Dissertations, Theses, and Capstone Projects   CUNY Graduate Center

5-2019

Death of the Caliphate: Reconfiguring Ali Abd al-Raziq's Ideas and Legacy

Arooj Alam
The Graduate Center, City University of New York

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

DEATH OF THE CALIPHATE:
RECONFIGURING ALI ABD AL-RAZIQ'S IDEAS AND LEGACY

by

AROOJ ALAM

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Middle Eastern Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of

New York.

2019

Death of the Caliphate: Reconfiguring Ali Abd al-Raziq's ideas and legacy

by

Arooj Alam

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Middle Eastern Studies
in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

_____   _____

Date   Samira Haj

                                           Thesis Advisor

_____   _____

Date   Simon Davis

                                            Executive Officer

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

ABSTRACT

Death of the Caliphate: Reconfiguring Ali Abd al-Raziq's ideas and legacy

by

Arooj Alam

Advisor: Professor Samira Haj

The demise of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 generated vigorous debates throughout the Muslim world regarding the political future of the *Ummah*. While several prominent Muslim thinkers contributed to this "Caliphate debate," none left as contested a legacy as the Egyptian intellectual, 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq (1888-1966). In his scholarly publication, *Islam and Foundations of Governance*, Abd al-Raziq argued against the revival and resurrection of the Caliphate by redefining it as coercive, monarchal, and as the antithesis of the community first established by Prophet Muhammad. While Abd al-Raziq's book attracted tremendous criticisms in 1925, numerous scholars today have commended and hailed him as the father of Secularism, Liberalism, and Laicism. This thesis, however strongly rejects such labels by investigating how Abd al-Raziq imbued the Caliphate with a modern definition and relied upon authoritative evidence from the Islamic tradition to bolster his analyses. By situating his criticisms within the Islamic tradition, this thesis demands that we reconfigure Abd al-Raziq's ideas and legacy, without the aid of limiting and misleading Western-centric categories. Additionally, by making use of Urdu language primary sources, this thesis brings forth reception of South Asian Muslims on Abd al-Raziq's work, to emphasize cross-cultural debates and disagreements amongst Muslims on the significance of the Caliphate, which continue to persist today.

To my peers; Liz, Kate, Samina, Jean, and Donnise, who reviewed several drafts of this thesis, offered incredibly honest and constructive comments and put so much faith in me and in this thesis; I feel grateful to have met you all this semester. Thank you for taking such interest in my work and encouraging me. To my girls at the GC who discussed my drafts in progress during our weekly thesis group meetings, thank you all for your friendship, support, and humor. I could not have survived this hectic semester without your wonderful company. To all my other friends and kind-hearted professors, who cheered me on during my two years in the program; KC Johnson, Kristina Richardson, Simon Davis, as well as Shani, Zeineb, Tamara, Zahra, Ayca, Fadi, and Onur; thank you for making my time at the GC so pleasant.

Turning towards my inner circle, I offer tremendous gratitude to my family for selflessly funding my education and giving me the freedom to pursue my passion for Islamic studies. A luxury, which is not available to every girl in the Pakistani culture. Hugs to my father and brother for making me laugh and preserving my sanity on the days when I was deeply submerged within the waters of modern Islamic political thought. Hugs also to my sisters: Julia, Sabrina, Cat, Rachel, and Tati, all of whom have been by my side throughout these years, and who continue to comfort and love me unconditionally. Last but not least, I thank my amazing mother who means the world to me. Our countless discussions on this project and Abd al-Raziq's work, as well as those late nights expended by sifting through numerous pages of Urdu sources, all have made this project even more special. I am so blessed to have her in my life, and I hope to continue making her proud.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction

The term "Caliphate" is deployed frequently by both the Western and Muslim media, thus emboldening certain Islamic extremist groups, such as the Islamic State, to appropriate this concept for their political discourses worldwide.[1] However, before the hijacking of this concept, Muslims debated, discussed, and disagreed amongst themselves over the significance of this term throughout history. Medieval and pre-modern Muslims theorized various blue prints for sustaining an ideal Caliphate, which would emulate the time of Prophet Muhammad and his immediate successors, the Rightly Guided Caliphs (*Khulafa al-Rashidun*).[2] The term Caliphate was thus molded and remolded by various Muslims throughout history, since it did not have a single definition within the authoritative texts of the Holy Quran and Prophetic Sunnah (*hadith*).

Interestingly, the word Caliphate (*al-Khilafa*) meaning the political institution overseen by a person in charge, emerged out of the word "Caliph" (*Khalifa*), and its plural (*Khulafā*), as mentioned in the Quran.[3] The Quran offers multiple definitions for the word Khalifa; the primary definition referring to a "successor, substitute, replacement, or deputy" or a group of people, "*replaced*" by Allah, with another morally steadfast community.[4] The second definition of *Khalifa* implies one who "settles on earth"; it appears throughout the Adam verses in the Quran

---

[1] Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic*, March 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/. Hassan Hassan, "The Sectarianism of the Islamic State: Ideological Roots and Political Context," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 13, 2016, https://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/13/sectarianism-of-islamic-state-ideological-roots-and-political-context-pub-63746.

[2] After this first time, all mentions of the Rightly Guided Caliphs will be abbreviated as merely the *Rashidun*. For more information on modern and medieval Islamic political theory see L. Carl Brown, "16-Islamic Political Thought," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam Volume 6: Muslims and Modernity: Culture and Society since 1800*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 385-410. Also, Han Hsien Liew, "Writing Away the Caliph: Political and Religious Legitimacy in Late Medieval Islamic Political Thought" (MA Thesis, Wesleyan University, 2012).

[3] Wadad Kadi, "Caliph," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden, 2001-6), 277.

[4] Ibid.

when Allah informs his angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a *successive authority*" (which refers specifically to Adam) but is applicable to all of the humankind according to some Quranic interpreters.[5] According to Wadad Kadi, the third, and rarer political definition - as someone who possess authority to govern - appears only in the David verses of the Quran when Allah proclaims, "O David we have made you a *Khalīfa* on earth; *so judge justly between people and follow not desires lest they should thwart you from God's path.*"[6] These various definitions, contexts, and occurrences of the term *Khalifa* in the Quran puzzled Quranic exegetes (*Mufasirun*) endlessly.

Signifcant for my thesis is the fact that pre-modern exegetes did not rely upon the political definition of *Khalifa* until the advent of the Persian polymath, al-Tabarī (d. 310/923).[7] Al-Tabari was responsible for standardizing the political definition of *Khalifa*, by combining "the Qurānic *Khalīfa* with the head of the Islamic community" within Sunni political thought, under the Abbasid caliphs.[8] Whereas historically Muhammad's immediate successors had differentiated their authority as Caliphs from the Prophet's (which consisted of messenger-ship), by coining the title *Khalīfat Rasūl Allāh* (successor of the messenger of God), and not *Khalīfat Allāh* (vicegerent of God).[9] Both Kadi and Han Hsien Liew's work emphasize that historically *Rashidun* had not combined political and religious authority, thus challenging works of some

---

[5] Quran, 38:26, *The Noble Quran*, https://quran.com/38/26.
[6] Kadi, "Caliph," 277.
[7] Han Hsien Liew, "The Caliphate of Adam: Theological Politics of the Qurʾānic Term Ḫalīfa," *Arabica* 63, (2016):1-29, https://doi 10.1163/15700585-12341381. In the footnotes, Liew writes, "Up till the end of the fourth/tenth century, the word *sulṭān* was understood in the sense of governmental power or of the person who at a particular time is the personification of impersonal governmental power. The latter meaning is found for the caliphs as early as the caliph al-Manṣūr (d. 158/775) who referred to himself as *sulṭān Allāh fī arḍihi* (*Sultan on Allah's earth*)."
[8] Kadi, "Caliph," 278.
[9] Ibid.

Orientalists who maintain that religious, legislative, and political authority all were initially vested under the Caliph's title.[10] The ambiguity of the term *Khalifa* in the Quran clearly shows that there was no agreement amongst pre-modern Muslims, over the meaning of this concept, from the death of the Prophet until the 10th century.

Since the Caliphate as a category has a history its meaning, and how that meaning changed over time, both have to be explained historically. How that meaning gets to be transcribed into practice is bound to be different from one period to another, and as such, it does not have an immutable essence. Additionally, the Caliphate which emerged at the time of the *Rashidun* was very different from the one which was established under various dynasties, since "the institution of the Caliphate developed gradually with time and crystallized only at the beginning of the Abbasid period in the second half of the eighth century."[11] Thus, when we refer to the Caliphate or a Caliph, it is not in the same sense as what had existed in the past, since our conception of the past and conditions of the present are vastly different.

Overall, the debates over the nature of the Caliphate in modern times are bound to be different from those of earlier times; while Muslims attempt to locate new meanings within the Islamic tradition, such meanings are necessarily shaped by the conditions dictated by modernity. Living under the project of modernity, neither Muslims nor non-Muslims can ever revive the past; they can only re-imagine it as it unfolds within language, history, and different temporalities. As the German conceptual historian, Reinhart Koselleck, has elucidated, concepts have multilayered and overlapping temporalities. Thus a conceptual history brings forth a history

---

[10] Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[11] Wadad Kadi, "Caliph," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought,* eds. Gerhard Bowering, Patricia Crone, Wadad Kadi, Devin J. Stewart, Muhammad Qasim Zaman, and Mahan Mirza (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 81.

which is alive, active, and which cannot be fitted into categories of beginnings, ends, transitions, ruptures, and brakes.[12] Similarly the concept of a pristine Caliphate, to which modern Muslims frequently refer, did not emerge until the Sunni tradition elevated the status of the four Caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali) with Prophet Muhammad's *hadith*, which stated that "*Khilāfa* (Caliphate) after me will be thirty years; after that, it will be kingship."[13]

Some Western and Muslims scholars would argue that "above all, a Caliph was Muslims' religious leader who ensured the obedience of the community to the divine law (*Sharia*)."[14] However, I contend, the seemingly "religious" activities performed by the *Rashidun* were symbolic functions assigned out of deference for their positions as political leaders. Additionally, we need to consider the tribal structure of the *Rashidun'*s community, which was far more egalitarian, less centrally organized, and based on kinship, to reach the conclusions of Kadi.[15] It is no accident that the succession conflict over Uthman and Ali's authority after the death of the second Caliph, Umar, emerged due to the lack of consensus in *consultation* among the tribal community.

Consultation (*al-Shura*) during the time of the *Rashidun* included leading members from the community, who came together to pledge allegiance to the most qualified person for the title of the Caliph. This principle of *shura*, as mentioned in the Quran was central for early Muslims since it determined the Caliph's authority—both moral and political. Members of the *majlis al-shura* (those gathered to consult) measured a candidate's qualifications (for the Caliphate) based upon his wisdom and morality, similar to the traits exhibited by Prophet Muhammad. However,

---

[12] Jordheim Helge, "Against Periodization: Koselleck's Theory of Multiple Temporalities," History *and Theory*, no. 2 (2012):151–171, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2303.2012.00619.x.
[13] Kadi, "Caliph" in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, 84.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

these members did not consider the Caliphs would supersede the role of the Prophet as the final

messenger of God. It might be tempting then to posit here the categories of "religious" and

"political" to differentiate prophetic authority from that of the *Rashidun*. However, we must

remember that even the binaries of "religious" and "political" authority did not exist in the

lexicon of the Arab tribes then. There was no language available then to delineate these different

meanings. Instead, it is helpful to think of prophetic authority as being concerned with

transforming the ethical sensibilities of believers, whereas Caliphal and *Rashidun*'s authority

concerned itself with leading the believers in a world without prophecy.[16]

The Egyptian intellectual, *Sharia* court judge, and Islamic reformer, Ali Abd al-Raziq,

similarly differentiated prophetic authority from Caliphal authority in his book *al-Islam wa-usul-*

al-hum (*Islam and the Foundations of Governance*). In it, he argued that the nature of political

sovereignty in Islam was different from "religious" authority. This understanding of Islamic

history and the *Rashidun* Caliphate cost Abd al-Raziq dearly, as he lost his judgeship license,

and attracted tremendous criticisms throughout the Muslim world in 1925. My primary purpose

here is to understand, how Abd al-Raziq attempted to legitimize the historic separation of powers

by locating his argument within the Islamic tradition and Islamic history. Also, I explore Muslim

responses and reactions to Abd al-Raziq's book, especially those living in modern day India and

Pakistan.

This thesis offers a way for present day Muslims and Western scholars to read, interpret,

and come to terms with Abd al-Raziq's ideas and legacy, as well as the nature of political and

religious authority in Islam. As David Scott reminds us, "morally and politically what ought to

---

[16] Due to a lack of adequate substitutes, I will continue to employ the categories of "Religious" and "Political" authority throughout this thesis. However, I hope that the readers will consider the shortcomings of these terms and the specific historicity of these categories.

be at stake in historical inquiry is a *critical appraisal of the present itself*, not the mere reconstruction of the past."[17] Hence my thesis poses the dilemma of how Muslims can reconcile the contradictions posited by modern state structures and their institutions with Islam as a living tradition? Solving this dilemma has real-world implications, since redefining the nature of sovereignty and religious authority in Islam can alter how we moderns reimagine Islam. A religion, which is not a monolithic, static, and irrational system of "belief" but a dynamic, diverse, and living entity.

This thesis is divided into the following sections; Section 1 presents a brief history of secularization and the nature of political sovereignty in Turkey and Egypt during the early 1920s. It is against this backdrop, I argue, that Abd al-Raziq made specific arguments against the possibility of a renewal of the Caliphate. Section 2 explores the reception of Abd al-Raziq's ideas by both Muslim and Western scholars. In this section, I challenge specific Western-centric labels by situating his work within the Islamic tradition. Lastly, Section 3 traces the broad cross-cultural connections between the Middle East and South Asia and more specifically between Egypt, India, and Pakistan, with a focus on primary Urdu sources. I select South Asian Muslims and their critique of Abd al-Raziq's work to bridge a glaring gap in scholarship as well as to highlight how Muslims have continually debated the significance of the Caliphate throughout history.

