the community, modeled after the Prophet, known as its sunna.

The Umayyad rulers belonging to the Quraysh, Muhammad's tribe, claimed to be the rightful caliphs as heirs to the Prophet but saw their leadership challenged by both the Shi'is, who reserved legitimate leadership for Muhammad's family, and the Kharijis, who advocated that the most meritorious Muslim be the ideal caliph. By the end of the Umayyad caliphate in 750, the stage had been set for Islamic political thought to evolve through five successive periods, the trajectory of which may be summarized as follows.

750–1055: The early medieval formulations of Islamic political thought during the ascendancy of the Abbasid caliphate at Baghdad developed in three directions: those of the clerical class of administrators (*kuttāb*), the schools of legal scholars ('ulama, *fuqahā'*) and theologians (*mutakallimūn*), and the circles of philosophers (*falāsifa*). Over a period of five centuries, Islamic thinkers integrated the thought patterns of a great variety of peoples, absorbing the intellectual systems brought into its fold by the converted populations of the Iranian empire and the Byzantine provinces. It appropriated the legacy of their learning and the acumen of their political experience with the help of comprehensive translation movements from Greek and Pahlavi into Arabic.

1055–1258: During this stage, Islamic political thought had to address the upheaval caused by Sunni Turkic nomads from Central Asia. Turkic sultans gained effective military control and cut into the economic and administrative strata of an Iran-based society nominally ruled by the Abbasid caliphs. The Turkic Seljuqs neither intended nor attempted to impose their language, culture, and seminomadic social order on the fabric of the Islamic polity; instead they wholeheartedly adopted Islam as their religion and promoted Persian next to Arabic as a language of higher learning.

1258–1500: After the demise of the attenuated Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad in 1258 during the Mongol invasions, Muslim political thinkers were forced to come to terms with three new political powers in the east: (1) Ilkhanid and then Timurid rule in Iran and Iraq; (2) khanate rule of the Golden Horde from Siberia to the Caucasus and from the Urals to the Danube River; and (3) Delhi-based sultanates in India. Farther to the west it saw military control passed into the hands of Mamluk Turks and Circassians who, uprooted from their homelands as military slaves, were sold into the households of their patrons and emancipated as converts to Islam to serve as soldiers in the Mamluk armies in Egypt and Syria. Control of the polity was thus usurped by a medley of foreign khanates and slave sultanates, each attempting to claim legitimacy through the manipulation of Islamic symbols of just rule and institutional affiliation with Sufi shaykhs. Faced with this fragmentation, Islamic political thinkers sought to find new paradigms that reflected the effort to overcome the tumultuous breakdown of order and managed to integrate the foreign conquerors into their community's religion and polity.

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1500–1800: From about 1500 onward, the division of the Islamic world into sultanates was succeeded by the rise of three separate and flourishing monarchic empires, none of which used Arabic as their official language of discourse and administration. The Turkish-speaking Ottomans, who had conquered Constantinople in 1453 (now named Istanbul as their seat of government), added Syria and Egypt to their empire in 1517 and eventually adopted the title and legacy of Sunni caliphs. Adopting the Persian idiom, the Safavids established themselves in Iran in 1501 and transformed it into a theocratic Imami Shi'i monarchy. The Mughals, developing a Persian-speaking culture, established their predominantly Sunni rule over India with their victory at Panipat in 1526. In this new threefold constellation, political theory was made to serve the particular vision of rule of each empire rather than that of a universal caliphal culture, and thus Islamic political thought was shaped according to three different modes.

From 1800 onward: The multifarious search for rationales of Islamic political thought from 1800 onward struggled with a situation the world of Islam had never encountered before in its history. It was challenged by a Western culture that had entered its ascendancy. For the first time, Islam neither had the power to conquer nor the capacity to absorb the opposing culture. In response to this anxious and often desperate situation, there gradually emerged revival movements and nationalisms in the Islamic world, whose ideologies covered the spectrum from puritanism, reformism, modernism, secularism, nationalism, and socialism to the extremes of fundamentalism, often termed Islamism. Its apogees are represented on the one hand by the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and on the other hand by the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, against the United States.

Foundations of Islamic Political Thought (from Muhammad to 750)

Both Islamic history and Islamic political thought began in the twilight of Late Antiquity with the hijra, the emigration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in 622. During his prophetic career in Mecca, Muhammad preached with the expectation of apocalyptic end times, focusing his listeners on their future in the hereafter and reminding them of their individual accountability before God. In Medina, he changed course, dominated by the urge to establish the collective religious unity of a community that would enter history here and now, and shape a polity in this world. Once the proclamation of the Qur'an came to an end with the death of the Prophet, eschatological concerns faded; Muslims focused on the victories of the Arab conquest and the resulting exigencies of empire-building and the shaping of polity. The caliphs took charge in their succession to the Prophet as leaders of the community. The crisis (*fitna*) of fraternal wars of succession within the ranks of the believers pitted insiders against outsiders, early Arab Muslims against new client converts, orthodox against heterodox, tribes against tribes, regions against regions,

and dynasties against dynasties. It gave rise to sects and parties but, ultimately, did not dismantle the body politic, even though, from the ninth century onward, it allowed for the separation of political functions between caliphs, military amirs, and viziers administering the state. Neither the bifurcation of the caliphate in the middle of the tenth century into the Muslim East under the Buyid amirs in Baghdad and the Muslim West of the Fatimid caliphs in Cairo (and the Umayyad caliphs in Córdoba) nor the influx of Turks and Mongols, respectively, in the middle of the 11th and 13th centuries destroyed the cohesive but highly flexible structure of the Islamic polity.

Early medieval Islamic political thought proved masterfully able to build on the rudimentary foundations of the earliest phase of Islam. Although the Qur'an was not designed to be a book of political thought, it included language that Muslim political thinkers adopted in their formulation of essential concepts. In addition, Muhammad's organization of Medinan society, through a document known as the Constitution of Medina, offered a model of applied political thought and a glimpse into the Prophet's pragmatic approach toward the creation of a new polity. The first four caliphs conquered and quickly established themselves as administrators of the core lands of the future empire and encapsulated their political vision in short directives and instructions. In Umayyad times, the caliphs defended Muslim interests, regarding the state as their family's benefice. The people, most of whom were non-Muslim, were regarded as clients under the caliph's patronage, providing the tax revenue needed by the state. As deputy (*khalifa*) of the Prophet, the ruler oversaw the rule of law and demanded unconditional obedience on the part of his subjects. Differing views about government and society were put down decisively as manifested by the neutralization of the Shi'is and the suppression of the Kharijis.

