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Its Impact on Interpreting Shariah Texts and
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The Dilemma of Modernity: Its Impact on Interpreting Shariah Texts and Statecraft

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ABSTRACT:

The article examines the impact of modernity on interpreting Shariah texts and the ensuing complexities in statecraft within Islamic contexts. It traces the historical evolution of Islamic thought from the 19th and 20th centuries to the contemporary era, exploring Islam's multifaceted roles as a cultural tradition, ethical guide, governance framework, and more. Through an analysis of traditionalist and modernist perspectives, the article delves into the challenges of reconciling established interpretations with evolving societal norms, reflecting on the repercussions of colonialism on Muslim societies' identity formation and political agency. It also addresses contemporary issues such as religious sectarianism, authoritarianism, radicalism, and Islamic exceptionalism, presenting a spectrum of viewpoints within Islamic discourse. The article advocates for a nuanced understanding of Islamic law (Shari'a) and emphasizes the ongoing dialogue between tradition and modernity in navigating the complexities of statecraft and societal evolution.

KEYWORDS:

Modernity, Shariah texts, Statecraft, Islamic discourse, Tradition

The evolving interpretations and implications of Islam had a profound influence on political and social ideologies, as well as domestic and global politics, during the 19th and 20th centuries. These influences are anticipated to keep growing in relevance to the 21st century. The political and societal implications arise from the redefinition of Islam as a system,¹ culture, civilization, or cultural tradition,² a Manhaj (way of life, method),³ a program or project, ethics, a code of public conduct, set of banking principles, and type of governance. In addition, Islam is sometimes used as a metonym to

1. Edward W. Said, *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 127.

2. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 142.

3. Gil Anidjar, *Semites: Race, Religion and Literature* (Stanford-California: Stanford University Press, 2008), 32.

represent fiqh (commonly referred to as jurisprudence) and kalam (theology). These fields were traditionally developed by Muslim scholars (Traditionalists). Similarly, Shari‘a (sacred law) is a term that carries various meanings and interpretations. It is often used to refer to a collection of opinions and interpretations considered integral to Islam and can, therefore, be used as a substitute.

In tradition, God, man, and the universe are all considered together in all matters.⁴ Modernity, in contrast, redefines the concept of human consciousness, recognizes the rational existence of humans, and says that humans are rational beings with their authority to determine their goals. Modernity is a comprehensive term for various political, economic, social, and intellectual changes that occurred under the influence of Western civilization.⁵ Modernity can create new realities.⁶ It is both an existential framework and an intellectual construction. Practical manifestations have become essential in modernity.⁷ Muslim societies were first introduced to modernity directly through colonialism.⁸ The most significant and immediate impact of colonialism on the collective consciousness of Muslim societies was the deprivation of political power and freedom. The resistance to modernity in terms of religious and ethical aspects is justified. Indeed, it is very valuable, but the means of this struggle should also be derived from modernity itself. Elements can be taken from tradition but cannot provide the framework then.

Society is a historical process and evolves. The case of religion is in an ideal form, and religion also presents ideal personalities who are meant to be role models. While society itself is not ideal, it constantly striving to become better as a whole.⁹ The question then arises: should society be molded according to the standards of religion, or should religion be adapted to fit society?¹⁰ The approach to society should start from where society is

4. The relationship between man, God, and the universe is seen as interconnected and is not allowed to weaken, and all actions are attempted to be in accordance with God’s will.

5. Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani, *Islam and Modernism* (Karachi: Darul Ishaat, 1996), 34.

6. Modernity adjusts itself to every new situation, either by conforming or by fighting if necessary.

7. It is not just a worldview, a worldview limits what you see, but modernity does not confine itself to binding concepts.

8. Muhammad Khalid Masud, Armando Salvatore, Martin van Bruinessen (eds.), *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 240.

9. Muhammad Rasheed Arshad, “Islamic Modernism: The Case of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal,” (*Al-Azḩvā*, Vol. 33, Issue 50, 2018), 97.

