

## The Renewal of Islamic Thought in the Middle East and South Asia and Its Influence on the Independence of Islamic Countries

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Received: 5 March 2025

Revised: 20 April 2025

Accepted: 25 April 2025

Published: 5 May 2025

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### Abstract

The reform of Islamic thought in the Middle East and South Asia emerged as a response to colonialism and the challenges of modernity. Figures such as Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, Hassan Al-Banna, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Abul A'la Maududi, Ali Shariati, and Muhammad Ali Pasha initiated religious reforms that significantly influenced the struggle for independence in the Islamic world. However, comparative studies on their contributions to independence movements in these two regions remain limited. This study aims to analyze the ideas of key Islamic reformers and examine their relevance in addressing contemporary challenges. Using a qualitative historical approach, this research explores how these reformers integrated Islamic teachings with modern advancements in education, governance, and law to resist colonialism. The findings show that Islamic reformers played a crucial role in shaping nationalist movements, reviving Islamic identity, and supporting the establishment of independent Muslim nations. Their advocacy for education, *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), and political unity formed the foundation of anti-colonial resistance. In conclusion, Islamic thought reform not only contributed to national independence but also continues to influence contemporary Islamic governance and social movements. This study offers valuable insights into the dynamic relationship between Islam, modernization, and political independence, and provides a basis for further research on the relevance of Islamic reformist thought in the modern era.

**Keywords:** Islamic Thought Renewal, Independence Movements, Islamic Reformism, Islamic Modernization, Pan-Islamism

### Abstrak

Pembaruan pemikiran Islam di Timur Tengah dan Asia Selatan muncul sebagai respons terhadap kolonialisme dan tantangan modernitas. Tokoh-tokoh seperti Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Rasyid Rida, Hassan Al-Banna, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Abul A'la Maududi, Ali Shariati, dan Muhammad Ali Pasha menggagas reformasi keagamaan yang berpengaruh besar terhadap perjuangan kemerdekaan di dunia Islam. Namun, kajian komparatif mengenai kontribusi mereka terhadap gerakan kemerdekaan di kedua kawasan tersebut masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis gagasan para pembaru Islam dan menelaah relevansinya dalam menghadapi tantangan kontemporer. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan sejarah kualitatif, studi ini menelusuri bagaimana para pembaru mengintegrasikan ajaran Islam dengan kemajuan modern dalam bidang pendidikan, pemerintahan, dan hukum untuk melawan kolonialisme. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para pembaru memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk gerakan nasionalis, menumbuhkan

### How to Cite this Article

Hadziq, Muhammad Fadhil, and Narul Hasyim Muzadi. "The Renewal of Islamic Thought in the Middle East and South Asia and Its Influence on the Independence of Islamic Countries." *Adabuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran* 4, no. 2 (2025): 86–109. <https://doi.org/10.38073/adabuna.v4i2.2582>.

kembali identitas Islam, serta mendorong pendirian negara-negara Muslim yang merdeka. Advokasi mereka terhadap pendidikan, ijtihad (penalaran independen), dan persatuan politik menjadi fondasi utama dalam perlawanan terhadap penjajahan. Kesimpulannya, pembaruan pemikiran Islam tidak hanya memberikan kontribusi terhadap kemerdekaan nasional, tetapi juga tetap relevan dalam dinamika pemerintahan dan gerakan sosial Islam kontemporer. Studi ini memberikan wawasan penting mengenai hubungan antara Islam, modernisasi, dan kemerdekaan politik, serta membuka ruang bagi penelitian lanjutan di era modern.

**Kata Kunci:** Pembaruan Pemikiran Islam, Gerakan Kemerdekaan, Reformisme Islam, Modernisasi Islam, Pan-Islamisme.

## Introduction

The renewal of Islamic thought in the Middle East and South Asia is one of the most significant phenomena in the history of modern Islamic intellectualism. Along with the increasing interaction of the Islamic world with Western civilization due to colonialism, trade, and the development of science, an awareness emerged among Muslim thinkers that the Muslim community needed to reform its religious understanding to remain relevant to the challenges of the time. This phenomenon grew stronger amidst the colonialism that swept the Islamic world in the 19th and 20th centuries, which threatened political sovereignty and influenced the mindset of Muslims.<sup>1</sup>

Islamic thinkers in the Middle East and South Asia responded to this situation by initiating reforms in various aspects, including education, governance, and methods of religious thought. This thought became the foundation for the Islamic nationalism movement that fought for independence from Western colonization. However, to this day, there are still differences of opinion regarding the extent to which these renewal thoughts genuinely contributed to the independence of Muslim nations.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, this study aims to analyze the thoughts of Islamic reformers and their impact on the struggle for independence in the Middle East and South Asia.

This research has several main objectives. First, to analyze the concept of the renewal of Islamic thought developed by figures in the Middle East and South Asia. Second, to examine how these renewal ideas influenced the struggle for independence of Muslim nations. Third, to identify the relevance of Islamic renewal thought to the modern challenges currently faced by the Islamic world. In terms of benefits, this research is expected to provide an academic contribution to the study of the history of Islamic thought and independence movements. Practically, this research can provide an understanding for the Muslim community on how the renewal of Islamic thought can be applied in a contemporary context. Furthermore, this study can also serve as a reference for researchers, academics, and policymakers in understanding the relationship between Islamic thought and political dynamics in the Muslim world.

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<sup>1</sup> Fateh Saeidi and Davoud Osmanzadeh, "Colonial Sovereignty and Religious Necropolitics: The Sacred Victimization of Infidel Kurds in the Middle East," *Ethnicities* 25, no. 5 (October 2024): 655–78, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687968241287204>.

<sup>2</sup> Jasmine K. Gani, "Anti-Colonial Connectivity between Islamicate Movements in the Middle East and South Asia: The Muslim Brotherhood and Jamati Islam," *Postcolonial Studies* 26, no. 1 (January 2023): 55–76, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2023.2127660>.

This research is based on the theory of Islamic modernization developed by Muslim reformers such as Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida. Islamic modernization seeks to integrate Islamic teachings with the progress of modern science and politics. Additionally, the theory of Pan-Islamism proposed by Al-Afghani also serves as a main foundation for understanding the efforts to unify the Islamic world as a strategy of resistance against colonialism. In the South Asian context, the thoughts of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Abul A'la Maududi also contributed to shaping ideas about the relationship between Islam and the state. The theory of Islamic nationalism is also an important approach in this research, as it emphasizes that Islamic identity can be the basis for the struggle for independence of Muslim nations.<sup>3</sup>

Several studies relevant to this research include those conducted by Mulia Harahap, who discusses the concept of the renewal of Islamic thought in the context of the resurgence of the Muslim community in the Middle East. In his research, he highlights how the idea of renewal became a response to the decline of the Muslim community and the challenges of colonialism.<sup>4</sup> Gojali examines Rashid Rida's role in the reform of Islamic education and socio-political modernization in the Arab world, emphasizing Rida's contribution to transforming Islamic thought to be more adaptive to the developments of the time.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Mappiaswan analyzes the influence of Islamic reformist thought on the nationalism movement in South Asia and asserts that reformist ideas had a major influence in awakening the political consciousness and national spirit of Muslims.<sup>6</sup>

Another study was conducted by M. Ridwan Lubis, who emphasizes that the renewal of Islamic thought is a historical necessity that has been ongoing since the time of the Prophet. According to him, this renewal functions to maintain the relevance of Islamic teachings to the dynamics of space and time.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Istadiyantha examines the influence of reformist thought from the Middle East, such as Al-Ikhwan and Wahhabism, on political Islamic movements in Indonesia, particularly in Yogyakarta and Surakarta. His research shows that reformist thought not only had an impact in the Arab world but also permeated into the socio-political Islamic movements in Southeast Asia.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, Nirwan Hamid highlights the role of Islamic reformist figures in India such as Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Shah Waliullah, who succeeded in awakening the Muslim community's awareness of the importance of education, *ijtihad*, and the integration of Islamic values with local culture. The renewal of Islamic thought in South Asia became an important part of the

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Hilman Hirzi, "Transformation of Islamic Nationalism into Pancasila Nationalism: Dynamics of Islamic Unity Nationalist Thought," *International Journal of Islamic Social Studies* 3, no. 1 (May 2025): 81–90, <https://doi.org/10.62039/ijiss.v3i1.64>; Şener Aktürk, "One Nation under Allah? Islamic Multiculturalism, Muslim Nationalism and Turkey's Reforms for Kurds, Alevis, and Non-Muslims," *Turkish Studies* 19, no. 4 (August 2018): 523–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2018.1434775>.