Islamic Political Thought in the Early Middle Ages (750–1055)

Upon the accession of the Abbasids as rulers of the empire in 750, the caliph acted as the protector of religion and state (*din wa-dawla*). His government was God's shadow on Earth, under whose sheltering protection everyone could find refuge. The clerical class (*kuttāb*) undertook impressive Arabic translations of Persian treatises on Iranian political institutions, a movement spearheaded by its principal proponent, Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 756), the champion of the courtly ideal of government (*adab*). The *Book of the Land-tax*, written by the chief judge Abu Yusuf (d. 798) at the behest of caliph Harun al-Rashid, set a precedent for treatises on government and fiscal matters written by 'ulama'. In it he covered not only the rules of taxation but also legal and ethical principles as applied to social groups. He defined the role of the caliph as the shepherd of his flock and stressed his obligation to establish divine order among the small and the great. The caliph Ma'mun's (r. 813–33) attempt to establish a high imperial ideal with the primacy of the caliph over the

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clerical class and the learned elite produced a flourishing high culture infused with the Hellenistic heritage. Neoplatonism, in particular, entered into Islamic political thought through a translation movement of Greek (via Syriac) into Arabic. After the failure of the *mihna* (trial), the inquisition enforced by an edict of the caliph to impose the theological doctrines of the Mu'tazilis as state creed, however, the clerical and learned classes found a way to resist caliphal authority in matters of religious doctrine and law.

The seat of the caliphs in the center of the circular capital city of Baghdad, conceived as an ideal city, did not become a throne for a pope-like authority; rather, the caliphate had to acknowledge that the 'ulama', inspired by Shafi'i (d. 820) and Ibn Hanbal (d. 855), held the allegiance of the masses and would exclusively and collectively represent the teaching authority in Sunni Islam on a consensual basis. The situation was very different with the Shi'is, who emphasized the teaching authority of their ideal leader. They advocated a theory in which overriding authority was vested in the infallible imam, the gate (*bāb*) through whom God is approached and the guarantee (*hujja*) without whom the world would collapse. The Shi'is, a minority weakened by internal dissensions and schisms, were unable to establish their own political theology as normative and readied themselves to endure the injustice of Sunni ruling institutions by embracing the principle of cautious dissimulation (*taqiyya*). They were sustained by their belief in the hidden presence of the imam and their projection into the future of the Mahdi's apocalyptic return.

The articulate political thought developed by the Muslim philosophers argued for a political society (*madīna*) that evoked the Greek ideal city (*polis*), whence derived the name of *madīnat al-salām* (City of Peace) that the Abbasids adopted for Baghdad, their capital. Farabi (870–950) and Ibn Sina (980–1037), both hailing from Transoxiana, focused on the center of the empire and supported the ideal of the philosopher-king, an ethically perfect individual, as head of a virtuous polity. Farabi's ideal of "the virtuous city" (*al-madīna al-fāḍila*) offered a systematic thesis on the state as the perfect society, in which rational integrity and right conduct are the means for achieving supreme felicity (*sā'ada*). Just as the human body has different parts doing different work in a harmonious manner, so too does the body politic require an efficient division of labor. Just as the body has a head to rule it, so too society has a chief to rule it, guiding society toward becoming an ideal community of the virtuous. Ibn Sina's chapter on governance (*siyāsa*) in his encyclopedic work, *The Healing of the Soul* (*al-Shifā'*), stressed the principle of human interdependence and promoted the ideal of the lawgiver who is both philosopher and prophet. Responding to the need for human government in a religious polity and reminding believers of God and the afterlife, the ruler guarantees the observance of the civil (*nāmūs*) and religious (*shari'a*) law.

Anchored in reason (*aql*) as its ultimate principle and worked out across boundaries of religious affiliations between Muslims and Christians, the political theory of the Islamic philosophers charted an intellectual trajectory that the majority of the Sunni population was unprepared or unwilling to follow. Unlike the

philosophical elite, the Sunni masses needed a political thought system established on the platform of tradition, not abstract reason. Islamic philosophy lacked the institutional basis that an academy would have provided and did not manage to attract the popularly important scholars of law and religion with their deep roots in the literature of the traditions of the Prophet and his Companions (hadith) and their codices of jurisprudence detailing the stipulations of shari'a and amassing a myriad of opinions on legal points (fatwa).

Islamic Political Thought in the High Middle Ages (1055–1258)

The political vision of Sunni Islam can be traced in two classical works on public law: the Arabic treatise on *The Principles of Power* (*al-Abkam al-Sultaniyya*) by Mawardi (974–1058), the honorary chief judge of the Abbasid caliphs, who defined the standard theory of the Sunni caliphate and its institutions from the perspective of the 'ulama'; and the *Siyasatnama*, the famous Persian work on statecraft by Nizam al-Mulk (1018–92), chief vizier of the Seljuqs, that gives expression to the views of the clerical class. Nizam al-Mulk also created the foundations of a network of educational institutions (madrasas) that offered scholars of law and religion lecterns and listeners for the dissemination of their works for many centuries. The *Siyasatnama*, together with the *Qabusnama*, written in 1082 by Kay Ka'us, represents the apogee of the literary genre of *naṣiḥat al-mulūk* (Advice for Rulers), that is, Mirrors for Princes literature that counseled political leaders on statecraft and diplomacy. Thriving for more than a millennium, the genre continued with treatises of Sufis and courtiers on ethical conduct in political life, and reached its final flourishing during the Mughal and Ottoman empires.

The impact of medieval Islamic political thought is best exemplified by the classical work of Ghazali (1058–1111), presented with great didactic clarity in his encyclopedic *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*), which relied on the legal tradition of the Shafi'i school of law and the theological tradition of Baqillani (d. 1013) and Juwayni (1028–85). The major achievement of Ghazali's magisterial work, however, was the theological and ethical platform he laid for Islamic political institutions, a platform that enabled the moral and religious renewal of Islamic society. Offering a Sunni theological interpretation of political thought, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (1149–1209) tried to combine dialectical theology with a modified version of Ibn Sina's philosophy in order to support the doctrine that the existence of the king-emperor, namely, the caliph, is necessary to maintain the order of the world.

