Editorial

Introduction to Special Issue: Islamic Revivalism and Social Transformation in the Modern World

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In Arabic, Islamic revival is called *tajdid,* which literally translates to "regeneration" or "renewal". It is also referred to as *as-Sahwah l-'Islamiyyah,* denoting "Islamic awakening" or "Islamic renaissance", as preferred by revivalists. This is generally described as a revival of Islam, usually with a focus on enforcing *shari'ah* (divine law) (Islam and Islam 2018). Sometimes, the Arabic term *islah* (reform) is also used in connection with Islamic revival. A revivalist leader is known in Islam as a *mujaddid* (renewer). According to Islamic tradition, a *mujaddid* is supposed to appear every Islamic century to revitalize Islam, cleanse it of extraneous elements, restore it to its pristine purity, and guide believers in protecting and organising the intimate zones of life, that is, marriage, family-making, child-rearing, and social relation-building. The revitalization of Islam is not a return to the past or an act of nostalgia, but a concerted effort by Muslim revivalists using classical Islamic teachings and practices to create a closer congruence between the blueprint that existed under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad, his "Rightly Guided Successors", and actual reality. That early experience of the Muslim community and this blueprint has become a model for revivalists. For them, pristine Islam is a reality with the capacity to guide humanity in all realms of life. Revivalists assert that they are not attempting to recreate the society of the first Islamic century, but are trying to recreate or reform the current society by reintroducing and re-enforcing the principles used under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad and his "Rightly Guided Successors".

Islamic revival has its origins in a combination of local and transnational conditions and manifests itself in myriad of ways, ranging from political revivalism and missionary revivalism to radical revivalism and jihadi revivalism (Ali 2023). Different local and international situations and thoughts take revivalists on different paths, and this is when their ideologies and methods of revivalism diverge from each other. In their ethnic background, language, norms and practices, as well as socio-cultural and political organization, they represent countless differences in the human experience. For all versions of contemporary Islamic revivalism and for all revivalists, it is, however, Islam as a *din*—a way of life—which unites them. Though Islam is not always the totality of their lives, it pervades their identity, regulates their patterns of daily practice, bonds them together in the socio-political order, and fulfills the quest for salvation. For all its variety, Islam brings these individuals together into the great spiritual community of believers—the *ummah*.

Revivalists emphasize that Islam is the God's prescribed way of life, and provides a set of ethico-moral principles for individual behavior, instructions for personal and communal life, and universal goals for the stability and unity of the *ummah*. Thus, they call for a renewed commitment to the fundamentals of Islam and place stress on the regulation of personal conduct, marital affairs, family life, education, social relations, and economic exchange according to divinely revealed rules. They want to see Islam be made the focal point, for instance, of state ideology via reliance on canonical religious texts to manage state affairs; allocation of government grants for *madrasa*s (educational institutions); and general Islamic education where classical Qur'anic and Islamic education is viewed as a powerful social force. Arabic would be made compulsory in all levels of

schooling, and the commercial sale of *haram* (impermissible) commodities, such as alcohol and gambling, would be banned. Also, revivalists have a tendency to encourage and teach others about other aspects of life such as creation and procreation, providence and scientific evidence, moral and behavioral codes, and spirituality by referring to the scripture. They concentrate on the teachings of the Qur'an and *hadith*s (record of the words, actions, and tacit approval or disapproval of Prophet Muhammad as transmitted through chains of narrators); enforcement and observation of *shari'ah*; a return to the pristine Islam supposed to have flourished during the early days of Islam; and rebuilding of society using these sources. Whilst they have been focusing on these, they have been far less focused, however, on specifying macroeconomic policies, creating developmental strategies and processes, and articulating the inner complexity and detailed functionality of political order.

In academic works, "Islamic revival" is an umbrella term used to describe Islamic revivalist movements or the contemporary global phenomenon of Islamic revivalism. Constituted by a variety of Islamic revivalist movements of varying sizes and maturity levels, contemporary Islamic revivalism is a complex, dynamic, and internally diverse global phenomenon. Islamic revivalists have their own distinctive worldview regarding knowledge and its proper use, scientific understanding and its application, and technological innovation. In comparison to their non-revivalist coreligionists, Islamic revivalists have an opposite attitude towards secular sciences and anthropocentric notions of advancement and growth; they rely exclusively on the truth revealed in guiding human intellectual endeavors. Their conceptualization of the cosmos and of a just socio-political order is different, and for them, the world is split into *dar al-Islam* (House of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (House of War). In *dar al-Islam*, Islamic law and faith prevail, and in *dar al-harb*, this is not the case; therefore, they want to bring Islam into it. In the early 20th century, Islamic revivalism began to bring about widespread "re-Islamisation"—a process of refiguring of the public sphere, introduction of increased number of *shari'ah*-based legal statutes, and construction of universalistic Islamic self-conception.

