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Islam in Modern South Asia: Continuity and Change since the Early Twentieth Century

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South Asia (postcolonial India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) is home to almost a third of the Muslim population worldwide. After Indonesia, Pakistan today is the second most populous Muslim country in the world. What are the directions in which some of the major Islamic trends have evolved in this region since the beginning of the twentieth century? Somewhat more specifically, how has the religious landscape changed in Pakistan since its inception, in 1947, as the first state in the modern world to have been established in the name of Islam? These are the questions I propose to briefly address here. I begin, however, with some illustrations of what has *not* changed very much in this landscape.

In mid-1960, with Ayub Khan (president, 1958-69) at the apex of his power, his Ministry of the Interior produced a candidly-titled memo outlining a “scheme for supervision and control of religious institutions and religious activity” (Government of Pakistan, 1960). The scheme was more or less equally divided between a rationale for such control and the means towards it. The rationale was that religion had come to be

regulated by the state from the time of the early `Abbasid caliphs (750-1258) and that the Mughals in India (1526-1857) were among the dynasties that had continued that practice with notable success. So did the semi-autonomous princely states of India, Hyderabad being an especially successful instance. As the authors of the memorandum saw it, Abul-A`la Mawdudi (1903-79), who would later emerge as one of the most influential of Islamist ideologues worldwide, was limited to being a religious intellectual while he still lived in his native Hyderabad. It was only after he had moved to Pakistan, and because of the new state's failure to regulate the religious arena, that people of his ilk had been able to harness religion to their political ambition. Put differently, British colonial India—as opposed even to the nominally independent princely states—was an anomaly, so far as the regulation of religion was concerned, and Pakistan was paying the price of having inherited that anomaly.

The rationale also had to do with the modernist vision of promoting, under government control, an Islam that was forward-looking, anchored in its core ideals, and concerned with matters of individual and public ethics rather than an empty ritualism. These would have been important goals for a modernizing regime at any other time, too. What made them especially pressing, from the viewpoint of the Ministry of the Interior, was its sense that the religious groups were coming together not just in their own right but potentially also in opposition to the government. No evidence was offered that these rival orientations were about to join hands against the government, but the perception that they were all disgruntled did raise that possibility.

What the ministry proposed on that occasion was the formation of a department of religious affairs at both the central and provincial levels. The central office would provide broad guidelines for the regulation of the religious sphere while the provincial and local administrations would register and oversee Islamic institutions, credential preachers, administer charitable endowments, and take charge both of Islamic research as well as of proselytism abroad. The idea, much favored by the traditionally-educated religious scholars, the `ulama, that such matters ought to be left to those representing particular doctrinal orientations was dismissed out of hand.

This was not the first time since independence, as the authors of the memorandum were aware, that such proposals had been taken up by the government. Nor would it be the last. The government made a serious effort to modify the structure and content of the education imparted at institutions of traditional Islamic learning, the madrasas, in 1962; there was a secret governmental initiative towards the end of the Ayub Khan era to tackle the “fundamental conflict” between the conservatives and the progressive forces; the Ministry of Religious Affairs was established by the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-77) in 1974; and more efforts to reform and regulate madrasas were to come under the military rulers General Zia al-Haq (1977-88) and General Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008). Such efforts have not been without results. Yet the results in question have not necessarily been what successive governments had intended. The government's undistinguished record of regulating Islam is one key area in which things have not changed very much over the course of the country's history.

Suspicion, recrimination, polemic and caricature in the relationship between the modernists—who have sought to adapt Islam, in the name of the religion’s pristine ideals, to the conditions of modernity—and the religious conservatives, too, have remained a constant. This goes back to well before the birth of Pakistan. The difficulties of that relationship did not prevent the modernists and the `ulama from joining hands at critical moments, be it during the Khilafat movement in the 1920s, launched at the end of World War I in support of the Ottoman Caliphate then teetering on the verge of dissolution and for the protection of the Muslim holy cities overseen by the Ottomans; or the movement for a separate Muslim homeland in the 1940s. Nor did such difficulties prevent the Islamists from lending their support to the modernizing governing elite and the military during Pakistan’s wars with India in 1965 and 1971, the Afghan guerrilla warfare against the Soviet occupation in the 1980s, and the insurgency in Indian Kashmir since the 1990s. Yet in all of those instances, and many others, the long history of mutual suspicion and, indeed, hostility has never receded very far into the background and it has resurfaced at every opportunity. The obstacles Pakistani governments have faced in regulating the religious sphere have had a direct correlation with this history.