On the far western periphery of the Islamic world in the Iberian Peninsula, Ghazali's books were burned in public by order of the ruling dynasty, bowing to the agitation of Maliki legal scholars. Significant contributions to Islamic political thought, however, were made in Spain through the insightful analysis of state and society by Ibn Rushd (1126–98), one of the most original minds in all of Islam.

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According to Ibn Rushd, philosophers were best qualified to interpret scripture, tradition, and law because they possessed the highest form of knowledge. Following Aristotle, he held that right and wrong were determined by nature rather than by divine command and that effective legislation required both theoretical and empirical knowledge.

In the last century of Abbasid rule in Baghdad, Sufism emerged as an organized movement of fraternities, building up the infrastructure of Muslim society and shaping the Islamic identity of the polity for centuries to come; in fact, Sufism made a powerful impact on the fabric of Islamic polity, which contemporary scholarship has widely overlooked. Sufism began in the eighth and ninth centuries in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, with groups of men of piety leading an ascetic life and seeking mystic experience of union with God. Led by teaching masters called shaykhs (or *pīrs* in Persian), it developed its ideal of poverty (*faqr*) and trust in God (*tawakkul*) and spread its practice of meditative recollection (*dhikr*). Its radical spiritual and social patterns provoked the scholars of law and theology, stirred up urban populations, and challenged public order. After being eclipsed by the Shi'i renaissance of the tenth century, Sufism reframed its path to God as a branch of the Muslim sciences during the Sunni revival under the Seljuq Turks. Leading into the caliphate of the Abbasid Nasir (1180–1225), Sufism organized itself into a large number of fraternities (*ṭarīqa*) based on a strict order of master and disciples, and marked by initiation rites and common prayer ceremonies. Networks of Sufi centers, called “lodges” (Ar. *ribāt*, or Pers. *khānaqāh*), paralleled the educational institution of the madrasa and were favored by sultanate governments. The sultans sought sacred legitimization for the secular leadership they had acquired through usurpation by securing the endorsement of Sufi shaykhs, whom they often honored with the title of shaykh al-Islam.

Sufism was profoundly undergirded by the monist philosophy of Ibn al-'Arabi (1165–1240), whose pivotal concept of the “Perfect Man” (*al-insān al-kāmil*) supplied both an ontological and ethical ideal. Yet Sufism engaged the emotions as well as the intellect, tolerating unruly wandering dervishes (*qalandar*) and growing widely popular through its provocative use of Persian love poetry, especially that of Jalal al-Dīn al-Rumi (1207–73). Drawing upon an image familiar to steppe populations, the Sufis advocated a “tent” of spiritual rule (*wilāya*) over the entire society. The hierarchy of saints (*awliyā'*) would be anchored in a spiritual pole (*quṭb*), who would in turn be supported by his substitutes, the “stakes” (*abdāl*) and “pegs” (*awṭād*).

Sufi institutions, often built at the outskirts of urban centers around the tombs of their founders, produced widely used manuals that disseminated the ethical and spiritual ideal of the Sufi way of life and contributed much to the Islamic identity of populations in India, Southeast Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. Sufism made its principal impact on Islamic political thought and social practice during the turbulent transition from the fragmentation of the Abbasid Empire and the emergence of its three successors. During the sultanate period of Ilkhanids, Timurids, Mamluks, and

Delhi Sultans, Sufi influence was spread by many orders, among them the Kubrawis in Central Asia, the Shadhilis in Egypt and North Africa, and the Suhrawardis and Chishtis in the Indus and Ganges plains. The three great empires would draw religious and political strength from Sufi resources, the Ottomans from the Mevlevis and Bektashis, the Shi'i Safavids from their Sunni Sufi roots, and the Mughals from the Qadiris and Naqshbandis.

Islamic Political Thought in the Late Middle Ages (1258–1500)

Two writers on Islamic political thought stand out in the late Middle Ages during the period of fragmentation and before the establishment of the three empires: Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) and Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406). Ibn Taymiyya, a Hanbali scholar of law and theology, who was active in Damascus and Cairo, engaged in bitter controversies with rationalism, Sufism, Shi'ism, and Christianity. He championed the legal method of individual reasoning (*ijtihād*) to discern the consensus of the believers and chose the middle ground between reason and tradition, as well as between violence and piety. He proclaimed that religion and state need one another because perfect spiritual and temporal prosperity is achieved only when religion is put into practice by religious law that is enforced by a leader who accepts the duty of commanding good and forbidding evil. Ibn Taymiyya maintained that the principles of the state's power ought to be applied rigorously through the use of the shari'a enforced by the ruler—an ideal that the Wahhabi movement adopted in the 18th century.

Ibn Khaldun was active in North Africa, Spain, and Egypt during periods of dynastic declines. Although he studied broadly in philosophy, law, and theology, he presented an empirical analysis gleaned from the history of the Berbers and Arabs in North Africa. His study of the history of civilization revealed a cyclical pattern: the rule of nomadic chieftains would gradually evolve into kingship in a civilized society that, in turn, would be overthrown by another nomadic group. In order to break the cycle, authority of leadership had to emerge from natural dominion, pass through the stage of government by men of intelligence and insight, and stabilize itself in a polity based on the principles of religion laid down by God, as exemplified ideally by the rule of the Prophet and his successors, the caliphs.

Little research has been done on the considerable role women played in the medieval Islamic polity. According to the Qur'an, women are equal to men before God and have similar religious obligations. Though subordinate to men in the public sphere and unequal in many sectors of Islamic law, many women played significant roles in the transmission of hadith, beginning with Muhammad's wives 'A'isha and Umm Salama, and in the organization of court life, the education of scholars, and the welfare of Islamic families and children in medieval times. Muslim biographical works quote hundreds of women involved in teaching Islam and transmitting its

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tradition, while Sufi women had an impact on Islamic ethics and religious practice. There has been a tendency in secular feminist scholarship to depict premodern women in the Islamic world as utterly backward. Against this backdrop, however, Muslim women now writing on Islam in the contemporary world have begun their own active line of feminist inquiry, which promises to open new vistas on Islamic political thought from a previously neglected sector of Islamic culture.