10. In the past, there have been efforts to forcefully mold society into the religious ideal, like when we talk about the dominance of Islam, society resists. For example, forcing someone to keep a beard meets resistance.

capable. For instance, when the Hudood Ordinance¹¹ was introduced in Pakistan,¹² it was not implemented because society did not have the potential for it. Religion cannot lead society forward with its ideas alone but needs to prove its relevance over time. For instance, the Ottoman Caliphate and the British Empire ended around the same time. The British Empire adapted and transitioned into nation-states or moved towards post-secularism. In contrast, we remained stuck in the terminologies of Dar al-Harb and Dar al-Islam without benefiting from them. Thus, survival is possible only after establishing this connectivity. Dr. Fazlur Rahman interprets this as keeping the search for the ideal while maintaining the evolution and compatibility¹³ of society and forming political and social institutions.

Religious sectarianism, Authoritarianism, Radical Islam, Political Islam, Islamic exceptionalism, Islamism, Pan Islamism, Islamic fundamentalism, Right-wing inclination, Tradition versus Modernity, Modernism, Progressive, Orientalism, and Secularism all these conflicts are different manifestations of the same crisis. That's why it is no longer possible for us to see any disagreement merely as a difference in thought and perspective, as even seemingly minor differences relate to the subconscious sense of identity determination, which human consciousness views as a matter of life and death. One mistake is the unrealistic determination of goals and priorities for resistance; the other is standing apart or becoming entirely opposed to it. This article presents a comprehensive overview of the transformation and challenges in Islamic education from the early Islamic period to the present, as explored in Fazlur Rahman's book, "Islam and Modernity." It aims to encapsulate all the critical points mentioned, providing a coherent narrative that reflects the intricacies and developments in Islamic thought and education.

Contemporary Interpretations of Religious Texts

The theologian explains the understanding of religion and Fiqh, which is

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11. The Hudud Ordinances are laws in Pakistan enacted in 1979. It replaced parts of the British-era Pakistan Penal Code, adding new criminal offences of adultery and fornication, and new punishments of whipping, amputation, and stoning to death.
 12. Tayyaba Batool Tahir, Ali Ammar, Fatima Bajwa, "Islam and Modernity: A Case Study of Pakistan's Political History," *Journal of Historical Studies, BZU-Multan* 6, no. 2, (2020): 349.
 13. When seeking to establish the relevance of religion in the contemporary context, it can approach from four perspectives. Firstly, consider religion as a system and advocate for its adoption as such. The second angle involves reshaping religion to emphasize its political role. The third perspective focuses on the societal aspect, exploring the role of religion in the state and the world. Lastly, the fourth angle revolves around understanding religion's interaction with humanity, emphasizing its primary connection to people in this world. Theologians and scholars work on establishing relevance through these four fundamental angles.

exactly what the author of this book has presented. So, understanding religion depends on how an individual comprehends it, and when a person accepts a tradition about the Prophet Muḥammad's ﷺ, it aligns with that understanding. However, Fiqh constitutes a significant portion of practical jurisprudential interpretations within the framework of principles, general rules, and sometimes specific regulations. This legal system, rooted in Islamic teachings, encompasses multiple issues related to individual lives, society, and, occasionally, the relations between states. This extensive effort is a jurisprudential one. This includes Shari'ah, the law derived directly from the divine teachings, and another type of law formed by applying the Shari'ah¹⁴ rules to societal issues. This highlights that it's a dedicated human effort and requires careful examination.¹⁵

Consider the example of the Quran, with fundamental reasons, logic, and rules. Prophet Muḥammad's ﷺ, adhered to these rules and the Quran's purpose. He translated them into practical applications through the Sunnah. The Khulafa then followed the Sunnah aligning it with Quranic principles and evolving its practical relevance. In subsequent eras, Muslim scholars and theologians aimed to present the useful shape of Sharia. They adapted the legal framework of Islam to all aspects of life, striving to establish the practical relevance of everyday life in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah. This effort is to show the compatibility of religion to contemporary political, legal, social and state affairs.¹⁶ According to Dr. Fazlur Rehman, The core of the Quran's ethical teachings establishes a connection between theology and law. The distinction between Islamic law and ethics has often been unclear, with historical development leading to a compilation of legal materials rather than a modern codified legal system. The Quran underscores the importance of morality within the legal framework. To avoid societal stagnation or secularism, there's a need for reinterpretation of Islamic law. Public awareness of Islamic values is vital for the development of authentic Islamic law. Legal professionals benefit from studying Islamic jurisprudence and the history of Islamic law.

