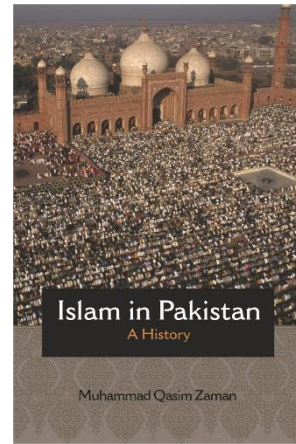


## Book Reviews

Muhammad Qasim Zaman. *Islam in Pakistan: A History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018. Pp. xviii+401. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780691149226. Price: \$39.50.

Muhammad Qasim Zaman's, *Islam in Pakistan, A History*, is a seminal, expansive work that goes over the history of Islam in Pakistan while situating it in its colonial roots. It is a thematic endeavour where certain topics related to Islam in Pakistan are connected in different chapters on different subject matters. It claims to be a book that does not teach us about the chronology of events related to Islam in Pakistan, but it does quite fittingly so with some sublime analyses throughout. Another emphatic trait of the book is that it brings various stakeholders vis-à-vis, Islam in Pakistan—the *'ulamā'*, the modernists, and the governing elite—into conversation with each other.



It starts by shedding some bright light on various Islamic identities in Colonial India, the most remarkable amongst them being the Deobandis, Bareilvis, Ahl-i Ḥadīth, Islamists with the likes of Abū 'l-A'ḷā Mawdūdī, and Muslim modernists such as Muhammad Iqbal and Sayyid Aḥmad Khān. It educates us on how all these groups were in conversation with each other not only on the question of the role of Islam after the emergence of Pakistan, as this question arose much later, but how an Islamic “polity” to Iqbal and other modernists, and Islamic “system” to Islamists would manifest in colonial India. There were serious disagreements about how all of that would manifest itself, but eventually, the Muslim League under its banner of Islam and a “distinct” Muslim identity proved to be successful with the inception of Pakistan in 1947.

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In the second chapter, Zaman emphasizes the ethical commitments of the modernists and what role they aim to play in Islam in a newly-born Pakistan. His primary focus is on the legacy of Fazlur Rehman, who was educated in the West and aimed to bring Islam's "dynamic" character to Pakistan. The problem that Zaman raises with these modernists is that they become so intermingled with the state and its motives that it becomes easier for their opponents, the *'ulamā'* and the Islamists, to reject them. Interesting here is the argument that the works of the likes of Fazlur Rehman were being produced and brought in an authoritarian regime of Ayub Khan in the 1960s. Thus, the independence that one expects from modernist scholars to critique the traditionalists ceases to be pure with its larger political objectives no matter how rigorous the modernist critiques are. Despite this, Zaman's book makes it clear, contrary to the popular conception, that modernists such as Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and Fazlur Rehman were well-versed in traditional Islamic sciences and hence reject them, over certain issues, in nuanced, rational ways.

In the third chapter, Zaman introduces various types of *'ulamā'* who contributed to supporting or resisting various state narratives in Pakistan. There were the traditionalists like Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī who supported and even defended state objectives in its early years even during the first war with India in 1948 over Kashmir against the likes of Mawdūdī who were critical of using the term "*jihād*" in that particular context. Then there were modernists such as Muḥammad Ḥanīf Nadvī who presented the "totality" of Islamic thought with its "dynamism" while still emphasizing the significance of the Arabic language for any *mujtahid*.

In the fourth chapter, Zaman elaborates on the term "sovereignty"/*ḥākimiyyah* and how its understanding is distinguished for classical and modern scholars. For instance, he argues that al-Ṭabarī and al-Qurṭubī interpreted the term as "only God should be worshipped" and "God is the Creator of everything" (p. 137). This is in no way near the modernist understanding of it where Mawdūdī would argue that it refers to the idea that sovereignty belongs to God, and not the people and this idea still proves to be influential for Jamā'at-i Islāmī's politics in Pakistan.

In the fifth chapter, Zaman raises the issue of minority rights in Pakistan, especially of Aḥmadīs and Shī'ahs, and how under specific circumstances, fueled and exploited by the state, the Islamists, modernists, and traditionalists came on the same page.