Islamic revivalism is not a new phenomenon. It has a long-established theme within the Muslim experience, and "The history of Islam has witnessed a constant influx of revivalist movements" (Islam and Islam 2018, p. 331). The prevailing conditions in any given era, region, or society have a central function in framing the ways that Islamic revivalism expresses itself. However, this unique set of circumstances must be understood within the dimensions of the larger narrative of the whole Muslim world and the enduring historical experience of Muslim societies. It is critical to note that in any attempt to understand Islamic revivalism, it is important not to become overly focused on the immediate circumstances and leave the broader questions of the Muslim experience unaddressed. Thus, if we direct our attention to Islamic history, it is not difficult to notice that revivalism of Islam has been occurring in different periods throughout the Muslim world. In fact, Islamic revivalism started as early as 717 C.E., when Umar bin Abdul Aziz, the eighth Umayyad caliph, assumed the reigns of the Umayyad Empire, expanded Islamization drive, and brought about a wide range of reforms in the Muslim world (Hoyland 2015). Other popular revivalists and revivalist movements include the Almoravid and Almohad dynasties in Maghreb and Spain (1042–1269); Sunni Muslim theologian and ascetic Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328); a prominent Muslim scholar of Delhi, Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (1702–1762); and an Arabian theologian and preacher reformer, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792). In the 19th century, notable Muslim figures, like Jamal al- Din al-Afghanii (1838–1897) of Iran, Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898) of India, and Muḥammad Abduh (1849–1905) of Egypt emerged to respond to the Western cultural imposition, meet the modern challenges, and embark on a quest of forging what was dubbed a truly Islamic identity in order to establish an Islamically-oriented order. They advocated for pan-Islamism and Islamic modernism to reconcile their Islamic faith with modern values. Then, in the 20th century, figures such as Abul A'la Maududi (1903–1979) of India, Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935) of Egypt, Hassan al-Banna (1906–1949) of Egypt, and Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) of Egypt came to prominence through cultivating Islamic spirituality and renewal. They reinvigorated the

idea of the *as-Salaf as-Salih* (the first and best three generations of Muslims) as the heuristic model by which a truly Islamic code of life can be embedded into the general pattern of everyday living. By taking the *sunnah* (traditions and practices of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad), the *Tabiun* (Companions), and the *Tabi'in* (Companions' Followers) as their primary reference points in matters relating to religion, they encouraged the Muslim masses to adopt pristine practices and rituals.

What separates contemporary Islamic revivalism, whose origins are traced to the last quarter of the twentieth century (Volpi 2010)—arguably with the advent of Iranian Revolution in 1978–1979 (Mutalib 1990)—from earlier revivalisms, however, is the enduring fallout of European colonial expansion on Islamic life and the conquests of Muslim territories. European territorial expansion gradually introduced damaging transformations to Muslim societies. Through activation of the process of modernization, accompanied by secularization and Westernization, the Muslim political order embodied in the Moghul, Safavid, and Ottoman dynasties was fundamentally disassembled. Ira Lapidus notes that:

Islamic societies were profoundly disrupted by the breakup of Muslim empires, economic decline, internal religious conflict, and by the establishment of European economic, political, and cultural domination. These forces led to the creation of national states, to the modernization of agriculture and industrialization, to major changes in class structure, and to the acceptance of secular nationalist and other modern ideologies. In the course of these changes Islamic thought and Islamic communal institutions have been radically altered (Lapidus 1988, p. xxi).

Contemporary Islamic revivalism is a direct response to this and to other socio-economic and political afflictions, including relative deprivation, oppressive state policies, and social injustice in many Muslim countries. It has appeared in the twentieth century as a tendency and attitude paradigmatically embodied in certain representative personalities and movements, such as Mohammad Ilyas and his *Tabligh Jama'at* (Convey the Message of Islam Group) (established in 1924), Hassan al-Banna and his *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* (Muslim Brotherhood) (established in 1928), and Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi and his *Jama'at e-Islami* (Society of Islam) (established in 1947). These are a product of modernity as well as a global response to the crisis of modernity (the failure of rationality, science, and technology to produce global progress, prosperity, and harmony).

