of Islam, the other in a Muslim minority democratic context. Political thought among Iranians stems from Shi'i historical and religious experiences and the interaction of these with a myriad of modern influences, including nationalism and imperialism. In contrast, Saudis draw on their Sunni Hanbali-Wahhabi background. Muslims in America reflect this contingency and diversity within the Muslim world and Islamic history. Unsurprisingly, the political thought and activism of American Muslims are increasingly in conformity with the sociology of American political culture.

See also authority; democracy; jurisprudence; minorities

Further Reading

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MAHAN MIRZA

Deobandis

The Deobandi movement emerged from religious schools and institutions devoted to the purist religious tradition associated with an Islamic school, the Darul Uloom (*Dār al-'Ulūm*), founded in 1866 in the North Indian city of Deoband. While considered traditional and orthodox today, Deoband originally represented a modern approach, emulating British colleges with its fixed curriculum, salaried teachers, regular class schedules, and hostel facilities. Its founders, Muhammad Qasim Nanotawi (1832–79) and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1829–1905), wanted to continue the tradition of Shah Waliullah (1703–62), who had sought to cleanse South Asian Islam of local customs. In their view, British rule had undermined religious laws and learning. The return to the true Islam of the pious forebears (*al-salaf*) through the reform (*iṣlāḥ*) of religious practice and thought was the prime theological objective. The study and implementation of the prophetic traditions (hadiths) received special attention. However, this did not entail challenging traditional adherence (*taqlīd*) to the Hanafi law school or the guidance of teachers (shaykh). Sufi practice (*tasawwuf*) was condoned, even encouraged, if it proceeded within the limits of Islamic law (shari'a), as it helped to foster the morality, moderation, and stability of personality and mind. The Deobandis regarded their own approach as the only true Islam and were critical of other sects and

law schools. In particular, they attacked Sufi shrine-based devotion common in South Asia as it detracted from the focus on Allah being the one and only God (*tawḥīd*). This critique led to particularly strong competition with the Barelwi sect, which defended traditional religious practices.

The defeat of the anticolonial revolt of 1857–58, in which a number of Muslim notables and scholars also were implicated, left a deep impact on the founding generation of the Deoband school. Its adherents came to emphasize religious learning and piety, joining other scholars of the time in renouncing jihad as a means of militant resistance against British rule. It was the abolition of the Muslim majority province of East Bengal in 1912 that spurred Muslim leaders across the theological spectrum into action. In Deoband, a new generation of scholars argued for a political role of the school. They included the Shaykh al-Hind Mahmud al-Hasan (1851–1920), Husain Ahmad Madani (1879–1957), and 'Ubaydallah Sindhi (1872–1944). Deobandi scholars traced their political philosophy back to Sayyid Ahmad Shahid (1786–1831), who was a puritan reformer and had led a movement of jihad against Sikh rulers in northwest India.

As British rule was regarded as an obstacle to proper Islamic practice and life, colonial India was viewed by many Deobandis as *dār al-ḥarb*, the land of war, as opposed to being the land of Islam, *dār al-islām*. This theological opposition led the Deobandis to cooperate with nationalists from the Indian National Congress under Mohandas Gandhi. The Silk Letter Conspiracy of 1916 revealed the extent to which Deobandi scholars had become involved in clandestine efforts against the British. Deobandis soon dominated the first public organization of Muslim religious scholars of India, Jamiat-Ulama-i Hind (JUH) after its foundation in 1919. The Khilafat movement (1919–24) turned into a mass campaign to mobilize Indian Muslims against the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate. The JUH aimed to create conditions in India under which Muslims could follow a religious life in accordance with the demands of Islam. For a future independent India, it envisaged a government commissioner of Islamic affairs who would be the highest arbiter in religious and social matters concerning Muslims. This position favored a united India, in contrast with demands for a separate Muslim state as advanced by the Muslim League.

Shortly before the partition of the subcontinent, a faction of the JUH broke away to form the Jamiat-Ulama-i Islam (JUI), which continued to operate in Pakistan. In India, the JUH avoided political activity. While the JUI was the largest religious party in Pakistan, its political influence remained limited to local pockets in the former Northwest Frontier Province and Baluchistan. During the reign of Pakistan's military dictator, General Zia-ul-Haq (r. 1977–88), with U.S. strategic support, selected Islamic schools (madrasas) in the Afghanistan border area following the Deobandi curriculum, were used to train tribal militias as mujahidin, or holy warriors, for intervention in the Soviet-Afghan War (1978–89). Simultaneously Pakistan directed the militias to the conflict in Kashmir, where they helped revive the civil war in the Indian-controlled