In chapter six, Zaman makes a compelling point about the "Contested Terrain of Sufism" by arguing that how there are certain links vis-à-vis

Aḥmadī theology and the Sufi approach to reaching the Divine through mystical experiences. It was also interesting to observe the declining Sufi nature of later Deobandis which was more active and visible in colonial India with the likes of Ashraf ‘Alī Thānvī. Furthermore, despite the Taliban attacks on Sufi shrines and the Deobandi critique of shrine activities, the old-school conventional Sufism of shrines is still prevalent in not-so-urban parts of Punjab and Sindh.

In chapter seven, Zaman delves into diverse methodologies and approaches that various militants use in their interpretation of the Qur’ān and justification of *jihād*. For instance, he refers to the Deobandi Mas’ūd Aẓhar and the Ahl-i Ḥadīth Ḥāfiẓ Sa’īd.

In the epilogue, Zaman emphatically argues that the reason the ‘*ulamā*’ have been still socially and politically powerful in Pakistan despite the modernist and governing elites’ critiques is that the latter have not been successful in offering equally strong counter-narratives. Be it the issue of considering Ahmadīs non-Muslims, women’s rights bills, or the jihadist interpretations of terrorist groups, at the levels of discourse, the ‘*ulamā*’ and Islamists have remained emphatically powerful. Also, he argues the ‘*ulamā*’ have remained more “flexible” in adopting Western education and tools to be critical of the modernists while the latter have not shown equally good “flexibility” to ground themselves in the tradition to eventually win the narrative. In all of Zaman’s work, Deobandis seem to be the winners with their strong madrasah systems and networks and their role in providing constant scholarship on changing political and social circumstances pre and post-independence, so much so that even the Taliban were the products of their madrasahs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The state also seemed to use the Deobandi thought well to achieve its motives vis-à-vis creating the *mujāhidīn* in the 1980s and later with their offerings of Islamic banking tools and scholarship provided by Muhammad Taqī Usmani in Musharraf’s reign. In other words, their rivals, the Barelvis, have not been able to win the state’s support and patronage, and even if they did, they did not do that at the same level. This seems to change in recent times with the Barelvis being the main stakeholders after the rise of Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan and their critique of the court’s decision over Aasia Bibi’s case and protests over the capital punishment of Mumtaz Qadri who murdered a provincial governor over blasphemy.

After making some thought-provoking arguments in the book, one might argue that there are some other important avenues that one can delve into while looking at Islam in Pakistan throughout its “history.” For instance, one of those avenues could be the role played by women in the

history of Pakistan and its intersection with Islam and the newly emerging women's marches (on International Women's Day) in big cities and their cultural and religious intermingling. In other words, it would be interesting to see how the state, these women's marches, the modernists, and the Islamists engage with each other on these issues. One might also argue that while talking about Islam in Pakistan from a historical lens it might have been interesting to talk about the particular role played by the judiciary, media, student movements, leftist movements, or civil society in general. It would have been interesting to see what role they have played in the "Islamization" of the state under Zia or the "enlightened moderation" under Musharraf. Having said that, these are some of the avenues through which one can expand Zaman's work, who stated that his is more of a textual endeavour to the study of the history of Islam in Pakistan, even though it deeply engages with the surrounding political contexts throughout.

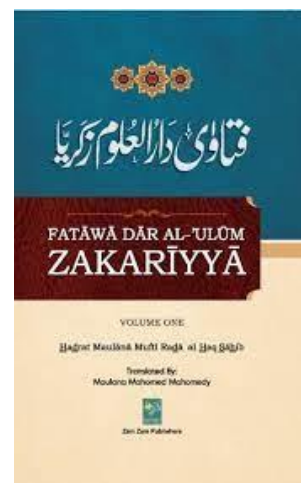
Muhammad Souman Elah\*

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Muftī Radā' al-Haq. *Fatāwā Dār al-'Ulūm Zakariyyā*. Translated by Mahomed Mahomedy. vol. 1. Karachi: Zam Zam Publishers, 2021. Pp. 832. Hardcover. Price: Rs. 2,170.

Dār al-'Ulūm Zakariyyā in Johannesburg, South Africa, is a prominent religious seminary and academic centre that opened in December 1983 under the supervision of its founder Maulānā 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, who also served as the institute's principal until he travelled to India in 1985. Following his departure, Maulānā Shabbīr Aḥmad was assigned to look after the institute. The seminary gets its name from Maūlānā Zakariyyā, who first visited South Africa in 1981 and called for the establishment of a traditional centre of Islamic learning (*madrasah*).

Throughout Islamic history, religious schools like Dār al-'Ulūm Zakariyyā have sought to educate Muslims



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