In terms of its key signposts at least, that religious sphere also represents considerable stability. South Asia is a region that has seen enormous upheaval since the mid-19th century: subjection to colonial rule; the massive impact of the two world wars on society and economy; famines and other disasters; the partition of India, with its unprecedented levels of violence and dislocation; the break-up of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh, the erstwhile East Pakistan, in 1971; the impact of the Iranian revolution, of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and, in more recent years, of global terrorism. It is remarkable, however, that none of the Islamic orientations that existed or were in the process of emerging at the turn of the twentieth century had ceased to exist a hundred years later. Even the Ahmadis, anathematized by other Muslims for their belief that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908) was a prophet, survive, despite all the state-sanctioned and other persecution directed at them; and they have survived not just abroad, but in Pakistan itself. The staying power of these orientations is especially impressive when we remind ourselves that several of them are of relatively recent vintage. By the same token, the `ulama representing the various Sunni and Shi`i orientations have not merely continued to exist in society but have also, in many cases, extended the range of their activities and their reach in the public and religious spheres. This institutional and socio-political prominence of the `ulama undergirds a good deal of the continuity that is to be observed in Islam in South Asia from the mid-19th century onwards. And it is not to be taken for granted, since the `ulama have not fared equally well in all modern Muslim societies.

What then *has* changed in this landscape? Just as the advent of colonialism had begun to usher in major transformations in Muslim religious life from the mid-19th century, including the emergence of new doctrinal orientations, the end of colonial rule and, in particular, the establishment of a Muslim homeland has continued to shape Islam in ways both obvious and subtle. The birth of Pakistan was an opportunity for the modernists, who had led the movement for it, to put their ideals into practice—to not

only rid Islam of the sectarian squabbles that had rent its fabric and made Muslims weak and petty, but also to demonstrate to everyone that a properly understood Islam had much to contribute to the world at large. To Islamists like Mawdudi, the new state represented the imperative to proclaim the sovereignty of God in all its legal and political implications. To the `ulama, for their part, the birth of Pakistan was an occasion to assume leadership roles that had eluded them for much of Islam's history, to reorient people's belief and practice not just through time-tested activities at the grassroots and by way of teaching and writing, but also through state legislation and public policy. There is much that is new in the ensuing competition among rival trends, but also in their continuing engagement with one another, and it would be inconceivable without the framework provided by what professes to be an Islamic state.

Within it, though building on prior developments, the aforementioned fixtures of the religious landscape have continued to undergo changes of their own. The `ulama are again a case in point here. Where most religious scholars of the late 19th and the early 20th centuries had been entirely lacking in any formal exposure to Western learning (and even pioneering modernists like Sayyid Ahmad Khan [d. 1898] spoke no English), it is not unusual for leading figures among the contemporary `ulama to have had some schooling in the Western sciences. Indeed, some of their success in reaching broader audiences rests precisely on an ability to demonstrate a familiarity with modern forms of knowledge, including the English language. It is no exaggeration to say that the contemporary `ulama have done better at acquiring Western learning, and at benefiting from so doing, than the modernists have in developing a credible grounding in the Islamic tradition and in enhancing the religious credentials that go with any such accomplishment. Some contemporary Sufi groups are equally instructive in this regard. The Sufi masters of the Chishti Sabiri order in Pakistan have tended to have a modern, Western education—from the college established by Sayyid Ahmad Khan in Aligarh, and from Oxford, the Dehra Dun Military Academy in pre-independence India, and the Air Force Academy in Pakistan (Rozeenal 2007). Zulfiqar Ahmad (b. 1953), a prominent Naqshbandi Sufi who belongs to the Deobandi doctrinal orientation—one of the several orientations in South Asia's Sunni Islam to emerge during the colonial era—is an electrical engineer by training and vocation. If anything, the Sufis have gone farther in this regard than have the `ulama.