Since the end of Late Antiquity and through most of the millennium of the early and late Middle Ages, the Islamic world was the leading culture on the globe. It excelled in philosophy and the natural sciences, logic and metaphysics, mathematics, astronomy, optics, alchemy, geography, medicine, and architecture. Its transition from vellum to paper in the eighth century propelled it onto a great curve of literary production in both religious and nonreligious literature. This enormous cultural achievement was accomplished in medieval Islam because the Muslim scholars of medicine and science, the philosophers, and the historians avidly inquired into the roots of world cultures anteceding or surrounding them in India, ancient Iran, and the Hellenistic world. Islamic political thought drew on the classics of Greco-Roman and Irano-Indian antiquity. It also antedated and influenced the appearance of works of political thought in medieval Europe, building a bridge between antiquity and modernity. Islamic political thought developed in a cosmopolitan medieval environment of wide-ranging information about other cultures, with all their riches and restrictions. A significant disruption in this development, however, came about from the 15th to the 16th century, when the Western world of Europe entered upon a course of profound changes in its vision of the world, religion, society, and politics.

Islamic Political Thought in the Early Modern Period (1500–1800)

The Ottomans, a group of Turkic tribesmen, established a small principality in northwestern Anatolia, crossed into Europe in 1357, and took control of the Balkans, moving their capital from Bursa to Edirne in 1366. Although defeated by Timur (known to the West as Tamerlane) at Ankara in 1402, they conquered Constantinople in 1453, making it their new capital of Istanbul. With the conquest of Egypt and Syria in 1517, the Ottomans established a large Sunni empire over Anatolia, the Balkans, and the regions of the eastern and southern Mediterranean. Constantly engaged in warfare with European powers, they suffered a decisive defeat at Lepanto in 1571 and failed to take Vienna in 1683. Increasingly weakened during the 18th and 19th centuries, they acceded to the rule of Muhammad 'Ali (r. 1805–48) as governor of Egypt in 1805. The Ottoman Empire officially disappeared from the geopolitical map when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk abolished the sultanate in 1922 and founded modern Turkey in 1923.

Ruled by pragmatic sultans, the Ottomans created a strong and loyal military force in the Janissaries, who were recruited as children from the Christian subject

populations and raised as Muslims. Organizing themselves around the sultan, the Ottomans integrated the military, the learned, and the bureaucracy into their patrimonial state and gave room to the influences of Sufi orders and folk Islam. Seeing the implementation of justice as their right and duty, the sultans conferred upon judges (qadi) the authority to administer both shari'a and their innovative and parallel civil law (*qānūn*).

Ottoman rule excelled in practical politics; its range of political theories, however, was modest. Abu al-Su'ud (1490–1574), a famous commentator of the Qur'an appointed as shaykh al-Islam, worked to strengthen the absolute rule of the sultan as the ultimate religious and civil authority. His fatwas brought the *qānūn* into agreement with the shari'a and established the principle that the qadis derived their competence from the appointment of the sultan and were obliged to go along with his directives in legal matters. In contrast, Kinalizade (1510–72) followed the philosophical tradition of ethics advocating the ideal of the philosopher-king who ruled the Virtuous City. His delineation of four status groups—men of the pen, men of the sword, traders, and craftsmen—became the foundation of an ideal social order known as the “right world order” (*niẓām al-‘ālam*). In practice, however, Ottoman society was organized according to a rougher bipartite order. The ruling class of *‘askaris* (warriors) encompassed the military, the learned, and the bureaucrats; its members were supported by taxes levied on the *ri'āya* (flock), the class of ruled subjects composed of tradesmen, laborers, and minorities. Katib Çelebi (1609–57), the most productive scholar of the Ottoman Empire, advocated the rule of a strong and just sultan and analyzed the financial state of the sultanate. He formulated his thought in medical terms, analogizing the body politic to the human body and its stages of growth and decline. In addition to arguing for a balanced budget, an increase in agricultural production, and a reduction of the armed forces, he also exposed rampant corruption and exploitation of the peasants.

The Safavids, of Kurdish origin and Turkic-speaking, arose from the Sunni Sufi fraternity of the Safawis organized in Azerbaijan by Safi al-Din (d. 1334). There, and in the neighboring regions of eastern Anatolia, the movement became militantly Shi'i under their leader Junayd (1446–60). Led by Shah Isma'il (1487–1524), they brought the whole of Iran under their control after overpowering the regional rule of the Timurid Qara Qyunlu and Aq Qyunlu in 1501. In these military endeavors, they relied on the support of Turkic tribesmen called “Redheads” (Qizilbash) for their distinctive red headgear. Adopting Persian as the language of their monarchy, the Safavid shahs set themselves in opposition to the Sunni Ottomans based at the western flank of their territory. Claiming to be living emanations of the godhead and representatives on Earth of the Mahdi, the Twelfth Imam of Shi'ism, they combined supreme secular and spiritual authority into the office of a single omnipotent ruler. The Safavids imposed Shi'ism as the state religion upon all of Iran and moved their capital to Isfahan where Shi'i Safavid power reached its apex in the reign of Shah 'Abbas (r. 1587–1629). The Safavid dynasty came to an end with the rise of Nadir Shah (r. 1729–47), a chieftain of Turkic tribesmen, who consolidated

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his rule over all of Iran, and the subsequent Qajar dynasty (1779–1925), a clan that had served in the Qizilbash army under the Safavids.

In the 16th century, the Safavids imposed Imami Shi'i beliefs on a largely Sunni population, although the distinction between the two groups was marked by significant ambiguity at the time. Shi'i political thought came vigorously alive in the work of Karaki (1466–1534), a Lebanese scholar who made the provocative claim to be speaking as the general representative (*al-nā'ib al-āmm*) of the absent imam. Karaki's theory of authority has been accepted and extended from his own time until the present by those scholars known as *uṣūlīs*, that is, those who held that religious authority is derived from the study of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). In accordance with this view, the scholars of the Safavid realm recognized the leading jurist as *mujtahid al-zamān* (the independent jurist of the age), and treated his authority as absolute.

The *uṣūlīs* were challenged in the 17th century by Muhammad Amin al-Astarabadi (d. 1626–27), whose work inaugurated what came to be known as the *akhbārī* or traditionist school of thought. The *uṣūlīs* favored rational elaboration of the law (*ijtihād*) and the acquiescence of lay Shi'is to the opinions of qualified jurists (*taqlīd*). The *akhbārīs* saw in revelation the sole source of the law and furthermore claimed that it was most reliably preserved in the *akhbār*, the reports of the imams' words and deeds recorded in the Four Books of Traditions accepted by the Shi'is. Even the Qur'an, in their view, should properly be understood through the commentary of the imams preserved in these reports. In the later 17th century, the main spokesman for the *akhbārīs* was Muhsin Fayz Kashani (1598–1680), who popularized the political thought of his period by integrating Sufi ideas. The *uṣūlīs*, on the other hand, found their most illustrious proponent in Majlisi (1627–1700), who developed orthodox Imami Shi'ism and brought the state under the direction of the legal scholars, launching attacks against Sufis and philosophers. In the view of Majlisi and similar theorists, the king (*shāh*) was but the instrument of the clerical class and dependent on the leading *mujtahid*.

