Pre Modern Islam

The Muslims of today face unprecedented challenges in the following areas: Women's issues, minorities, secularism and democracy, and law. These issues were insignificant a century ago, but have now become the most important issues for Muslims all over. In order to understand how these changes took place we study pre modern Islam. And in order to understand the thinking of major thinker on these issues we study Islam and Modernity. This study covers these basic areas:

- Local Conditions: A study of the specific conditions out of which particular individuals and groups emerged.
- The Modern: A study of the relationship of the various groups to modern modern world history and its entry into the Islamic world through colonialism.
- The Islamic Continuum: The nature of Islam and the revivalist impetus native to it.

Four basic patterns to changes emerged: a) Adaptationism: this was largely state sponsored willingness to make adjustments to changes in a pragmatic manner, such as the early caliphs; absorption of Greek philosophy, and Persian political structures; syncretic Sufism; and adoption of modern structures such as democracy. Adaptationism became methodology of modernists and secularists B) Conservatism: a mistrust of innovation; Islamising the practices of the adaptationists. C)

Fundamentalist: a rigorous adherence to the specific and general rules of the faith and a critique of existing conditions. It was at the heart of the resistance to colonialism, but political activism also disturbed social stability, and was often opposed by the conservatives led by the `ulama.

D) Individualism: legal structures and social functions subordinated to individual spirituality. In secular states this style became popular

The 18th Century

Three major areas of inquiry will be examined here:

a-Changes in the Politics and the Economics of the Islamic world

16th century we had great sultanate empires: Moghul, Safawi, and Ottoman. By 18th century they began crumbling because of industrial revolution, change in means of transportation, importation of products, deficits in balance of payments, increased debt to European powers, granting o f commercial and religious concessions (capitulations), changes in significance of areas within Islamic world, changes in social elite.

b-Sufism and Neo-Sufism

Major changes took place in Sufi theology and in the structure of the tariqas. Previously, world negating pantheism of Ibn `Arabi was reigning theology: God was the only reality, and man's duty is to become absorbed in divine reality. Scholars modified these ideas, others, like the Wahhabis rejected it outright. Tariqas existed for centuries: Safawi

empire was break away from one, Murabitun and Muwahhidun in North Africa, and Naqshbandiyya as a reaction to Akbar. Latter became prototype for neo-Sufism, and positive attitude to society, and political and socio-moral issues.

Important merger between hadith scholars and sufism eg., Shah Wali Allah, and Shah Abdul Haqq

Provided leadership of Revivalist movement. But not much emphasis on changing political scene—creeping menace of colonialism was not recognized.

Naqshbandiyya spread from India to eastern middle east; Sirhindi's disciples, Murad al-Bukhari setttled in Damascus and spread his ideas with his wealth and influence, and Taj Zakariyya settled in Mecca.

In Egypt the influence of the Azhar was pervasive. Ulama mediated conflicts of the Mamluk rulers; provided stability. Scholars from all over the Islamic world traveled to Cairo and studied hadith and studied under Zabiti, student of Wali Allah, and Mustafa al-Bakri, sheikh of the Khalwatiyya tariqa

North African influence on Islamic lands: Stressed union with the Prophet; in time this was replaced by neo-sufism's activism.

Mecca and Medina and the Pilgrim scholars: Holy cities always magnet for scholars and students. Twelve of the most prominent scholars in the Haramayn were influential in the reform movements of the 18th

century. Muhammad b. `Abd al-Wahhab was a student of one of them, al-Sindhi, but he ultimately rejected sufism. Reasserted tauhid and the equality of all men with equal access to the sources and to Allah.

The 19th Century

The Influence of the West on Islam

For the first time in its history Islam had to deal with sustained domination; for the first time, Muslims had little control of their own destiny, their own society, and their own legal system. European countries, thanks to the industrial revolution, were able to colonize nations much larger than themselves. From that period onwards the history of Islam has been a relentless struggle to maintain its traditions.

Muslims faced two struggles: ongoing socio-moral struggle, begun in the 18th century against internal corruption, and the latest struggle against colonialism and the structures of colonialist powers. Three reactions emerged: the adaptationist westernizers, militant reactionism, and a continuation of the 18th century reformists.

Adaptationist Westernizers

Mehmet Ali and Muhmud ii: Examples of leaders of the old systems who tried to install western style reform in society. More concerned about strengthening state structures than Islamic structures. In Ottoman empire Mahmud dismantled Janissaries, this weakened `ulama, and gave Mahmud greater influence over society, and over the auqaf

endowments. This led to Tanzimat reforms: eg., the Mejella, a combination of Islamic and western structures, was created under the leadership of an `alim, Cevdet Pasha. But latter shunned by the other `ulama.

Young Ottomans, strongly influenced by western liberalism, emerged to criticize slow pace of Tanzimat reforms.

Another development was the emergence an Islamic reaction, which claimed that the Ottoman sultan was the leader of the Islamic world, i.e., he was the caliph. Abdul Hamid ii, was the first to make this claim.

There was also a new defense of Islam intellectually, led by Jamal al-Din Afghani.

