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Review of *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis*, by Nasr Abu Zayd

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Nasr Abu Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis*. (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 112 pages.

First, I should address the reasons for reviewing Nasr Abu Zayd's *Reformation of Islamic Thought*. The work was published twenty years ago. However, over that period Islamic societies have undergone many changes, and Islamic thought has been affected by these changes. The work is important for religious thinkers and reformists in Islamic societies. Furthermore, it seems there are no reviews of the book. The Islamic reform movement is growing, especially in Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, and Iran. Studying Nasr Abu Zayd's work is useful in this context.

Reformation of Islamic Thought by Nasr Abu Zayd, in addition to analyzing the reform movement in Islam from the 18th century onwards, points out key concepts related to this movement that have the potential to influence other thinkers. One such concept is 'liberal theology.'¹ In my view, liberal theology is a type of theology that holds that the essence of God is freedom and that God created free human beings. For this reason, Islam and other religions, must vouchsafe such freedom. Anything that, in the name of religion, undermines human freedom is open to doubt, and according to liberal theology, those things that violate human freedom cannot be regarded as religious. Zayd's own view is in line with liberal theology. The views he describes of other Muslim reformers show direct or indirect influence from 'liberal theology.' The spread of Western civilization brought serious disturbance to Islam. The confrontations with Western civilization were diverse and different positions were formed in response, including the creation of new concepts, some with Western roots, e.g., 'human rights,' 'women's rights,' 'democracy,' and 'secularism.'² Some radical and even conservative Muslims felt antagonism between Islam and all Western societies and considered Western concepts as anti-Islamic. In contrast, others saw these concepts as useful to people regardless of their religion. Accordingly, philosophy, culture, science, and technology are not limited to a specific time and place.

Differing Muslim views of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* (the Prophetic tradition) also contribute to the formation of divergent perspectives on the West. The reform movement in Islam is a change in how the *Qur'an*, the *Sunnah*, and other

civilizations are treated. Muslims do not need to consider the *Qur'an* an obstacle to adopting the principles of other cultures, especially Western ones, in the present era. For Abu Zayd, the reform movement began in the pre-colonial era in Islamic societies, and with the onset of the colonial era, the reform movement became more necessary. Abu Zayd divides his discussion into four parts: the pre-colonial era (especially the 18th century), the 19th century, the 20th century, and the views of some thinkers on Islam, Sharia, democracy, and human rights. The peak of reformist theory and liberal theology is manifested in the opinions of the thinkers in the fourth section.

In the first part, Abu Zayd points out two different ways of thinking in the Islamic world and shows that although both approaches are considered a form of reform in Islamic thinking, one leads to progressivism and the other to fundamentalism. He refers to the ideology of Shah Wali Allah Dehlawi (1703-1762) and Dynamic Islam, which exists in India and Indonesia, and to Wahhabism, a kind of return to previous values. The first shows that the religion of Islam and Islamic civilization are receptive to various intellectual and cognitive sources, such as philosophy, Sufism, and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). However, the second shows Islam reduced to *fiqh*. During the golden age of Islamic civilization, a period of cultural diversity, Islamic philosophy and theology played an important role, alongside other intellectual and epistemological sources. However, afterwards, as many theologians began to criticize philosophers and Greek ideas introduced into the Islamic world, this diversity diminished. Eventually, instead of Islamic theology (*kalām*) being central, extremist jurisprudence took its place. In consequence, we see the persecution of some Sufis, such as al-Hallaj, and some philosophers, such as Suhrawardī (15). Wahhabism was founded in Arabia by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) and was heavily influenced by Ibn Taymiya (1263-1328). Abu Zayd sees this movement as “Ibn Taymiya’s approach without Ibn Arabi” (18). Ibn Taymiya and Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) are both prominent scholars of the Islamic world. Ibn Taymiya became a source of fundamentalism and literalism, while Ibn Arabi became a source of moderation and esotericism. “Ibn Taymiya’s approach without Ibn Arabi” means attention to the outward without the inward, the result of which is dogmatism and fundamentalism. Regarding Shah Wali Allah, what I call the open example of Islam, Abu Zayd points out that Shah Wali Allah criticizes the spread of imitation (*taqlid*) and says that, in place of imitation, independent reasoning (*ijtihad*), i.e., personal effort in deciding a point of law, should be substituted. Abu Zayd also emphasizes the distinction between *haqiqa* and *sharia* that is found in Sufism. In other words, *ijtihad* is, to some extent, a sign of rationalism, and the spread of *ijtihad*, instead of *taqlid*, means that, instead of the number of mujtahids being few at any given time and the number of imitators being high, we should turn to the path where everyone can do their own independent reasoning (16). Abu Zayd makes the key point that Shah Wali Allah was influenced by Ibn Arabi, one of the most famous mystics in the Islamic world (17). Shah Wali Allah’s way of thinking Islam is not limited to Sharia law as it has a mystical dimension.