14. Contrary to the notion that religion imposes thoughts, it provides believers with three options in accepting its authority. The first is through historical relevance, offering a remedy tied to history when presenting a dictation. The second involves practical observability or Mushahada, allowing believers to observe the facts of the matter. Lastly, rationality plays a role, as religion provides orders that are rationally acceptable to believers. However, when it comes to metaphysics and the superficial belief known as faith, religion may not provide historical evidence, rational thought, or observational accounts, but some scholars count these metaphysical beliefs in observational account.

15. Amina Abdullah Abu Shehab, *Women, Islam, and Modernity* (London: University of London, 1992), 114.

16. Shaukat Ali, *Islam and the Challenges of Modernity* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research at Quaid-i-Azam University, 2004), 360.

Traditionalists argue that the current issues in relevancy and compatibility matters can be addressed using established fiqh, with the option of Ijtihad if necessary, negating the need for a complete reconstruction or reinterpretation of religious thought. Modernists counter by pointing out the cultural baggage associated with historical fiqh. They argue that scholars of different times faced unique challenges, political contexts, personal inclinations, and the potential for error, impacting of their interpretations.¹⁷ In response, modernists advocate for a reinterpretation of Islamic theology to align with current realities.¹⁸ However, some traditionalists (Originality-oriented)¹⁹ emphasize the ongoing process of ijtihad and reject blind imitation,²⁰ highlighting various scholarly institutions addressing legal perspectives on modern issues. Modernists counter that a piecemeal approach won't suffice; instead, a comprehensive reconstruction of the entire framework for understanding the Quran and Sunnah is needed to ensure compatibility with the contemporary situation. Dr. Fazlur Rahman introduced "Sunnah Jariyya." This implies that practical approaches to religious texts are flexible, allowing for reinterpretation without altering the fundamental principles of Islam.²¹

Islam demonstrates flexibility through various theologians and schools of thought that draw references from classic texts to justify their beliefs. For instance, an American scholar, in emphasizing respect for other religions, points to Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ teachings about humanity. The Prophet's act of standing in honor of a non-Muslim person's burial, illustrates a universal respect for humanity. On the flip side, there are those who wrongly legitimize slavery, claiming it aligns with Islamic teachings. However, it's essential to discern between interpretations, as some may misrepresent Islam, as seen in instances of slavery being wrongly practiced. ISIS price list for women and children revealed by Zainab Bangura, UN special envoy on sexual violence in conflict.²²

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17. Each region interprets Islam influenced by its unique environment. Shah Waliullah preferred Muwatta Imam Malik over Bukhari, believing Muwatta to be a more organic source.
 18. Both traditionalists and reformists now strive to establish the relevance of religion in today's context, albeit with differing methodologies. Iqbal used terms like "reconstruction of religious thought in Islam" and "Ijtihadi Basirat."
 19. J. Rognifard, O. Gafarli, and L. Terebessy, "Islam and Progress: Between Tradition and Modernity," *Journal of International Analytics* 11, no. 4 (February 8, 2021): 108, <https://doi.org/10.46272/2587-8476-2020-11-4-104-121>.
 20. Dr. Malik Mohammad Tariq, "Islamic Modernity: Its Significance in the Current Scenario," *Balochistan Review* 31, no. 2, (2014), 125.
 21. Dr. Fazl ur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1995), 27.
 22. Yoon, Sangwon. Islamic State Circulates Sex Slave Price List. Bloomberg.com website, 3 August 2015.

Diverse Perspectives in Religious Interpretation to State Affairs

When people claim Islamic exceptionalism in politics, law, and governance, they argue that Islam's literature in these areas differs significantly from other religions and contend that Islam seems tailored for a pre-modern era rather than the present one. Critics question how Islam can be made compatible with modern times. Mainstream Islamists like the Muslim Brotherhood, navigate the integration of pre-Islamic laws into modern nation-states, treating Islam as a distinct political project.²³

The narrative of separation of religion and state,²⁴ supporting the separation of religion and state gained prominence two centuries ago, but in the 19th century, the liberal perspective on the role of religion in public and state life faced challenges due to colonialism.²⁵ This questioning of established norms culminated in events like the Arab Spring, where the people, especially the youth in Arab countries, asserted their right to shape their lives according to their beliefs.²⁶

The population can be broadly categorized into two groups regarding the role of religion in state affairs. The first group comprises those who assert that religion should play no part in governing the state. Within this group, there are two subcategories: Islamic modernists and liberals. Islamic modernists argue that Islam provides fundamental principles rather than detailed directives on running a country. They argue that the involvement of religion in the state suggests ethical and spiritual engagement.²⁷ Parsing the intricacies of defining religion and norm, the analysis seeks clarity on what is deemed religious and non-religious, unraveling complexities in Muslim political thought.²⁸ On the other hand, liberals, who also believe religion

23. Notably, this Islamist movement is led by professionals such as doctors, engineers, and lawyers, diverging from the traditional Mullah-led movements.