Regarding these figures and their movements, Hassan al-Banna and his successor Sayyid Qutb, for instance, conceptualized Islamic awakening as a socio-religious and political endeavor. In their worldview, religion and politics were intertwined through the message of the Qur'an, and they wanted to create a new Islamic order by working with Muslims at the grassroots level by engaging in proselytization and networking, as well as at the political level using a top-down discipline and command-and-control mechanisms within the broader structure of the movement to instruct and guide the members. Sayyid Qutb, after al-Banna's death, developed al-Banna's worldview further using many of Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi's concepts and ideas, in which the modern world was understood to be steeped in *jahiliyyah* (ignorance or barbarism) and Islamic awakening was the process through which *jahiliyyah* was to be reversed. Islamic awakening, from their viewpoint, was a socio-religious and political project, and many of their followers today exhibit such a view.

In a different scenario, Mohammad Ilyas's approach to Islamic awakening was completely different. Mohammad Ilyas and his *Tabligh Jama'at* concentrated on ordinary Muslims and their reform on a personal level. In Mohammad Ilyas's worldview, politics and religion were intertwined, but his work of *tabligh* (preaching) was apolitical. All Mohammad Ilyas was focused on was to make religiously neglectful Muslims better practicing Muslims. He did not have a political program and, therefore, was distinct from Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi as a revivalist and an ideologue.

This demonstrates, as I mentioned above, contemporary Islamic revivalism's internal diversity. Distinctive worldviews produce different sets of priorities and methods of Islamic awakening in the modern world. Whilst some worldviews combine religion and

politics and act upon it, some worldviews separate religion and politics completely, such as groups with strong *Sufistic* (mystical) influence. Then, there are some worldviews that combine religion and politics, but only act upon religious or political aspects, such as the *Tabligh Jama'at*.

Contemporary Islamic revivalism maintains itself as a strategy or set of strategies by which struggling revivalists attempt to preserve their distinctive self-concept as an exclusive collection of people. Feeling this self-concept to be under threat in modernity, these revivalists reinforce it by a selective retrieval of doctrines, dogmas, and practices from the era of pristine Islam. These retrieved fundamentals are then modified, cultivated, and legitimized in consideration of pragmatism. They are seen to serve as a form of protection against the encroachment of harmful elements of modernity which threaten to drive ordinary Muslims into a syncretic, areligious, or irreligious cultural abyss. Moreover, revivalists place the retrieved fundamentals alongside reckless assertions and doctrinal innovations, encouraging Muslims to appreciate the retrieved and updated fundamentals, as they represent the religious values and experiences that originally shaped their communal identity. Revivalists seek major reforms in the social, economic, religious, and political institutions of their states. They see Islam to serve as a vehicle for social progress, and opt for a policy of re-Islamization, attempting to expand the sphere of operation of the *shari'ah* to the main areas of social, economic, cultural, and political activity.

Contemporary Islamic revivalism is about social transformations, and is not simply a phenomenon confined to the Arab world or the Middle East. Discussions of contemporary Islamic revivalism in the context of crises of modernity tend to imagine the Muslim world and the Middle East as identical and assume that the crisis is restricted to only these places. Muslims are not all Arabs or Middle Easterners, and, in fact, a vast majority of Muslims are non-Arabs and non-Middle Easterners (Held and Cummings 2014). Although the crisis of modernity is a global problem, regarding Muslims specifically, it afflicts them almost everywhere they live. Any discussion of contemporary Islamic revivalism, therefore, must include all Muslims. To not include all Muslims and Islamic revivalist movements in a discussion about contemporary Islamic revivalism is to ignore vital dimensions of the modern Muslim experience, which can render generalizations about contemporary Islamic revivalism not only weak, but even invalid. Revivalism has been an inherent part of the logic and experience of Muslims throughout their history. It is a common Muslim belief that in the Qur'an and the *hadith*s are the perfect blueprint for the "best" way of life. Many Muslims look up to the community of Muslims who lived during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad as a perfect community, and they work towards remodeling their current community in such a guise. They note that, as long as humans continue to fail to create such a model society, there will be an ongoing crisis.

Modernity has transformed the societies of the world through the formation of nation-states, the establishment of capitalist economies, the development of technologies and sciences, an emphasis on reason and rationality, and the reformation of socio-cultural processes and institutional operations. In the Muslim world, modernity found its way on the backs of European colonialists who colonized many Muslim societies under the guise of modernization. Muslim societies were faced with the challenges of scientific discovery and technological advancements, the popularization of rationality and rationalism, reason-centered ideas and institutions, and political reorganization. These challenges invariably operated interconnectedly.