<sup>4</sup> Sumper Mulia Harahap, *Khilafah Konstitusional Dalam Pemikiran Politik Islam Rasyid Ridha*, 2014, 1–25.

<sup>5</sup> M. Imam Gojali, Imron Fauzi, and Khotibul Umam, "Modernism In Islamic Education In Tafsir Al-Manār: An Epistemological Review Of Muhammad Abduh And Muhammad Rashid Ridha," *LINGUA: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya* 21, no. 1 (April 2024): 91–105, <https://doi.org/10.30957/lingua.v21i1.921>.

<sup>6</sup> Jubair Situmoraang, *Pembaharuan Pemikiran Rasyid Ridha Di Berbagai Bidang (Pendidikan, Agama, Dan Politik)* (Malang: Literasi Nusantara Abadi, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> M. Ridwan Lubis, "Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam : Dasar, Tujuan, Dan Masa Depan," *Ilmu Ushuluddin* 5, no. 2 (20116): 223–46.

<sup>8</sup> Istadiyantha, "Pengaruh Pemikiran Ulama Timur Tengah Terhadap Gerakan Islam Politik Di Yogyakarta Dan Surakarta," *Center of Middle Eastern Studies (CMES): Jurnal Studi Timur Tengah* 6, no. 1 (2013): 65–76.

resistance against colonialism and the construction of national identity.<sup>9</sup> Although a number of studies have discussed the renewal of Islamic thought and its influence on Muslim societies, not many studies have specifically connected Islamic reformist thought with the struggle for independence in the Middle East and South Asia comparatively. Therefore, this research is present to fill this gap by analyzing the contribution of reformist thinkers to the independence process of Muslim nations and the relevance of their thought in facing the challenges of modernity and globalization today.

## **Method**

This research employs a qualitative approach using historical and comparative analysis methods. This approach is adopted in line with Gunn's view that historical research is an interpretive practice that seeks not merely to reconstruct past events, but to analyze the development of ideas within their specific social, political, and intellectual contexts. Historical analysis is utilized to trace the emergence and evolution of Islamic reformist thought in the Middle East and South Asia, particularly in relation to colonial domination, socio-political transformations, and internal challenges faced by Muslim societies. Meanwhile, comparative analysis is applied to examine similarities and differences in how reformist ideas influenced independence movements and intellectual discourses across both regions, allowing for a contextual and transregional understanding of Islamic renewal as a historically situated and dynamic process.<sup>10</sup>

The subject of this research includes the thought of Islamic reformist figures who played a role in the renewal movement in the Middle East and South Asia, such as Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and Abul A'la Maududi. Furthermore, this research also analyzes various historical documents, literature, and previous studies that discuss the Islamic reform movement and its connection to the struggle for independence in both regions.

This research is conducted through the following stages: (1) Literature Study: Collection of various relevant primary and secondary sources, such as books, academic journals, and historical documents that discuss Islamic reformist thought and the struggle for independence. (2) Historical Analysis: Tracing the development of Islamic renewal ideas in the context of colonialism and the struggle for independence. (3) Comparative Analysis: Comparing Islamic reformist thought in the Middle East and South Asia and its influence on the struggle for independence. (4) Synthesis of Findings: Interpreting the data and drawing conclusions regarding the relationship between Islamic reformist thought and socio-political dynamics in the Muslim world.<sup>11</sup>

This research uses materials in the form of historical documents, classical Islamic texts, academic journals, and various previous studies discussing modern Islamic thought and the independence movement. The instruments used in this research are text analysis and

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<sup>9</sup> Nirwan Hamid, "Pembaharuan Islam Di India," *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7 (2016): 63–83.

<sup>10</sup> Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire, *Research Methods for History*, Research Methods for the Arts and Humanities Series (United States: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Arditya Prayogi, "Telaah Konseptual Pendekatan Kuantitatif Dalam Sejarah," *Kalpataru: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Pembelajaran Sejarah* 8, no. 1 (August 2022), <https://doi.org/10.31851/kalpataru.v8i2.8970>.

document study to understand the historical context and the thoughts of the Islamic reformers.

Data in this research is collected through: (1) Documentation: Reviewing various historical sources, academic literature, and relevant documents. (2) Literature Review: Analyzing the theories used in the research, including the theories of Islamic Modernization, Pan-Islamism, and Islamic Nationalism. (3) Qualitative Analysis: Interpreting the ideas of Islamic thinkers based on their historical and social context.

This research uses qualitative analysis techniques with the following methods: (1) Historical Analysis: Tracing the background and development of Islamic reformist thought from the 19th century to the early 20th century. (2) Comparative Analysis: Comparing Islamic renewal ideas in the Middle East and South Asia and their impact on the struggle for independence. (3) Contextual Analysis: Connecting Islamic reformist thought with the modern challenges currently faced by the Islamic world. With these methods, the research is expected to contribute to understanding the relationship between modern Islamic thought and the dynamics of political struggle in the Muslim world.

## Results and Discussion

### Jamaluddin Al-Afghani

Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (1839-1897) is one of the leading figures in the renewal of Islamic thought in the Middle East and South Asia. He is known as an Islamic scholar, reformer, and political activist who was influential in driving liberation and modernization movements in the Islamic world. Jamaluddin Al-Afghani was born in Asadabad in 1839, in the region that is now part of Afghanistan or Iran. His father was named Sayyid Shafdar. Al-Afghani's family descended from Husain bin Ali through the famous *hadith* of Ali At-Tirmidzi, and because of this lineage, he used the title Sayyid and called himself Sayyid Jamaluddin Al-Husaini. However, he was more widely known in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and Europe by the name Jamaluddin Al-Afghani.<sup>12</sup> He traveled to various Islamic countries, including Egypt, Turkey, India, and Persia. During his travels, Al-Afghani spread his ideas about the importance of reviving Islam through the renewal of thought and modernization.<sup>13</sup>

Jamaluddin Al-Afghani's role and influence on the independence of Muslim nations centered on the renewal of Islamic thought across several key areas. Foremost among these was his concept of Pan-Islamism or Islamic Unity (a), where he championed the solidarity of the Muslim community and Islamic states against Western colonialism. He believed that the collective power of Islam was vital for confronting colonial domination.<sup>14</sup> Pan-Islamism, as conceived by Al-Afghani, did not necessitate merging Islamic kingdoms into a single entity, but required them to share a common vision and be united in cooperation,

<sup>12</sup> Michael Kemper, *From Regional Islamic Reform to Global Anti-Colonialism? Jamaladdin al-Afghani and Russia's Muslims*, November 6, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1163/27728668-20240029>; Ariff Aizzuddin Azlan, "Islam and Nationalism in the Thought of Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 12, no. 2 (December 2022): 212–24, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.122.15>.