The next section of the book deals with the 19th century, when the Islamic modernist and reformist movement emerged in a tangible way. The concept of reform in the modern sense emerged in this century. Although the roots of reformism can be traced to rationalist philosophers, the Mu'tazilites, and even to Shah Wali Allah, these are not true reformists in the modern sense. During the 19th century, many Islamic thinkers reinterpreted tradition in the light of modernity (21). Three challenges that faced Islamic thinkers, and perhaps all Muslims, in the 19th century, i.e., science and technology, rationalism, and political change (22), led to the formation of modernity among Islamic revivalists. Abu Zayd also addresses the key concept of 'rethinking tradition' in relation to the influential Islamic scholar Shaykh Refaa Rafi al-Tahtawi (1801-1873), who emphasized the development of independent reasoning rather than imitation. Tahtawi also believed that there was little difference between *Sharia* and natural law. Islamic law, accordingly, should be reinterpreted based on the direction of modern needs. In this view, independent reasoning replaces consensus (*ijmā'*) among the four sources of jurisprudential knowledge, i.e., the *Qur'an*, tradition (*Sunnah*), consensus, and rational analogy (*qiyās*) (24-5).

Abu Zayd points to Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897) also known as Jamal al-Din Asad Abadi, as the most significant reformist figure in the Islamic world. I mentioned three groups at the beginning and said that the third group, while wanting to preserve their values and not be inferior to other societies, also uses the intellectual, cultural, and scientific capacities of other civilizations. Afghani can be placed in this group. However, he may also be considered one of the pioneers of liberal theology. Abu Zayd considered Afghani to be a figure influenced by Islamic philosophy, especially Avicennian philosophy. In my view, if someone is influenced by Ibn Sina, also known as Avicenna (980-1037), it means that aspects of rationalism, or, more precisely, intellectualism are dominant. In other words, Avicenna and Avicennian philosophy are symbols of intellectualism.

Abu Zayd holds that Afghani is a rationalist figure in the reform movement (26). Afghani's rationalism lies in his view that Islam is a religion with rational aspects, while Christianity opposes some scientific and rational principles (26). Afghani's influence on other reform movements, such as the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, is also evident. Due to his importance in the reform movement and his inspiration for other reform movements, Afghani has been called the Martin Luther of Islam (26). However, as I said, he falls into the third group, and it seems that he wanted to return to the greatness of Islam, but while maintaining modern Western elements. However, he did not accept the political superiority of the West over Muslim societies in any way, and for this reason, he was influential in the anti-colonial national and Islamic movements. In this regard, Abu Zayd writes:

He felt that Muslims must act in unison to have a chance of making a stand against Western hegemony. He believed that Sunnis and Shiites had to overcome their difference in the face of this danger, and that even Muslims and

non-Muslims should be able to stand together in a common fight based on a reform Islam. (26)