<p style="text-align:center">∗ ∗ ∗ ∗ ∗</p>

In 1924, the Turkish Grand National Assembly's decision to abolish the Ottoman Caliphate triggered intense debates throughout the Muslim world. Disagreements abounded

---

[17] David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 41.

among Muslims from Egypt to India, on how to proceed in the aftermath of this occurrence. The responses ranged between the two positions of either reinstating the Caliphate or moving on from this institution; these different positions later came to be identified as the "Caliphate debate." History shows, there were never any clear winners within this debate, but several losers, such as the Ottoman Caliph Abdulmecid II, and the Egyptian reformer Ali Abd al-Raziq. It has taken 80 years after Abd al-Raziq's death for Muslims and non-Muslims to revisit his ideas on the Caliphate and hail him as the father of Islamic liberalism, secularism, and laicism.[18] However, this revision of his ideas and legacy have not only oversimplified Abd al-Raziq's views but have also overlooked his commitments to Islam. Since he was first a Muslim judge, who eventually published his research in 1925, his views regarding Islam should be front and center when discussing his critique of the Caliphate as mentioned in his book, *al-Islam-wa-usul-al-hukm* (*Islam and the Foundations of Governance*).[19]

Abd al-Raziq's primary critique of the Caliphate was that this concept was not a "religious" obligation within the Islamic tradition but merely a necessity for a specific period. No doubt, this provocative and bold argument should be re-examined more closely. In this section, I proceed to do precisely that by first providing a brief background to the conflict over the nature of the Caliphate engendered by the modernizing project during the Ottoman Empire and

---

[18] On the labels of "liberalism," "secularism" and "laicism" with regards to Abd al-Raziq's work consult: Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologie*s, (University of Chicago Press, 1989). David Sagiv, "Chapter 7: Attitudes to the Caliphate and the Imamate" in *Fundamentalism and Intellectuals in Egypt 1973-1993,* (Routledge, 1995). Luay Radhan, *Muslims against the Islamic State: Arab Critics and Supporters of Ali Abdarraziq's Islamic Laicism,* (Ph.D. diss.*,* Peter Lang Academic Research, 2014).

[19] According to Charles Butterworth, a more appropriate translation for the title would be *Islam and the roots of governance* instead of; fundamentals of government, sources of political authority, bases of power, or foundations of political power. "Law and the Common Good; To bring about a virtuous city or preserve the old order," in *The Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and theory of Statecraft,* ed. Mehrzad Boroujerd (Syracuse University Press, 2013), 218.

immediately after its collapse in the aftermath of World War I. My focus here is primarily on Egypt and Turkey, where the question of the Caliphate as combining religious and political authority was hotly debated. Secondly, I discuss the details of Abd al-Raziq's critique against the Caliphate in his book *al-Islam*, which argues that the Caliphate historically was a political institution rather than "religious" in nature. He does that by making both a historical as well as a "religious" argument and by providing evidence from within the Islamic tradition to bolster his claims.

<p style="text-align:center">* * * * *</p>

The modernizing project of the Ottoman Empire took place under what is known today as the Tanzimat system lasting between 1839-1876. Ottoman Bureaucrats pushed for reforms to combat the aggression of external Western enemies, as well as to control the wave of nationalist uprisings within the Empire. The Tanzimat system continued under the reign of Sultan, and self-appointed Caliph, Abdulhamid II (1842-1918), hence heralding the Hamidian regime of power. Abdulhamid II's regime generated stronger calls for popular sovereignty and the demand for a constitution to limit his political power - since he had re-molded the category of the Caliphate to having a "pious" meaning by combining both religious and political authority under this title. Most importantly, he imbued the title of the Caliph with new meanings, as he created new traditions and ceremonies in his honor and rewarded those loyal to him, thus departing from the practices and conduct of the *Rashidun.*

As Sukri Hanioglu explains, the calls for a constitution within the Empire first emerged in 1826 when Ottoman bureaucrats monopolized power at the expense of other political groups. It was then hoped that the Constitution would allow Muslim masses' public opinion to lead the

government, thus the emergence of their concept of popular sovereignty.[20] By Sultan

Abdulhamid II's time, Ottoman bureaucrats joined forces with their critics in re-demanding the

Constitution, which they hoped, would curb the ambitions of the Sultan. Abdulhamid II, like "his

predecessors, the Tanzimat statesmen" however, imposed strict adherence to the letter of the law,

while also presenting himself as a "just" Islamic Caliph.[21]

      After the collapse of the Empire in the aftermath of World War I, Mustafa Kemal

(d.1938) came to a head the new nation-state of Turkey, and under his leadership, the contest

between state sovereignty and popular sovereignty resumed once more, albeit under different

historical conditions. Give the title (*Ataturk*) or father of the secular Turkish nation-state, Kemal

is best remembered as having encouraged the ideal of popular sovereignty, while historically he

consolidated his power under this guise.[22] First, he ended the Sultanate, and eventually the

Caliphate in 1924, as part of his aggressive policy of secularizing and modernizing Turkey a la

Europe. His abolishment of the Caliphate generated different reactions; those like the "two

members of the Indian *Khilafat* Movement, Maulana Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, urged

Kemal to preserve the Ottoman Caliphate for the sake of Islam."[23] However, as Basher Nafi

points out:

      "Under Turkey's new nationalist government, (Khilafat Movement's requests) however, was

construed as foreign intervention, and any form of foreign intervention was labeled an insult to Turkish

---

[20] Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 112.
[21] Ibid, 123.
[22] Basheer M. Nafi, "The Abolition of the Caliphate in Historical Context," in *Demystifying the Caliphate: Historical Memory and Contemporary Contexts*, ed. by Malawi Al-Rasheed, Carool Kersten, and Marat Shterin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 31. See also; Serif Mardin. "Religion and Secularism in Turkey" in *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*, eds. Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury, and Mary C. Wilson (University of California Press, 1993), 347–74.
[23] Basheer M. Nafi, "The Abolition of the Caliphate in Historical Context," 33.

sovereignty, and worse, a threat to State security. Kemal promptly seized his chance…on his initiative; the National Assembly abolished the Caliphate on February 20, 1924."[24]

By the 1920's a contest over sovereignty also ensued between the Egyptian King Fuad I (1868-1936), and the Egyptian political elite parties and intellectuals who aspired for popular sovereignty. In her book *A Short History of Modern Egypt*, Afaf Marsot describes how under nominal independence granted by the British, the Egyptian parliament created a constitution which allowed Fuad to "chose and appointed the Prime Minister and dismiss the cabinet and postpone the parliament….the king was therefore given too much power, a power he used to undermine the workings of parliament."[25] However, Fuad's reign was not uncontested since prominent members, such as Saad Zaghloul of the Wafd party repeatedly challenged the king's authority. The abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 then presented the perfect opportunity for Fuad to not only fill the power vacuum left in the Muslim world but also to silence his opponents like Zaghloul. It was against this background that Abd al-Raziq's work came to the forefront in 1925 and criticized, not the fitness of Fuad for the Caliphal office, but rather the institution of the Caliphate, and its place within the Islamic tradition and history.

* * * * *

Born in 1888 to an illustrious Egyptian landowning family, Ali Abd al-Raziq grew up around an intellectually energizing environment. He came from a long line of scholars and political party members as his father Hasan founded the Ummah party in 1907, and one of his

---

[24] Ibid, 54.
[25] Afaf Lutfi Sayyid-Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), 24.

brothers, Mahmud, co-founded the Liberal Constitutionalist Party in 1922.[26] After having

memorized the Quran at the tender age of 10, Ali Abd al-Raziq attended the prestigious Islamic

University of Al-Azhar for "religious" education. There he attained familiarity with Islamic

history, philosophy, jurisprudence, and political theory, as well as knowledge of Quranic

sciences, narrations of Prophetic statements (*hadith*), and Islamic theology. In 1915, he

graduated with the certificate of a religious scholar (*Alim*) which allowed him to teach as well as

work in an Islamic court as a judge (*Qadi*) in the city of Alexandria. During the early 1900's Al-

Azhar's curriculum did not concern itself with western subjects such as ancient philosophy or

modern political science, thus to address this lack Abd al-Raziq went on to attend the University

of Cairo for secular studies. There he worked under the guidance of the Italian Orientalist, Carlo

Alfonso Nallino; he also immersed himself in the study of Islamic history and jurisprudence,

both of which led him to the concept of the Caliphate.[27]

  After attaining his degree at the University of Cairo, Abd al-Raziq traveled to the United

Kingdom and briefly attended the University of Oxford. Unfortunately, he could not finish his

studies due to the effects of World War I in England and thus returned to Egypt soon after. Upon

his return, Abd al-Raziq worked as a Qadi, taught courses, and embarked upon a decade of a

lengthy and extensive investigation into the topic of the Caliphate. Having sifted thoroughly

through authoritative Sunni sources, Abd al-Raziq published his findings on the Caliphate in his

1925 book, *al-Islam*. It is important to note that the ideas of moving on from the Caliphate, as

well as for its preservation, were all circulating in the Muslim world well before and after the

---

[26] James Broucek, "The Controversy Of Shaykh 'Ali 'Abd Al-Raziq," (Phd.diss., The Florida State University College of Arts and Sciences, 2012), 2.
[27] Mona Hassan, "Debating a Modern Caliphate," in *Longing for the Lost Caliphate: A Transregional History* (Princeton University Press, 2016), 225.

demise of the Ottoman Caliphate. While, it is plausible that Abd al-Raziq meant to question King Fuad's right to the Caliphate, I do not think this explanation alone suffices. I contend that Abd al-Raziq was also conducting a revisionist history of the early years of Islam and the *Rashidun* Caliphate, thus imbuing the concept of the Caliphate with a modern definition, which was absent from its past usage.[28] Even though Abd al-Raziq's *al-Islam* has attracted the most fame and infamy, he also authored a second lesser known book, titled *Al Ijma fi al-Sharia al Islamiyya* (*Consensus in Islamic Sharia)* in 1947.[29] Long after the scandal of losing his judgeship license due to Al-Azhar's critique of his book as "unIslamic," Abd al-Raziq remained active politically within the Egyptian Parliament and intellectual by teaching at the Egyptian Language Academy.[30] He passed away in 1966, which regenerated once again the controversy surrounding his book, *al-Islam*.

* * * * *

The central thesis of *al-Islam* was that the Caliphate, a political institution since the early years of Islamic history, had never been a "religious" obligation. Since its formation, this institution had little authority over the *Sharia* and, or other matters of the faith. The Caliphate, which emerged immediately after the death of the Prophet, was never present during Muhammad's lifetime. Had it been a central tenet of faith, then Muhammad would undoubtedly have declared himself the first ever Caliph. However, this was not what occurred. Muhammad laid the foundations for a pluralist and multi-religious community in Medina where his followers, including the Medinan Jews, and non-Jewish Arabs (*al-Ansar*) agreed to cohabit peacefully, as

---

[28] James Broucek, "The Controversy Of Shaykh 'Ali 'Abd Al-Raziq," 4.
[29] Mona Hassan, "Debating a Modern Caliphate," 225.
[30] Orit Bakshin, "Ali Abd Al-Raziq," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, ed. Gerhard Bowering (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1r2g6m.

documented in the authentic Medina Document. Moreover, as Abd al-Raziq further argued, nowhere in that document was there any mention of the terms Caliphate or Caliph, nor an obligation for Muslims to establish a specific political order.[31]

      With these facts in mind, Abd al-Raziq presented his argument in three parts. In part one titled "The Caliphate and Islam," he deconstructed the linguistic and theological significance of the term Caliphate, as well as how it had been interpreted by Quranic exegetes, and philosophers within the Sunni tradition. Abd al-Raziq emphasized that the Caliphate assumed a "religious significance" retroactively in time, since its definition within the Quran was ambiguous, occurring only in passages referring to Adam or David instead of Muhammad or any of his followers. In the second section labeled "Islam and Government," Abd al-Raziq made one of the most original contributions within modern Islamic political theory by reinterpreting Prophet Muhammad's legacy. He described Muhammad's leadership as purely "religious" which was different from the Orientalists' description of him as a shrewd and brilliant military strategist, tactician, and politician.

     In the third and final section of his book "The Caliphate and the Government throughout History," Abd al-Raziq defended his main argument regarding the separation of "religious" and political authority in Islam. Since the Caliphate was never required for believers, and since Prophet Muhammad was only a messenger of God, then logically the Caliphate of Muhammad's successors --the *Rashidun*-- were all primarily political, in Abd al-Raziq's opinion. Therefore, he

---

[31] For a detailed reading of the Medina Constitution/Charter consult; Michael Lecker, *The "Constitution of Medina," in Muhammad's First Legal Document*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). Moreover, Walid Nuwayhid, "Chapter 8: The Medina Charter," in *Human Rights in Arab Thought; A Reader,* ed. Salma K. Jayyussi (New York; I. B. Taurus, 2005), 229-249.

insisted that the Caliphate was never incumbent upon the believers, and indeed not upon the modern Muslims.

In sum, Abd al-Raziq asserted that "religious" authority or the authority exercised by Prophet Muhammad as a messenger and prophet, had ceased with his death, and did not transfer on to the *Rashidun*, or the religious scholars (*Ulama*), nor the Muslim Community (*Ummah*). Furthermore, he described Islam as a *din*, which was much more than simply a "religion," and as such did not necessitate the establishment of a particular form of political institution.[32] The Caliphate, as well as the concept of giving allegiance to a Caliph (*bay'a*), were both innovative concepts which involved some form of duress according to Abd al-Raziq. Also, electing a Caliph with public consensus (*ijma*) occurred only at specific instances in Islam's history, thus reviving the Caliphate as a political institution was no longer a necessity for Muslims of his time.[33]

* * * * *

In part one Abd al-Raziq grappled with the term *Khalifa* as mentioned in the Quran, which refers to a person who stands as a substitute for someone else. Based on this Quranic definition, all political leaders who followed Muhammad, were *Khalifat Rasul Allah* rather than *Khilafat Allah*, in Abd al-Raziq's opinion.[34] However some *Ulama* had extended the title of God's Caliph on to all of humanity as descendants of Adam, who was the first human, and assigned the title of *Khalifa* on earth, as Allah proclaimed, "I shall appoint a deputy (*Khalifa*) on

---

[32] "Din can generally refer to any path that humans follow for their lives or more specifically to Islam as the comprehensive way of life chosen by God for humanity's temporal and eternal benefit. Din encompasses beliefs, thought, character, behavior, and deeds… which comprises Islam." John L Esposito, "Din," *Oxford Islamic Studies Online,* http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e541.