During three centuries (1200–1500), Muslim rule in India was organized by Afghan and Turkic sultanates ruling mainly from Delhi. The control of the Mughal emperors over the entire subcontinent began with Babur (1483–1530), a descendant of both Chingiz Khan and Timur, who invaded India from the northwest. After Babur's victory at Panipat in 1526, the Sunni Mughal monarchy was extended over almost all of India during the long rule of Akbar the Great (r. 1556–1605). Akbar, a superb though illiterate administrator, abolished the poll tax levied on Hindus, favored a syncretistic religion, called *dīn-i ilāhī* (divine religion), and created a ruling class of appointees (*manṣabdārīs*) consisting of Turks, Afghans, Persians, and Hindus. Dara Shikuh (1615–59), inclined toward the Qadiri Sufi order, inspired the translation of the Upanishads into Persian and championed religious assimilation with Hinduism. His program of religious openness was not to last long, as he was executed on the orders of Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707), his brother and rival. Aurangzeb stood up against the eclectic traditions of his predecessors,

breaking the renewed vigor of Hinduism with a reform centered on Islamic values and supported by the Naqshbandi Sufi order. The Mughal Empire lost its glory after Delhi was sacked by Nadir Shah in 1739 and gradually lost all its power under the rule of British colonialism.

The open-minded innovations of the Mughal emperor Akbar broke with traditional patterns of Islamic political thought in an attempt to build a single political community that granted India's majority Hindu population religious toleration and equal status with their Sunni and Shi'i Muslim neighbors. He also tried to reconcile Muslim sectarian groups with one another. Claiming infallible monarchical authority and according himself supreme power as the "perfect man" (*insān al-kāmil*, originally a Sufi concept), Akbar combined the role of king with that of spiritual teacher. Proclaiming himself the highest authority in matters of religious law as well as secular law, he set aside key stipulations of the shari'a and embraced religious tolerance and political equality.

Akbar's vision did not survive in India. Ahmad Sirhindi (1564–1624), who stood in the spiritual line of the Naqshbandis, perceived Akbar's ideology as destructive to Islamic law and religion. He came to be called the "renewer" (*mujaddid*) as Islam entered its second millennium because he wished to restore Islamic values in public and political life, albeit in a form inspired by Sufi piety rather than legalistic rigidity. 'Abd al-Haqq Dihlawi (1551–1642) went a step further and stressed the precedence of religious law over the Sufi path and limited the king's function to upholding the shari'a. Emperor Aurangzeb (1650–1707) repudiated Akbar's tolerance toward Hinduism; he reintroduced a unified legal system of Sunni orthodoxy based on Hanafi law and reimposed the poll tax on non-Muslims. Shah Waliullah (1703–62), a man of encyclopedic learning with roots in the Naqshbandi Sufi affiliation, strove to establish a polity based on the shari'a in India.

Islamic Political Thought in the Later Modern Period (from 1800 to the Present)

During the 19th century, half of the Islamic world passed under the formal colonial rule of European states—geographically tiny but militarily and economically mighty countries in comparison to the vast Muslim territories they ruled and controlled. The reaction of the Islamic intelligentsia to this overpowering control from without was one of reform and revival from within, spearheaded by social and political reformers, some of whom were journalists rather than scholars steeped in Islamic law and religion. Perhaps the most outstanding figure among them was Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–97), an austere man of Shi'i Persian origin and a charismatic lecturer with only a small number of published works. Active in Istanbul, Cairo, Paris, London, India, Russia, and Iran, he devoted his life to the reviving of Muslim intellectual and social life in pamphlets and political articles, commented on current affairs, and, in travels and speeches, agitated for the resurrection of a reformed and

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purified Islamic identity in the face of European encroachment. Teaching orthodox religion to the masses and natural-law rationalism to the elite, he attacked Darwin in his refutation of materialism and asserted that only religion ensures stability of society, whereas materialism causes decay and debasement. Longing to recreate the glory of Islam in a Pan-Islamic state, Afghani argued that Islam's ultimate orientation toward God enabled it to organize the finest possible political community.

Afghani's chief disciple was Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905), often seen as the founder of Egyptian modernism. 'Abduh, who had received a traditional education and attended Azhar University, was attracted to mysticism and considered Afghani to be his spiritual guide. He wrote several theological treatises, among them a defense of Islam against Christianity, and promulgated his program of reform in *al-Manar* (The lighthouse), a Qur'an commentary that he published in installments and that was later continued as a monthly by his highly educated collaborator Rashid Rida (1865–1935), a man of Syrian descent. 'Abduh's political thought had the overriding goal of returning Islam to its pristine condition, emphasizing the Qur'an and sunna and restoring the role of *ijtihād*. Although the exercise of reason and the adoption of modern natural science were of paramount importance, reason must defer to the dogmas of religion, while prophecy focused on the moral education of the masses. Rida, a very prolific writer, refined some of 'Abduh's points and distinguished between the religious duties (*'ibādāt*), unchangeable because based on the Qur'an and sunna, and duties toward other Muslims (*mu'āmalāt*), to be reinterpreted by the exercise of reason so as to serve the welfare (*maṣlaḥa*) of the community.

With roots in the political thought of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya, the modern reform movement of the Salafis began with Afghani, 'Abduh, and Rida, and continued to identify the causes of disintegration of the Muslim community in the infiltration of foreign ideas and practices. The movement taught that Islamic honor and self-respect would only be reestablished if Islam as both a religion and a way of life was redeemed from cultural submission to Western powers and revitalized with its own internal resources. Salafi thinkers called for sweeping reforms to be introduced into Muslim education, combining the values of traditional pedagogy with the creativity of modern education. They advocated resurrecting the ideal of Islamic law and updating the Arabic language to address the realities of modern life. The Salafis had an impact on Algeria with Ibn Badis (1889–1940), on Morocco with Muhammad 'Allal al-Fasi (1910–74), and on Tunisia with Muhammad al-Tahir b. 'Ashur (1879–1973).