In Egypt we had Mehmet Ali, Albanian general in Ottoman army who took control of Egypt after Napoleonic invasion. Introduced western style reforms in economy and political life of Egypt. His successors led extravagant life and this led to foreign control. Ahmad `Urabi led a revolt and this allowed British to take control under Lord Cromer. Afghani spent 8 years in Egypt and influenced many Azhar graduates including Muhammad `Abduh, who worked for the reformulation of Islamic thought and created Salafiyya movement.

Militancy

In countries such as Algeria, India, and Russia there was no Adaptationism because direct colonial rule was established, and efforts to adapt Muslim society to western ideas and structures did not take place. Muslims had to confront European control militarily. This led to the emergence of the revivalist movements.

Revivalism Without Modernism or Militancy

In many areas local social conditions led to revivalist activism without westernizing reforms; Saudi Arabia is best example of this. Ibn Abdul Wahhab provided ideology, Muhammad b. Saud provided military power. Expanded from Najd to Hajaz and had brief control, but then crushed by Mehmet Ali and the Ottomans, who regained control. In 1909 Abdul Aziz led army that was assisted by British and defeated Sharif Hussain of the Hijaz and established kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Twentieth Century Islam

Throughout Islamic history the binding unit was the Umma, the transnational, transethnic, and transracial social and political adhesive of Islam. Even when People lived in different empires they still belonged psychologically to the umma.

But in 20th century two developments have sorely tried this concept: a-the evolution of nationalism, and b-the emergence of the state as the prime paternalistic influence on society. This meant that Islam was now subordinated to the state. This phenomenon began in Turkey and Egypt

when the communities language and culture was prioritized over the religious bonds. This meant for instance that the primary bond in Mustapha Kamil's Egypt would be a shared language uniting Muslims to Copts and not iman uniting Egyptian Muslim to Nigerian Muslim.

The State had an even stronger influence. It was initially devised by the colonialists to endorse balance-of-power compromises. They cut across ethnic lines (Kurds in Iran, Iraq and Turkey) linguistic lines (Punjabis in Pakistan and India), and cultural lines. States are as resilient as weeds; not one state has disappeared after its inception; this notwithstanding efforts by the Egyptians and the Syrians or Gaddafi's merger of Libya with Egypt.

Efforts were made to preserve Khilafa: after WWI and defeat of Ottoman empire Mustafa Kamal saved Turkey from incorporation into Greece, and thus established modern state of Turkey. In 1922 office of sultan was abolished, and in 1924 the caliphate was abolished. In India Khilafat movement was established in 1919 to restore khilafat but failed.

State was established in 3 phases: 1-struggle for independence: In most countries, the conservative `ulama or the sufi leaders were unable to obtain independence, It was the adaptationist nationalists that were in the forefront of the struggle. 2-post independence: what emerged was a state rather than a unit of the umma. Nationalism was promoted over Islam, and Islamic law was increasingly marginalized. 3- overthrow of founding

fathers by groups seeking greater secularism and less Islam such as Mustafa Kemal an Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia. Another manifestation was socialism, and the role of Islam was to endorse this new way of doing things; eg., include Sekou Toure of Guinea, Nasser of Egypt, Ben Bella of Algeria.

The Islamic Reaction:

- Faisal and the Islamic Conference: In contrast to the secularism of the Turks Saudi Arabia islamised its law and society after independence, but it remained a bit player until the discovery of oil and the leadership of Faisal. In 1962 he introduced the 10 point plan which included an advisory role for the `ulama and thus assured the country a conservative tenor. In 1963 he established the closest structure to the umma concept, the Islamic Conference.
- The Ikhwan: Where European ideas and imperialism were strongest fundamentalist organizations like the Jamat-e-Islami in Pakistan and the al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun in Egypt. They grew out of the challenge of modernizing secularism. Hassan al-Banna (1909-1949), a schoolteacher, believed that weak Islamic society can be cured only by return to sources, the Qur'an and the Sunna. Islam is a way of life, that regulates all aspects of human conduct. Ikhwan was heir to ideas of Afghani, Abduh, Rida etc. Role of Ikhwan: "a new soul in the heart of this nation to give it life by means of the Qur'an . . .a

light that destroys the darkness of materialism. Organized study groups in Ismailia, followed by schools. Clinics and cultural organizations. Became increasingly drawn into politics by lack of social services and bu Palestinian problem. After WWII it emerged as a revolutionary force with ties with the young officers led by Nasser. Banna murdered in 1949. In 1954 assassination attempt on Nasser; Ikhwan suppressed. After 1954 Ikhwan went underground. In 1965, alleged plot to overthrow regime announced; Qutb hanged.Ikhwan satellites emerged in Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, etc.

- The Jamat-e-Islami: Modern educated Muslim of India provided leadership. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan, founder of Aligarh, leading exponent of reform. Greatest proponent of separate Muslim identity was Muhamad Iqbal, whose ideas gave rise to Muslim league and then to Pakistan

- The `Ulama: showed great flexibility, especially the Azhar in Egypt. They were the custodians of tradition. Abduh most prominent among them. Worked towards reforming curriculum at the Azhar; strongly resisted at first, but between WWI and WWII it gained wide acceptance. Curriculum expanded to include modern subjects. Azhar rubber stamped socialism of govt and lost credibility.

- The Indian `Ulama were ultra conservative in their attitude to reform. They had credibility because they fought against colonialism and did not endorse the state and its policies.