<sup>13</sup> Dwi Sukmanila, "Kiprah Dan Kontribusi Jamaluddin Al-Afghani Dalam Pemikiran Modern Islam," *At-Tajdid*, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Syafieh Syafieh and M. Anzhaikan, "Moderate Islam And Its Influence on Religious Diversity in Indonesia," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 23, no. 2 (March 2023), <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v23i2.3262>.

emphasizing that unity and cooperation are the backbone of Islam. He argued that this unity could only be achieved by agreeing on a vision and returning to pure Islam, based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, Al-Afghani stressed Educational Reform (b), highlighting the critical importance of modern education and science for Muslims. He sought to replace the traditional educational system with modern, scientific instruction, arguing that ignorance and backwardness were the primary causes of Muslim weakness against Western powers. To combat this, he proposed that modernization in Islamic society must be based on the values of the Qur'an and Hadith, that fatalistic concepts must be eliminated and replaced with a rational approach, and that the technology and strategies applied must be based on studying and adopting modern Western science and technology. Furthermore, through his emphasis on Politics and National Awakening (c), Al-Afghani inspired many nationalist and reformist figures by stressing the importance of national awakening and political independence for Islamic nations in their struggle against colonialism.

Al-Afghani's reformist ideas had a tangible influence on the independence of Muslim nations (2) across the Middle East and South Asia. In Egypt (a), he collaborated with Muhammad Abduh to promote Islamic renewal and resist British colonial rule, aiming both to encourage the liberation struggle and to raise awareness about the dangers of Western domination. His concepts served as an inspiration for the Egyptian nationalist movement, playing a significant part in the nation's independence in 1952.<sup>16</sup> In India (b), Al-Afghani influenced major figures such as Muhammad Iqbal and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. His thoughts on Muslim unity and national awakening fueled the movement against British colonialism in the subcontinent.<sup>17</sup> Finally, in Turkey and Iran (c), his ideas encouraged social and political reforms aimed at modernization, with his influence clearly visible in the Constitutional Movement in Iran and the reforms within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>18</sup>

The thought and activities of Al-Afghani left an important legacy in the history of Islamic renewal and the struggle for independence of Muslim nations. Despite ongoing debate surrounding some of his ideas and methods, his spirit for the awakening and unity of the Muslim community remains deeply relevant in the modern context. Many contemporary Islamic figures and movements continue to reference Al-Afghani's ideas in their efforts to face current challenges and advocate for justice and independence for Muslims globally.<sup>19</sup>

### **Hassan Al-Banna**

Hassan Al-Banna was an Islamic reformer and the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt. He was born on October 14, 1906, in Mahmudiyah, a small town in the Nile Delta, Egypt. His father, Ahmad Al-Banna, was a scholar and watchmaker who taught Hassan the fundamentals of religious knowledge from childhood. Hassan

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<sup>15</sup> Syafieh and Anzhaikan, "Moderate Islam And Its Influence on Religious Diversity in Indonesia."

<sup>16</sup> Sulaiman Kurdi, "Jamaluddin Al-Afghani Dan Muhammad Abduh (Tokoh Pemikir Dan Aktivis Politik Di Dunia Islam Modern)," *Syariah Jurnal Hukum Dan Pemikiran* 15, no. 1 (August 2015), <https://doi.org/10.18592/syariah.v15i1.541>.

<sup>17</sup> Saleh Nur, *Abdul Kalam Azad: Nasionlisme India*, 12, no. 2 (2015).

<sup>18</sup> Ariff Aizuddin Azlan, "Islam and Nationalism in the Thought of Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 12, no. 2 (December 2022): 212–24, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.122.15>.

<sup>19</sup> Azlan, "Islam and Nationalism in the Thought of Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani," December 2022.

showed a deep interest in Islam and social activism from an early age. He continued his education at Darul Ulum Teachers' College in Cairo, where he studied religious sciences and modern education. His experience in Cairo introduced him to various ideologies and movements, including nationalism, socialism, and reformist Islamic thought.<sup>20</sup> In 1928, Hassan Al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood movement (Ikhwanul Muslimin) in Ismailia, Egypt. The main goal of this organization was to revive Islam in personal and social life and to reject the influence of colonialism and secularism.<sup>21</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood aimed to implement Islam as a comprehensive way of life. They promoted education, social reform, and economic empowerment as means to achieve their goals. Hassan Al-Banna believed that Islam must be applied in all aspects of life, including politics, economics, and culture.<sup>22</sup> Hassan Al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood played a significant role in Egypt's struggle for independence. They organized protests and campaigns against British colonial rule and supported national efforts to achieve independence. The Muslim Brotherhood was also involved in armed resistance against British colonialism and Zionists in Palestine.<sup>23</sup>

Hassan Al-Banna's Renewal of Islamic Thought always stated that the Islamic world had been contaminated by Western thought, necessitating a purification. In its early days, the Muslim Brotherhood focused on reviving the religious awareness of the Egyptian people, building a social life aligned with Islamic teachings, and emphasizing the importance of education and charity. Several key points can be summarized as follows: The movement became an Inspiration for Islamic Movements (a), where Hassan Al-Banna's thought and strategy inspired many Islamic movements worldwide, making the Muslim Brotherhood a model for various Islamic organizations that sought to integrate religious thought with social and political activism.<sup>24</sup> He also succeeded in Spreading the Idea of Universal Islam (b), promoting a concept that unified Muslims globally to face common challenges, including colonialism and imperialism.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, he stressed Social and Educational Reform (c), which was realized through organizations inspired by Al-Banna establishing educational and charitable institutions in various Islamic countries, helping to raise awareness and education among the Muslim population.

His Influence on the Independence of Muslim Nations continued when, in the subsequent phase, the Muslim Brotherhood transformed into a struggle movement to achieve Egypt's independence, fight European invasion, and seek to implement Islamic Sharia and establish an Islamic caliphate in the Muslim world. With this shift in orientation, the Muslim

<sup>20</sup> Omar Gomaa, "Hassan Al-Banna and His Modern Political Islam," *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research* 05, no. 08 (August 2022), <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v5-i8-04>.

<sup>21</sup> Gomaa, "Hassan Al-Banna and His Modern Political Islam."

<sup>22</sup> Lokman Cömert, "Analyzing the Interaction between Islam and Ideology in the Political Thought of Hassan Al-Banna and Ayatollah Khomeini," *Turkish Journal of Shiite Studies* 6, no. 1 (June 2024): 67–86, <https://doi.org/10.48203/siader.1482105>.

<sup>23</sup> Novi Maria Ulfah, "Sejarah Dan Strategi Dakwah Ikhwanul Muslimin," *Smart* 2, no. 2 (2016): 213, <https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v2i2.397>.

<sup>24</sup> Yaser Amri, Yogi Febriandi, and Phaison Da-Oh, "Religious Moderation Unveiled: The Intersection of Textual and Contextual Approaches to Understanding Indonesian Muslims," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 48, no. 1 (June 2024), <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v48i1.1207>.

<sup>25</sup> novi Maria Ulfah, "Sejarah Dan Strategi Dakwah Ikhwanul Muslimin," *SMART* 2, no. 2 (December 2016): 213, <https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v2i2.397>.

Brotherhood became a political movement striving to achieve political interests.<sup>26</sup> However, the Muslim Brotherhood often faced opposition from the Egyptian government and other countries. In 1948, the organization was banned by the Egyptian government, and in 1949, Hassan Al-Banna was killed in an attack allegedly carried out by government agents.<sup>27</sup> Hassan Al-Banna's legacy holds great significance in the history of modern Islamic thought. Not only did he found one of the largest Islamic movements globally, but he also influenced many figures and movements that sought to integrate Islamic values with the demands of the modern era. His thought on the importance of social reform, education, and the unity of the Muslim community continues to inspire many people to this day.