The puritan movement of the Wahhabis began in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula with Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703–92). Also inspired by the thought of Ahmad b. Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya, he insisted on a single core idea: uncompromising monotheism (*tawḥīd*). God had to be professed as one in word and served in action. Islam had to be purified from all devotion to anything else (*shirk*), in thought and practice. There was no room for saint worship, legal reasoning beyond the Qur'an and sunna, or any innovation (*bid'ā*). He allied himself with

‘Abd al-‘Aziz (1765–1803), the leader of the tribal group of Al-Su‘ud, becoming shaykh and qadi in the service of the amir and imam. The Saudi-Wahhabi alliance continued with their sons and extended rule over the Hijaz and the key cities of Mecca and Medina. Eradicating anything they believed would undermine the purity of their beliefs, they destroyed tombs of saints and books of intellectual adversaries, interdicted devotional prayers, and pillaged Shi‘i shrines in Iraq. Muhammad ‘Ali, the powerful governor of Egypt under the Ottomans, pushed them back, but the Saudi-Wahhabi state, with Riyadh as its capital, was eventually restored in 1902. Over this long history the Wahhabis expressed the staunchest spirit of politically strategic fundamentalism, which inspired many similar movements in other parts of the Islamic world.

Traders brought Islam to West Africa on camelback from the north through the Sahara and to East Africa from the shores of South Arabia, Iran, and India by boat across the Indian Ocean. In West Africa, Sunni Islam of the Maliki legal school became dominant; since the 12th century, Timbuktu has developed into a famous seat of commerce and Islamic learning on the Niger River. Dongola on the upper Nile River was taken under Muslim rule in the 14th century after the collapse of Christian Nubia. The vast independent state (often called the “Sokoto caliphate”) established at Sokoto by Muhammad Bello after the death of his father, Usuman Dan Fodio (1754–1817), who had led a successful four-year jihad against neighboring principalities, became the largest autonomous state in 19th-century sub-Saharan Africa.

It was charismatic leadership that transformed sub-Saharan Islamic societies into fundamentalist-inspired states, as can be shown by two examples, one centered on the idea of “the seal of the saints” (*khātam al-awliyā*) and the other on the messianic idea of the Mahdi, the apocalyptic leader of the end times. In West Africa, the Tijani Sufi affiliation was founded in an oasis of Algeria by Ahmad al-Tijani (1737–1815), who later settled in Fez in Morocco and whose teachings were recorded by a close companion and thereafter elaborated by ‘Umar b. Sa‘id al-Futi (1796–1864). Ahmad al-Tijani claimed that the Prophet had appeared to him in a waking vision, appointing him to the spiritual rank of the seal of sainthood (*khātam al-awliyā*, *quṭb al-aqtāb*), a rank that gave him domination over the age (*ṣāhib al-waqt*), exclusive knowledge of the supreme name of God (*ism Allāh al-‘aẓam*), and the power of a vicegerent (*khalīfa*) who alone mediates between God and his creatures. In the middle of the 19th century, ‘Umar b. Sa‘id al-Futi, a Fulbe of Senegal, assumed the leadership of the Tijanis and the role of a *mujāhid*, launching a militant anticolonial jihad movement across West Africa from Senegal to Ghana and into Nilotic Sudan. By the middle of the 20th century, the Tijanis were transformed into a revivalist movement among the black Africans as Ibrahim Niassé (1900–1975) extended it among the urban Muslims of Nigeria and Sudan.

In (Nilotic) Sudan, Muhammad Ahmad (1844–85), a Sunni with roots in the Sammani Sufi affiliation, proclaimed himself to be the expected Mahdi in 1881. He learned of his divine election in a colloquy with the Prophet himself. Ahmad

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advocated a reformist brand of Islam; he aimed to restore the primitive *umma* (community of believers), governed by the Qur'an and sunna, through his activity in supreme succession to the Prophet (*al-khilāfa al-kubrā*) and with the assistance of his chief disciples in the role of successors to the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Retreating (hijra) into the Nuba Mountains together with his followers, named Ansar after the helpers of Muhammad in Medina, he called people to arms in a jihad against Turkish, Egyptian, and British overlords. Ahmad died shortly after conquering Khartoum in 1885. He was succeeded by his son 'Abdallah b. Muhammad (1885–99) as his deputy (*khalīfa*), who established a Mahdist state that was overthrown by the British in 1898. The revivalist movement of the Ansar, however, continued under the leadership of 'Abd al-Rahman (1885–1959) and played a decisive role in the Sudan's declaration of independence in 1955. Under the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan al-Turabi (b. 1932) worked toward the formation of an Islamic state and the promotion of a fundamentalist regime in Sudan.

Beginning in the ninth century, Islam reached East Africa through traders and seafarers who came from Southern Arabia and Iran and established trading posts on the East African coast. By the 13th century, the Indian Ocean had become a Muslim sea, and Muslims controlled the trade from India and Iran to South Arabia and East Africa. Sunni Islam of the Shafi'i legal school laid the religious foundations for the emergence of the Swahili civilization of the Muslim "coastalists" (*sawāhila*) in East Africa. Swahili culture remained a coastal phenomenon with only sporadic Islamic inroads into the East African hinterland; in the area of Lake Nyasa, for example, Islam spread among the Yao. In the 16th century, the Portuguese took control of the spice trade away from the Muslims and secured a sea route linking Europe to India. By the end of the 17th century, however, the sultans of Oman reestablished effective rule in East Africa when they exerted dominance over the island of Zanzibar in 1698 and expelled the Portuguese from the Tanzanian coasts in 1730. In 1832, the sultans of Oman moved their capital to Zanzibar, which had by that time become the center of the Arab slave trade. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, imperialist European powers (Portugal, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy) scrambled among themselves for control of East Africa. Islam, however, began to play a significant political role in the region only in the 20th century, as East African states that included large Muslim minorities gained their independence. These states included Tanzania, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, and Malawi. Although the Muslims of South Africa, who trace their ancestry to immigrants from South Asia and slaves imported from Southeast Asia, remained a small minority, they attracted worldwide attention in their struggle against the injustice of apartheid.