Several things should be noted. First, Afghani considered Western domination of Muslim societies to be a threat. Second, he believed in tolerance between Shiites and Sunnis. Third, he also believed in religious tolerance between Muslims and non-Muslims. Nevertheless, he wanted to fight against Western domination, and for this reason, he could perhaps be considered aggressive. However, because he believed in tolerance, he is considered an important figure in liberal theology. In other words, in his thinking and that of some Muslim reformers who both wanted to embrace modern Western concepts and resist their domination, Europe was an enemy to be confronted and a master to be used (37). Afghani saw the solution in uniting Muslim communities, which, I believe, includes both political and cultural unity. Although Afghani seems to believe in an Islamic state, it is also possible that by uniting Muslim communities, he means creating a unity by statesmen, and not simply creating a theocracy. In fact, statesmen, since they govern Muslims and Muslim communities, must be able to maintain Islamic identity as opposed to cultural identity. Also, if Afghani believes in creating an Islamic state, he should be seen as someone who establishes tolerance between Muslims and members of other religions.

Afghani's thought welcomes rethinking the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, which is also why he is an influence on reformists. The role he gives to independent reasoning is high, so much so that it even replaces consensus, on occasion. In this way, independent and personal reasoning replaces the reasoning of a group of jurists, and the ability to understand rulings from religious texts becomes common among individuals, instead of their imitating the opinions of other jurists. The reformist movement emphasizes rationalism, much like the golden age of Islam, when rationalism held a central place. The view of the *Sunnah* has changed for the reformist movement. Forgery of *hadith* had been high in the *Sunnah*, and that is why the *Qur'an* plays a key role. During the time of the Prophet of Islam, people heard his words directly with their own ears or through close intermediaries, but several years after the Prophet's death, the possibility of alteration in the *hadith* increased. However, the *Qur'an* has always remained unchanged, and this is why the reformist and rethinking movement relies more on the *Qur'an* than on *hadith* and the *Sunnah*. The rethinking movement, of which Afghani was a pioneer, values rationalism; it rereads the *Sunnah* from the perspective of modernity, as well as rationalistic *ijtihad*, i.e., independent reasoning. The rethinking approach significantly changes the way the *Qur'an* is interpreted in the century after Afghani. For the interpretation of the *Qur'an*, on the one hand, the context of the period in which revelation was sent down to the Prophet is examined, and, on the other hand, the context of the present period is also considered. In some verses of the *Qur'an*, it is understood that the context pertains only to a particular period, such as the wars that took place during the time of the Prophet. In other verses, it is understood that the audience is not limited to only one group of people in a specific time and place, but rather includes all people in all times and all places.

In addition to Afghani, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), an Indian Muslim scholar, also played an important role in the development of the re-thinking approach. Abu Zayd points out that Ahmad Khan believed in the role of reason and nature in presenting an account of Islam. He also reconsiders the second classical source of jurisprudential knowledge, i.e., the *Sunnah* (28), and thus the role of the *Qur'an* and reason, as sources of knowledge, becomes more prominent. Furthermore, Muhammad Abduh (1848-1905) also adopted this approach in Egypt; his belief that "Islam is the Qur'an alone" became a slogan, which led to the spread of the Qur'anic movement,³ opposed to the *Ahl al-Hadith*,⁴ in India and Egypt (29).