[33] Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologie*s (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989),141.

[34] Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (*Cambridge:* Cambridge University Press, 1986).

earth."[35] As a deputy and substitute, a Caliph by Quranic definition could not precede a Messenger or Prophet, given the elevated status (*darjah*) of the latter, within the hierarchies of God's creations. However, Muslims scholars had committed this exact error as Abd a-Raziq mentions, "these scholars (those who permit the term *God's Caliph*) suggested that the Caliph assumes the same position as the Prophet towards the faithful…he (*Caliph*) becomes the supreme overseer and defender of the faith."[36] Hence Abd al-Raziq found the elevation of the status of Caliphs to the status of Prophet Muhammad problematic, since it was their fellow Muslims who chose the former, rather than appointed directly by God.

Abd al-Raziq also problematized the extent to which Sunni scholars had encouraged obedience within the *Ummah*, which resulted in out of proportion devotion to the Caliphs. He argued that if a fallible being always filled the Caliphal position and not a divinely chosen human such as Prophet Muhammad, then both the Caliph and the Caliphate could never be the equivalent of a Prophet or Prophethood. As the Islamic profession of faith also made apparent in his view, Muslims declared their belief in the unity of God and the finality of His messenger, Muhammad. Thus, he wrote, "We cannot find, in the entire body of the (Islamic) tradition, any evidence that the institution of the Caliphate was a matter of religious dogma, or that it was entailed by religious belief."[37]

In part two, Abd al-Raziq differentiated the duties associated with Prophethood versus those invested under the title of a Caliph who had temporal authority. He convincingly asserted that a Muslim Caliph's responsibilities entailed providing security, protection, and defense--as

---

[35] Ali Abd al-Raziq, *Islam and the Foundations of Political Power*, ed. Abdou Filali-Ansary, trans. Maryam Loutfi (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press & The Aga Khan University, 2014), 27.
[36] Abd al-Raziq, *Islam and the Foundations of Political Power,* 28.
[37] Ibid, 40.

well as conducting warfare—and establishing order and being just. Here Abd al-Raziq admitted there appears to be some overlap between the functions of a Caliph and those executed by Prophet Muhammad, since the latter also conducted raids (*maghazi*), fought against disbelievers, and resolved conflicts amongst his community members.[38] However, Muhammad's primary duty was to preach the word of God, in Abd al-Raziq's scholarly opinion.

For Prophets, the activity of preaching is a performance which aims at transforming the listeners morally, and converting them as fellow believers in the present.[39] Similarly, Prophet Muhammad's role was to guide his community by teaching them how to be morally good Muslims since Islam is an embodied practice rather than a declaration of faith. Abd al-Raziq understood the power of Prophetic preaching as performed when he wrote, "Religious preaching…takes effect only by word, *by the change wrought in the heart through persuasion*, by an impact on human sensibility. Religious preaching cannot take effect by coercion or force; thus, in the Quran God himself declares that."[40]

While Prophet Muhammad and his followers participated in warfare to protect their faith and community, this was a unique case: an instance of "religious" and political authority existing simultaneously, Abd al-Raziq explained. Above all, Muhammad's most important task was to guide his community and instill faith as a Messenger and Prophet, a role which was later adopted

---

[38] Ibid, 70.

[39] Ibid, 71. On an intriguing article regarding "religious" talk as a form of transformative performance see Bruno Lauter, "Thou Shall Not Freeze-Frame, or, How Not to Misunderstand the Science and Religion Debate." in *Science, Religion, and the Human Experience* ed. by James D. Proctor, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 27-48. And F. E. Peters, *Jesus and Muhammad. Parallel Tracks, Parallel Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[40] Ibid.

by Holy Men.[41] For Abd al-Raziq, Prophecy was a unique role which could not be performed by any temporal ruler since "This role (Prophethood) involves a function which is unique and which he does not share with anyone else."[42] Since Prophet Muhammad was the last Prophet of his kind, and since no one after him could claim the mantle of prophecy, it followed that the leadership after his death came to be purely political. For Abd al-Raziq, Prophet Muhammad was a reformer and renewer of faith, who had no need for coercion or violence, unlike the figure of a Caliph. The Caliph was a political leader who did not refrain from using coercion and violence to assert his power. This is how Abd al-Raziq summarized his views:

"It is equally understandable that the authority of a new type, sharing nothing with the function of transmitting the divine message…should appear after him (Muhammad). This would have to be a secular power, a temporal or political rather than a "religious" power. This is in fact what happened."[43]

In the last section of his book, Abd al-Raziq boldly claimed that the Caliphate was an innovation from the age of the *Rashidun* who, despite their piety, were never inheritors of Prophetic authority since one group or another opposed each Caliph. This meant that none of them was chosen unanimously by the *Ummah*. For example, the war of Apostasy (*Haroub al-Riddah*) immediately after Abu Bakr was chosen to lead the Muslim community, occurred because all three parties including; the Mecca emigrants (*Muhajirun*), the Medinan helpers (*al-Ansar*), and Prophet Muhammad's companions, were competing for the Caliphal title. This was a political struggle which was later assigned a "religious" significance long after the events. Abd

---

[41] David Sagiv, "Chapter 7: Attitudes to the Caliphate and the Imamate," in *Fundamentalism and Intellectuals in Egypt 1973-1993*, (London: Routledge, 1995), 148. For a fascinating article on Prophecy and Holy Men in Arabia and early history of Islam see Chase F. Robinson, "Prophecy and Holy Men in Early Islam," in *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown,* eds. James Howard-Johnston and Paul Anthony Hayward (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1999.
[42] Ali Abd al-Raziq, *Islam and the Foundations of Political Power,* 83.
[43] Ibid, 107.

al-Raziq described the outcome of these wars as, "These rivalries persisted until allegiance was finally given to Abu Bakr... this allegiance had very much to do with a temporal or political pledge; that it had all the attributes of a newly created state."[44] According to Abd al-Raziq, these wars and contests over the Caliphal office cannot be described as Wars of "Apostasy" since they never represented a threat to the faith. Neither Abu Bakr, nor any of the *Rashidun* ever pretended to take over Muhammad's role as a Prophet, as evident by Abu Bakr declaration, "O people, I am one of you. I do not know whether you will expect from me things that the Messenger of God could offer. God has elected Muhammad over all his creation, and has protected him from error, *while I am merely a follower.*"[45]

By establishing specific points against the "religious" significance of the Caliphate, Abd al-Raziq concluded that Muslims were free to create any form of government as long as it upheld Islamic values of justice as delineated within the *Sharia*.[46] He explained that since the body of Islamic law (*Sharia*) had allowed Muslims to make changes to its structure, believers did not have to follow failed models of governance such as the Ottoman Caliphate.[47] In the final section, he also insisted that "this institution (*Caliphate*) has nothing to do with Islam (*din*). No principle prevents those (modern Muslims) from dismantling this obsolete system; from building their state and their system of government based on past constructions of human reason."[48] While

---

[44] Ibid, 109.

[45] Ibid, 110.

[46] Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologie*s, 131. For a nuanced understanding of the *Sharia,* consult Asma Afsaruddin, "What Sharia Law Means: Five Questions Answered," *The Conversation*, June 15, 2017, http://theconversation.com/what-sharia-law-means-five-questions-answered-79325.

[47] Mark Wegner, *Islamic Government: The Medieval Sunnī Islamic Theory of the Caliphate and the debate over the revival of the Caliphate in Egypt, 1924–1926* (Ph.D. diss., Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012), 221, protesthttps://search.proquest.com/docview/304737827.

[48] Ali Abd al-Raziq, *Islam and the Foundations of Political Power*, 118.

elaborating on an alternative political model would have strengthened Abd al-Raziq's case

further, one hypothesizes that his intentions were not to force a model on to the *Ummah.*[49]

Instead, Abd al-Raziq left the door ajar to the political possibilities, thus allowing the

Ummah to make political decisions collectively. Most importantly, the primary purpose of his

work, I believe, was to demonstrate the historical significance of the Caliphate as a political

institution and not an article of faith or an inherent part of Islam as a *din*. By making his

argument against the revival of the Caliphate, Abd al-Raziq opened the space for Muslims to

imagine the modern state as a viable replacement to the political intuition he identified as the

Caliphate. He made the argument that political sovereignty in Islamic history had always been

secular, since the Caliphate was never authorized with the right to lead or guide the Muslim

community. Thus, in his opinion, Muslims should not aspire for this political institution, and

instead should seek other ways of organizing themselves befitting the needs of their present.

* * * * *

Both Muslim and Western scholars have wondered why Abd al-Raziq, a Sunni religious

scholar and *Sharia* court judge, made a case against the historic Caliphate? Was he reframing

Orientalist arguments in Islamic garb, as his critics charged him? Alternatively, was he

remolding the discursive Islamic tradition in the image of liberalism? Questions such as these

abounded throughout the Muslim world in 1925 and continue to do so today. Some scholars

suggest his motives were primarily political; to criticize King Fuad who was vying for the

Caliphal title immediately after Ottoman Caliphate's fall in 1924. Others counter that Abd al-

---

[49] According to Butterworth, the biggest shortcoming of Abd al-Raziq's work was his failure to offer concrete suggestions and alternative political reforms in place of the Caliphate. "Those critics have had an easy time largely because Abd al-Raziq is so vague about what he means by change, reform, and modernization. At no point does he identify the political or social organizations he desires or thinks Muslims now need" (p.239).

Raziq's secular education during the first decade of the 20th century, under the mentorship of Western Orientalists, led him to present a revisionist account of both Islamic history and tradition. The first part of this section discusses hypotheses from both groups of scholars, those relying upon political motives versus those who attribute it to conditions engendered by the modernizing project. Such a comparison allows us to analyze how scholars overall have received and read Abd al-Raziq's ideas. After accomplishing this, I proceed to summarize how three distinct ideological schools such as the Revivalists, Muslim Laicists, and Modern liberals, have responded to Abd al-Raziq's work. This information serves well to emphasize how Muslims vertically- meaning cross-culturally, and horizontally- meaning those from Abd al-Raziq's time until our present, have read and (re)read *al-Islam*, thus disagreeing about what the Caliphate means.

Lastly, I present my analysis of Abd al-Raziq's legacy by utilizing Samira Haj's ideas in *Reconfiguring the Islamic Tradition.* I argue that categories such as "liberal," "secular," and "laicist," hinder more than they aid, as these categories overlook Abd al-Raziq's commitment to Islam which he repeatedly affirmed within *al-Islam*. By eliminating these Western-centric categories, we can appreciate Abd al-Raziq's ideas as a question on the nature of political power within the Islamic tradition while also responding to the conditions of possibility available to him at that time.

* * * * *

Orientalist scholars have consistently argued that Abd al-Raziq's *al-Islam* was a political statement against King Fuad, camouflaged as a critical historical analysis of the Caliphate institution. For instance, the Orientalist, Leonard Binder in *Islamic Liberalism* claimed that Abd al-Raziq's *al-Islam* was directed at King Fuad's ambition to reclaim the title of the Caliphate for

himself.[50] However, Binder's explanation does not necessarily explain why Abd al-Raziq favored the dismantling of the Caliphate? Surely it would have been easier for him to support the Ottoman Caliph, Abdulmecid II, Sharif Hussain of Mecca, or any other better-suited candidates instead of Fuad. Why then argue against how Modern Muslims had come to conceive of Prophet Muhammad's legacy and that of the *Rashidun* Caliphate? As an alternative to the Orientalists' hypotheses, I find James Broucek's perspective helpful, which explains why Abd al-Raziq's efforts were a form of "revisionist history of the Prophet's mission, and Abu Bakr's Caliphate."[51]

Broucek describes that while Abd al-Raziq was guided by his Orientalist Professor Nallion, to conduct a revisionist history of the early years of Islam, he managed to depart from his mentor's ideas significantly. He trod an "uncharted territory" by asking, what was the nature of Prophet Muhammad's mission and the first Caliphate after his death? Abd al-Raziq's response to these questions did not signify a "fabrication of history" as was often the charge by some of his critics. Instead, in Broucek's opinion, he was "inventing the (Islamic) tradition" as is commonly done by members of various "religious" communities throughout history, who reformulate their origins narratives when experiencing historical changes.[52] I, on the other hand, do not find Abd al-Raziq to be reinventing the Islamic tradition, but rather remolding the definition of Caliphate from his present lens, and genealogically tracing how the separation of powers was historically present within the Islamic tradition.

Arab scholars Mona Hassan and Souad Ali favor the 'conditions of modernity hypothesis' to explain why Abd al-Raziq attacked the historic Caliphate and not Fuad's

---

[50] Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*, 132. Binder offers a useful analysis of 'Abd al-Raziq's arguments, including a summary the first half of his book which was a refutation of both Ibn Khaldun's and Rashid Rida's theories of the Caliphate.

[51] " James Broucek, "The Controversy Of Shaykh 'Ali 'Abd Al-Raziq," 162.