24. They argue that Islam itself is not inherently problematic, but rather the political structure becomes problematic when Islamist movements assume governance. Critics assert that when in power, these movements attempt to impose their political and religious narratives on others, contradicting Islam's belief in individual liberty.

25. Muhammad Khalid Masud, Armando Salvatore, and Martin van Bruinessen, eds., *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 241.

26. The awareness fueling movements like the Arab Spring can be attributed to the impact of colonialism and the widespread dissemination of information through travel and media.

27. Exploring the necessity of the state during the prophet's time becomes crucial, and the separation between religion and politics, evident in various civilizations, prompts a deeper analysis. Examining the historical context, the document's meaning, and the attempt to define boundaries between religion and non-religion, the discussion delves into the interplay of religious representatives and rulers.

28. Rr. Siti Murtiningsih, "Islam and Modernity: A Construction According to Bellah's and Rahman's Thought," *Dharmasmrti: Jurnal Ilmu Agama dan Kebudayaan*, XIII, no.

should have no role in the state,²⁹ emphasize individual perspectives on religion and assert the right to personal choices. Unlike Islamic modernists,³⁰ they tend to downplay the importance of religion's core principles in shaping state affairs.³¹

The schools of thought that abide by religion are primarily three main schools of thought. First would be titled by revolutionists or radical Islamists who do not believe in democratic norms and impose their own thoughts through violent means. Second, asserts the implementation of Islam in its traditional form, resisting interpretation and insisting that it should be applied as it is, without reinterpretation to fit modern political and social contexts. Other people emphasize compatibility with contemporary situations, and within this thought, there are two thoughts. The first sub-thought advocates for adhering to established Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), arguing that it provides comprehensive solutions without the need for modernistic approaches. The second subgroup within the compatibility advocates supports reinterpretation, asserting that scholars throughout history have adapted Islam to their political situations, and individuals should have the right to do the same. This group further divided into two reformist subgroups: progressive and reactionary reformists, progressive or revivalists who align with Islamic modernism and emphasize reason and evidence in Islam, and those who prioritize individual choice and advocate for a pro-democratic stance, believing that people have the right to decide how to interpret and implement Islam in their lives. Reactionary reformists or Mainstream Islamist figures Jamal afghani 1(1838-1897)³², Muhammad Abduh Cairo (1849-1905), Rashid Rida (1865-1935), Mustafa Abdel Raziq (1885-1947), Ali Abdel Raziq (1888-1966), an Islamic modernist, seek to redefine Islam through practical and logical means.³³ They endeavor to make Islam relevant by projecting it as a project, implementing Sharia, and reconciling pre-modern Islamic law with the modern nation-state.

26 (October 2015), 1-16

29. Shadi Hamid, *Islamic Exceptionalism* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2017), 19.

30. Nur Fauziah et al., "Islamic Modernism and the Development of Islamic Intellectualism," in *Proceedings of the 3rd International Colloquium on Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies, ICIIS 2020, 20-21 October 2020, Jakarta, Indonesia* (EAI, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.20-10-2020.2305145>.

31. Muhammad Islam, "The Tradition in the Age of Modernity: A Critical Study of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi's Approach to Religion and Modernism" (PhD diss., University of the Punjab, Lahore, 2020), 182-188.

32. Willem Van der Sluis, "Islam and Modernity. Perspectives of Jamal Ad-Din 'Al-Afghani' (1838-1897)," *Groniek*, no. 217 (October 31, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.21827/groniek.217.35727>.

33. Sobia Tahir, "Islam and Modernity: A Selective Influence of the Capitalistic Set-Up," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 01, no. 01 (March 2011): 56, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.11.04>.