territory. These militias drew much of their motivation from sectarian doctrines striving to defend "true" Islam and uprooting un-Islamic practices, which led to sectarian strife with Shi'i groups as well as attacks on Christian, Hindu, and Ahmadi targets. After the Afghan mujahidin groups failed to control the country, a new movement of religious students, the Taliban, emerged from some Deobandi madrasas near the Afghan borderland in 1994 with active support of the Pakistani government. The new international war in Afghanistan in 2001 toppled the Taliban, who withdrew into Pakistan. There, they regrouped and reemerged as a major force, later forming an alliance of tribal religious groups, the Taliban Movement of Pakistan.

While the politicization of Deobandi militias owed much to political and ethnic factors, the vast majority of Deobandi madrasas remained committed to religious learning, offering educational opportunities to aspiring rural and suburban families. As the share of madrasa education did not exceed 3 percent in Pakistan in the early 21st century, their influence remained limited. Their religious education became more formalized with the introduction of degree courses for religious scholars. The more advanced schools also offered secular subjects and the national curriculum. The Darul Uloom madrasa in Deoband split in 1982 in a factional dispute, creating a rival institution, the Darul Uloom Waqf, in the same city. The old school was dominated by the descendants of Husain Ahmad Madani's family, while the new school was controlled by the offspring of Deoband founder Nanotawi. The regional and global expansion of Deobandi institutions relied on diaspora groups from the colonial era but also on traditional migrants from Muslim trading groups as well as other migrants. The global influence of Deobandi thought significantly expanded through the Deobandi-dominated missionary movement, the Tablighi Jama'at. Many observers believe it to be the largest transnational Islamic grassroots movement, operating in all countries where Muslims live.

See also Barelwis; India; madrasa; Pakistan; Taliban; Tablighi Jama'at

Further Reading

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DIETRICH REETZ

difference of opinion

A difference of opinion (*ikhtilāf*) is a ubiquitous feature of Islamic law. More often than not, on any given issue a number of equally legitimate legal rules exist. Classical legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) tended to explain the legitimacy of differences of opinion as a result of the many ways in which the divine textual sources of the law (Qur'an and sunna) could be interpreted. Given that one of the main functions of a ruler or judge is to apply Islamic law, the legitimacy of a plurality of interpretations of the Divine Law (*ijtihād*) posed acute problems: Which law should the ruler implement? Which body of rules is the judge to apply? What makes the applied rule legitimate? In the classical period, Muslim legal theorists' justifications for the legitimacy of the applied rule vacillated between emphasizing the legitimacy of the institutional role of the applier of the rule (i.e., did the applier legitimately occupy the role of the ruler or judge?) and the scholarly competence of the individual applier (i.e., was the individual applier himself a *mujtahid* [expert jurist]?).

In the early classical period, the legitimacy of a judicial application of one opinion over another depended on whether the judge possessed the competence to derive the relevant legal rule from the textual sources of the Divine Law. In theory, this competence required the possession of knowledge of the divine textual sources, rules of textual construction and the accepted methods of legal reasoning, and moral probity. The scholar of the Shafi'i school Mawardi (d. 1058) regarded the absence of these qualifications as ground for invalidating a judge's appointment and his judicial decisions. Two generations later, Ghazali (d. 1111) upheld the necessity of these qualifications for judges but did not regard them as essential for the validity of the cases that the judge had decided. As long as the judge's appointment by the ruler was legitimate, he was willing to accept the validity of past decided cases even if the judge was not a *mujtahid* in his own right. Similarly, the Maliki scholar Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. Idris al-Qarafi (d. 1285) identified the validity of the judicial decision as resting not on the individual judge's expert competence but on "receipt (from an authorized authority) of a specific jurisdiction (*wilāya khāṣṣa*)" (Jackson, 1996, 160). Jackson interprets Qarafi's justification as motivated by the desire to protect the legitimacy of disagreement among the major Sunni legal traditions of his time. Qarafi held that a judge's decision according to the rule of any one of the established legal traditions (*madhāhib*) could not be challenged on the ground that the rule rested on an incorrect understanding of the sources of the Divine Law. Qarafi argued that a firm consensus had validated the legitimacy of the differences of opinion as enshrined in the four Sunni legal traditions. Any judicial decision based on a legal rule upheld by any one of these traditions was valid because of this consensus. This meant, for example, that a Hanafi jurist who had the ear of the sultan could not seek to invalidate a judicial decision based on the application of a Maliki rule by arguing that the Maliki rule is an incorrect