



NAHDA (RENAISSANCE), TAJDID (RENEWAL) AND ISLAH (REFORM)

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1. The Modern Origins of the Concepts of Renewal

The question of renewal has long been an element in Arab/Islamic culture and in former times there were numerous different words used to express it. Of these, *ijtihad* (interpretative judgement) was found in connection with *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *usul al fiqh* (roots of jurisprudence),¹ while *tawlid* (bringing into being) was used in literature and literary criticism² and *istihdath* (innovation) was commonly found in the field of social ideas³. Another widely used term was *ihyaa'*

1 See studies on *istinbat* (deductive reasoning) in books of *usul al fiqh*. Note: the term has acquired a broader meaning in the modern era.

2 The term '*al adab al muwallad*' (literally 'literature brought into being') was applied to the *tajdid* movement in poetry and prose that appeared during the Abbasid period. Its main figures included Bashar bin Burd, Abu Nuwas, Ibn al Muqffa', al Jahidh etc.

3 For example, Ibn Khaldun wrote in his *Muqaddima* (Prolegomena): 'It should be known that discussion of this topic is something new, extraordinary and highly useful ... and fits the purpose.' Book One on the *Nature of Human Civilisation*.



(revival), which owed its popularity to the book *Ihya' 'ulum al din (Revival of Religious Sciences)* by the Islamic religious thinker Abu Hamid al Ghazali. Another word, *tajdid* (renewal), occurs in the *Hadith* (Saying of the Prophet), which states that at the beginning of every hundred-year period Allah sends someone to renew (*yijaddid*) the *ummah's* (nation's) *deen* (religion). In earlier times people produced lists of these 'renewers' (*mujaddidun*) and recited them, sometimes in verse form.

All these terms, that were used in the past, have now been revived in various new contexts since the old divisions and differences within Arab/ Islamic culture have come to be replaced by the relationship between that culture and another culture; some people regard this other culture as 'modern civilisation' and believe that Arabs and Muslims ought to adopt some aspects of it, while others see it as a competing civilisation that ought to be confronted.

This novel situation has given rise to the expression '*nahdha*' ('renaissance'), a term that has connotations to common expressions *ijtihad*, *tajdid*, *islah* (reform), *ihyaa'* etc. and combines them to form a concept covering every aspect of knowledge, science and scholarship, as well as all the new and different facets of present-day social life.

The very word *nahdha*— and the fact that it has become accepted across the whole spectrum of Arab discourse, from the secular extreme left to the fundamentalist hard right — indicates that something completely new and different has occurred in the style and form in which modern debates and discussions take place. As we have pointed out, the main element is the transformation of the divisions within Arab/Islamic culture into that culture's relationship with another culture. It is on this basis that we have consistently championed the position that a clear distinction exists between the modern and classical Islamic eras and, accordingly, we have stressed that it is vital to refine and clarify the concepts and methodologies that are adopted when speaking of Islam in the modern age¹. One tool we

¹ See the Introduction to our book *Hafariyat Ta'wiliyah fi'l Khitabi'l Islahi'l 'Arabiyy (Interpretative Excavations in the Reformist Arab Discourse)*, Dar al Tali'ah, Beirut, 2001. We proposed that the heritage should be divided into ancient heritage, old heritage and near heritage.



recommend for this purpose is ‘paradigm’ (or ‘model situation’), a term we have borrowed from Kuhn’s book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

The term ‘paradigm’ became widespread after the publication of that important book. The writer used it in a scientific context, specifically to describe the shift from a particular situation of accepted scientific propositions to another situation in which all accepted scientific elements and data are not necessarily discarded, but rather reconstituted within a new systemic framework.

We also see the old concepts of the past, such as *ijtihad*, *tajdid* and *ihyaa’*, as continuing to exist in modern Islamic discourse, but they have taken on new semantic functions in view of the new contexts within which they are presented. This does not only mean that there is a new context, it also demonstrates that pioneering individuals have established a new general framework that will transform the old functions and provide additional intellectual tools for interpreting the present. This, in our view, is what ‘paradigm’ represents in relation to *nahdha*, *islah* or *tajdidin* the senses that they were coined in the nineteenth century. We have tried to define its main characteristics in numerous studies aimed at replacing the narrative approach in favour of a more up-to-date interpretative system.

The new basis of renewal-related concepts has been derived by establishing a set of elements that produce a vision of the ‘modern/”other”’ relationship today as distinct from the past and future. These elements are few in number, but they are deeply ingrained in the thinking of the so-called ‘*nahdhawiy*’ (‘renaissanceist’). We shall rely on Khayr al Din’s book *AqwamalMasalik fi Ma’rifat Ahwal alMamalik (The Surest Path to Knowledge Concerning the Condition of Countries)* as our main source of evidence and examples. However, the evidence to support the analysis we shall put forward may be found in all the *nahdhawiy* writings of the ‘pioneering generation’.