[52] Ibid.

candidacy directly. In their opinions, Abd al-Raziq's work was primarily a departure from the legacy of the Egyptian "modernizer" Muhammad Abduh (d.1905), thus reflecting the influence of his secular Western education. Both Hassan and Ali find Abd al-Raziq implicitly promoting the idea of a secular state and a de-politicized Islam. Mona Hassan, in *Longing for the Lost Caliphate* further hypothesizes that Abd al-Raziq looked upon a secularized Turkey for inspiration. There a certain Mehmet Sayyid Celebizade supported the Ottoman Caliphate's abolition by arguing how the Muslim community could easily revoke the power they had once endowed upon the Caliph.[53]

Also, according to Souad Ali, multiple factors, such as the persistent independence discourses of the mid-20s, the availability of Western education, and the interactions with Orientalist faculty at the University of Cairo—all contributed to the formation of Abd al-Raziq's secular opinions.[54] Additionally, Abd al-Raziq's privileged position as a members of the Liberal Constitutionalist Party, and his fear of an autocratic monarchy, led him to favor the secular model of separation of religious and political powers. This was modeled on the complex history of separation of Church and State, which had emerged out of Western Christian Europe.

Here we must remember that the separation of Church and State did not exist inherently within Christianity, contrary to popular opinions. New Testament scholar, Elaine Pagels' groundbreaking research on the Gnostic texts has shown, that during the early ministry of Peter a political struggle ensued between Jesus's disciples regarding who had the authority to lead

---

[53] He was a lawyer, Turkish senate member, as well as the author of *Hilafet ve Hakimiyet i Milliya* (The Caliphate and The National Sovereignty) which published anonymously in Turkey. It was translated in Arabic in 1924. This information is mentioned in Mona Hassan's *Longing for the Lost Caliphate: A Transregional History*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2016.
[54] Souad Ali, *A Religion, Not a State: Ali 'Abd Al-Raziq's Islamic Justification of Political Secularism* (Utah: University of Utah Press, 2009), 55.

believers. Pagels writes, "The central tenets of Christian faith were constructed to confer legitimacy on to a select group of men (eleven apostles like Peter), who claimed to have witnessed Jesus' resurrection first hand, though we have only second-hand testimony from believers who affirm this and skeptics who deny it."[55] Historicizing the Western European separation of powers between Church and State makes apparent the specific conditions in time and history which lead to this phenomenon. Abd al-Raziq was not encouraging modern Muslims of his time to emulate this Western phenomenon but rather was challenging their reconstruction of early Islamic history, and their reverence for the category of the Caliphate.

While I agree with Hassan, that Sayyid Bey's ideas may have bolstered Abd al-Raziq's confidence in publishing *al-Islam*, I find Abd al-Raziq's scope much broader than Bey's since the latter redefined Prophet Muhammad's authority in his work; I also do not doubt that by working with Nallino and reading Orientalist, Thomas Arnold's *The Caliphate*, affected Abd al-Raziq profoundly. However, I emphasize that his work was more than just a political statement since he did not offer any concrete remedies or solutions on how Egyptians political leaders could replace the Caliphate or King Fuad's authority. This is something lacking within his work, and I will offer my hypothesis on this later on.[56]

* * * * *

---

[55] Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 2004), 9.
[56] Both Hassan and Ali also trace Abd al-Raziq's "liberal" thoughts back to his mentor Muhammad Abduh, who believed in Islam's compatibility with modernity but who never went as far as to claim that the Caliphate had no place within Islam. Abduh rejected politics as corrupting and concerned himself the improvement of Islamic education. However, if Abd al-Raziq charted a new territory distinct from his mentor then to what extent did Abduh's thoughts guided him? Abd al-Raziq greatly admired Abduh since he and his older brother Mustafa both had studied under the brilliant teacher for several years. Nonetheless, we should be cautious in giving Abduh credit unduly.

Muslims, who adhere to a literal interpretation of authoritative Islamic sources of the Quran and *hadith*, are generally thought of as "Traditionalists" or as "Literalists." Renowned Anthropologist, Talal Assad, however, cautions that categories of "tradition" and especially "Islamic tradition" cannot be envisioned as being static or frozen in time. Assad writes, "The internal temporal structure of tradition is obscured if we represent it as the inheritance of an unchanging cultural substance from the past."[57] Hence disregarding the term "Traditionalists," I label one specific group of Muslims as "Revivalists" because this designation adequately captures how they imagine the historic Caliphate, and how in their opinion, this institution should be revived in modern times. I am also discarding the term "Literalist" since the Revivalists' aspirations are not limited to what the literal word of the Quran and *hadith* states.

As I have repeatedly mentioned above, Abd al-Raziq was a Muslim reformer attempting to find new ways of accommodating modern political sovereignty, i.e., the state, without compromising the Islamic faith. For Abd al-Raziq, historically speaking, the Caliphate was merely a political institution, implicitly suggesting that its replacement with the modern state is not un-Islamic. Others, like the Revivalists, however aspire to reviving a Caliphate modeled after the early era of Islam, and the era of Prophet Muhammad and his successors, as an institution that would combine both political and religious authority. For them, Abd al-Raziq's work was a gross misrepresentation and distortion of Islamic history. They chastised him for discarding the Caliphate, upon which "all Muslims" have agreed on for centuries. In their opinion there could

---

[57] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) 221. Quoting Barber Johansen's work Assad explains, "The respect for normative pluralism (*ikhtilaf*) is possible only because the *fiqh* scholars conceive of an ontological difference between the knowledge as revealed by God in Q texts, the Prophet's praxis, or the communal consensus on the one hand, and the knowledge which human beings acquire through their reasoning. The second one is fallible and has to interpret the first but cannot aspire to reach its rank. Therefore, Muslim jurists recognize the contingency of all results of scholarly reasoning."

only be two explanations for Abd al-Raziq's work: he was either taking credit for a non-Muslim Western writer or he was colluding with the British imperialists by weakening the solidarity of the Egyptian Muslims with his work.

The most prominent voices of opposition against Abd al-Raziq's ideas were his colleagues from Al-Azhar who brought specific charges against him, held a trial, and eventually revoked his judgeship license.[58] These peers charged Abd al-Raziq with denigrating the status of the *Sharia* by arguing that it did not necessitate the Caliphate in Islamic tradition. They also accused him of distorting the nature of Prophetic government, negating the "religious" nature of the consensus (*ijma*) of the first Islamic community, as well as the piety of the *Rashidun* by labeling them as Kings. Even though both Abd al-Raziq's and his critics' goal was the same, to preserve and enforce the *Sharia*, they disagreed on the nature of political authority in Islam as delineated by this system.

It is pertinent to remember that the project of modernization in 19th and 20th century Egypt, with its creation of European inspired schools, armies, and administrations, as Wael Hallaq articulates, "came to displace almost every sphere that the *Sharia* and its related institutions had occupied. The effect of these reforms was to create a new subject, the citizen, who sees the world through the eyes of the modern state."[59] Meaning the *Sharia*, which Abd al-Raziq had encountered in his present, and was different from the one, which had been historically present during the time of the *Rashidun*.

Abd al-Raziq like other modern Muslims, was conscripted in the project of modernity and could not help but internalize the concepts of free reason, rationality, and political

---

[58] Broucek, "The Controversy Of Shaykh 'Ali 'Abd Al-Raziq," 4.
[59] Wael Hallaq, *Restating Orientalism: The Critique of Modern Knowledge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 116.

sovereignty as necessary replacements to the Caliphate. Thus, in his book, Abd al-Raziq stated that "*Sharia* cannot be used to justify certain State institutions…state cannot claim to enforce *Sharia*, and that people need to use *reason* to oppose the state (in that matter)."[60] However, this is precisely what the Egyptian state had done by curtailing *Sharia*'s scope of regulatory power, which was not limited initially to the "private" sphere but had played a significant role in the shaping of the moral sensibilities of believers.[61]

Additionally, among the Revivalists, who also disagreed with Abd al-Raziq's interpretation of the *Sharia* and the early era of Islam, was the Syrian journalist Muhammad Rashid Rida (d.1935), who been a student of Abd al-Raziq's teacher, Muhammad Abduh.[62] Abduh is frequently described in Western scholarship as a "liberal" Islamic reformer, who wanted to "Westernize" the Islamic education system, beginning with the University of al-Azhar. Abduh's experience as a student at Al-Azhar during the mid 19th century, and his struggles with classical methods of learning, namely; memorization and oral recitation, led him to perceive the quality of Islamic education as outdated and ineffective. Nontheless, Abduh desired to "bridge the gap between what Islamic societies should be, and what they had become, and in what sense can Muslim societies be truly Muslim?"[63] This was a dilemma for Abduh-- how to grapple with the perverseness of modernization and secularization taking place during 19th century Egypt, while also preserving the ethical sensibilities of being a Muslim? In the face of these conditions,

---

[60] James Broucek, "The Controversy Of Shaykh 'Ali 'Abd Al-Raziq," 41.
[61] Hallaq, *Restating Orientalism,* 112.
[62] Mark Wegner, *Islamic Government*, p.173. Rida was the disciple and biographer of Muhammad Abduh. Similar to Abduh, Rida also preached Islam's compatibility with modern conditions; however, went to great lengths in finding complementary features of modern government within the Islamic tradition.
[63] Albert Hourani, *Arab Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 138.

Abduh advocated for educational reform in Islamic learning at Al-Azhar. However, as Asad decribes, Abduh's dilemma remained in tact as he attempted to define the *Sharia*:

"On one hand he (Abduh) complains that teaching and examining the *Sharia* in al-Azhar pays far too much attention to *ibadat* (rituals of worship) and far too little to *muamlat* (rules for social relations). But he also says that the judge's authority requires more than intellectual competence, and that it depends on his developing certain moral aptitudes and predispositions."[64]

As a Muslim, Abduh wanted to preserve the limited role of the *Sharia* in the face of Western encroachment, but as a modern subject, he also had internalized subjectivities of Western Europe, as shaped by the concept of the Secular and the political doctrine of Secularism.[65] Abd al-Raziq similarly conceived of *Sharia* not as a template which allowed every individual Muslim to decide for themselves which political system they desired to live in, but rather as a guiding roadmap for the *Ummah* since the "*Sharia* rejects the idea that the moral subject is completely sovereign…Islamic jurists regard the individual's ability to judge what conduct is right and good (for oneself as well for others) to be dependent…on embodied relationships."[66]

While Rashid Rida did not have a formal secular education like Abd al-Raziq, he too internalized the vocabulary of the modern subjectedhood. We know Rida had written on the

---

[64] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 247.
[65] Ibid. In his chapter 1 "What Might an Anthropology of Secularism Look Like?" Asad begins with the premise that it is imperative to map the difference between secularism as the political doctrine and the secular, which, "brings together certain behaviors, knowledge, and sensibilities in modern life." Secularism falls under the broad project of modernity with its myth of equal citizenship, private vs. public reason, and universal human rights, all of which conflict with the nation-state's monopoly on an exercise of violence for security purposes. The secular on the other hand is contingent upon time, place, and religion for meaning and involves the creation and transformation of a sovereign subject, who is supposed to have agency, autonomy, rationality, meanwhile, nature is also transformed as a "manipulatable material determinate, homogenous, and subject to mechanical laws."
[66] Ibid.

topic of the Caliphate as early on as the 1890's when "drawing upon Abduh's work, he (Rida) supported the Ottoman Caliph Abdulmecid II."[67] While Rida remained critical of Abdulmecid's failure as a Caliph, he hoped that the built-in mechanisms within the *Sharia*, such as the principle of *Shura*, would allow Muslims to prevent a despotic Caliphate. Additionally, even though Rida's opinions on the Caliphate changed throughout his lifetimes, he remained adamant that Muslims, especially the Arabs with the assistance of Turks, needed to establish a Caliphate to resist Western imperialism.

In a modern-day Caliphate, Rida envisioned, "the Caliph would not have absolute authority since in Classical Sunni doctrine *those who bind and loose* (*ahl al-ḥall wal-aqd*) would put constraints on the Caliph's authority. In modern times it would be all leaders and not just *Ulama* who would limit the Caliphate's reach."[68] This expansion of authority by Rida, to all Muslim leaders was a modern interpretation of the checks and balances mechanisms, which had been reserved for only a select group of men within the Sunni tradition. Rida justified his addition of all the leaders by limiting a Caliph's power, given the political realities of his present, as the wave of Pan-Arabism was rising in the Middle East, and as the Ottoman Empire was taking its last breaths.

It is quite possible that Abd al-Raziq's work against the Caliphate offended Rida, who had published his call for a renewed Caliphate two years prior in 1923, labeled *al-Khilafa au Imam al-Uzman* (*Caliphate or the Great Imamate*). Immediately after the publication of *al-Islam*, on June 21st, 1925, Rida published a scathing book review of *al-Islam* in his journal The Lighthouse (*Al Manar*) by using the terminology of "falsify," and "misguidance" to discredit

---

[67] Broucek, "The Controversy Of Shaykh 'Ali 'Abd Al-Raziq," 194.
[68] Ibid.

Abd al-Raziq's work. In a 1932 speech, Rida continued his attack on certain "false" reformers, whom he believed "assumed the leadership of renewal and monopolized the title of Islamic revivalists."[69] From Rida's perspective, Abd al-Raziq had falsely propagated an extreme view which not only made it permissible to abolish the Caliphate but a necessity.[70] As an alternative, Rida proposed that Muslims needed to revive the Caliphate, to fortify against Western encroachment as well as to take a necessary step towards the revival of the *Ummah.* However, as I will discuss next, Muslims Laicists, in disagreement with Rida, embraced Abd al-Raziq's arguments and called for the end of the Caliphate as a viable institution in modern times.

* * * * *

Laicism, the predecessor of the concept of Secularism, first emerged during the French Revolution and insisted upon the separation of a "religious" institutions from the political ones.[71] What makes Muslim Laicists distinct from ordinary Muslims is their rejection of an Islamic State or the Caliphate based on "religious" reasons. Essentially, Muslim Laicists demand a pluralist society in which a state would represent all cultures and groups regardless of religious or atheist affiliation. They also enthusiastically praise Abd al-Raziq's work to justify the creation of such a society, which would emphasize individual liberties.[72] Overall, Muslim Laicists find Laicism to be complementary to Islam rather than its antithesis, and argue that Abd al-Raziq was not the

---

[69] Rashid Rida, "Renewal, Renewing, and Renewers," *Oxford Islamic Studies Online,* http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1979.