Given that the doctrinal orientations that dot the religious landscape of Pakistan are not abstract entities but are defined rather by the *people* who adhere to and represent them (cf. Bevir 1999), we should not be surprised to see that they, too, have undergone significant change while retaining the lineaments of a broad continuity. Some of the changes in question are internal to these orientations, whereas others relate to their position vis-à-vis one another. An example of the former is the space Sufism now occupies among the Deobandis. Though Sufi piety continues to have a strong appeal in many circles, it appears to inhabit a smaller area in contemporary Deobandi thought and practice than it did a hundred or even fifty years ago. As for the relative standing of particular religious orientations vis-à-vis one another, the most significant change has to do with the leading presence of the Deobandis in the public and religious spheres. This is a development that has long been in the making, but it has been consolidated in

Pakistan. More than others, the Deobandis have been able to combine scripturalism with a continuing fidelity to the Hanafi legal tradition dominant in South Asia, religio-political activism with Sufi piety, scholarly productivity with populism; and this has paid dividends in terms of a greater reach and influence in state and society. The Deobandis were also the first to develop the model of loosely-affiliated madrasas supported by smalltime local contributions, and their madrasas have been the greatest beneficiaries of it without yet forswearing more lucrative sources of patronage at home or abroad.

The hardening of boundaries between and among key doctrinal orientations represents another significant change over the course of the past hundred years. It is scarcely unexpected for some such delineation of boundaries to have taken place, of course, as an expression of the very survival and development of the orientations in question. What *is* worth remarking on is when and how its effects have come to be felt. Though difficult to demonstrate in the absence of largescale empirical studies, it seems to be far less common in Pakistan today for Sunnis of different doctrinal persuasions to participate in Shi`i rituals commemorating the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson and their imam, Husayn (d. 680), than it was a hundred years ago. Initiatives towards the development of a distinctly Sunni symbolism to compete with that of the Shi`a had already been witnessed in late colonial India, and they came to find new expressions at the hands of a virulently anti-Shi`i sectarian organization, the Sipah-i Sahaba, in the 1980s. The context in which this latter-day development has taken place is characterized not merely by a long history of sectarian squabbles or local politics, however, but also by events of a global significance, such as the Iranian revolution and Islamic revivalism more broadly. This new phase in the history of Shi`i-Sunni relations has been accompanied by sectarian violence on a scale that had little parallel in colonial India or in the first decades of Pakistan.

The most notable example of hardening attitudes relates, however, to the Ahmadis. Their exclusion from the fold of the Muslim community through a constitutional amendment in 1974 had built on earlier developments, though hardly in any linear manner. The modernist poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) had felt offended by the Ahmadi refusal to see other Muslims as Muslims and, on this and other grounds, he had urged the colonial government to declare the Ahmadis a separate religious community. Yet several of Iqbal's contemporaries had not viewed the Ahmadis as non-Muslim. The first foreign minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, was an Ahmadi. It was demands for his removal from office that had helped galvanize a widespread anti-Ahmadi agitation in the Punjab province in 1953. But even that agitation did not render members of his community outcastes during the following two decades. Things would look decidedly different by the fall of 1974 and different still a decade later, when it was made a criminal offense for the Ahmadis to pass off as Muslims.

On the face of it, the government had acted very differently in 1953—when it had refused to give in to the anti-Ahmadi demands and the agitation had been firmly put down by the military—from how it responded in 1974, when it had capitulated to calls that the Ahmadis be declared non-Muslims. What the two occasions shared, however,

was the government's unwillingness or inability to offer a reasoned defense of its position. In more recent years, that inability has continued to haunt it in its dealings with radical Islamist groups, among others.

In Pakistan's early decades, the modernizing governing elite did have some promising intellectuals to not only explain and bolster its positions but also to help cultivate something of a middle ground between the modernists and the conservatives. The case of one such figure from among the `ulama is worth considering here. A native of the Punjab, Hanif Nadwi (d. 1978) was educated at the Nadwat al-`Ulama in Lucknow, an institution originating in a late nineteenth-century initiative towards better relations within the ranks of the `ulama and between them and the modernists. Nadwi was a Salafi, a doctrinal orientation characterized by adherence to what are deemed to be the unalloyed beliefs and practices of Islam's first generations. Over the course of a prolific career, he published a number of books on the reported teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (*hadith*) and on the Qur'an, besides works on Islamic law and studies on some major figures of pre-modern Islam. Though his scholarly career had begun well before the partition of the Indian subcontinent, a good deal of his published work belongs to his decades-long association with a modernist institution, the Institute of Islamic Culture, in Lahore. He had joined that organization shortly after its inception in 1951. It gave him financial security and a direction to his writings. Late in his life, he also served as a member of the Council of Islamic Ideology, a constitutionally-mandated body to advise the government and the parliament on matters of legislation and public policy inasmuch as they bore on Islam.