### **Muhammad Rashid Rida**

Muhammad Rashid Rida was a prominent scholar, journalist, and Islamic reformer who played a significant role in the renewal of Islamic thought in the Muslim world, particularly in the Middle East region. Rashid Rida was born on September 23, 1865, in Qalamun, near Tripoli, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire (now Lebanon). He came from a religious family and received his early education in local schools before continuing his studies in traditional religious schools. Rida later continued his education at Al-Azhar, Cairo, Egypt, in 1897.<sup>28</sup> At Al-Azhar, Rida met Muhammad Abduh, a highly influential Islamic reformist figure. This encounter became a turning point in Rida's intellectual life. He became Abduh's student and partner, and together they called for reform in Islamic thought.<sup>29</sup>

Rashid Rida's *Renewal of Islamic Thought* positions him as one of the main figures in the contemporary Salafiyyah movement, which aimed to return to the pure and original teachings of Islam while applying those principles in a modern context.<sup>30</sup> Several important aspects of Rashid Rida's thought include: First, Educational Reform (a), where he emphasized the importance of modern education encompassing both general and religious knowledge. He stated that Muslims must master science and technology to advance and compete with the Western world. Rashid Rida asserted that Muslims needed scientific strength to face the challenges of the modern world, as science and technology are not contrary to Islam; rather, Muslims must study and embrace them if they wish to progress. Second, *Ijtihad* (b), Rida stressed the importance of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) as a way to understand and apply Islamic teachings in a modern context. Contemporary *Ijtihad*, according to him, was an effort to balance modern civilization with commitment to Islamic teachings. He explicitly rejected *taqlid* (uncritical acceptance) of traditional religious authority. Third, Islamic Governance (Politics) and Social (c), Rida called for a concept of

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<sup>26</sup> Setia Gumilar and Firman Maulana Noor, "Hasan Al-Banna and Ikhwanul Muslimin's Da'wah Movement in Egypt," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 16, no. 2 (December 2022): 397–414, <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v16i2.20982>.

<sup>27</sup> Gumilar and Noor, "Hasan Al-Banna and Ikhwanul Muslimin's Da'wah Movement in Egypt."

<sup>28</sup> Nayel Musa Shaker Al Omari, "Rashid Rida's Efforts in Calling for Muslim Unity and Political Reform," *Journal of Islam in Asia* <span Style="font-Size: 0.6em">(E-ISSN: 2289-8077)</span> 6, no. 1 (September 2009): 149–89, <https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v6i1.61>.

<sup>29</sup> Al Omari, "Rashid Rida's Efforts in Calling for Muslim Unity and Political Reform."

<sup>30</sup> Khairul Hamim and M Masykur Abdillah, "Renaissance of Islam: A Content Analysis of Muhammad Rashid Ridā's Exegesis," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 13, no. 2 (December 2023): 104–19, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.132.07>.



government based on Islamic principles, but he also recognized the necessity of modernizing governmental and administrative structures to meet the challenges of the time. He asserted that the appropriate form of state was the *khilafah* (caliphate), so that all people could unite under one faith, one moral system, one educational system, and one legal system.<sup>31</sup> Although Rashid Rida acknowledged the progress of Western civilization, he disagreed with the idea of nationalism brought by Western countries. According to him, Muslims did not need to imitate the Western idea of nationalism because, in Islam, national loyalty is built upon the foundation of religion.<sup>32</sup> Rida was a prolific writer and social activist who used print media to disseminate his ideas, establishing the magazine “Al-Manar” in 1898, which became the main platform for spreading Islamic renewal ideas.<sup>33</sup>

His Influence on the Independence of Muslim Nations was extensive in the Arab world and the Middle East. He inspired many national figures and movements that struggled against colonialism and supported the independence of Muslim nations. His ideas about modernization and Islamic reform became the ideological foundation for these movements. In Egypt (a), Rashid Rida collaborated with Muhammad Abduh, and later with Hassan Al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. His ideas influenced the reform and nationalist movements that sought to drive out British occupation and establish an independent and modern state.<sup>34</sup> In Syria and Lebanon (b), in his home region, Rashid Rida’s ideas also inspired national movements fighting against French occupation. His political involvement was evident in his activities; he served as the president of the Syrian Congress in 1920 and became a delegate for Palestine and Syria in Geneva in 1921.<sup>35</sup> Rashid Rida’s thought was also highly influential outside the Arab world, affecting renewal movements in South Asia and other regions. His ideas on educational modernization and the application of *ijtihad* attracted many followers in other Islamic countries, such as India and Indonesia. Rashid Rida left a highly significant legacy in the history of modern Islamic thought. He played a major role in illustrating a vision of Islam that could interact with modernity without losing its spiritual and moral essence. His ideas about *ijtihad* and reform continue to inspire many Muslim scholars and thinkers today in their efforts to respond to the challenges of the time and advance progress and independence in Islamic nations.

#### **Dr. Ali Shariati**

Ali Shariati (1933-1977) was an Iranian scientist, sociologist, and writer known as one of the leading thinkers in the movement for the renewal of Islamic thought in the Middle East. Shariati played a crucial role in triggering the Islamic Revolution in Iran and influencing other Islamic movements in the Muslim world. Ali Shariati was born on November 23, 1933, in Kahak, a small village in Iran. His father, Mohammad Taqi Shariati, was a scholar and intellectual who also founded a religious education center. Ali Shariati’s

<sup>31</sup> Harahap, *Khilafah Konstitusional Dalam Pemikiran Politik Islam Rasyid Ridha*.

<sup>32</sup> Ahmet T. Kuru, “Islamism and Nationalism: How Did Old Enemies Become New Allies?,” *Zeitschrift Für Religion, Gesellschaft Und Politik*, ahead of print, November 8, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41682-024-00186-3>; Bobby Hajjaj, “Nationalism and National Identity Formation in Bangladesh: A Colonial Legacy behind the Clash of Language and Religion,” *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 7, no. 3 (September 2022): 435–48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057891120938145>.

<sup>33</sup> Gojali, Fauzi, and Umam, “Modernism In Islamic Education In Tafsir Al-Manār.”

<sup>34</sup> Gojali, Fauzi, and Umam, “Modernism In Islamic Education In Tafsir Al-Manār.”

<sup>35</sup> Hamim and Abdillah, “Renaissance of Islam.”

education and upbringing were deeply influenced by his family's religious and intellectual environment, which had a major impact on his education and his views on life.<sup>36</sup> Shariati completed his education at Mashhad University, where he studied sociology. In 1959, he received a scholarship to study at the Sorbonne University in Paris, where he earned a doctoral degree in sociology. During his time in Paris, Shariati was influenced by various Western philosophical and social thoughts, including the works of Jean-Paul Sartre, Frantz Fanon, and Max Weber. This experience shaped his critical and innovative approach to Islamic and social thought.<sup>37</sup> Shariati often spoke out harshly about the social, political, and economic conditions of Iran at the time, which he deemed dominated by injustice and oppression. He believed that Islam should be a liberating force that fights injustice and establishes social justice. Shariati proposed the concept of "Revolutionary Islam," which sought to combine Islamic teachings with the principles of social justice and political liberation.<sup>38</sup>

The Renewal of Islamic Thought brought by Shariati had several important aspects: First, Islam as a Method of Liberation (a), where Shariati saw Islam as a method capable of freeing society from injustice and oppression. He criticized traditional and formal forms of Islam, which he deemed incapable of facing the challenges of the modern era.<sup>39</sup> Second, The Role of Islamic Thought (b), Shariati emphasized the role of Islamic thought as an agent of social change. He encouraged Islamic thought to actively engage in the struggle against injustice and oppression. Third, Critique of Colonialism and Imperialism (c), Shariati strongly opposed Western colonialism and imperialism, which he believed had damaged Islamic identity and culture. He supported independence movements in the Muslim world.<sup>40</sup>

His Influence on the Independence of Muslim Nations was highly significant, especially in the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Although he passed away before the revolution occurred, his ideas about Revolutionary Islam and social justice greatly influenced the revolution's leaders, including Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers. The Revolution successfully overthrew the Western-backed Shah regime and established the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>41</sup> Shariati's influence extended beyond Iran and inspired Islamic movements in several Muslim countries. His idea of Islam as a liberating force and his critique of social, economic, and political injustice gained widespread resonance in various renewal and independence movements throughout the Muslim world. Specifically, Shariati's thought influenced a number of activists and intellectuals in the Muslim Brotherhood

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<sup>36</sup> Muhammad Amin, "Implications of Ali Shari'ati's Political Thought for Iranian Revolution," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 05, no. 02 (October 2015): 56–67, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.52.05>.