The reinterpretation approach, one of the most important approaches adopted by the reformers in the 19th century, shows that the fundamental principles of Islam, based on the *Qur'an*, do not contradict the laws of nature and that many of the matters raised in the *Qur'an* are metaphorical. The fact that earlier Islamic thinkers viewed the *Qur'an* only in a literal sense was due to the lack of development of natural science (30). Abu Zayd refers to Ahmad Khan's view that the *Qur'an* should be interpreted using the *Qur'an* itself and pre-Islamic literature. This view, I believe, paved the way for some Islamic thinkers in the following century to accept a hermeneutic interpretation of the *Qur'an* (31), including an understanding of language, history, culture, and the circumstances of revelation at the time it was revealed, rather than solely on focusing on the textual analysis of the *Qur'an*. In addition, Abu Zayd enters into a discussion of various readings of the *Qur'an*, stating that some understand its meanings literally, while others regard many of its terms as metaphorical. Likewise, some maintain that many Qur'anic passages pertain to a specific historical period, whereas others argue that certain elements constitute fixed principles and that a distinction must be made between them. Furthermore, some consider the *Qur'an* not as a scientific or political text, but as a spiritual and ethical one (58). Against this broader hermeneutical background, Abu Zayd turns to thinkers whose interpretations move in a more ideological and political direction. He discusses Abu Ala Mawdudi (1903–1979), the Pakistani author, and acknowledges that Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) was among those influenced by him. According to Mawdudi, the world is divided into two parts: the West and Islam, or *jāhiliyya* and Islam (52). In this regard, Abu Zayd has presented two dichotomies: that between a modern, cultural, and rational Islam and a literalist Islam, and that between different approaches to interpreting the *Qur'an*. Abu Zayd, to support his dichotomies, provides some cases in his book and examines them like Islam in Indonesia and Iran in the twentieth century.

Abu Zayd, in the discussion of Islam and Rationalism, claims that Muhammad Abduh always praised Afghani's knowledge, philosophical and mystical. Abduh continued the rationalist approach adopted by Afghani (31). Abduh was a follower of independent reasoning and believed that religion was an essential aspect of human existence. He believed that independent reasoning should be broad, so that it could reach all social and intellectual branches of humanity. He also believed that true reform could not occur except through reform of Islamic thought. Like Ahmad Khan, who believed that in order to understand

the *Qur'an*, one must be aware of pre-Islamic literature, i.e., the context in which the *Qur'an* was revealed, Abduh also believed that much of the *Qur'an* was in line with Arab thought of the time (32). Unlike Ahmad Khan, who viewed the *Qur'an* from a scientific perspective, Abduh held the *Qur'an* to be a book of guidance, not a book of history. If it contains historical material, it is because it expresses historical and ethical lessons (32). Abduh's discourse, like Afghani's discourse, which influenced the Iranian Constitutional Revolution and aimed to modernize Iran, was influential in the thinking of Muhammad Ali (1760-1849), one of the leaders of Egyptian modernization (33). Abduh's liberal discourse included the imperative to return to a pure and accurate understanding of Islam, the same understanding that had enabled the ancient Muslims to achieve world leadership (33). This is why Abduh distinguishes between 'Islam' and 'Muslims' (33): the fundamental values of Islam have always been constant, but Muslims' understanding of Islam has often varied. Like Afghani, Abduh believed in a return to Islamic values and the revival of Islamic civilization. It is important to note, however, that unlike the fundamentalists, he did not see the solution simply in aggression against Western societies. The Afghani and Abduh movement was political, but it was first a cultural and reformist movement, as the Reformation emerged in Christianity, and then the Enlightenment in Europe. The difference is that, in the European Enlightenment, Christianity was key, while the case in Islam is different. Abduh believed that we can have European science and technology, and we can also borrow European rationalism and modern enlightenment, and he justified it with classical Islamic theology and philosophy, especially with the beliefs of the Mu'tazilites and Averroës (34). Free discourse, the reform movement, and the context of Islam's interaction with modernity are created by people like Afghani, Ahmad Khan, and Abduh.