Books published under the auspices of the institute were typically addressed to an audience schooled in modern educational institutions. They were meant to educate such readers in Islam while buttressing particular modernist positions. But they were also intended to appeal to the `ulama. Not all those who had studied in madrasas were learned scholars, of course, which meant that they, too, could be educated further in Islamic matters. There may have been the hope that even distinguished traditionalists would join in a conversation that the institute was trying to sponsor through its own traditionally-educated scholars. A good example of a work that sought to address these varied audiences is Nadwi's "Problem of *Ijtihad*," viz. the juristic mechanism for the derivation of legal rulings from the Islamic foundational texts in order to address new legal problems (Nadwi 1952).

The book was much broader in scope than its title suggested. Echoing the influential eighteenth century Indian mystic and legal scholar Shah Wali Allah (d. 1762), Nadwi argued that Islamic prescriptions were not merely a matter of mindlessly obeying God but were based rather on the pursuit of human interests, and that those interests were discernible through human reason. This was an argument against literalist readings of the sacred law but also, by the same token, for the adaptation of that law to changing circumstances and needs. Not everything in the sacred law was amenable to change, and Nadwi distinguished, as others had before him, between divinely mandated ritual practices, which must remain immutable, and laws governing human interaction, which were subject to modification in changing circumstances. In the latter case, particular

rulings could be set aside in light of the general principles embedded in the foundational texts, he said, even when the rulings in question were specifically present in those texts. For this would be a case not of ignoring the teachings of the foundational texts in favor of something else, but rather of reinterpreting some legal rulings in those texts with reference to others of a broader import. This is precisely where *ijtihad* came into play, which he understood in the following terms:

Given that Islam is a sagacious system of thought and practice, there are subtle strengths in the form of [legal] rationales and [human] benefits that are built into its structure. Delicate meanings and interconnections lie behind its rulings; and a vibrant and comprehensive philosophy underlies its laws. A *mujtahid* [a practitioner of *ijtihad*] is one whose gaze is fixed on the totality of its intellectual system, one who is able to discern the strengths that are concealed within it, one who discovers the meaning and connections that are hidden yet present in it.... He is then able to find the solution to new problems in light of the rationales behind the rulings, their meaning and their interconnections, and to apply the results to new circumstances (Nadwi 1952, 109-10).

That Islam was a “complete religion” meant only, Hanif Nadwi said, that “it provides guidance on all facets of life, not that it takes society itself to be static” (Nadwi 1952, 117). The task of Islam was to provide guidance to its adherents as they moved through changing times, and the *mujtahid* was at the forefront of those who did so. The Prophet himself was a *mujtahid*, Nadwi said, and he made clear that more was at stake in this assertion than to elevate the later *mujtahids*’ pedigree and the significance of their intellectual endeavor. What it meant was that the Prophet was not merely the deliverer of the divine message but also its interpreter, one continuously engaged in applying it to particular circumstances and deriving broad principles from it. Not to see the Prophet as actively engaged with the divine message in some such way was, Nadwi said, to do a disservice to his work. A skilled physician was one, he said, who did not merely apply received knowledge to the ailments he treated; rather, he possessed an ability and an understanding that went beyond the sum of his acquired knowledge. The same was true of a musician or an architect. But if we were willing to take this view for such practices, he rhetorically asked, “why should we take a mechanical view of prophethood, viz., that ... the prophet only remembers the text of the Qur’an and is appointed to disseminate it rather than also reflecting upon it and undertaking *ijtihad* in its light” (Nadwi 1952, 128-9).