[70] Malcolm Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 221.

[71] Radhan Luay. *Muslims against the Islamic State*, 4. I am relying heavily upon Luay's definition, and explanation of Laicism since his work extensively discusses this concept and how Abd al-Raziq's legacy can be interpreted under this category.

[72] Christian Donath, "Ali Abd Al-Raziq and the Politics of Secularism: Breaking the Islamist-Liberal Impasse," in *Beyond the Arab Spring in North Africa*, eds. Daniel Křížek, and Jan Záhořík (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017), 165.

only thinker to advance such a position.[73] However, as James Broceuk would counter, "it would be more accurate to categorize Abd al-Raziq's work as a refutation of Islamism rather than a promotion of secularism since he never offered how living in a secular state would be beneficial for the believers."[74] Nonetheless, some prominent supporters of Abd al-Raziq in this group include Professor of Islamic Law Abdullahi Ahmed al-Naim.[75]

Al-Na'im as a passionate defender of Laicism asserts, "I need a secular state because *Sharia* cannot be coerced due to the fear of the state."[76] His arguments can be summarized as such; Laicist ideology does not contradict but complements Islam. Though Islam has political components, this should not be a reason to establish an Islamic State or the Caliphate since the state has always relied upon a legitimized monopoly of violence and has enlisted political elites for support.[77] Furthermore, there was no established authority on the moral necessity of the Caliphate in classical or medieval Islamic political theory as Abd al-Raziq has argued in his work. Thus, for Al-Na'im any state which upholds one "religion" over others would be coercive in power, encroach on its citizens human rights, and hence could never be Islamic.

---

[73] They are partially correct in arguing that similar to Abd al-Raziq the Pakistani Muslim Philosopher, Muhammad Iqbal had supported the Mustafa Kemal's to "chart new paths and articulate a new consensus" by abolishing the Caliphate. Iqbal had been greatly inspired by the 17th-century Sufi reformer Shah Wali Allah and believed that attempts at recreating the first community in the present in the form of a Caliphate should not be imposed "stringently" on future Muslims. For more details on Iqbal find Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "South Asian Islam and the Idea of the Caliphate," in *Demystifying the Caliphate: Historical Memory and Contemporary Contexts,* eds. Madawi Al-Rasheed, Carool Kersten, and Marat Stern (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 59-60.

[74] James Broucek, "The Controversy Of Shaykh 'Ali 'Abd Al-Raziq," 4.

[75] Luay. *Muslims against the Islamic State*, 14. For Muslim Laicists Abd al-Raziq's case against the Caliphate does not contradict to the message of Islam or the authentic Prophetic narrations (*hadith*). This group would rather have a pluralistic community as established under the Prophet than the type of Caliphate, which Arab elites engineered after the death of Muhammad. In their opinion, it is not practical all of humanity or even all Muslims to live under one type of government. Muslims have to protect themselves against the self-centered tyrant since the threat to the community is not external as much as it is internal.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid, 276.

Furthermore, Al-Na'im explains, "Muslims need not perceive the secular state as a threat to Islamic politics since it has an interest in promoting political participation."[78] However, we know from Michel Foucault, Asad, and Hallaq's work, that this view is very much the myth espoused by Modernity as a tradition. The state, using its diffused power and governmentality, dominates and refashions modern subjects, both externally by disciplining their bodies, and internally by leading them to internalize the values of secularism, liberalism, rationalism, humanism, and the uncompleted project of the Enlightenment.[79] Al-Na'im's endorsement of Laicism, can thus be explained as his reading of the historic Caliphate as a modern subject. One needs to remember the historic Caliphate, under the *Rashidun* never functioned like a modern state. Only the Ottoman Caliphate, under the conditions of modernity, eventually enacted secularization reforms in 1839 and began to form state structures.[80] Before presenting my hypothesis on Abd al-Raziq's motivation for writing *al-Islam*, I now briefly discuss the reactions of Modern liberals, who find in Abd al-Raziq a kindred spirit.

* * * * *

Some Modern liberals maintain that Abd al-Raziq's work does not fit neatly within rigid ideological camps of "liberal" or "secular" since he would not have described himself as such. According to Christian Donath, Abd al-Raziq's definition of *Sharia* place him closer to his

---

[78]Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 65.

[79] Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 6.

[80] These include centralization of authority, bureaucratization, the abolition of charitable endowments (*Waqf*) and seizure of land, as well as taxes, and fiscal reforms. For more details consult Joel Beinin, "Ottoman Reform and European Imperialism, 1839-1907," in *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East,* 44-70. Also, Ussama Makdisi, "Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism: Modernity, Violence, and the Cultural Logic of Ottoman Reform," in *Empire in the City*, eds. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber, 29-48.

opponents' comfort.[81] While I commend Donath for attempting to break out of rigid and misleading categories, I believe Abd al-Raziq's ideas do not overlap with those calling for the revival of the Caliphate. As explained earlier, the Revivalists maintain the "religious" legitimacy of the Caliphate while Abd al-Raziq does not. Thus, both are not on the same spectrum, though I emphasize that Abd al-Raziq's stance does not make him any less Muslim, than Revivalists, as other polemics claim.

Nonetheless, Donath persuasively shows how important the application of the *Sharia* was for Abd al-Raziq when he wrote, "Islam does not impose upon Muslims a particular type of government…but allows us to choose the form that can facilitate the application of the *Sharia.*"[82] Hence in Donath's opinion, it would be incorrect to label Abd al-Raziq and his work as advocating Liberalism, Laicism, or Secularism since his intentions were not to erect a barrier between state power and religious life; instead, he wished to invite both groups to begin discussions on how Muslims can proceed from the fall of the Caliphate. Here I find Donath's analysis convincing and concur, that Abd al-Raziq was not advocating for a liberal definition of Islam, but trying to justify why the need for a Caliphate in the modern context was no longer necessary.[83] Donath is also correct in assessing how Abd al-Raziq vigorously defended the *Sharia* which is "often ignored by his critics and supporters alike."[84] I further add that Abd al-Raziq's aim, was not to question the authority of the *Ulama* or denigrate Islam as a *din*. His

---

[81] Christian, Donath. "Ali Abd Al-Raziq and the Politics of Secularism," 171.
[82] Ibid.
[83] M. A. Muqtedar Khan, "What Is Enlightenment? An Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Religion and Society* 16, (2014). "I think that the route to this noble end is through a collective emergence from this self-imposed *jahiliyyah*. This task requires major changes in the outlook of Muslim intellectuals as well as Muslims in general. Our self-imposed immaturity does not stem from a complete disregard for a reason; on the contrary, it stems from a lack of self-confidence" (p.6).
[84] Donath, "Ali Abd Al-Raziq and the Politics of Secularism," 172.

original critique of the Caliphate served as a wake-up call for the *Ummah* to discuss other pressing matters, such as what comes next and how can this discussion begin. [85]

<div align="center">* * * * *</div>

I will now bring forth my interpretation of Abd al-Raziq's motives behind his *al-Islam*, what he hoped to accomplish in my opinion, as well as my solution on how we can reinterpret his legacy by eliminating Western-centric labels, which have been attached to his work uncritically for far too long. I hypothesize that Abd al-Raziq conducted a scholarly investigation and historical revision on the concept of the Caliphate. An important fact to keep in mind is that Abd al-Raziq began his research at the University of Cairo and continued it for over a decade. Even though he was an *Alim* (religious scholar) and *Qadi* (judge), he was also a Muslim curious about the exalted status of the Caliphate which had assumed a timeless essence within the Islamic tradition. Thus, he wondered, have Muslims always venerated this institution or is it a recent phenomenon? Most importantly, why has this institution gained the status of the article of faith (*Iman*), when it was human-made and never established by the Prophet? All Muslims are aware that Prophet Muhammad's first community was not a Caliphate, and neither was he the first Caliph. In other words, I would say, Abd al-Raziq's work questioned when Prophetic authority ended and when temporal politics began within Islamic history.

Above all, he argued within the discursive Islamic tradition as an *Alim*, by applying his independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) and locating his arguments in Quranic verses and limited numbers of *hadith*. This is what renews and reforms Islam as a *din*--a constant generation of

---

[85] Ibid, 162.

novel ideas, debates, disagreements, and discussions occurring internally within the tradition.[86]

While his description of Prophet Muhammad's leadership as only a "religious" leader might not

entirely convince all Muslims, we must remember that the idea of separate concepts like

"religious" and "political" authority was not part of the language or culture of the tribal society

within which the Prophet and his message of Islam unfolded. This distinction emerged in the

modern age when a modern state dictated the separation of religion and state. It is the modern

state of being that led to Abd al-Raziq's response that the Caliphate itself was never a "religious"

institution, unlike the Catholic church in Western Europe. His stance, however, does not make

Abd al-Raziq either a liberal or secularist as stated by his opposition, and requires that we engage

closely with his ideas rather than dismiss or miscategorize them.

 I demand that we place Abd al-Raziq's work on the Caliphate within the Islamic tradition

and reimagine what it is meant by both the terms "Tradition" and "Islamic tradition."

Philosopher, Alasdair MacIntyre like Talal Asad, cautions that "Tradition is an ever-changing set

of socially embodied arguments extended through times…which certain fundamental agreements

are defined and redefined through debating with external enemies and internal debates."[87]

Traditions are constituted and reconstituted through debates, disagreements, and paradoxes, thus

embodying a fluidiy. Similarly, Islam as a tradition, has a fluid and dynamic movement

---

[86] Abd al-Raziq is correct in arguing that there was never such a thing as clear consensus within the community or the jurists since humans can never agree all the time. Muslims from the present would like to imagine and have done that there were no disagreements amongst past generations of Muslims. However Islamic history shows that there was plenty of strife amongst the community after the death of the Prophet.
[87] Ibid, 4.

(*harakiyya*).[88] Since renewal (*tajdid*), reform (*islah*), and revival (*iihya*) are all authentic and necessary aspects of Islam as a faith and tradition, Islam should be described as a living tradition, which moves, breathes, evolves, and changes given the conditions of believers' time and contexts.[89] Therefore, Abd al-Raziq, in my opinion made an internal critique of the Caliphate within the Islamic tradition, and not simply a secular, modern, or liberal claim.

<p style="text-align:center">* * * * *</p>

As this section has shown, I strongly disagree with the hypothesis that Ali Abd al-Raziq's work can and should be categorized under the labels of Liberalism, Laicism, and Secularism. These are Western and Eurocentric terms, which distract us from pondering upon what Abd al-Raziq left unstated in his work. I believe that was the main thrust of his work, to move on from the Caliphate debate and discuss what comes next for the *Ummah*, and how Muslims can adhere to the *Sharia* in the modern age? Abd al-Raziq's work is relevant even today as certain fundamentalist Islamic groups continue to co-opt the term "Caliphate" and the past to justify their political ends. Even though we can only imagine the past through the lens of the present, we still can preserve some of it's essence by saving quotes.[90] Thus, I close this section with a quote from Abd al-Raziq as he stood by his work until the end by declaring, "I do not revoke it (my stance). I have never revoked it."[91]

<p style="text-align:center">* * * * *</p>

---

[88] Shahrough Akhavi, "The Dialectic in Contemporary Egyptian Social Thought: The Scripturalist and Modernist Discourses of Sayyid Qutb and Hasan Hanafi," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 03 (August 1997): 377–401.

[89] Samira Haj. *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p.7.

[90] Walter, Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 264.

[91] Luay, *Muslims against the Islamic State*, 184.

In the following section, I move to discuss South Asian Muslims' reception of *al-Islam* by primarily focusing on sources in Urdu. As I will discuss below, several books and chapters have been devoted to discussions of *al-Islam,* and the historical context within which it emerged, precisely at the height of the Caliphate debate in 1925. There are also secondary sources which endlessly discuss and debate Abd al-Raziq's assertion that the Caliphate had been retroactively elevated as part of faith, while historically it had been a purely political institution. These sources also emphasize the broader impact of his ideas evident from the multi-lingual translations of his book, now available in French, German, Farsi, Malay, and Turkish. However, most secondary literature has failed to take notice or even mention the existence of an Urdu language translation of his work, titled *Islam aur Usul-i Hukumat*.[92]

My recovery of this Urdu translation is significant, because it addresses a glaring gap in modern scholarship, since, to my knowledge no secondary source on Abd al-Raziq's critique of the Caliphate has mentioned this Urdu translation. I suspect this is the case since, since most Muslims and Western scholars focused on the immediate impact of *al-Islam* after its publication in Egypt in 1925 and, more broadly the reactions engendered by this book, within the Arab world today. However, such scholars have failed to address how Muslims received Abd al-Raziq's work in other regions such as South Asia, South East Asia, Central Asia, and even Europe.[93] Thus as a remedy I asses the Urdu language translation and bring forth the reception of one

---

[92] 'Alī Abd al-Raziq, *Islām aur Uṣūl-i Hukūmat: al-Islām va Uṣūl al-Hukm,* trans. Rājā Muḥammad Fakhr Mājid (Lahore: Bazm-i Iqbāl, 1960). In the rest of the footnotes, this source will be abbreviated as (Majid, *Islam aur Usuli Hukumat*, p.x).

[93] I believe a mention of other language translations of *al-Islam* and brief reception of modern Muslims who may have read al-Islam in other languages would have strengthened both Buttersworth and Hassan's analyses.