Abu Zayd also refers to the reform movement in the twentieth century. Based on his discussions, the reform movement is, on the one hand, a way of confronting Western modernism, and on the other hand, a desire to return to original Islamic values and, even, to revive the glory of Islamic civilization. However, in reformist thinking, we come to the conclusion that conservatism and fundamentalism are not possible without understanding Western modernism, as many new concepts have emerged in Western civilization and have become popular. However, the confrontation with the West led some to think that the solution was the creation of an Islamic state opposed to Western governments. Abu Zayd begins this chapter by discussing two opposing views. On the one hand, Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935) was in favor of the caliphate, deeming it necessary to prevent people from entering the age of ignorance. The idea of the Brotherhood was formed here (37). It was based on a return to original Islam through the revival of the practice of the pious ancestors (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) and the establishment of an Islamic social and political order. The concept of political Islam in the modern sense was formed in this century. On the other hand, Ali Abd al-Raziq (1888-1966), an Egyptian scholar, who held that there is no political system that can be called Islamic, and, therefore, advocated for the abolition of the caliphate. For example, he believed that the caliphate

has no basis in the *Qur'an* (45), and others like Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq (1804-1878) believed that religion was an individual matter, rather than a social obligation, and thus, the only way to preserve religion was to separate it from politics. Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1848-1902) also thought that religious authority should not have political power, because the combination of the two would be dangerous (38). These scholars, contrary to Rida, were reformers who adapted their principles to secularism. Rida, however, supported the caliphate. As editor of *al-Manār*, although influenced by Muhammad Abduh, Rida also held Salafi views⁶ and weakened the reform movement in some ways. The Muslim Brotherhood crystallized from Rida's teachings. The Brotherhood upheld Salafi doctrines and emphasized a return to the practices and actions of the pious ancestors (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*). They called for a return to authentic Islam, free from the influence of Greek philosophy and devoid of modern European elements. They also accepted the idea of the caliphate (45-6), precisely in contrast to the approach of modernist thinkers, who pursued rationalism and adaptation to modern foundations.

In addition to Egypt, Abu Zayd points to the examples of Iran and Iraq, where, in the 20th century, the question arose: should the law be based on Sharia or should a constitution be codified? Abu Zayd refers to Muhammad Husayn Naini (1860-1936), a Shi'ite cleric in Iran who was considered an advocate of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. Naini held that the absolute ruler is God, and that if someone assumes rulership, he may deviate into imitation of God and fall into *shirk* (associating partners with God),⁵ and consequently into despotism. Therefore, during the occultation of the Infallible, power must be limited through the representatives of parliament, who supervise political authority and prevent the concentration of absolute power in the hands of one ruler. Naini was in favor of a limited government (40). He reckons that the right to absolute rule belongs only to the Prophet and his family (*Ahl al-Bayt*), and in their absence government should not be held absolutely in the hands of any one person. This view is comparable to that of Abu Nasr al-Fārābī (870-950), who likewise believed that the ruler of the city is similar to God in the sense of governing the world and society toward order and perfection (Al-Fārābī 1991, 64). However, al-Fārābī's First Ruler was a prophet. He also held that after him, and regarding subsequent rulers, governance could take a consultative form. What I mean by the similarity between al-Fārābī's view and that of some Shi'i clerics during the Iranian Constitutional Revolution is that al-Fārābī considers absolute authority to be confined only to the First Ruler of the Virtuous City, the Prophet, and that, after him, government can take a consultative form.

In Iran, the establishment of the Islamic Republic after the 1979 Revolution led to a rethinking of the relationship between religion and the state. Following the overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchy, Shi'i clerics, most notably Ayatollah Khomeini (1902-1989), succeeded in bringing an Islamic political order to power. Reformist figures in Iran, such as Abdolkarim Soroush (b. 1945) and Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari (b. 1936), continued the reform movement. For example, Soroush may be regarded as a kind of modernist. He held that, in addition to Western technology, we should also make use of Western social sci-

ences and philosophy (65). His view was that just as Muslim philosophers made use of Greek philosophers, and others later benefited from Muslim philosophers, so reformists too can draw upon Western thinkers. He rejects Ali Shariati's (1933-1977) idea of returning to the self, arguing that if we were to reject external elements, we would also have to reject Islam, since it does not have Iranian roots (66). The discourse of liberal theology regarding the understanding of the *Qur'an* was also continued in the Islamic world by Iranian thinkers. Shabestari regarded the *Qur'an* as a hermeneutical text, with various possible interpretations. Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr (1935-1980), for example, derived Islamic economics from the *Qur'an* (67). This means that the *Qur'an* is an interpretable text, and, therefore, not subject to dogmatic or doctrinal control. Soroush maintained that religious understanding changes over time, that it is conditioned by time and place (71). Abu Zayd treats the *Qur'an* as hermeneutical: it is interpreted in communist, fundamentalist, and feminist ways (91).