<sup>37</sup> Amin, "Implications of Ali Shari'ati's Political Thought for Iranian Revolution."

<sup>38</sup> Mahbubeh Moqadam, "Ali Shariati and Crafting a Collective Revolutionary Islamic Identity for Women: A Socio-Historical Perspective," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 60, no. 3 (May 2025): 1943–57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096231207891>.

<sup>39</sup> Abd. Qohar Liky Faizal and Ali Abdul Wakhid, "Telaah Pemikiran Ali Sya'riati Tentang Pemerintah Islam Kontemporer," *Jurnal Tapis: Teropong Aspirasi Politik Islam* 18, no. 1 (2022): 27–41.

<sup>40</sup> Liky Faizal and Wakhid, "Telaah Pemikiran Ali Sya'riati Tentang Pemerintah Islam Kontemporer."

<sup>41</sup> Benjamin R. Young, "'Even They Might Rise': The Islamic Republic of Iran's Solidarity with African Americans," *The Journal of African American History* 109, no. 4 (September 2024): 569–91, <https://doi.org/10.1086/732139>.

movement in Egypt (a) who struggled against the authoritarian regime in Egypt.<sup>42</sup> In South Asia (b), namely in India and Pakistan, Shariati's ideas about Revolutionary Islam and social justice inspired several intellectual elites and activists who fought against social and political injustice.<sup>43</sup> Ali Shariati's legacy holds great significance in the history of modern Islamic thought. He successfully combined Islamic teachings with modern thought on social and political justice, creating a vision of Islam relevant to contemporary challenges. His thinking continues to inspire many people across the Muslim world who seek ways to apply Islamic principles in the context of the modern era to achieve justice and freedom.

### Rifaa Rafi' Al-Tahtawi

Rifaa Rafi' Al-Tahtawi was a scholar, writer, and pioneer of educational modernization in Egypt, and he is considered one of the leading figures in the renewal of Islamic thought in the Middle East in the 19th century. He was born in 1801 in Tahta, a small town in Upper Egypt. Although he came from a respected family as they were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad through the line of Hussein, his family's life was affected by poverty due to burdensome tax pressures. Despite living in poverty, Al-Tahtawi's zeal for seeking knowledge never faded. He received his initial education at Al-Azhar, the prominent Islamic educational institution in Cairo, where he studied various fields of religious knowledge and gained extensive knowledge in Islamic law (*sharia*) and Arabic literature. On May 27, 1873, Al-Tahtawi passed away in Cairo.<sup>44</sup> In 1826, Al-Tahtawi was chosen to join an educational mission led by Muhammad Ali Pasha to Paris, France. Initially, he was assigned as the *imam* for the Egyptian students studying there. During his five years in Paris, Al-Tahtawi not only carried out his religious duties but also learned the French language and observed advancements in Western science, technology, and educational systems.<sup>45</sup>

The Renewal of Islamic Thought brought by Al-Tahtawi, upon returning from Paris in 1831, focused on modernization and educational reform. Several key aspects of his thought include: First, Modern Education (a), where Al-Tahtawi was a strong proponent of modern education that included general science and technology alongside religious knowledge. He founded the School of Languages in Cairo and encouraged the translation of many scientific and literary works from French into Arabic.<sup>46</sup> Second, Harmony between Islam and Modernity (b), Al-Tahtawi sought to create harmony between Islamic principles and the ideas of modernity he encountered in the West. He believed that Muslims could utilize the progress of Western science and technology without abandoning Islamic values, and one way to achieve well-being was by relying on religion and morality. Therefore, education was deemed essential for building human character and nationalism. He also advocated for the liberation of education for women, so they could educate their children

<sup>42</sup> Shahzada Rahim Abbas, "Religion of Revolution: An Inquiry into Ali Shariati's Redefinition of Islam as a Catalyst for Social and Political Change," preprint, SSRN, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5626972>.

<sup>43</sup> Abbas, "Religion of Revolution."

<sup>44</sup> Cici Cahyani Cici and Banu Irfan, "History of Islamic Education in the Modernization Era of Egypt," *HISTORICAL: Journal of History and Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (November 2022): 15–20, <https://doi.org/10.58355/historical.v1i1.29>.

<sup>45</sup> Muhammad Irfan and Astuti Purwasari, "From Taqlid to Inclusion: The Transformation of Islamic Education During the Islamic Renewal in Egypt," *Journal Analytica Islamica* 14, no. 2 (July 2025): 684–701, <https://doi.org/10.30829/jai.v14i2.25039>; Mohammed Hashas, *Contemporary Moroccan Thought* (Brill, 2024), <https://brill.com/display/title/63015>.

<sup>46</sup> Cici and Banu Irfan, "History of Islamic Education in the Modernization Era of Egypt."

and become partners to their husbands in intellectual and social life, and even work.<sup>47</sup> Third, Social and Political Reform (c), Al-Tahtawi wrote many works encouraging reform in governance, economics, and society. He believed that renewal in education and thought could achieve broader social and political progress, as well as provide new ideas capable of transforming the lives of Muslims who were then in a state of decline. One of Al-Tahtawi's famous works is "*Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz*" (The Gold of Paris), an account of his journey in Paris and his observations of European society. This book offered insights into how Al-Tahtawi viewed the differences between the East and the West, and his conviction that Egypt could benefit from certain aspects of Western civilization.<sup>48</sup>

His Influence on the Independence of Muslim Nations was profound in Egypt. He played a role in establishing a number of modern educational institutions that produced a new generation of thinkers and professionals. These individuals later became leaders in the national awakening and reform movements in Egypt.<sup>49</sup> Al-Tahtawi's influence spread in Egypt, and one of its impacts was his inspiration for Muhammad Abduh and the renewal movements in many other Islamic countries. His ideas on the importance of modern education and socio-political advancement were embraced by many Muslim leaders and thinkers in the Middle East and South Asia. In the Middle East (a), Al-Tahtawi's ideas encouraged reforms in education and administration, which contributed to the modernization process of countries like Turkey and Iran.<sup>50</sup> In South Asia (b), specifically in India, Al-Tahtawi's works and ideas inspired reformist figures such as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (which later became Aligarh Muslim University) to promote modern education among Indian Muslims. Rifaa Rafi' Al-Tahtawi left an important legacy in the history of Islamic thought renewal. His efforts to harmonize Islam with modernity paved the way for many Muslim reformers and intellectuals to continue the process of modernization without abandoning their religious identity. Al-Tahtawi is remembered as a visionary pioneer in the field of education and Islamic thought, and his influence is still felt in various renewal efforts across the Muslim world today.

### **Muhammad Ali Pasha**

Muhammad Ali Pasha (1769-1849), known as the "Father of Modern Egypt," was an Albanian leader who played a crucial role in the renewal of Islamic thought and the modernization of Egypt. Muhammad Ali was born in Kavala, a city in Macedonia that was then part of the Ottoman Empire. He came from an Albanian military family. In 1798, he was sent to Egypt as part of the Ottoman forces to counter the French invasion led by Napoleon Bonaparte. Following the French departure, Muhammad Ali exploited the power vacuum and internal conflict among various factions to seize power in Egypt in 1805, with local support and legitimacy from the Ottoman Sultan.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Cici and Banu Irfan, "History of Islamic Education in the Modernization Era of Egypt."

<sup>48</sup> Irfan and Purwasari, "From Taqlid to Inclusion."

<sup>49</sup> Cici and Banu Irfan, "History of Islamic Education in the Modernization Era of Egypt."