Pakistani academic, while also offering a glimpse into how other intellectuals other than Egyptians and Arabs reviewed Abd al-Raziq's work.[94]

By making use of this translation and other primary Urdu sources, I discovered that the *Ulama* and other academics rejected Abd al-Raziq's theory of the Caliphate as based upon, what they interpreted as, some faulty premises. The convergence of opinions amongst South Asian Muslims leads me to hypothesize that the failure of the Khilafat Movement in 1922, the nature of education in Islamic learning institutions (*Madrasa/Mudaras*) in this region, and the creation of Pakistan in 1947, all contributed to shaping South Asian Muslims' conceptualization of the Caliphate. Additionally, I argue that Abd al-Raziq's stance on the Caliphate provided an opportunity for some South Asian Muslims to extend their critiques from his work, on to the European project of modernity. In what follows, I focus on the voices of the Indian and Pakistani Muslims, including the *Ulama* from Nadawat al-Ulama Institution, as well as other South Asian academics and intellectuals.[95] I start with Raja F. M. Majid's translation and critique of *al-Islam,* written approximately between 1952-53 but published in 1960. The second part of this section discusses reviews of *al-Islam* by the renowned Indian *Ulama,* Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (d.1998), and Maulana Muhammad Raziul Islam Nadi (b.1964), both of whom also obtained their religious training from Nadwat al-Ualam school.

* * * * *

---

[94] A quick search of the title *al-Islam* in World Cat led me to Columbia University's library catalog which showed the Urdu source listed in their offsite collection. Thankfully New York Public Library's MarLI program allowed me to access this source and make the necessary scans.

[95] An Islamic institution of learning founded in 1894 in Lucknow, India. Its curriculum gave primacy to Islamic sciences such as Hadith literature and Quranic exegesis along with a mastery of the Arabic language in both its classical and modern forms. Similar to Al-Azhar's curriculum in 1920's students of this institute were not given instructions in Western subjects such as Western philosophy, history, or sciences.

A quick search on the name Raja Fakhr Muhammad Majid does not yield any significant results these days. The only information available is from the *Middle East Journal* article which documented Majid's status as a visiting staff at the McGill University between the year 1952-53.[96] All the other information regarding his project comes from what he chooses to tell us in the preface. Specially, we learn that Majid worked closely with Canadian Orientalist, Wilfred Cantwell Smith (d.2000) who suggested this project.[97] We also discover that Majid had met Abd al-Raziq in person, in Cairo, to obtain his permission for the Urdu translation. In addition to reading the original Arabic version, Majid also accessed Charles C Adams's English translation of *al*-Islam to ensure the accuracy of his translation.[98] While Majid does not specify his reasons for the translation, it is likely that he felt the need to respond to Abd al-Raziq's compelling arguments against the "religious" necessity of the Islamic Caliphate.

In the preface, Majid skillfully summarized the life and career of Abd al-Raziq, who was alive at the time of this translation in 1960. From his summary, we learn that Abd al-Raziq had the privilege of personally learning from the renowned Egyptian reformer, Muhammad Abduh while attending the University of Al-Azhar in 1911.[99] Significantly Majid confirmed Abd al-Raziq's testimony that the history of *Sharia* eventually led Abd al-Raziq to wonder how Muslims

---

[96] The Middle East Institute, "Back Matter," *Middle East Journal* 7, no.1 (1953): 6, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4322480. It describes the inauguration of the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University in October 1952, thus the invitation of Muslim thinkers "in a cooperative endeavor toward an understanding of present-day developments in the Muslim world."

[97] Smith founded the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill and authored, *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind* (1962) which took issue with the Western concept of "Religion."

[98] Author of *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: A Study of the Modern Reform Movement Inaugurated by Muhammad 'Abudh* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1933). Majid, *Islām aur Uṣūl-i Hukūma*t, 19. Majid informs us that Adam's English translation was never published yet he credits Abd al-Raziq for sending him the photostats (photocopies?) of Adams' work.

[99] *Islam aur Usul-i Hukuma*t, 7.

constructed the significance of the Caliphate over the years.[100] However, immediately Majid contradicted himself by commenting, "اور اسی زمانے میں (فواد اول جب مصرکے حکمران تہے آپ یعنی

شیخ علی عبدالرازق یہ کتاب الإسلام لکھی جس سے درپردہ ان کا مقصد فواد اول کے دعوائے خلافت کا ابطال تہا"

"during this time period (when Fuad I was the King of Egypt) his (Sheikh Abd al-Raziq's book *al-Isla*m) was written with an implicit agenda of demolishing the King's political ambitions of becoming the next Caliph."

As I have argued earlier, Abd al-Raziq began working on this project long before the Caliphate debate or the abolition of this institution. In the introduction of the original Arabic version of *al-Isla*m, Abd al-Raziq informed his readers, "I must state that these pages are the fruit of labor in which I have invested the better part of my energies *for many years*."[101] As a Muslim scholar, it was part of Abd al-Raziq's professional training to not only produce scholarly works related to Islamic jurisprudence but also to engage with debates, disagreements, and reinterpretation of specific topics such as the role of *Sharia* and the Caliphate in modern times. Thus, unlike Majid and some other scholars, we should not overlook this crucial aspect of Abd al-Raziq's testimony. Within the preface, Majid also made a sweeping statement about *al-Islam*,

" اور ناقابل تردیدہا تک صدیوں نزدیک کے عالم مسلمانا جو گی لکھی تی ایک.ایسے موضوع پر مر تبہ پہلی کتاب یہ

جسے امرخداوندی سمجھا گیا" meaning, "for first time a book like this discussed a topic (the Caliphate) *upon which the entire Muslim world had previously agreed on for centuries* and

---

[100] Contrary to the misconception of the Sharia as "law," Professor Asma Afsaruddin describes the *Sharia* as a "wide-ranging moral and broad ethical principles drawn from the Quran and the practices and sayings (*Hadith*) of Prophet Muhammad" in "What Sharia Law Means: Five Questions Answered." *The Conversation*, June 15, 2017. http://theconversation.com/what-sharia-law-means-five-questions-answered-79325

[101] Abd al-Raziq, *Islam and the Foundations of Political Power*, 22.

which they had considered a crucial part of expressing devotion and obedience to Allah."[102] Here again, I take issue with Majid's reductionist statement, since as early as 1922, thinkers like Sayyid Bey of Turkey had published a book to justify the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate. While Bey's work was created to bolster the support for Mustafa Kemal's decision, it still constituted an intellectual project written by a Muslim thinker for the consumption of other Muslims. Thus even before the publication of *al-Islam* in 1924 Muslims were making a case for the end of the Caliphate.

My critique of Majid's statement further gains strength from the fact that Indian *Khalifat movement* which emerged in 1914 in India, and favored preserving the Ottoman Caliphate, never grew up to be a mass political movement in the region.[103] Thus the collapse of this movement highlighted that even amongst South Asian Muslims, not everyone supported the preservation of the Caliphate. Most importantly, in *Islam-aur-Usual-i-Hukumat,* Majid critiqued Abd al-Raziq's ideas in defense of the Caliphate by stating "this institution of the Caliphate was not as bad as the Sheikh had so described in his work. Hence why his work was considered so offensive."[104] Majid does not specify whether the Egyptian scholar's work was considered offensive only in Egypt at the time of its publication, or for all Muslims? Though it is highly likely that Majid took offense to Abd al-Raziq's work as he continued, "while no one in the Muslim world had any

---

[102] Majid, *Islam aur Usul-i Hukuma*t, 8.
[103] To gain a deeper understanding of this movement consult; A. C., Niemeijer, *The Khilafat Movement in India: 1919-1924* (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde, 1972). See also Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (Columbia University Press, 1982).
[104] Majid, *Islam aur Usul-i Hukuma*t, 12.

qualms about the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate or the book *al-Islam*, *we* find his work to be unconvincing and unacceptable."[105]

To counter Abd al-Raziq's "offensive" arguments against the necessity of the Caliphate, Majid posed the following questions; a) If the Quran has not assigned the Caliphate a "religious" significance then why did not the first community of Muslims raise this objection when pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr? b) How has the Muslim community allowed the Caliphate to exist for 1300 years and only recently began to raise objections against its legitimacy? c) If, as Abd al-Raziq stated, the concept of *Ijma* does not support the reinstatement of the Caliphate in the present, then what is the definition of this term? In Majid's opinion, the Prophetic *hadith* that "my community will never agree on any error" and the constant presence of the Caliphate both proved that the *Ummah* had given their *Ijma* to this institution, thereby collapsing the definition of Caliphate and *ijma* as one.[106]

Since Muslims have always pledged their allegiance to a Caliphal figure, for Majid, this proved that the *Ummah* had deemed the Caliphate to be as an integral part of the faith. He firmly asserted that the Caliphate was crucial for the existence of Islam, since it was a mechanism which ensured Muslims' access to justice, harmony, and the fulfillment of their obligations as commanded by Allah.[107] Unlike Abd al-Raziq's recommendation that Muslims should move past this political institution and establish another form of government, Majid countered, "How is it possible that Muslims be asked to observe their "religión" and perform all the duties incumbent on them but then give support to a non-Islamic form of government under which all forbidden

---

[105] Ibid, 12.
[106] Ibid, 13.
[107] Ibid, 14.

things such as alcohol and usury are permitted?"[108] The anxiety caused by this dilemma became

apparent when Majid mentioned that the Caliphate's absence would entail the moral corruption

of the *Ummah* and the annihilation of Islam.

What I find ironic is how Majid was making these claims in 1952, long after the Ottoman

Caliphate's demise. How did Majid reconciled his sweeping statements regarding the Caliphate

with the historical and political realities of his time? I believe the answer lies in the creation of

Pakistan as an Islamic Republic. I suspect Majid conflated the concept of a *Republic* with that of

the Caliphate, as he stated: "Every government which observes and protects the *Sharia* is a

Caliphate and should be called as such."[109] Even though it wasn't until 1956 when Pakistan

officially adopted the title of " (اسلامی جمہوریہ پاکِستان/Islamic Republic of Pakistan)," as early as

1948 the Assembly of Pakistan had drafted the basic principles of the country as a place,

"wherein the Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective

spheres in accordance with the teachings and requirements of (*Sharia*) as set out in the Holy

Quran and the Sunnah."[110] Thus, I suspect if Majid had agreed with Abd al-Raziq's work on the

Caliphate, then it could have been interpreted as subversive to Pakistan's legitimacy. It could

have potentially caused a great scandal in Pakistan since it was in its 5th year of existence by

1952. While I cannot substantiate these claim, the links between Majid's explicit support of a

nonexistent Caliphate in 1952, and the existence of Pakistan are significant and deserve closer

attention.

---

[108] Ibid, 15.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Shahzad Nakhoda, and Zartash Uzmi. "The Objectives Resolution." The Constitution of the Islamic
Republic of Pakistan, 1995, http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/annex.html.

What I can prove, on the other hand is that Majid criticized the Western project of

modernity through his critique of *al-Islam*. This became transparent when Majid forcefully

asserted, "These days religion is a slave to politics whereas in Islamic history it was politics

which had to abide by religion. Abd al-Raziq's work and its foundations are faulty because they

encourage subverting religion in the hopes of nationalism."[111] To elaborate, Majid provided a

brief history of how the concept of nationalism originated in the West and extended it back

erroneously to England's Henry VIII time when he broke from the Catholic Church. Majid

described the concept of nationalism as a malaise, which had engulfed the Western world within

its grip, which had motivated colonialism, and led to the two World Wars.[112] He lamented that

during his time, the Muslim world had been splintered due to this concept, and Muslims had

forsaken the idea of a trans-regional *Ummah*.

As a remedy to nationalism, Majid believed the bonds of faith amongst Muslims were

stronger than the idea of an "imagined community" which Benedict Anderson had made famous

through his work in 1983.[113] Before concluding his analysis, Majid offered an alternative to the

growing disease of nationalism and further fragmentation of the Muslim world. He proposed

Muslims to, "form a confederation similar to that of United Nations where each Muslims country

would still be in charge of its affairs. However, the federation would oversee justice, defense,

trade, economic relations, and internal affairs."[114] With this recommendation, Majid concluded

---

[111] Majid, *Islam aur Usul-i Hukuma*t, 16.
[112] Ibid, 17.
[113] Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* (London: Verson, 2006). For a critique of Anderson's work as well as a new theory of nationalism consult Caspar Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism: An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011).
[114] Majid, *Islam aur Usul-i Hukuma*t, 18.

his analyses of *al-Islam*, clarifying that though he disagreed with Abd al-Raziq's work on the Caliphate, he would still encourage engagement with his ideas since they do have some merit.

* * * * *

Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi's scholarship and legacy (1914-1999) transcends well beyond the borders of India as he is highly regarded even in the Arab world. Abul Hassan was born in pre-partition Indian in the region of Uttar Pradesh in 1914, and followed his father's footsteps by attaining an Islamic education in Quranic recitation, Islamic sciences, and the languages of Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi. Most importantly he served as the rector of Nadwat al-Ulama and fiercely opposed the concept of Pan-Arab nationalism.[115] Concerns regarding the future of Islam amid Pan-Arabic aspirations led him to author a paper which later turned into a thesis titled, "The Attitude of World of Islam towards Western Civilization"[116] While translating this work into Urdu, he made revisions to the thesis, add new information, and published them in 2003, titled *Muslim Mumalik mein Islamiyyat aur Maghribiyat ki Kashmakash* (*The Clash between Islamic Tradition and Modernity in Muslim Countrie*s).[117]

What compelled Abul Hasan to write *Muslim Mumamlik* was a sense of urgency created by the moral degeneracy of Muslim countries, their political and military weaknesses, as well as the pervasiveness of Western culture and its ideas, and influence in the Muslim world. Abul Hasan described the current situation of modern Muslims as, "all Muslim countries today are grappling with an acute crisis of an ideological and intellectual nature. This crises more

---

[115] John L. Esposito, "Nadwi, Abul Hasan Ali" *Oxford Islamic Studies Online,* http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1686.

[116] Abulḥasan ʿAlī. Nadwi, *Western Civilization: Islam and Muslims*, trans. Mohammad Asif Kidwal, 4th edition (Academy of Islamic Research & Publications Nadwa; Lucknow, 1969).