Abu Zayd also considers the case of Indonesia. The reform movement entered Indonesia through the journal *al-Manār*. Subsequently, the education of Indonesian students in Cairo, as well as the travel of Indonesian scholars to Mecca and Medina, and thereafter to other Islamic countries, and their engagement in dialogue, contributed to the expansion of the reform movement in Indonesia (42). In this context, we encounter a strong belief in Indonesia in independent reasoning, one that maintained that, in order to understand various issues, one should turn to different schools of *fiqh*. At the same time, an approach to rethinking the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* emerged in Indonesia (43). A number of journals and Islamic institutions in Indonesia contributed to the dissemination of this reformist perspective.

The reform movement in Indonesia led to the emergence of the idea of cultural Islam, which sought to guarantee freethinking, democracy, and human rights. It also adopted secularism. Abu Zayd acknowledges that some Indonesian thinkers did not regard secularism as a worldview, but rather considered it an approach (59). Some Indonesian Muslim thinkers also maintained that pluralism in society must be accepted and that one should adopt tolerance. For this group of thinkers, Islam is compatible with pluralism, tolerance, freethinking, human rights, and democracy. Abu Zayd refers to the view of Ahmad Wahib (1942–1974), who states that God is dynamic rather than static. For this reason, freethinking is not merely a right but also a duty. Wahib also argues that enlightenment and freethinking are among the characteristics of the Prophet of Islam (61-2). Other figures, like Munawir Sadzali (1925-2004), held that the *Qur'an* does not obligate us to establish a state, and that the Islamic state in its modern sense is merely a reaction to colonialism (63).

In the final chapter of his book, titled 'Selected Thinkers on Islam, *Sharia*, Democracy and Human Rights,' Abu Zayd treats of his own and others' views, which can be considered the culmination of earlier reformist ideas. He refers to Abdullah An-Naim's (b. 1946) view that we should follow the message of the Meccan *suras* of the *Qur'an*, which contain universal and enduring messages. According to this view, the messages of the Meccan *suras* override those of the Medinan *suras*, which were related to specific historical times and contexts (85).

The key view here is that the essential rulings and values of Islam, like monotheism, superior moral ethics, justice, and equality, are unchangeable, whereas its accidental rulings are subject to change (90). Abu Zayd argues that many rulings are not explicitly stated in the *Qur'an* itself, but have been articulated through the five objectives of Islamic law (*maqāsid al-sharī'a*) as formulated by figures such as al-Ghazālī (1058-1111). The five objectives of the *sharia* are: preservation of the soul; protection of progeny; protection of property; preservation of sanity (intellect); preservation of religion (94). The first objective is deduced from the Islamic penal code⁷ related to illegal killing, since the prohibition and punishment of murder aim at protecting human life. The prohibition of alcohol consumption is deduced from the fourth objective, i.e., the preservation of sanity (94-95). The *Qur'an* in itself is a book of guidance rather than a book of law. Abu Zayd claims that the formation of a dictatorship results from viewing all the rulings of the *Qur'an* as timeless and placeless (95). He also states that some of the concepts mentioned in the *Qur'an* had meanings appropriate to the time of its revelation. For example, it is not necessary to understand the *shura* (consultation) mentioned in the *Qur'an* as democracy in its modern sense (96). Islam operates within context. Just as it adopted the form of *shura* in its own time, Muslims today can also adopt Western models. Therefore, it is not Islam that stands against democracy, modernity, and development; rather, it is the resistance of some Muslims and Islamic societies to modernity.