2. The ‘Other’ – Dazzling, Threatening and Different

From the beginning of the modern era, questions relating to *nahdha*, *islah* and *tajdid* have been propounded in relation to – and in reaction to



–another powerful and forceful civilisation. This situation is completely unprecedented because battles between conservatism and *tajdid* in earlier times were fought within the context of political domination. During the modern era, however, they have taken place in a situation of ‘civilisational fragility’, and in which the discovery of a ‘superior other’ has been accompanied by the revelation of this ‘fragility’, which has had a deep and traumatic impact on the ego.

In the nineteenth century this ‘other’ was identified as Europe; the word ‘West’ did not appear until later because America did not become a clear imperialist competitor in the Mediterranean and the Middle East until after the First World War, while Japan was classed in the nineteenth century as an Oriental nation. Communism did not become an international political force dividing Europe into east and west until the twentieth century. To the ‘*nahdhawi* pioneers’ Europe appeared in three personifications: ‘Europe the dazzling’, ‘Europe the threatening’ and ‘Europe the “other”’ and in response to this multi-faceted entity there was a range of different and disparate elements.

Why was Europe ‘dazzling’? Khayr al Din answers this question with several examples. The most obvious was the dazzling nature of its inventions, and in one chapter of his book *Summary of Discoveries and Inventions* he mentions several inventions that turned human life on its head – from the printing press to the mirror to the steam engine, and from ships and trains to the balloon and electricity. He also cites a number of discoveries that turned man’s view of the world upside-down – from the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope to the discovery of America, as well as the discovery of ways of fighting off plagues and epidemics¹.

Seen from this angle, Europe does indeed look dazzling, and adopting and benefiting from its inventions and discoveries is necessary and

1 Kuhn, Thomas, ‘The Structure of Scientific Revolutions’, tr. Shawqi Jalal, *‘Aalam al Ma’rifah (World of Knowledge)*, Series No. 168 –12/1992.

Shawqi Jalal translates the word ‘paradigm’ as ‘*al namudhaj al irshadi*’ (‘didactic model’). In our view this translation provides only a partial meaning of the word. We have, therefore, preferred the transliteration ‘*baradighm*’ or ‘*al wadh’ al anmudhaji*’ (‘model situation’).



imperative. However, to adopt the result one must also adopt the cause, and the cause is the spread of education, the promotion of knowledge and the status of knowledge. This requires the adoption of the educational, scientific and research systems followed by Europe.

Another dazzling thing about Europe is the tremendous level of economic prosperity it attained. After reviewing the figures on human, economic and military development in France, Khayr al Din finds himself obliged to address the following piece of advice to his reader:

The above numbers showing the wealth of the French nation and its state revenue, as well as similar details on the other European states which will appear below, may appear excessive to the observer ... Our reply to a person who rejects them is in essence what Ibn Khaldun replied when he detailed the revenues of the Islamic states and was afraid people might regard them as excessive: "Do not reject something just because it is unfamiliar to you or because there is nothing else like it in the age in which you live, because if you do your crawl will become too restricted to accommodate those things that are possible."¹

Here too, the rule on adopting the cause in order to reap the result also applies; this means an economic system must be adopted based on a free market and individual enterprise, because that is the system that enabled Europe to amass huge wealth and assume the form of a paradise on earth.

Another dazzling thing about Europe is the power of its states and their ability to defend the rights of their citizens and impose their interests and views. They owe this power to their political systems, which are based on freedom, constitutions and elected assemblies, so it is also essential to adopt elements of those systems in order to reap the benefits they bring.

Europe's military power, which is also dazzling, is the product of all these factors because it is the result of technological development – something that can only be achieved through the massive spending

¹ *Aqwam al Masalik fi Ma'rifat Ahwal al Mamalik (The Surest Path to Knowledge Concerning the Condition of Countries)*, ed. Moncef al Chennoufi, Tunis, 2000, Part 1, pp.353, 354.



made possible by a thriving economy. Moreover, it can only be effectively managed under democratic systems in which the popular will is united in the interests of the Public Good as opposed to power being used to crush revolutions and impose despotic rule on peoples.

This is the ‘dazzling face’ of Europe. However, it also has a ‘threatening face’, though in the view of the ‘renewers’ this threat is a motive for adopting things from Europe rather than for introversion or isolation. Thus we find Khayr al Din paraphrasing from ‘some leading Europeans’ as follows:

European civilisation pours across the ground like a torrent and anything that resists it is uprooted by the force of its current. One fears for the future of those countries neighbouring Europe unless they follow its example and flow in the same direction by adopting its secular systems; if they do so they can be saved from drowning.

He then comments that this statement is depressing for someone who loves his country, but it is shown to be true by observation and experience¹. This means that in his view the only way to protect oneself against the damage Europe can cause is by adopting some of its systems, and that the threat it poses is another good reason being receptive to modern civilisation.