This position fell well short of other formulations, for instance, that of the noted Pakistani modernist and sometime professor of Islamic thought at the University of Chicago, Fazlur Rahman (d. 1988). As Rahman put it in a well-known book, *Islam*, first published in 1966, “orthodoxy (indeed, all medieval thought) lacked the necessary intellectual tools to combine in its formulation of the dogma the otherness and verbal character of the Revelation on the one hand, and its intimate connection with the work and the religious personality of the Prophet on the other, i.e. it lacked the intellectual capacity to say both that the Qur’an is entirely the Word of God and, in an ordinary sense, also entirely the word of Muhammad” (Rahman 1979, 31). Even so, Nadwi’s understanding of the Prophet’s role in the making of revelation went considerably beyond that of the

traditionalists. In seeing some of the Prophet's teachings as his *ijtihad*-based extrapolations from revelation, Nadwi left the distinct impression that they were not necessarily more binding on succeeding generations than was the *ijtihad* of a distinguished scholar. Such views had much to offer towards facilitating modernist initiatives in the area of social and legal reform.

In a significant contrast with some other Muslim countries, notably Indonesia (Hefner 2000; Feener 2007), few modernist institutions were established in Pakistan's early (or, for that matter, later) decades with the aim of producing Islamic scholarship or of educating people in new understandings of Islam. There was a Department of Islamiyat (Islamic Studies) that existed in the early years under the auspices of the Punjab Government's Directorate of Public Relations. But given that it functioned essentially as part of the official bureaucracy, the department had little space within which to formulate credible viewpoints and it was always subject to the day-to-day interests of the government. The Islamic Research Institute and the Council of Islamic Ideology, both mandated by the state's constitution, were high profile bodies but they, too, were, and remain, instruments of government policy rather than sites of modernist thought with any measure of independence. While he was its director during the 1960s, Fazlur Rahman had brought international scholarly attention to the Islamic Research Institute, but that had owed largely to his own stature rather than to any particular governmental investment in it. The Institute of Islamic Culture in Lahore, where the aforementioned Nadwi spent several decades of his life, had initially shown greater promise, but it too now stands as a shadow of its earlier self. None of these, moreover, was designed as teaching institutions. Unlike the traditionalist *ʿulama*, the likes of Nadwi produced no successors. Fazlur Rahman, the towering figure of the 1960s and the most gifted modernist intellectual to have been associated with *any* Pakistani government, was no bridge-builder. And though he had considerable influence on intellectual trends in Turkey and Indonesia, his legacy in Pakistan itself was small. Colleges and universities would seem to have been the most promising sites for modernist initiatives to put down roots and find distinctive expressions. But the longstanding weakness of public education, including higher education, made that difficult. Further, in an apparent paradox for a state that has always foregrounded its Islamic commitments, the study of Islam has tended to be seen at universities as suited only to the least gifted. Perhaps the greatest beneficiaries of Islamic Studies in the university system are the graduates of madrasas, who have been able to add degrees from Westernized institutions to their credentials as *ʿulama*. This has enabled them to break down some of the longstanding barriers between the products of the college and the madrasa and to reach broader audiences. But it has done little for the modernists.

What all this amounts to is, of course, a picture of the decline of Islamic modernism in Pakistan. The sort of self-confidence that Liaquat Ali Khan (d. 1951), Pakistan's first prime minister, had exuded in the early years by way of envisioning Pakistan as a "laboratory" for progressive Islamic ideals in the service of all humankind has had few parallels in more recent years. It has little in common, for instance, with General Pervez Musharraf's elusive desire to chart a path of "enlightened moderation" between Islamist radicalism and the failings of particular policies adopted by Western powers (Musharraf

2004). A related contrast between Pakistan's first decades and today has to do with the modernist elite's moral authority. The authority that Jinnah and Liaquat `Ali Khan had enjoyed did not outlive them. This was not only because subsequent members of the modernizing elite could not point to the same kind of accomplishments as could the founding fathers or because they often lacked political legitimacy. It also had to do with their failure to put in much effort into providing credible alternatives to the positions espoused by the `ulama and the Islamists. For their part, the latter have poured great energy into making *their* case. Mawdudi's extensive writings made him the most influential Islamist ideologue in 20th century South Asia and one of the most visible of them in the wider Muslim world. Even some of those with a history of hostility towards him have drawn approvingly on his commentary on the Qur'an. The Islamists and the `ulama have also been adept at actively continuing to weaken the moral authority of the modernists, and they have done this while benefiting from the patronage of the governing elite.