In conclusion, from the discussion Abu Zayd presents in this book, it can be understood that the reform movement in Islam is grounded in the encounter between Islam and Muslims and other civilizations, especially Western civilization in the modern period, as well as in the way human beings view the *Qur'an*. For this reason, alongside social transformations and the reformers' perspectives on social phenomena, Abu Zayd also addresses the views of Islamic thinkers regarding the interpretation of the *Qur'an*. If I were to summarize the reform movement in a few key terms, it would be that Islam is compatible with rationalism, independent reasoning, freedom, human rights, democracy, and all the concepts that guarantee human well-being.

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Biography

Mohamad Mahdi Davar is an M.A. Student in Philosophy at Memorial University of Newfoundland and he holds a B.A. in Islamic Philosophy and Theology from the University of Tehran. His research is in Metaphysics, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, and Islamic Philosophy (especially Al-Fārābī, Avicenna, and Suhrawardī and his *Philosophy of Illumination*). He also works in Politi-

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Notes

1. The term “liberal theology” is more commonly used in the Christian context and is a concept associated with rationalism, the Enlightenment, modern science, society, and religious experience. According to Gary Dorrien, “[l]iberal theology conceives the meaning of Christianity in the light of modern knowledge and ethical values. It is reformist in spirit and substance; it is deeply shaped by modern science, humanism, and historical criticism; and it is committed to making Christianity credible and socially relevant” (2009, 3); and according to Olli-Pekka Moisio, “[t]he term Liberal Theology denotes various philosophically, theologically, and biblically informed religious movements and ideas that emerged within Christianity during the so-called Age of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. These movements and ideas can in large part be seen as reactions to Enlightenment philosophy and rationalism” (Moisio 2013, 1161). I believe that this concept can be applicable in Islam as well, and that it is for this reason that Abu Zayd also employs this concept in his book. The definition that I have provided in the text concerns the freedom of God and the human being, and I have defined liberal theology on the basis of the concept of freedom. My definition is not in conflict with the definition of liberal theology in Christianity, because in the Christian context, as well, liberal theology is connected with humanism, and within humanism the freedom of the human being is also a necessary condition.
2. Although the concept of something like human rights may have been seen in pre-modern Western and even non-Western societies, as in Cyrus the Great Cylinder, the ancient Persian king, or in the teachings of many religions, these concepts emerged as organized concepts in the modern West.
3. The Qur’anic movement is, in fact, an approach that focuses solely on the verses of the *Qur’an*, rather than on *hadith*, for deriving legal rulings and religious matters; in this approach, even if there is a need to make use of *hadith* or the *Sunnah*, such use is highly limited.
4. *Ahl al-Hadith* refers to a group whose approach is based solely on focusing on *hadith* and the *Sunnah*, i.e., the prophetic tradition. They regard the role of reason and rational argument in understanding theological and legal matters as highly limited, because they consider the *Sunnah* to be complete and as having taken the place of reason. They also use the *Sunnah* for understanding the *Qur’an*, since they consider human reason to be insufficient for understanding the *Qur’an*.
5. *Shirk* means ascribing a partner to God; this can take the form of placing another being on an equal level with God, or even attributing other forms of divinity to other things.

6. Salafi doctrine refers to an intellectual and religious movement within the Islamic world that seeks to follow the views and practices of the pious ancestors and predecessors (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*), especially the first generations of Muslims, including the companions of the Prophet, the Successors, and their followers. This movement regards the return to the views of these early generations as the path to the well-being of Muslims and Islamic societies.
7. Islamic penal code or Islamic punishment law is a part of Islamic law that concerns the prevention and punishment of crimes such as murder, theft, bodily harm, and adultery; within the framework of objectives of Islamic law, this part of the law should be directed toward the preservation of the soul, protection of progeny, and protection of property.

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