Dr. Fazlur Rahman and Their Contributions to Religious Thought

According to Dr. Fazlur Rahman, when interpreting the Holy Quran, a deep study of its themes and contents should be conducted, presenting them in a manner relevant to current circumstances so that the true purpose of the Quran becomes clear. Without this, the Quran cannot be proven relevant and appropriate for today's life. Muslims have not undertaken this task because it requires diverging from traditional exegetical literature. He emphasizes the need to distinguish between legal demands and moral guidelines in the Quran. Failing to make this distinction will lead to a fundamental misunderstanding of Quranic reforms. For instance, in polygamy, The Quran states that if you fear you are able to deal justly with a woman, then marry those you prefer, two, three, or four. But (if you fear) you will not be fair, then (marry) only one to prevent injustice. He argues that although legal permission for polygamy was granted, the accompanying moral condition was left to the husband's conscience. He believes that permission for multiple marriages was given under specific circumstances and with particular objectives. However, it's not possible to completely stop this tradition, so a moral condition was imposed to guide society towards a moral direction. He also compares this to the issue of slavery in the Quran, which was not abolished immediately, but conditions were imposed, and emancipation was encouraged. Laws and commands should evolve with and according to changing circumstances, and this can only be done under the guidance of the Quran when the rational and logical foundation of the Quranic texts, rather than just the literal words or verses, are followed. A thorough study of the Quranic commands and an understanding of their historical and social context is necessary to responsibly extract their legal rationale and reasons.

The effort made by Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ to practically implement the call of Islam is known as Sunnah. The Quran cannot be understood without the Sunnah. That's why he deems the interrelation and interdependence between the Quran and Sunnah essential. The sayings and actions, the call, and the struggle of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ all fall under the category of Sunnah. According to Dr. Fazlur Rahman, the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ cannot be understood separately from his call and its overarching spirit. He believes it's essential to view the entire prophetic life as an indivisible unity. Since the Sunnah implies action, its application will vary in different situations. This variability is inherent in Sunnah, so it doesn't affect its indivisible unity.

Dr. Fazlur Rahman considers all contents of Hadith to be historically derived from the Sunnah of the Prophet. In the second century Hijri, there came a stage when these derivations, extracted from the Sunnah, started to be counted as part of the Sunnah through a chain of narrations. Dr. Fazlur Rahman doesn't accept the sayings in the narrations as the Prophet

Muḥammad's ﷺ own due to differences and contradictions,³⁴ He believes these narrations were not fabricated but derived from the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ according to the understanding of the Muslims of that time, and he refers to this as "Sunnah Jariyyah." The concept of Sunnah, as explained above, shows that it is a dynamic and continuously evolving process because, according to Dr. Fazlur Rahman, the correct understanding of Sunnah after the Prophet's era was not just limited to the Prophet Muḥammad's ﷺ own Sunnah but also included its interpretations as part of Sunnah.³⁵ Applying the moral principles of the Quran in line with contemporary circumstances is Sunnah, and it is not the name of a specific command but implies Sunnah Jariyyah. The starting point of this Ijtihad (independent reasoning) was the personal and individual opinion of the jurists, but over time, after a tremendous struggle against heresies, it gained the status of consensus, meaning the majority of the Ummah accepted and adhered to it. In other words, the living and Sunnah Jariyyah of the early generations were reflected in Hadith, with the addition of the chain of narrators. However, an essential and fundamental difference emerged: while the Sunnah was largely and fundamentally related to practice, defining the standards of Muslims' character and practical ways, Hadith not only became a means of establishing legal and jurisprudential standards but also started influencing beliefs and religious principles. Hadith began to be used for historiography, resulting in contemporary events being retroactively attributed to the past to mold the life of the Muslim community into a specific spiritual, political, and social model. He seems to be particularly critical of the Hadiths concerning prophecies. He presents the concept of 'historical criticism' and 'internal evidence' in the examination of Hadith.