Though a good deal of the responsibility for the enervation of modernism rests with the Pakistani governing elite and their intellectual associates, religio-political trends in the wider Muslim world have not been friendly to modernism either. The defeat of the Arab states in the 1967 war with Israel was a significant contributor to the declining appeal of secular Arab nationalism and the growing prominence of Islamist trends in the Middle East and elsewhere. More or less in tandem with it, the vast financial resources that had begun to become available to Middle Eastern petroleum-exporting countries enabled them to invest in religious causes as never before. Under Saudi patronage, this meant the growth of Salafi mosques and schools—of a very different orientation within Salafism than that represented by a Hanif Nadwi. The beneficiaries were not all Salafis, though they tended to be conservative in social and religious terms. Mawdudi, who was not a Salafi, had advised the Saudi government on plans for the establishment of the Islamic University of Medina, he was the first recipient of the Faisal Prize for services to Islam (instituted by the Saudi government in memory of King Faisal, r. 1964-75), and some of his followers would later have prominent positions at the Saudi-supported International Islamic University in Islamabad. The prospects of Saudi patronage had also helped reorient the government of Zulfikar Bhutto away from the harder edges of its leftist leanings. The unprecedented opportunities that the oil wealth had created in the Middle East for labor from countries like Pakistan fostered as well the growth of a petite bourgeoisie that would become the bulwark of conservative religious change in the 1980s. By the beginning of that decade, the impact of the Islamic revolution in Iran and of mobilization for the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan had begun to have ripple effects of their own across the Muslim world. This was no longer a time when scholars and policy analysts could confidently predict the sweeping march of westernization and secularization.

It was not inevitable that such transregional trends should strengthen anti-modernist currents in Pakistan, but they did, especially because the ground had long been prepared for them within the country. Though the Bhutto regime would have probably capitulated any way to the anti-Ahmadi agitation of 1974, it did matter that a Saudi-sponsored pan-Islamic organization, the Muslim World League, had taken the lead in

declaring the Ahmadis non-Muslim. Two other illustrations are also in order here. Fazlur Rahman had tried in the 1960s to rethink the *hudud*—stringent punishments sanctioned by the Qur’an—by arguing that it is not the content and the authority of *hudud* laws that should be seen as invariant, but rather their goal of deterring people from committing certain crimes and of reforming the criminals (Rahman 1965). Such rethinking was a significantly more arduous exercise in the Pakistan of the 1980s not only because it was Zia al-Haqq rather than Ayub Khan who was in power but also because revolutionary Iran was flaunting its commitment to Qur’anic law next door. The winds, internationally, were not blowing in the direction of explaining away the *hudud*, but rather of implementing them. Islamization could also be lucrative, and not just in terms of a regime’s image. Though Islamists and the `ulama have long called for the elimination of financial interest from the economy, it was more tempting for a government to heed such demands, even if superficially, at a time when petroleum-rich Muslim countries were helping to underwrite Islamic banking. In this instance, too, the 1980s and the 1990s were not propitious decades for Islamic arguments in favor of financial interest—arguments Fazlur Rahman had made with much learning in the 1960s. In 2002, General Pervez Musharraf did manage to have an impending ban on interest-based transactions overturned by a stacked Shari`at Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court, but the rushed decision was little more than the affirmation of a military ruler’s wishes. There was barely a mention of Rahman’s work by *any* side on that occasion (Zaman 2008).

By the 1980s and the 1990s, the `ulama and the Islamists had come to substantially encroach upon the terrain inhabited by Islamic modernism in colonial India and in the first decades of Pakistan. This is among the most significant contrasts between the religious landscape of Pakistan’s first decades and the present. However, though tempting to see its decline as the passing of an era, Islamic modernism is not necessarily a thing only of the past. The Pakistani governing elite retain their modernist impulses. And modernism lives on, among other things, in the impact it has had on rival trends over the course of the past hundred years. In not a few cases, that impact has, ironically, strengthened those trends vis-à-vis modernism. For its part, modernism’s control of or proximity to the levers of political power has not required a concomitant investment in the bolstering of its intellectual defenses. This need not have been the outcome, of course, and it might yet be different as a result of decisions still to be made. A change in modernist intellectual fortunes would depend, however, upon serious, not wishful, thinking about Islam and on engaging with it as something more than as a tool of political legitimation. It would also depend upon the social, economic, and political conditions in which such thinking takes place.

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