In the Muslim world, the initial process of modernization, unlike in the West, was driven purely by external dynamics, which expressed itself through unfamiliar value systems, processes, and institutions. The role of external input into the transformation was never minimized and occurred almost abruptly. The Muslim world's modernization and liberalization took place as a result of its contact with the West, and not of its own initiative. For the most part, Muslim societies dealt with modernization from a position of cultural, economic, and political weakness, and modernity served to disempower the Muslim world

and reinforce its feeling of inferiority vis-à-vis the West. The popular embrace of modern values was never uniform and widespread.

Although some non-Western countries, such as Japan and South Korea, have benefitted hugely from Western modernization and liberalization and have undergone relatively successful transformations, this is not so for the Muslim world. The dynamics of modernization in Muslim-majority countries are fundamentally different from those in the West. Modern values did not spread organically through internal processes, but were imposed as consequences of contact, sometimes aggressive, with the West. Instead of empowering the masses and assisting in improving and modernizing their traditional value system, modern values did the opposite by undermining enduring traditional Muslim values, norms, processes, and institutional functions. Moreover, the highly elaborated modern value system as a total package, as well as new and highly complicated concepts such as citizenship, parliament, election, human rights, and freedom of speech, were introduced simultaneously and within brief intervals of one another to the Muslim masses, which made their adoption into the micro- and macro-levels of everyday living highly challenging and problematic.

Collectively, these generated, in the Muslim world, a religious response manifesting as an Islamization of Muslim countries. From the revivalists' perspective, modernity has always been seen as a foreign force imposed on the Muslim world from above by European colonial powers in partnership with the Muslim elite class in the wake of the gradual decline and ultimate deconstruction of Safavid, Moghul, and Ottoman Empires. The Islamic revivalist movements which emerged from this experience embarked on a salvational mission to save the Muslim world from drifting further into an abyss. Their basic tenet has been to save the Muslim world, and, by extension, the world, by returning particularly negligent Muslims to the ethico-moral standards preserved in the Qur'an and the *Sunna* (the teachings of Prophet Muhammad). They call for the abandoning of various so-called false and historically adulterated traditional practices and beliefs of Muslims and a renewed commitment to pure Islam—the Islam which was practiced by the first few generations of Muslims. They want to see a return to the *shari'ah,* which they believe will lead to communal solidarity, social justice, improved living standards, and universal prosperity. They seek to remove corrupt or dysfunctional regimes and to create a caliphate or a *shari'ah*-based Islamic state that they claim will protect and enforce Islamic morality and ethical standards in Islamized societies.

In this sense, contemporary Islamic revivalism is at once both derivative and vitally original, but it is not anti-modernity and does not seek the destruction of modernity. In an attempt to reclaim the efficacy of a comprehensive Islamic way of life, Islamic revivalists have revealed that they have much in common with other religious revivalists of the past and present. However, they do not intend to artificially impose archaic practices and lifestyles or return to a sacred past. What they do intend to do, however, is to make the revitalized Islamic identity an exclusive and absolute basis for a reinvented socio-political order that is oriented to the future and not to the past. In this sense, they use the "beneficial" elements of modernity to move forward. By selecting elements of tradition and modernity, Islamic revivalists pursue a goal to remake a world which is God-friendly and in constant service to divine will. In this attempt, they seek out members and promote rigorous socio-moral codes for them. Boundaries are set, processes are put into place, rules are articulated, and institutions are established and nourished in pursuit of a widespread reorganization of society.

This Special Issue aims to examine the phenomenon of contemporary Islamic revivalism and the approaches taken by various movements to address the malaise faced by Muslims and their different societies in the epoch known as modernity. The idea is to undertake a social scientific study of Islamic revivalist movements and grapple with issues regarding the root causes of the movement's origins, the revivalists' reactions to and discontent with modernity, and their approaches to community-building in the face of the fragmentation of modern society. An important question to address is that of the

message which they convey to the faithful and what material and spiritual solutions they provide for their necessities. To this end, scholars, experts, and researchers were invited to examine contemporary Islamic revivalism from their respective areas of expertise and disciplinary areas.