<sup>50</sup> Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Ideologi Islam Dan Utopia* (Jakarta: Freedom Institute, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> Hasneli Hasneli, Meirison Meirison, and Qasem Muhammadi, "Educational Renewal During Muhammad Ali Period and Its Impact on The Al-Azhar Educational Institution," *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 5, no. 1 (January 2024): 27–40, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v5i1.687>.

Muhammad Ali is renowned for the sweeping reforms he implemented in Egypt, covering various sectors such as the military, economy, education, and infrastructure. His primary policies included: Military Reform (a), where he built a strong and modern armed force. He recruited local peasants (*fellahin*) to form a national army and established military academies to train officers, also bringing in military instructors from Europe to train his troops in modern warfare techniques. Economic Reform (b) saw him introduce a series of agricultural reforms to increase productivity and state revenue. Muhammad Ali monopolized the cotton trade, which became Egypt's main export commodity, and established textile and other manufacturing industries. Educational Reform (c) involved establishing modern schools and sending Egyptian students to Europe to study science and technology, aiming to create an educated professional class to support Egypt's modernization. Lastly, Infrastructure and Development (d) included initiating various infrastructure projects such as the construction of canals and irrigation systems to enhance agriculture and transportation. One major project he supported was the construction of the Suez Canal, although it was realized after his death.<sup>52</sup>

Muhammad Ali Pasha's policies and reforms had a significant impact not only in Egypt but also in other Islamic regions, although his influence was not as direct as other reformist figures. His reforms demonstrated that Muslim nations could achieve modernization and great military strength without abandoning their Islamic identity.<sup>53</sup> As the most directly affected region, Egypt (a) underwent a massive transformation under Muhammad Ali's rule that strengthened the foundations of the Egyptian state and society. These reforms prepared Egypt to become a more independent and sovereign nation, despite remaining under the nominal authority of the Ottoman Empire. His influence extended through military expansion into Sudan (b), making the region part of Egypt and bringing social and economic changes there. In the Hijaz (Modern Saudi Arabia) (c), on the orders of the Ottoman Empire, Muhammad Ali sent a military expedition to defeat the Wahhabi movement and secure the Hajj route to Mecca and Medina. This success increased Egypt's influence in the region. Furthermore, Muhammad Ali also conducted military campaigns in Syria and Lebanon (the Levant) (d), temporarily controlling these areas. Although he eventually had to withdraw due to international pressure, this campaign demonstrated Egypt's military strength and its capacity to challenge Ottoman power in the region.<sup>54</sup> Muhammad Ali Pasha, through his policies of modernization and military expansion, played a crucial role in shaping the geopolitics of the Middle East in the 19th century. Although some of his ambitions were limited by European powers and the Ottoman Empire, his reforms left a profound legacy and continue to influence the development of Islamic regions to this day.

### **Muhammad Abduh**

Muhammad Abduh was born in 1849 in the village of Mahallat Nasr, Nile Delta, Egypt. He was raised in a humble farming family. Abduh began his education in traditional Islamic schools, then continued his studies at Al-Azhar University, one of the oldest and

<sup>52</sup> Hafiz Ansyary, *Pembaharuan Islam Di Mesir* (Yogyakarta: Bildung, 2023).

<sup>53</sup> Mohsin Ali, "Muhammad Ali and Modernization of Egypt: Historical-Cultural Perspectives," *The International Journal of Humanities* 30, no. 2 (March 2023): 42–53.

<sup>54</sup> Ansyary, *Pembaharuan Islam Di Mesir*.

most renowned centers of Islamic education in the world. At Al-Azhar, he studied under the guidance of Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, a radical Islamic reformer, who later became his mentor and comrade-in-arms in the Islamic renewal movement. Abduh was known as a scholar, journalist, and judge. In 1899, he was appointed as the Mufti of Egypt, the highest position in the religious hierarchy in Egypt. During his tenure, Abduh sought to reform the Islamic education system and modernize religious thought.<sup>55</sup>

Muhammad Abduh is known as one of the most important figures in the Islamic renewal (*islah*) movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries. His thought focused on three main aspects:<sup>56</sup> Modernization of Education (a): Abduh encouraged curriculum reform in Islamic educational institutions. He introduced modern subjects such as natural sciences and mathematics at Al-Azhar and other educational institutions. His goal was for Muslims to master religious knowledge as well as the modern sciences necessary for societal progress. Social Reform (b): Abduh was deeply concerned with the social conditions of Muslim society. He criticized religious practices he deemed inconsistent with true Islamic teachings, such as superstitions and *bid'ah* (innovation). He encouraged Muslims to return to pure and rational Islamic teachings. Reinterpretation of Islamic Teachings (c): Abduh viewed Islam as a rational religion aligned with science and modern progress. He encouraged *ijtihad* (independent interpretation) in understanding religious texts and rejected *taqlid* (uncritically following the opinions of previous scholars). Through *ijtihad*, Abduh believed that Muslims could adapt to the changing times without abandoning the fundamental principles of the religion.

The thought and activities of Muhammad Abduh had a major influence on nationalist and independence movements in many Islamic countries, particularly in the Middle East and South Asia.<sup>57</sup> In Egypt (a), Abduh's thought inspired the nationalist movement demanding independence from British occupation. Figures like Saad Zaghlul and the Wafd party were greatly influenced by Abduh's reform ideas. In Syria and Lebanon (b) (the Levant region), Abduh's thought on modernization and Islamic reform had a significant impact. Many leaders and intellectuals involved in the nationalist movements in Syria and Lebanon were inspired by Abduh's ideas. In India (c), on the Indian subcontinent, Abduh's thought influenced figures such as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who founded Aligarh Muslim University as a center for modern education for Indian Muslims.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, Abduh also interacted with figures like Muhammad Iqbal, who later became one of the chief architects of the establishment of Pakistan. Muhammad Abduh, through his thought and activities, made a great contribution to the renewal of Islamic thought and the independence movement in the Muslim world. His progressive and rational vision of Islam continues to inspire reform and nationalist movements in various parts of the world.

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<sup>55</sup> Kinda AlSamara, "Muhammad 'Abduh: Islam and New Urbanity in the Nineteenth-Century Arab World," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (June 2018): 63–79, <https://doi.org/10.55831/ajis.v3i1.77>.

<sup>56</sup> Juhri Jaelani, "Modernitas Kehidupan Beragama Dalam Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam (Studi Analisis Pemikiran Muhammad Abduh)," *Civilization Research: Journal Of Islamic Studies*, 2, no. 1 (2023).

<sup>57</sup> Ahmad Nabil Amir, "The Influence of Muhammad Abduh in The Nusantara: From Qur'anic Exegesis to Islamic Reform Movement," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 2 (December 2022): 260–78, <https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v18i2.10282>.

<sup>58</sup> Amir, "The Influence of Muhammad Abduh in The Nusantara."

### Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan was born on October 17, 1817, in Delhi, India, into an esteemed family that had close ties with the Mughal court. From a young age, Ahmad Khan received a traditional Islamic education while also studying Western science and philosophy. In 1837, he joined the British East India Company as a civil servant, which gave him deep insight into the British colonial administration system in India. Following the Indian War of Independence in 1857, known as the Sepoy Mutiny, Ahmad Khan realized the necessity for reform within Indian Muslim society to address the challenges of the modern era. His experiences during this war shaped his views on the importance of education and cooperation with the British colonial government.<sup>59</sup>

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan was a pioneer in several areas, including education, social reform, and the reinterpretation of Islamic teachings. The primary aspects of his thought and role include: Educational Reform (a), where Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan strongly believed that modern education was the key to the progress of Muslims in India. In 1875, he founded the Anglo-Muhammadan Oriental College in Aligarh, which later evolved into Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). This institution merged traditional Islamic education with a modern Western curriculum, becoming a crucial intellectual center for Muslims in India. Reinterpretation of Islamic Teachings (b) involved Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan encouraging the reinterpretation of Islamic teachings within the context of the modern era. He viewed Islam as a rational religion aligned with science and progress. He emphasized the importance of *ijtihad* (independent interpretation) and rejected *taqlid* (uncritically following the opinions of previous scholars). Relationship with the British Colonial Government (c) saw Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, after witnessing the devastation caused by the Sepoy Mutiny, believe that cooperation with the British colonial government was necessary for the welfare of Muslims in India. He sought to establish good relations with the British and encouraged Muslims to adopt Western education and technology. Social Reform (d) was also actively pursued by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, including improving the status of women and eliminating practices considered inconsistent with pure Islamic teachings. He supported women's education and encouraged Muslims to abandon superstitions and irrational practices.<sup>60</sup>

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's thought and activities had a major influence on nationalist and independence movements in the Indian subcontinent and other Islamic regions.<sup>61</sup> In India (a), Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan was one of the founders of the Aligarh movement, which became the intellectual and political base for Muslims in India. This movement played a significant role in awakening the political consciousness of Muslims and ultimately contributed to the formation of the All-India Muslim League, which became the main political vehicle in the struggle for the establishment of Pakistan. In Pakistan (b), Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's ideas about the importance of education and social reform deeply influenced figures such as Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal, who were key leaders in the

<sup>59</sup> Tanjeel Ahmed and Muhammad Amin, "Nationalism, Patriotism and Political Ideas of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: An Analysis," *International Journal Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* 23, no. 2 (December 2021): 138–51, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ihya.23.2.9263>.

<sup>60</sup> Dr. Ishtiaq Hussain, "Revisiting a Fractured Legacy: Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Muslim Women Education.," *Rashhat-e-Qalam* 2, no. 2 (September 2022): 85–100, <https://doi.org/10.56765/rq.v2i2.74>.

<sup>61</sup> Omair Anas, "The Transition of Islamic Thought on Nation-States on the Indian Subcontinent," in *The Routledge International Handbook of Contemporary Muslim Socio-Political Thought* (Routledge, 2021).

struggle to establish Pakistan as a separate state for Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, through his thought and reforms, made a great contribution to the renewal of Islamic thought and the political awakening of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. His role in establishing modern educational institutions and encouraging the reinterpretation of Islamic teachings was crucial in preparing Indian Muslims to face the modern era, and his influence shaped the nationalist movements that eventually formed new states in the region.<sup>62</sup>

#### **Abu A'la Al-Maududi**

Abul A'la Al-Maududi was born on September 25, 1903, in Aurangabad, India, into an educated and religious Muslim family. His father was a lawyer and religious teacher who instilled Islamic values from childhood. Maududi began his education in traditional Islamic schools and later continued his studies in modern schools. At a young age, Maududi began writing articles and books about Islam, which quickly garnered widespread attention. In 1941, he founded Jamaat-e-Islami, a political and religious organization aimed at establishing an Islamic state based on Sharia. His works, particularly those on Islamic politics and economics, were highly influential and became the foundation for Islamic movements worldwide.<sup>63</sup>

Abul A'la Al-Maududi is one of the most important figures in the modern Islamic movement. His thought encompasses various aspects of life, ranging from politics, economics, to education and law. The main aspects of his thought and role include: Islamic Politics and Law (a): Maududi viewed Islam as a comprehensive system of life, covering political, legal, and social aspects. He supported the implementation of Sharia (Islamic law) as the legal basis of the state and rejected secularism. According to Maududi, the Islamic state must be based on the sovereignty of Allah and His laws.<sup>64</sup> Islamic Economics (b): Maududi developed the concept of Islamic economics based on the principles of social justice and welfare. He emphasized the importance of *zakat*, the prohibition of *riba* (interest), and the fair distribution of wealth as the foundation of the Islamic economic system.<sup>65</sup> Education and Social Renewal (c): Maududi was a strong proponent of Islamic education that integrated modern knowledge with Islamic values. He believed that education must shape individuals who are obedient to Allah and capable of contributing to society. Jihad and Da'wah (d): Maududi emphasized the importance of *jihad* as an effort to uphold Islam in all aspects of life. He interpreted *jihad* not merely as physical warfare but also as an intellectual and spiritual struggle for self and societal improvement.

The thought and activities of Abul A'la Al-Maududi had a major influence on nationalist and independence movements in various Islamic countries, especially in South

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<sup>62</sup> Hussain, "Revisiting a Fractured Legacy."

<sup>63</sup> Abdessamad Belhaj, "From Divine to Popular Sovereignty: The Civil Shift in Contemporary Islamic Political Thought," *Religions* 16, no. 5 (May 2025), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16050622>.

<sup>64</sup> Salafuddin Noor, Ahmadi Hasan, and Nuril Khasyi'in, "Review of Political Theory of Islamic Law Abul 'Ala Al Maududy Positive Perspective of the Political System of Indonesian Islamic Law," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pemikiran* 23, no. 1 (June 2023): 36–49, <https://doi.org/10.18592/sjhp.v23i1.9626>.

<sup>65</sup> Arshad Zaman, "Maulānā Maudūdī and the Genesis of Islamic Economics," *Turkish Journal of Islamic Economics* 8, no. 2 (August 2021): 597–622, <https://doi.org/10.26414/A036>.



Asia.<sup>66</sup> Pakistan (a): Maududi and Jamaat-e-Islami played a significant role in shaping the ideology of Pakistan as an Islamic state. After Pakistan's independence in 1947, Maududi was active in Pakistani politics and continuously pushed for the implementation of Sharia and the establishment of a true Islamic state. India (b): Although Maududi moved to Pakistan after the partition of India, his thought continued to influence the Muslim community in India. Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, the Indian branch of Jamaat-e-Islami, continued to promote Maududi's thought and worked to improve the welfare of the Muslim community in India. Bangladesh (c): In Bangladesh, Maududi's thought also influenced the Islamic movement. Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, a branch of Jamaat-e-Islami, became one of the largest Islamic political parties in the country, despite facing major political challenges<sup>67</sup>. Other Islamic Nations (d): Maududi's thought spread to various other Islamic countries, including the Middle East and Southeast Asia. His ideas about the Islamic state and the implementation of Sharia influenced many Islamic political movements in the Muslim world. Abul A'la Al-Maududi, through his thought and activities, made a great contribution to the renewal of Islamic thought and the political Islamic movement in various Muslim countries. His role in founding Jamaat-e-Islami and advocating for the application of Sharia as the basis of state law played a crucial role in shaping modern Islamic political ideology. Maududi's thought continues to influence Islamic political movements in various parts of the world, from South Asia to the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Abul A'la Al-Maududi, through his thought and activities, made a substantial contribution to the renewal of Islamic thought and the development of modern Islamic political movements across the Muslim world. Through the establishment of Jamaat-e-Islami, Maududi articulated a systematic vision of Islam as a comprehensive socio-political system, in which Sharia serves as the foundation of state law and governance rather than merely a personal religious ethic. His ideas not only influenced political movements in South Asia but also shaped broader intellectual debates on the relationship between religion and the state, particularly concerning Islamic governance, legal authority, and moral order. Furthermore, Maududi's normative conception of Sharia has continued to inform contemporary discussions on Islamic law and human rights, positioning his thought as a critical reference point in ongoing debates over the compatibility of Islamic legal principles with modern political and human rights discourses in the Muslim world<sup>68</sup>

### **Muhammad Iqbal**

Muhammad Iqbal was born on November 9, 1877, in Sialkot, Punjab, which was then part of British India. He came from a religious, middle-class Muslim family. From childhood, Iqbal showed a great interest in literature and philosophy. He received his basic

<sup>66</sup> syed Rafaqat Hussain and Mazher Hussain, "Politico-Religious Thoughts Of Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) And Abul Aala Maududi (1903-1979): A Comparative Study," *Journal of Academic Research for Humanities* (Pakistan) 4, no. 2 (2024): 211.