[117] Maulana Sayyid Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi. *Muslim Mumalik Main Islamiat Aur Maghribiat Ki Kashmakash, (Silsila Matbooat Majlis Nadwa al-Ulama*; Lucknow. 2003). After this citation, any mention of this source will be abbreviated as Nadwi, *Muslim Mumamlik, p.x*.

adequately can be summarized as a clash or battle *[of subjectivities]* between Islam and the West."[118] Thus he historicized how this crisis between the West and the Muslim world began, how it transformed Muslim subjects, and what the future status of Islam looked like. Abu Hassan's book very clearly supports my hypothesis that some South Asian thinkers, who were deeply critical of the Western project of modernity, and this disdain for the West becomes manifest in Abul Hassan's reception of *al-Islam*.

In section "Proponents of Western civilization from the Arab world," Abul Hasan first described how several aspiring and rising intellectuals from the Egyptian world, travelled to Europe, to "swim in their waters" meaning to be inculcated in the Western mode of subjectivity, skepticism, and rationalism. These same men were trained to demand hard evidence and proofs, and were taught to be suspicious of universalizing claims, according to Abul Hassan. Furthermore, they were trained to demand human rights, liberty, and freedom from oppressive powers, such as that of "religion," and were encouraged to rebel against the system of Islam.[119] In Abul Hassan's view, the only two Muslim intellectuals who sucessfully resisted the West's coercive and transformative powers were; the Pakistani Poet-Philosopher, Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) and Indian activist, Muhammad Ali (1878-1931). These men, served as an example for what lacked within the Egyptian and Arab Muslims, namely the need for more "lovers of Islam." In his opinion, men like Iqbal and Ali had used Western knowledge to criticize this same system, rather than their *din*.[120]

As a continuation of these thoughts in another section titled "Egyptian Orientalists and their echoes" Abul Hasan mentioned specific Egyptian thinkers who had been fully molded by

---

[118] Ibid, 11.
[119] Ibid., 140.
[120] Ibid.

Western values, to the extent that they even "breathed from the lungs of the West," meaning that any trace of Islamic sensibilities within them had been eradicated internally.[121] The ultimate task of such Muslims was to please the West, to spread its agenda, to demolish the foundations of Islam and to further the process of secularization, Abul Hasan contended. Among such Egyptian Orientalists (*Mustashriqueen*), he mentioned Ali Abd al-Raziq's name, as an advocate for the separation of Islam and politics. He further added, "The extent of Western power was so strong that it had made a religious scholar (*Alim*) spread Orientalists ideas that the Caliphate was not related to nor relevant in Islam."[122]

Abul Hassan vociferously attacked Abd al-Raziq as an advocate of the West for claiming that the Caliphate was only a necessity for a specific period, and had eventually transformed from Kingship into dynastic rulership. What stung Abul Hassan the most, was the overall message of Abd al-Raziq's work that the Caliphate had no relationship with *Sharia* which allowed Muslims to select any other form of government befitting the needs of their times.[123] For Abul Hassan, Abd al-Raziq's inspiration could safely be attributed to the West and its project of modernity. I partially agree with the Indian *Alim* that the diffusion of Western power through its project of modernity had affected the minds and bodies of Muslims as thoroughly as it had their institutions of learning, spaces of discipline, spheres of law, and spheres of domesticity. However, I do not agree with Abul Hasan's claim that thinkers like Muhammad Iqbal had successfully "resisted" this power, or that Abd al-Raziq was advocating on behalf of Orientalists.

Conscription for the project of modernity was an all-encompassing and non-voluntary project. Therefore I cannot imagine how Iqbal could have resisted this project, given that he

---

[121] Ibid. 147.
[122] Ibid, 148.
[123] Ibid.

received most of his higher education in Europe and was thoroughly inspired by European intellectuals such as Sir Thomas Arnold, Nietzsche, and Kant, to name just a few. Even a shallow reading of Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought* proves the fact that the Pakistani philosopher drew on the works of several Western philosophers. On the concept of immortality, for instance, Iqbal mentioned "There is, however, in the history of modern thought one positive view of immortality– I mean Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence. This view deserves some consideration, not only because Nietzsche has maintained it with a prophetical fervor, but also because it reveals a real tendency in the modern mind."[124]

While it is true that the Western models of education, instruction, and training, also impacted how Abd al-Raziq came to regard the Islamic tradition and history, we should not overlook his commitment to the system of *Sharia*. Abd al-Raziq repeatedly affirmed his commitmment by stating, "Are we not commanded by the *Sharī'a* to be generous to beggars, considerate to the poor, and kind and compassionate towards them? Would a reasonable man deduce from this that we should make it a point to have poor people and beggars in our midst?"[125] He used this analogy to argue that even if authentic Prophetic *Hadith* encouraged obedience to the Caliphate, it did not mean that Muslims should treat this political institution as one of God's commandments as required by *Sharia.* He further deduced, "To treat the Caliphate as a requirement of "religious" law (*Sharia*) is a proposition that has consequences of great magnitude." By this, he meant that the Caliphate concept had been retroactively elevated and given a quasi-divine status, while it had been a human-made, political, and corrupting institution. Therefore, even though both Iqbal and Abd al-Raziq were conscripts and particpiated within the

---

[124] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 120.
[125] Abd al-Raziq, *Islam and the Foundations of Political Power*, 41.

project of modernity, this did not lessen their commitment to Islam nor their concern for the future of the *Ummah*.

<p style="text-align:center">* * * * *</p>

Lastly, I want to discuss Muhammad Raziul Islam's review of *al-Islam* and the evidence he brings forth in favor of the historic Caliphate. Raziul Islam's last name makes it apparent that he too is formally associated with the Nadwat al-Ualam's institution. Born in 1964 India, he currently serves as the secretary of Tasneefi Academy, and as a member of the *Jamaat-e-Islam* political party, (*Hind*) India branch. Aside from this information, little is available online regarding his formal education, mentors, or how he became interested in Abd al-Raziq's work. All we know is that Raziul Islam dedicated one blog post on his website to *al-Islam* titled "Islami Nizami Hukumat pe kiye jaane wale Aaterazaat" or "Some objections on the Islamic system of government and rule."[126]

Unlike other reviewers mentioned in this section, Raziul Islam first outlines what kind of rulership and form of governance are commanded by both Allah and His messenger. Using Quran's chapter 4 (Surah An-Nisa) verse 59, he quotes, "O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and *those in authority among you… that is the best [way] and best in the result.*"[127] For Raziul Islam "those in authority" refers to a Caliph who not only ensures the protection and physical well being of the *Ummah* but also of their spiritual and moral astuteness.[128] The *alim* then mentions the *hadith* from Sahih Muslim regarding obedience to a

---

[126] Muhammad Raziul Islam Nadwi, "Islami Nizami Hukumat pe kiye jaane wale Aaterazaat," *Maulana Muhammad Raziul Islam* (blog), October 2, 2016, http://www.raziulislamnadvi.com.

[127] English translation obtained from The Nobel Quran, 2016. https://quran.com

[128] For details on how South Asian Muslims idealized the functions of a Caliph, and the institution of Caliphate read; Maulana Abdul Majed Beyadoni, *Dars E Khilafa*t, (Kitab Khana Anjuman-e-Taraqqie, Dehli, 1920), http://archive.org/details/DarsEKhilafatByMolanaAbdulMajedBedayouni. As well as Dr.

leader that, "ان امّر علیکم عبد مجدّع یقودکم بکتاب الله فاسمعوا و اطیعوا" meaning "even if an Ethiopian slave is appointed over you, as long as he obeys the book of Allah, then you must follow and obey him."[129] Therefore using these pieces of evidence from the Quran and Hadith, Raziul Islam establishes that in Islam there has never been nor can there ever be, a separation between political power and "religious" guidance.

Preceding from this point Raziul Islam also mentions how in European history, the separation of Church and State emerged from specific instances of religious wars, abuse of papal authority and corruption, as well as disagreements amongst Christians over doctrinal issues. Hence, the Catholic church was stripped of its political power and religion was declared a private matter, Raziul Islam informs his readers.[130] Here we also find Raziul Islam's implicit critique that the specific circumstances in the history of the West led to the demotion of Christianity and triumph of the political doctrine of Secularism. This result was then encouraged in the Muslim world by a few Muslim thinkers, in his opinion, who claimed that Islam too had this separation of spheres. I suspect Raziul Islam is categorizing Abd al-Raziq within such Muslim thinkers, and accusing him of claiming that Islam has not elaborated on any political ethics of governance, which blatantly misconstrues Abd al-Raziq's work. Another error on Raziul Islam's part, is to state that "Abd al-Raziq completed his higher education at Oxford" while we know that he had only briefly enrolled in a course at the university.

Ali Muhammad M. As-Salabi, *Saltanat e-Usmania: Turkoon ki Mufasal Siyasi Tamadni aur Tehzibi Tarkih,* trans. Ulama Muhammad Zafar Iqbal Kalyar, (Lahore: Zia al-Quran Publishings, 2008). Moreover, Mulana Muhammad Ayub Dehlvi, "Mas'ala E Imamat Amarat Wa Khilafat," *Ji*, 11 (2013): 195–218.
[129] Raziul Islam Nadawi, "Islami Nizami Hukumat pe kiye jaane wale Aaterazaat."
[130] Ibid.

While Raziul Islam does not make scathing remarks against *al-Islam* or Abd al-Raziq, like his colleague, Abul Hassan, Raziul Islam also manages to misrepresent a lot of Abd al-Raziq's points including, that "Islam has allowed Muslims to run all their affairs freely based on their rationality, experiences of their nations, and the nature of politics of their conditions."[131] Whereas in his work what Abd al-Raziq wrote was, "It (political governance) is a matter which religion (Islam) has left to humankind, for people to organize themselves following the principles of reason, the experience of nations and the rules of politics."[132] Meaning that Islam has not specified nor limited Muslims in their possibilities or imaginations from creating a different form of political organization which could still uphold the precepts of *Sharia*, the commandments of Allah, and the example of Prophet Muhammad, all the while participating in the conditions of modernity.

<p style="text-align:center">* * * * *</p>

To conclude**,** I have presented the reactions, receptions, and responses of some South Asian Muslims to Abd al-Raziq's book *al-Islam*. By focusing on opinions and critiques of Indian and Pakistani Muslims, I have shown how their response to Abd al-Raziq's *al-Islam* is to take the opposite position in support of the Caliphate and its "religious" significance in Islam. Their reaction was more or less generated by the specific historical conditions in South Asian including the demise of the *Khilafat* movement, the nature of educational reforms in *Mudaras*, and the creation of Pakistan, rather than simply an opposition to the historical evidence of Abd al-Raziq's basic argument. By strongly admonishing Abd al-Raziq's work, South Asian Muslims were

---

[131] Ibid.
[132] Abd al-Raziq*, Islam and the Foundations of Political Power, 117.*

directly projecting their critique of Western modernity, as having played a crucial part in the formation of Abd al-Raziq's specific arguments.

I hope that by putting individual Indian and Pakistani thinkers in conversation with Abd al-Raziq and his work, we can view these connections between the Middle East and South Asia not as 'freeze-framed' moments within history. But rather as reoccurring within different temporalities, as constituted by the relationship between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation, and in the context of language and history, language and time, and language and experience.[133] All of these voices allow us to trace cross-cultural connections between South Asia and the Middle East, and India and Egypt. Furthermore, incorporating these voices, I believe, reinvigorates the debate surrounding the definition and memory of the Caliphate—a debate which triggers disagreements on the nature of political sovereignty and its relationship to "religious" authority—to the present day.

<p style="text-align:center">* * * * *</p>

V. Conclusion

This thesis began with curiosity regarding Abd al-Raziq's bold claim that the Caliphate was a purely political institution, which had retroactively been made a part of the faith. Before embarking upon this project, I, like several of Abd al-Raziq's other critics, was skeptical and ready to dismiss his claims as an Orientalist inspired hubris. However, after spending close to two years researching, revising, and reformulating several of my assumptions, I have come to agree with Abd al-Raziq on several points. I am now convinced that the importance assigned to the Caliphate institution by modern Muslims is due to a longing for a past which has long gone.

---

[133] Jordheim, "Against Periodization," 169.

A past in which modern Muslims imagine the conditions to be perfect, where the first *Ummah*'s unity was unbreakable, and the status of Islam was a force to be reckoned with.

As Muqtedar Khan, has convincingly explained, "One of the enduring myths of Islamic beliefs is the ultimate glorification of early Muslims…early Muslims are far superior in intellect and virtue than later Muslims."[134] The only way out of this mindset set is to realize that the modern *Ummah* is just as unique, as the *Rashidun's*, since modern Muslims have been entrusted with guiding each other without the aid of Prophet Muhammad. This is precisely what I believe Abd al-Raziq was also encouraging in *al-Islam*. Instead of trying to capture the past in the form of the Caliphate, modern Muslims should embrace what their present conditions have made available, namely an opportunity to create an experiment in politics, just as long as this experiment adheres to the system of *Sharia*, the word of God, and the example of the Prophet.

My thesis has shown that instead of demonizing, dismissing, or banishing the ideas of Abd al-Raziq as "un-Islamic" or "scandalous", we should grapple with them, even when we disagree with some or most of his work. Most importantly, my work has argued that instead of relying upon rigid categories of "Liberal," "Secular," and "Laicist," we should keep in mind Abd al-Raziq's commitment to Islam, his use of Quranic verses and Prophetic *hadith* to support his arguments, and his project of reform as taking place within the bounds of Islamic tradition. While it can be said that Abd al-Raziq was advocating for the creation of a secular state, he most certainly was not advocating for the complete secularization of the Egyptian society, nor the Muslim world.