Eleven papers in total were successfully submitted. The papers explore the phenomenon of contemporary Islamic revivalism and its attempt to bring about social transformation in the modern world from differing disciplinary, analytical, and theoretical perspectives. What brings the papers together in this Special Issue is their focus on the inner workings of the contemporary phenomenon of Islamic revivalism, its impact on the patterns of everyday Muslim living, and its contribution to the development and transformation of the modern world. The paper entitled *Modernity, Its Impact on Muslim World and General Characteristics of 19–20th-Century Revivalist–Reformists' Re-Reading of the Qur'an* explores the new approaches to the Qur'an and its interpretation which have emerged in the last two centuries. The paper concentrates on reformist *tajdid*-centered suggestions of polyphonic modern Qur'an interpretations and how they affect or not affect Muslim societies. The next paper is entitled *Islamic Revivalism and Muslim Consumer Ethics*. This paper examines the concept of Muslim consumer ethics and its manifestation as a form of religious revivalism. The paper posits that Muslim consumer ethics comprise the moral and humanistic dimension of living in a globalized world, which is an extension of an individual's religious practice. The paper entitled *Modernity, Its Crisis and Islamic Revivalism* examines the phenomenon of contemporary Islamic revivalism as a religious transformative response to the crisis of modernity. It explains that contemporary Islamic revivalism is a complex and heterogeneous global phenomenon seeking to steer modernity out of its prevailing crisis through finding the universal blueprint of life in Islam. The paper entitled *Extremism(s) and Their Fight Against Modernity: The Case of Islamists and Eco-Radicals* compares and contrasts Islamist and eco-radical extremist groups involved in fighting against Western modernization. It further explores the meaning of "modernity" and the role of "frames" (the enemy to fight, the victims to protect, and the change to achieve) in the two extremist groups, as well as the impact of modernity on the development of alternative and extremist ideologies. The paper entitled *Tajdid (Renewal) by Embodiment: Examining the Globalization of the First Mosque Open Day in Australian History* examines the concepts of *tajdid* and *mujaddid,* as well as how a mosque open day in a country like Australia can be understood as a form of renewal of an Islamic tradition. The paper entitled *Moving Beyond Binary Discourses: Islamic Universalism from an Islamic Revivalist Movement's Point of View* explores the Hizmet movement and its origin, theology, and transnational character. It further examines the movement's outreach work in multicultural societies and its ability to adapt to a changing world through education and interfaith activities. The paper entitled *Emotion Work in Tabligh Jama'at Texts* examines the emotional dynamics of the written and oral texts of the Tabligh Jama'at. It claims that Tablighi emotion work contributes to transforming Muslims' emotional spheres by linking them emotionally to critical religious concerns, which ultimately leads to the social transformation of individuals and society. The next paper is entitled *An Islamic Revivalist Group's Unsuccessful Attempt to Find Meaning on WhatsApp: A Case Study of Understanding Unsustainable Asymmetrical Logics between Traditional Religion and the Digital Realm*. The paper explores how adherents of the Tabligh Jama'at utilized WhatsApp for the purpose of meaning-making during the coronavirus pandemic in Pakistan. The paper asserts that without structural authority and organization, communicative interactions between members of Tabligh Jama'at proved chaotic at best and combative at worst. The next paper, entitled *Religious Authority, Popular Preaching and the Dialectic of Structure-Agency in an Islamic Revivalist Movement: The Case of Maulana Tariq Jamil and the Tablighi Jama'at,* is a study of a popular Urdu-speaking Pakistani Muslim scholar and preacher, Maulana Tariq Jamil. Using ethnographic study and content analysis, and by relying on sociological framework of structure–agency, the paper reveals that Maulana Tariq Jamil's increasing exercise of agency in preaching Islam has unsettled structural expectations within traditionalist *'ulama* and the Tablighi leadership. The paper

entitled *Deprived Muslims and Salafism: An Ethnographic Study of the Salafi Movement in Pekanbaru, Indonesia* analyzes the process of reversion to Salafism in Pekanbaru, Indonesia. The paper is based on an empirical study, and the findings reveal that individuals who join the Salafi movement do so because of their experience of relative and existential deprivation. The paper entitled *Revisiting Literacy Jihad Programs of 'Aisyiyah in Countering the Challenges of Salafism* examines the contribution of 'Aisyiyah, the oldest modern Muslim women's organization in Indonesia, to the transformation of Indonesian society through literacy jihad. Using data collected from fieldwork, the findings show that through the establishment of *'Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Kindergarten* and the publication of the *Suara 'Aisyiyah* magazine, the literacy jihad of 'Aisyiyah has empowered many Muslim women and families.

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