Insights from "Islam and Modernity" by Fazlur Rahman

The transformation and challenges in Islamic education from the early Islamic period to the present are explored in Fazlur Rahman's book, "Islam and Modernity." It aims to encapsulate all the critical points mentioned, providing a coherent narrative that reflects the intricacies and developments in Islamic thought and education. Early Muslims employed a holistic understanding of the Qur'an rather than focusing on individual verses. This nuanced approach set the tone for early Islamic jurisprudence and education. Umar's pragmatic approach to the Qur'an, emphasizing social justice, a key aspect of his governance. The intellectual landscape post-Prophet Muhammad's era is marked by the contributions of the "Successors" and their successors. Despite lacking direct experience with the Prophet, these figures were intellectually acute, shaping the early phase of Islamic jurisprudence. This period was pivotal in developing a focus on concrete text

34. He doesn't consider them devoid of religious significance.

35. Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*, 2-7.

interpretation (Nas) and analogical reasoning (Qiyas), leading to a multitude of legal opinions.

The evolution of Islamic education centered around the Qur'an and piety, with madrasas emerging as key institutions. These educational institutions initially revolved around notable scholars like Shah Wali Ullah. However, this phase had limited intellectual productivity, with a curriculum heavily focused on Islamic law and theology and minimal exposure to secular sciences. This led to a decline in the quality of Islamic education, characterized by a focus on commentaries rather than original thought. The challenges of integrating traditional Islamic education with modern knowledge discusses the emergence of neo-revivalism or neo-fundamentalism as a response to Western influences, focusing on distinguishing Muslim identity from the West. However, Rahman criticized these movements' lack of depth and failure to establish an effective Islamic educational system.

The stagnation in Islamic law and theology began before the political fragmentation of the Muslim world. Ash'arite theology, dominant in medieval Islam, is critiqued for rejecting natural reason in favor of divine omnipotence, contributing to a widening gap between orthodox Islam and philosophical, creative thinking. This period also saw a tendency to interpret the Qur'an through a narrow lens, focusing on grammar and rhetoric, often at the expense of its broader message.

Rahman's book emphasizes the need for an Islamic metaphysics based on the Qur'an to foster a unified worldview.³⁶ Efforts at reforming Islamic education, mostly within the traditional framework, have focused on simplifying the syllabus and emphasizing Hadith and the Arabic language. However, Rahman calls for a more profound integration of Islamic and modern knowledge, highlighting the necessity of a broader intellectual vision.³⁷

A Way Forward: Philosophy and Social Sciences

Fazlur Rahman emphasizes the importance of philosophy in Islamic intellectual tradition, advocating for its inclusion to strengthen theological and ethical understanding. He critiques the medieval Muslim approach to philosophy as too restrictive and advocates for a more open approach to address modern challenges. Furthermore, the article discusses the significance of social sciences in understanding human behavior and societies, arguing for their integration into Islamic education to help form a more ethical social order.

36. Dr. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity* (Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 132-133.

37. Prof. B. H. Siddiqui, *Islam and Modernity: A Dialogue* (New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies, 2002), 3.

Dr. Fazlur Rahman's insights on the historical roots, current state, and prospects of Islamic education emphasize his advocacy for a reformed approach that balances traditional Islamic values with modern intellectual disciplines. He urges intellectual courage, critical thinking, and openness in the Muslim world. The piece concludes by underscoring the importance of a systematic interpretation of the Qur'an and the need for Islamic education to evolve, reflecting both traditional and contemporary realities.

Conclusion

In this article, we explored the profound impact of modernity on the interpretation of Sharia texts and the complexities it introduces to statecraft within Islamic contexts. The historical evolution of Islamic thought from the 19th century to the present was traced, highlighting the multifaceted roles of Islam as a cultural tradition, ethical guide, and governance framework. The analysis of traditionalist and modernist perspectives revealed significant challenges in reconciling established interpretations with evolving societal norms. The lasting effects of colonialism on Muslim societies' identity formation and political agency were also examined. The study underscored the need for a nuanced understanding of Islamic law (Shari'a) and the importance of continuous dialogue between tradition and modernity. Contemporary issues such as religious sectarianism, authoritarianism, radicalism, and Islamic exceptionalism were discussed, presenting a spectrum of viewpoints within Islamic discourse. The article emphasized the relevance of Dr. Fazlur Rahman's work, particularly his advocacy for a balanced approach that integrates tradition with the demands of modernity. Navigating the complexities of statecraft and societal evolution in the modern world requires an ongoing reinterpretation of Islamic teachings. This process must respect the core principles of Islam while remaining flexible enough to adapt to contemporary realities. By fostering this dialogue, Muslim societies can better address the challenges they face and find ways to harmonize their rich traditions with the dynamic demands of the modern era.