Islam in India saw its own developments of Islamic political thought in the 19th century. Ahmad Khan (1817–98), known as Sir Sayyid and knighted by the British in 1888, had only a traditional education but became the founder of Muslim modernism and the principal force of Islamic revival in India. An advocate of modern education for India's Muslims, he wrote commentaries on the Bible and the first half of the Qur'an. After the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857, Ahmad Khan worked toward

the reconciliation of the British and Muslims in India, and founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1875. Reinterpreting Islam according to his maxim, “the work of God—that is, nature and its fixed laws—is identical to the word of God,” he emphasized a rational approach to Islam and to social reforms in Muslim culture.

The mutiny in 1857 that led to the formal colonization of India by the British also had an effect on the emergence of two Sunni reform movements among the Urdu-speaking Muslims, the Barelwis and the Deobandis. Both movements maintain considerable influence among Muslims in India and Pakistan today. Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), an outstanding poet beloved for his commitment to the creation of Pakistan, accused both the West of cheating humanity of its values through the power of its technology and the Muslim society of his day of subsisting in a state of somnolence. He called the whole world to join the dynamism of the “true Islam” of the Qur’an and Muhammad, a dynamism that he believed would harness the forces of history for the moral renewal of all humanity.

Islam came to Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei, as well as territories in Thailand and Mindanao) discreetly over the sea. From about the 13th century onward, Muslim traders in noticeable numbers sailed to the ports of this island world and its adjacent coasts, forming viable and enduring communities. Sultanates, based in the port cities of Malacca on the Malaysian peninsula (1400–1511) and Demak on Java (1475–1588), constituted little-known early Muslim powers. The 16th and 17th centuries saw the formation of four great Islamic empires with their centers in port cities, formed at (1) Aceh, in northern Sumatra and central Malaysia (1500–1650); (2) Bantam, on western Java and southern Sumatra (1527–1682); (3) Mataram, on central Java, southern Borneo (Kalimantan), and eastern Sumatra (1588–1682); and (4) Macassar, on Celebes and Sumbawa (1605–69). As Sunni Islam of the Shafī’i legal tradition spread in Southeast Asia, its law, practice, and essential doctrines set down firm roots. In addition, Sufis coming from India to the Malay Peninsula, and from the Arabian Peninsula to the archipelago, had a significant impact on the formation of the Southeast Asian Muslim polity.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Muslims of Southeast Asia were challenged by increasing Dutch colonial supremacy throughout Sumatra, Java, and Borneo, as well as by British colonial administration in Malaysia. At the same time, the fervent practice of the pilgrimage to Mecca kept Southeast Asian Muslims in contact with the world of Islam and facilitated the influence of the Wahhabis and the reformism of ‘Abduh and Rashid Rida on Southeast Asian Islam. The development of the *pesantren*, Muslim boarding schools led by groups of religious teachers, created an infrastructure of traditional Muslim education that propelled the spread of Islam, especially in Java. The most influential puritan movement of the Muhammadiyah, founded in Yogyakarta in 1912, adopted Dutch institutional and Christian missionary approaches and opposed Sufi forms of education. It organized a comprehensive educational system that ranged from primary schools to teacher training colleges and expanded social services to the needy. Indonesia achieved independence in

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1945 and adopted the five principles (*pancasila*: monotheism, nationalism, humanism, democracy, and social justice) as the philosophical basis for its order of society; Sukarno became the first president (1945–67), followed by Suharto (1967–98). Malaysia gained its independence from the British in 1957; its political system was a mixture of parliamentarianism and authoritarianism. The Malaysian constitution both guaranteed freedom of religion and made Islam the state religion. Ethnic Malays, who are mainly Muslim, dominated politics, and non-Muslim Malays of Chinese or Indian descent ran the economic and financial sectors.

In the 20th century, Europe lost its global leadership during the period of the two world wars, when it experienced the eclipse of fascist nationalism, the downfall of colonial imperialism, and the emergence of the Soviet Union and the United States as the primary shapers of the world order. The Russian revolution and the emergence of the communist systems in the Soviet Union and China left only tangential imprints on Islamic political thought. The forceful entry of the United States into world politics in the aftermath of World War II, however, particularly its projection of military and cultural dominance into Muslim societies, provoked a range of vehement and enduring Islamic reactions. The extremist fringe is characterized by destructive militancy and terrorist movements, such as al-Qaeda, originally a group of American-backed jihadists fighting against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

For Islam, the 20th century began with forceful secularist movements and ended with a rising tide of fundamentalist movements seeking to expunge the Western presence from Muslim lands.

In 1924, Atatürk (1881–1938) abolished polygamy, shari'a courts, and Qur'an schools; he also created national banks, reformed the Turkish alphabet, prohibited the wearing of fez and veil, empowered women to vote and obtain a divorce and offered them equality in education and employment, and required citizens to use family names rather than simply first names. Atatürk suppressed the dervish orders and introduced new civil, criminal, and commercial codes, secularizing what was at the time the strongest Muslim empire on the globe. Turkey became the central case of a cultural and political revolution imposed from the top by an authoritarian regime with the result that the country was divided into urban elites (which acceded to secularization) and rural masses (which resisted it). As it opens the back door for Islamic culture and practice to squeeze in again, Turkey is gradually restoring balance to its society. Not all efforts to reappropriate the riches of the Islamic tradition are violent. The Nurculuk movement, founded by Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1876–1960), with millions of followers forming two major branches today (one led by Fethullah Gülen, b. 1941), is a peaceful revivalist phenomenon manifesting the re-Islamizing trend in Turkey.

On the other side of the spectrum, in the late 20th century the Islamic world became dominated by fundamentalist movements: the Muslim Brotherhood founded by Hasan al-Banna (1906–49) in Egypt and spearheaded by Sayyid Qutb (1906–66); the Islamic Group, established by Mawlana Mawdudi (1903–79) in India and Pakistan; and the movement of clerics and mujahidin led by Ayatollah

Ruhollah Khomeini (1903–89) that culminated in the Iranian Revolution in 1979. These three movements transformed Islam into a political ideology and were not hesitant to use force to secure their political objectives.