<sup>67</sup> Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah and Thameem Ushama, "Islamic Epistemology in the Bangladesh Government System (1996–2022): An Analysis of Political Ideologies," *Jurnal Bina Praja* 15, no. 3 (December 2023): 479–93, <https://doi.org/10.21787/jbp.15.2023.479-493>.

<sup>68</sup> Siti Rohmah, Moh Anas Kholish, and Andi Muhammad Galib, "Human Rights and Islamic Law Discourse: The Epistemological Construction of Abul A'la Al-Maududi, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, and Mashood A. Baderin," *Justicia Islamica* 19, no. 1 (July 2022): 153–70, <https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v19i1.3282>.

education in Sialkot and Lahore before continuing his studies in Europe.<sup>69</sup> Iqbal studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, and later earned a doctoral degree in philosophy from the University of Munich, Germany. After returning to India, he balanced work as a lawyer and professor with his deeper commitment to social and political reform of the Muslim community. Through his literary and philosophical works, Iqbal sought to awaken consciousness and inspire resurgence among Indian Muslims, advocating for intellectual revival and dynamic reinterpretation of Islam in the face of modern challenges<sup>70</sup>

Muhammad Iqbal is known for his ideas and contributions in shaping the intellectual and political identity of Muslims in India<sup>71</sup>. The main aspects of his thought and role are: Education and Thought, (a) Iqbal emphasized the importance of education and intellectual understanding in building the progress and awakening of the Muslim community. He encouraged the renewal of Islamic education and the development of thought that integrated Islamic teachings with modern knowledge.<sup>72</sup> Nationalism and Nationality, (b) Iqbal promoted the concept of Islamic nationalism in India, asserting that Muslims in India possessed unique political, social, and cultural interests.<sup>73</sup> He supported the idea of Islamic unity and led the movement to build national consciousness among Indian Muslims. Independence and Awakening, (c) Iqbal called for the ambition to achieve independence for Muslims in India. He viewed the spiritual and political awakening of the Muslim community as the key to achieving freedom and justice.<sup>74</sup> Islamic Socialism, (d) Iqbal developed the concept of “Islamic Socialism,” which combined the principles of Islamic social justice with socialist economic principles. He believed that Islamic Socialism could serve as a model for a just and equitable society.

Muhammad Iqbal’s ideas and activities had a major influence on the independence movement and the establishment of Muslim states, particularly in South Asia:<sup>75</sup> In India (a), Iqbal was one of the leading figures in the Indian independence movement, as well as the independence movement for Muslims in India. He played a significant role in shaping the political identity of Muslims and advocating for their political and social rights. In Pakistan

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<sup>69</sup> Islam Ali, “Muhammad Iqbal,” in *Reappraising Modern Indian Thought: Themes and Thinkers*, ed. Ankit Tomar and Suratha Kumar Malik (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2022), 317–46, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-1415-7\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-1415-7_15); Dr Yasmeen Kauser, Dr Shagufta Firdous, and Dr Irum Saba, “Dr. Saeed Akhtar Durrani’s Iqbal Studies : (Antiques in Europe in the Context of Iqbal),” *Negotiations* 4, no. 2 (December 2024): 201–9.

<sup>70</sup> Sarbini Anim, “Muhammad Iqbal And The Idea Of Dynamic Islam,” *Al-Risalah* 15, no. 1 (January 2024): 387–98, <https://doi.org/10.34005/alrisalah.v15i1.3574>.

<sup>71</sup> Fathul Ghaffari et al., “The Relationship Between Religion and Politics of Muhammad Iqbal: A Philosophical and Its Relevance,” *Suhuf* 37, no. 1 (May 2025), <https://doi.org/10.23917/suhuf.v37i1.10286>.

<sup>72</sup> Ade Firman Khanafi, Syamsul Arifin, and Fahrudin Mukhlis, “Muhammad Iqbal’s Islamic Education Philosophy: Critical Analysis Mbkm Curriculum,” *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 11, no. 1 (June 2025): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjipm.v11i1.390>.

<sup>73</sup> Adeel Hussain, “Muhammad Iqbal’s Constitutionalism,” *Indian Law Review* 2, no. 2 (May 2018): 135–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/24730580.2018.1544023>.

<sup>74</sup> Shahid Rasheed and Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan, “Discourse on Nationalism: Political Ideologies of Two Muslim Intellectuals, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani and Allama Muhammad Iqbal,” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 09, no. 02 (December 2019): 127–47, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.92.07>.

<sup>75</sup> Bujuna Al-Haddad, “Muhamad Iqbal Dalam Kontribusi Pemikiran Dan Pembaharuan Islam Di India-Pakistan,” *AL-Taddabur: Jurnal Kajian Sosial, Peradaban Dan Agama* 8, no. 1 (2022).

(b), Iqbal is regarded as one of the intellectual architects of the founding of Pakistan.<sup>76</sup> His ideas on Islamic unity and the unique political interests of Muslims in India provided the ideological foundation for the Pakistan movement. His vision of an Islamic state based on Islamic principles also influenced Pakistan's constitution. Muhammad Iqbal, through his ideas and works, made a great contribution to shaping the political and intellectual identity of Muslims in India and the surrounding region. His concepts of Islamic nationalism, independence, and spiritual awakening became a source of inspiration for independence movements and political thought in India and Pakistan.<sup>77</sup> Iqbal's ideas and contributions continue to influence political movements and Islamic thought in the Muslim world today.

## Conclusion

The renewal of Islamic thought in the Middle East and South Asia played an important role in facilitating the independence of Muslim countries. Figures such as Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi, Muhammad Ali Pasha, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, Maududi, Muhammad Iqbal, Hassan al-Banna, and Ali Shariati made unique and significant contributions. Their ideas combined elements of modernization, education, and social reform, which not only challenged the status quo but also paved new paths toward independence and liberation from colonialism.

These thinkers, through their innovative approaches, emphasized the importance of integrating modern knowledge with Islamic values, inspiring numerous national and independence movements. For instance, Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi and Muhammad Abduh stressed the importance of education as a vehicle for enlightenment and social advancement. Meanwhile, Jamaluddin al-Afghani and Muhammad Iqbal called for the unity of the Muslim community in confronting colonial domination. Leaders such as Hassan al-Banna and Ali Shariati focused on the importance of social justice and the establishment of a society based on progressive Islamic principles.

The legacy of their thought continues to inspire later generations in the effort to build more just, independent, and prosperous societies. Through comprehensive and adaptive intellectual frameworks, these reformers demonstrated that Islam can develop and respond to the challenges of time without losing its spiritual essence. Thus, the renewal of Islamic thought in the Middle East and South Asia not only made a major contribution to the independence of Muslim countries, but also opened the way for strong and sustainable social transformation.

Despite the significant contribution of this study in elucidating the role of Islamic intellectual renewal in the Middle East and South Asia in shaping independence movements and social transformation, this study is limited by its primarily historical and conceptual approach, which does not extensively examine the empirical implementation of reformist ideas within specific socio-political contexts. Furthermore, the focus on selected regions and prominent figures may not fully represent the diversity of Islamic reform movements across

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<sup>76</sup> Carimo Mohamed, "'Islam' as the National Identity for the Formation of Pakistan: The Political Thought of Muhammad Iqbal and Abu'l 'Ala Mawdudi," *História (São Paulo)* 33, no. 1 (June 2014): 317–39, <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-90742014000100015>.

<sup>77</sup> Rasheed and Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan, "Discourse on Nationalism."

the Muslim world. Future research is therefore encouraged to adopt comparative, empirical, and interdisciplinary approaches to explore the practical influence and contemporary relevance of Islamic reformist thought in addressing current challenges faced by Muslim societies, including governance, education, social justice, and global integration.

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