Despite enduring grave consequences for his ideas, Abd al-Raziq did not renounce his opinions regarding the Caliphate. As he made quite clear in his Introduction, his book was meant

---

[134] Khan, "What Is Enlightenment?" 7.

to serve as a starting point for debate on the nature of political authority and sovereignty, "religious" legitimacy, the idealization of the Islamic past-- especially of the *Rashidun*-- and the nature of Prophet Muhammad's leadership. All of these points meant to serve as the beginning of a discussion, rather than a final word on the matter. Abd al-Raziq presented his case and anticipated that Muslims no doubt would disagree with him. As David Scott has written in his book *Conscripts of Modernity*, "There remains another story… the story of transformations that have reshaped those conditions which are not of people's choosing but within which they must make their history."[135] This is precisely what Abd al-Raziq was attempting within the historical conditions available to him, by asking, what if modern Muslims moved past the notion of the Caliphate--especially the one which has been constructed as a quasi-divinely ordained form of government? What other paths and horizons of expectations present themselves to the modern *Ummah*?

Furthermore, he posited particular dilemmas which remain unresolved within modern Islamic political thought, namely; How can believers adhere to the precepts of the *Sharia* which was meant to address all aspects of Muslims' lives, when the modern state takes over this system, curtails its powers, and banishes it to the "private" sphere? Second, when a modern nation-state also redefines the meanings of the terms "religious" and political authority, how then can Muslims reconcile these redefinitions with what had existed previously within Islamic history? Moreover, how can Muslims live in a moral community they define as the "*Ummah*" while still being citizens of a nation-state?

By detailing specific points within Abd al-Raziq's book, the reception of categorization of his work in both Western and non-Western scholarship, as well as South Asian Muslims'

---

[135] Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity,* 116.

critique of *al-Islam* and the greater project of modernity, it is hoped that the readers will appreciate a new perspective on Abd al-Raziq's scholarly contributions. Given the constraints of space, I was not able to discuss in depth the affinities in political thoughts possibly present between the Pakistani Poet-Philosopher, Muhammad Iqbal's and Abd al-Raziq. While I cannot substantiate that historically, Iqbal and Abd al-Raziq ever communicated, met, or came across each other's work, I believe both thinkers' ideas overlapped, especially with regards to the Caliphate. This is a thread of inquiry I would like to follow in a future project, by emphasizing that Abd al-Raziq was not alone in his journey of reconfiguring the definition of the Caliphate in Islam. Additionally, that scholarship on modern Islamic political thought should emphasize cross-cultural connections, rather than the study of thinkers and their ideas in sealed and isolated vacuums.

Bibliography

Abu-Rabi, Ibrahim M. *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*
 Albany: SUNY Press, 1996.

Abd al-Raziq, Ali. *Islām aur Uṣūl-i Hukūmat: al-Islām va Uṣūl al-Hukm*. Translated by Rājā
 Muḥammad Fakhr Mājid. Lahore: Bazm-i Iqbāl, 1960.

Abd al-Raziq, Ali. *Islam and the Foundations of Political Power*, edited by Abdou Filali-Ansary.
 Translated by Maryam Loutfi. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press & The Aga Khan
 Univeristy, 2014.

Adams, Charles C. *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: A Study of the Modern Reform Movement*
 Inaugurated by Muhammad 'Abudh. New York: Russell & Russell, 1933.

Akhavi, Shahrough. "The Dialectic in Contemporary Egyptian Social Thought: The Scripturalist
 and Modernist Discourses of Sayyid Qutb and Hasan Hanafi." *International Journal of*
 Middle East Studies 29, no. 03, (1997). https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743800064825.

Ali, Souad T. *A Religion, Not a State: Ali'Abd Al-Raziq's Islamic Justification of Political*
 Secularism. Utah: University of Utah Press, 2009.

Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford
 University Press, 2003.

Asfaruddin, Asma. "What Sharia Law Means: Five Questions Answered." *The Conversation*,
 June 15, (2017). http://theconversation.com/what-sharia-law-means-five-questions-answered-
 79325.

Al-Salabi, Dr. Ali Muhammad M. *Saltanat e-Usmania: Turkoon ki Mufasal Siyasi Tamadni aur Tehzibi Tarkih*. Translated by Ulama Muhammad Zafar Iqbal Kalyar. Lahore: Zia al-Quran Publishings, 2008.

Bakshin, Orit. "Ali Abd Al-Raziq." In *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, edited by Gerhard Bowering, Patricia Crone, Wadad Kadi, Devin J. Stewart, Muhammad Qasim Zaman, and Mahan Mirza. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Beinin, Joel. "Ottoman Reform and European Imperialism, 1839-1907." In *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Benjamin, Walter. "Theses on the Philosophy of History." In *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, edited by Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.

Benedict, Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verson, 2006.

Beydoni, Molana Abdul Majed. *Dars E Khilafat*. Delhi: Kitab Khana-e-Anjuman, 1926. http://archive.org/details/DarsEKhilafatByMolanaAbdulMajedBedayouni.

Binder, Leonard. *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologie*s. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Botman, Selma. "The Liberal Age, 1923–1952." In *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, edited by M. W. Daly, 1998. https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521472111.013.

Broucek, James. "The Controversy Of Shaykh 'Ali 'Abd Al-Raziq." The Florida State University College of Arts and Sciences, PhD. Dissertation, 2012.

Brown, L. Carl. "16-Islamic Political Thought." In *The New Cambridge History of Islam Volume*

6: Muslims and Modernity: Culture and Society since 1800, edited by Robert W. Hefner.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521844437.

Butterworth, Charles. *The Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and theory of Statecraft,* edited

by Mehrzad Boroujerd. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2013.

Cole, Juan I. R. "16. Printing and Urban Islam in the Mediterranean World, 1890-1920." In

Modernity and Culture from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, 1890–1920, edited by

Leila Tarazi Fawaz, C. A. Bayly, and Robert Illbert. New York: Columbia University Press,

2002. https://doi.org/10.7312/fawa11426.

Crone, Patricia, and Martin Hinds. *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of

Islam. Cambridge:* Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Dallal, Ahmad. "4-The Origins and Early Development of Islamic Reform." In The New

Cambridge History of Islam Volume 6: *Muslims and Modernity: Culture and Society since

1800*, edited by Robert W. Hefner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521844437.005.

Dehlvi, Mulana Muhammad Ayub. "Mas'ala E Imamat Amarat Wa Khilafat." *Ji*, no.11, (2013).

https://archive.org/details/MaulanaAyyubDehlviMasalaEImamatAmaratWaKhilafat.

Donath, Christian. "Ali Abd Al-Raziq and the Politics of Secularism: Breaking the Islamist-

Liberal Impasse." In *Beyond the Arab Spring in North Africa,* edited by Daniel Křížek, and

Jan Záhořík, Maryland; Lexington Books, 2017.

Esposito, John. L. "Din." *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*.

http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e541.

_____. "Nadwi, Abul Hasan Ali." *Oxford Islamic Studies Online.*

http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1686.

Gallois, William. *Time, Religion and History*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007.

Gillespie, Michael Allen. *The Theological Origins of* Modernity. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Haj, Samira. *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

Hallaq, Wael. *Restating Orientalism: The Critique of Modern* Knowledge. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.

Hanioğlu, Sukru. *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman* Empire. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Hassan, Hassan. "The Sectarianism of the Islamic State: Ideological Roots and Political Context." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. June 13, (2016). https://carnegieendowment.org.

Hassan, Mona. *Longing for the Lost Caliphate: A Transregional History*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2016.

 Helge, Jordheim. "Against Periodization: Koselleck's Theory of Multiple Temporalities," *History and Theory*, no. 2, (2012). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2303.2012.00619.x.

Hirschi, Caspar. *The Origins of Nationalism: An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany*. Cambrigde, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Hourani, Albert. *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511801990.

Iqbal, Mohammad. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013.

Jedaane, Fahmi, "Notions of the State in contemporary Arab-Islamic writings." In *The Arab State,* edited by Giacomo Luciani. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Kadi, Wadad. "Caliph." In *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought,* edited by Gerhard Bowering, Patricia Crone, Wadad Kadi, Devin J. Stewart, Muhammad Qasim Zaman, and Mahan Mirza. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

_____. "Caliph." In *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān Volume:1*, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Kerr, Malcolm H. *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.

Khan, M. A. Muqtedar. "The Islamic State: Classical and Contemporary Theories." In *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, edited by Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan. New York and London: Routledge, 2004. https://www.academia.edu/6516141/.

_____. "What Is Enlightenment? An Islamic Perspective." *Journal of Religion and Society,* no.16, (2014).

Lauter, Bruno. "Thou Shall Not Freeze-Frame, or, How Not to Misunderstand the Science and Religion Debate." In *Science, Religion, and the Human Experience*, edited by James D. Proctor. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Lecker, Michael. "The Constitution of Medina." In *Muhammad's First Legal Document*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Liew, Han Hsien. "Writing Away the Caliph: Political and Religious Legitimacy in Late Medieval Islamic Political Thought." Wesleyan University MA Thesis, 2012.

_____. "The Caliphate of Adam: Theological Politics of the Qurʾānic Term Ḫalīfa." *Arabica,* no. 63, (2016). https://doi 10.1163/15700585-12341381.

Makdisi, Ussama. "Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism: Modernity, Violence, and the Cultural

Logic of Ottoman Reform." In *Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the late Ottoman*

Empire, edited by Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber. Wurzburg:

Ergon in Kommission, 2002.

Mardin, Serif. "Religion and Secularism in Turkey." In *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*,

edited by Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury, and Mary C. Wilson. Berkeley and Los Angeles:

University of California Press, 1993.

Marsot, Afaf Lutfi Sayyid. *A Short History of Modern* Egypt. Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 1985.

Mas, Ruth. "Secularism and Religion-Making." In *Secularism and Religion-Making*, edited by

Arvind-Pal S. Mandair and Markus Dressler. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Metcalf, Barbara D. *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900*. Princeton:

Princeton University Press, 2008.

Minault, Gail. *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*.

Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Nadawi, Muhmmad Raziul Islam. "Islami Nizami Hukumat pe kiye jaane wale Aaterazaat."

Maulana Muhammad Raziul Islam (blog). October 2, (2016).

http://www.raziulislamnadvi.com.

Nadawi, Sayyid Abul Hassan Ali. "Muslim Mumalik Main Islamiat Aur Maghribiat Ki

Kashmakash." *Silsila Matbooat Majlis,* 23, (2003).

_____. *Western Civilization: Islam and Muslims*. Translated by Mohammad Asif

Kidwal, 4th edition. Luknow: Academy of Islamic Research & Publications Nadwa, 1969.

Nafi, Basheer M. "The Abolition of the Caliphate in Historical Context." In *Demystifying the*

Caliphate: Historical Memory and Contemporary Contexts, edited by Madawi Al-Rasheed,

  Carool Kersten, and Marat Shterin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Nakhoda, Shahzad, and Zartash Uzmi. "The Objectives Resolution." *The Constitution of the*

  Islamic Republic of Pakistan. 1995.

  http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/annex.html.

Nasr, Vali. "South Asia from 1919." In *The New Cambridge History of Islam Volume 5: The*

  Islamic World in the Age of Western Dominance, edited by Francis Robinson. Cambridge:

  Cambridge University Press, 2010. https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521838269.022.

Niemeijer, A. C. *The Khilafat Movement in India: 1919-1924*. Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal,

  Land-en Volkenkunde, 1972.

Nuwayhid, Walid. "Chapter 8: The Medina Charter," in *Human Rights in Arab Thought; A*

  Reader, edited by Salma K. Jayyussi. New York; I. B. Taurus, 2005.

Orwin, Alexander. "In Search of the Vanished Caliphate." In *Current Trends in Islamist*

  Ideology, edited by Hillel Fradkin, Hussain Haqqani, and Eric Brown. Hudson Institute, 21,

  (2017).

Pagels, Elaine. *The Gnostic* Gospels. New York: Random House, 2004.

Peters, F. E. *Jesus, and Muhammad: Parallel Tracks, Parallel Lives*. New York: Oxford

  University Press, 2010.

Qasim-Zaman, Muhammad. "South Asian Islam and the Idea of the Caliphate." In *Demystifying*

  the Caliphate: Historical Memory and Contemporary Contexts. Oxford: Oxford

  University Press, 2015.

_____. "The Ulama: Scholarly Tradition and new Public commentary." In *The New*

  Cambridge History of Islam Volume 5: The Islamic World in the Age of Western Dominance,

edited by Francis Robinson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521838269.022.

Radhan, Luay. *Muslims against the Islamic State: Arab Critics and Supporters of Ali*

Abdarraziq's Islamic Laicism. Frankfurt: Peter Lang Academic Research, 2014.

Rida, Rashid. "Renewal, Renewing, and Renewers," *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*.

http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1979.

Robinson, Chase F. "Prophecy and Holy Men in Early Islam," in *The Cult of Saints in Late*

Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown, edited by James

Howard-Johnston and Paul Anthony Hayward. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Robinson, Francis. "Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia." In *Modern Asian*

Studies, 42, no. 2/3, (2008).

_____. "South Asia to 1919." In *The New Cambridge History of Islam Volume 5: The*

Islamic World in the Age of Western Dominance, edited by Francis Robinson. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 2010. https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521838269.010.

Rosenthal, Erwin I J. "Some Reflections on the Separation of Religion and Politics in Modern

Islam." *Islamic Studies* 3, no. 3, (1964).

Sagiv, David. "Chapter 7: Attitudes to the Caliphate and the Imamet." In *Fundamentalism and*

Intellectuals in Egypt 1973-1993. London, Routledge, 1995.

Scott, David. *Conscripts of Modernity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004.

The Middle East Institute. "Back Matter." In *Middle East Journal*, 7, no.1, (1953).

http://www.jstor.org/stable/4322480.

Voll, John O. "Reform and Modernism in the Middle Twentieth Century." In *The New*

Cambridge History of Islam Volume 6, edited by Robert W. Hefner. Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 2010. https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521844437.006.

Wegner, Mark. *Islamic Government: The Medieval Sunnī Islamic Theory of the Caliphate and the debate over the revival of the Caliphate in Egypt, 1924–1926*. University of Chicago, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2012. Proquest.

https://www.protesthttps://search.proquest.com/docview/304737827.

Wood, Graeme. "What ISIS Really Wants." *The Atlantic*, March 2015.

https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/.