Banna, a schoolteacher from Isma‘iliyya on the Suez Canal, formed the Muslim Brotherhood in order to combat the influence of a corrupt society by bringing the Egyptian youth back to religion. He gave his movement a militant character with a strict chain of command that consisted of a general guide presiding over the membership, members organized as families and battalions, and a trusted core of its elite defined as a “secret apparatus.” His promulgation of the movement’s “fundamental law” transformed it publicly into a social and political organization with antiforeign, anti-Zionist, anticommunist, and antisectarian attitudes. After the Free Officers seized power in 1952 and exiled Faruq, Egypt’s last king of Albanian descent, President Nasser cracked down on the Muslim Brotherhood, driving the movement underground. Sayyid Qutb, a journalist who had experienced culture shock during a visit to America, returned to Egypt in 1951, proclaimed himself to have been reborn a true Muslim, and joined the Muslim Brotherhood. Imprisoned by Nasser for ten years, he wrote a manifesto for political revolution through personal discipline and violent jihad, which decried Nasser’s Egypt as *jāhiliyya*, a land of ignorance and unbelief. He argued that to resurrect the Muslim polity as a collectivity (*jamā‘a*) based on Islamic ethics, a vanguard had to be mobilized by an all-inclusive jihad with the aim of establishing a truly Islamic society.

The Muslim Brotherhood achieved a strong popular appeal through its social programs, which assisted the large lower strata of Muslim society in its neighborhoods. It was unable, however, to offer an agenda that would pull Egypt out of lethargy and overcome corruption. It also contributed to social instability by organizing riots that targeted the minority Coptic populations. Later, small spin-offs of the Muslim Brotherhood had recourse to more extreme forms of violence. In 1977, al-Takfir wa-l-Hijra resorted to kidnapping, and in 1981, Al-Jihad assassinated President Sadat (d. 1981). Not unlike his predecessors, President Mubarak curbed the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood by arresting its leadership. When he was removed from power by peaceful mass demonstrations in 2011, however, the Muslim Brotherhood was taken by surprise and began immediately to reorganize its structure to resonate with the new spirit of freedom. The Arab Spring, beginning with mass demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt early in 2011, created enthusiasm but risks devolving into a leaderless revolution. The key challenge facing Muslim advocates for reform will be to identify and empower balanced leadership in the hitherto unfamiliar environment of human rights and democratic freedom.

In India and Pakistan, Mawlana Mawdudi, an Urdu journalist by profession, became one of the leading interpreters of Islam in the 20th century. Educated as a Hanafi Sunni, he was insulated from Western ideas and the English language but acquired a fluent knowledge of Arabic. Stung by Hindu assertions of Islam having been spread by the sword, he emphasized the spiritual and ethical dimensions of the doctrine of jihad, presenting it as a testimony to his profound conversion to the

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Muslim faith. For the rest of his life, Mawdudi published his ideas in a monthly, making it the vehicle for his intense anti-Western feelings and his relentless desire to demonstrate the superiority of Islamic culture. For thirty years Mawdudi worked on his Qur'an commentary, in which he developed his political thought on the Islamic state. In 1941, he founded the Jama'at-i Islami, a carefully selected group that would disseminate his ideas and implement his plan for an ideal Islamic state that was not confined within national boundaries. Mawdudi was initially opposed to the creation of Pakistan as a separate state, out of fear that the Muslims in India would lose their religious identity. Nevertheless, when the subcontinent was divided in 1947, he opted to move to Pakistan, becoming the decisive force that directed the new nation away from the ideal of a secular state toward that of an Islamic state and infusing his ideas into the constitution of Pakistan.

Khomeini came from a family of strict Shi'i religious leaders in Iran; his father was killed on the orders of Reza Shah (r. 1925–41). Having been educated in Islamic schools, and having written extensively on Islamic law and philosophy, Khomeini was proclaimed an ayatollah in the 1950s in Qum, where he received the more exalted title of a *marja'* (grand ayatollah) after the death of Ayatollah Boroujerdi in 1960. Because he spoke out against Muhammad Reza Shah (r. 1941–79) and against Westernization, he was exiled to Najaf in Iraq in 1964. Asked to leave Iraq in 1978, Khomeini settled in a suburb of Paris and agitated from there for the overthrow of the shah and the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran. After the ouster of the shah, he returned to his homeland on February 1, 1979, and was acclaimed as the religious leader of the revolution. Khomeini came to power with the help of a network of mosques, the support of the bazaar, and the lower ranks of the military, together with a wide spectrum of leftist, secularist, and conservative traditionalist thinkers.

A new constitution created the Islamic Republic of Iran with Khomeini as its religious leader and legal guardian (*wilāyat al-faqih*). More generally, a new theocratic political system gave the clerics ultimate control of the state. Although an elected president headed the executive branch, his authority was superseded by that of the legal guardian, who was supported by an advisory council of Shi'i jurists. Under Khomeini's direction, fundamentalist Muslim codes designed to suppress Western influence and restore shari'a were enacted. Women were required to wear the veil, alcohol and Western music were banned, and punishments prescribed by Islamic law were reinstated. Opposition figures were killed, imprisoned, or exiled. The fledgling republic managed to survive war with Iraq (1980–88) but was unable to export its Shi'i brand of fundamentalism to other Muslim countries.

Perhaps the thorniest issue for Islamic political thought in the 20th century was the establishment of Israel on native Arab lands in 1948. To make room for Ashkenazi Jewish refugees from Central Europe and Sephardic Jewish immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East after World War II, Palestinian Arabs were driven from their homes without receiving any remuneration and forced to live in refugee camps. Wars in 1967 and 1973 between Israel and its neighbors, as well as

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Israeli bombardments of Beirut in 1982 and cluster bombings of Southern Lebanon in July 2006, only deepened Arab resentment. Ongoing construction of new Israeli settlements on the high ground of Palestinian soil west of the Jordan River and dividing walls cutting through Palestinian villages further antagonized the Palestinians, who were promised a two-part quasi state—the Gaza Strip and the West Bank—without territorial, economic, or military sovereignty. While advocates for peace and reconciliation can be found within both liberal Israeli and Palestinian factions, the policies of far-right Israeli leaders have resisted reconciliation and reparation as dangerous weakness. American support of Israel created a deep dislike for American policy in the greater Middle East, which reverberated throughout the entire Muslim world.

In contemporary times, Pan-Islamism has remained a distant dream, secularism severed the bonds with a long and venerable Islamic heritage while fundamentalist movements forced Islam into a puritanical straitjacket, and militancy brought murder and destruction. Islam has not created a comprehensive system of political thought able to integrate the disparate elements informing its current stage of development. Emerging currents in political Islam are attempting to articulate ideologies and organize movements that aspire to inner purity, ethical strength, personal freedom, and collective dignity. Burdened with political and cultural fragmentation and labeled by the West as a violent religion, Islam thirsts for a new paradigm of political thought that will enable it to construct its future as a peaceful order in a pluralistic world.