The European threat can either be military, economic or political. The first of these can only be challenged with the same weapons as those used by the European armies, while the second can only be countered by adopting modern means of developing markets and promoting trade. The only way the third threat can be confronted is by ensuring that a stable, strong and mutually supportive relationship exists between the ruler and the people, otherwise the ‘home front’ will be split by dissension and disturbances.

Europe’s third face is its *mubaayinah* (‘otherness’). *Mubaayinah* is not the same as *ikhtilaaf* (‘difference’). There are two kinds of ‘differences’,

¹ *Aqwam al Masalik fi Ma’rifat Ahwal al Mamalik (The Surest Path to Knowledge Concerning the Condition of Countries)*, op. cit., p.157.



those that constitute variety, such as different languages and skin colours; and these do not amount to ‘otherness’ between human beings. Equally, with regard to the second type of difference— differences relating to levels of civilisation— these should not lead to ‘otherness’ between different human beings either, since the people on a lower level will strive to catch up with people who are ahead of them. ‘Otherness’ is a difference that cannot be changed or reconciled, and the only form in which it genuinely exists is the form of ‘otherness’ in religion, since a people en masse cannot abandon their religion. And since modern/European civilisation is based on secular principles, there is no cause to fear ‘otherness’ here because the Christian religion is not a part of European civilisation and whatever Muslims adopt from European civilisation it will not include a religious aspect.

‘Otherness’ is not one of those elements that constitute a threat; at the same time, the existence of a threat does preclude the possibility of benefiting from the side that poses that threat. In this case the three personifications referred to above blend into one to form an ‘other’ that is compatible with the desire to adopt elements from it without surrendering to it and accepting its hegemony. Viewed from this angle, European / modern civilisation is seen to be compatible with a desire for *nahdha*, *islah* and *tajdid* and, instead of making the ‘other’ the desired goal, it opens up the possibility of achieving one’s own ‘home-produced’ objective.

3. The ‘Other’ and the ‘Home-produced’ Objective

One’s own ‘home-produced’ objective is *nahdha*. This does not just mean treating the European Renaissance as the inspiration for an Arab/ Islamic *nahdha*. Rather, Arab pioneers saw aspects of the European Renaissance as representing what they themselves hoped to achieve for the Arab/ Islamic *nahdha*. If their travels in Europe led them to see that continent as comprising the three personifications indicated above, they also looked at Europe through its historical perspective as a result of what they had learnt from their readings of European history. We have already discussed the main features of the first of these from the *nahdhawi* angle, so let us now take a look at the second image – the historical perspective.



The *nahdhawi* model saw European history as consisting of three phases: backward Europe, Renaissance Europe and powerful, prosperous Europe.

Backward Europe, according to Khayr al Din, covered a period of six hundred years and was known by European historians as the Middle Ages. European history in the nineteenth century – and French history in particular – saw this period as a time of darkness. However, the picture changed in the twentieth century with the emergence of revisionist historical schools, which regarded this view as exaggerated¹. In the nineteenth century European historians aimed to show that there was a complete break between the feudal, religious Middle Ages and the modern era based on capitalism, nationalism and secularism. Arab and Muslim writers adopted this view from them and adapted it so that it could be applied to their own *nahdhawi* concerns. In particular, they used it to make two points:

First, a new renaissance can take place after a long period of backwardness. That was the case in Europe in the past and the same could happen in the Islamic world in the future.

Second, between Europe in the Middle Ages and Europe in the modern era a complete break occurred with regard to its relationship with Christianity. Previously, its political identity had been Christianity, but in the modern era Christianity ceased to be a part of its civilisation. Thus, there was no objection to adopting things from that civilisation, which had abandoned Christianity, and there was no relationship between Crusader Europe, which had been at war with Islam, and modern Europe, which did not concern itself with matters of religion.

Renaissance Europe was an ideal model for the kind of *nahdha* that was sought for the Arab/Islamic world. The main feature of Renaissance Europe was that it had adopted Arab science and scholarship, both during the Crusades and through the geographical proximity between the Arabs and Europe after the recovery of Andalusia and Southern Italy. Some European historians highlighted this debt to Arab/Islamic civilisation and counted it

¹ Eg. see *Le Moyen Age, une Imposture* by the historian Jacques Heers. 1999.



as a secondary factor of the European Renaissance. Few attached as much importance to this factor as the historian Sedillot (1808-1887) in his book *Histoire des Arabes*¹. The Arab *nahdhapioneers* accepted this and other books as authoritative sources and used the thesis of Europe's debt to the Arabs to assert two points:

First, taking from other sources is a fundamental element of every renaissance. The Arab Renaissance during the reign of al Ma'moun adopted the philosophy and sciences of the Greeks, while the European Renaissance during the modern era adopted Arab knowledge and science. Thus, no renaissance can take place in the Arab/Islamic world unless it adopts the knowledge and science of the modern age, particularly from Europe.

Second, if the Europeans adopted the knowledge and science of the Arabs and developed it, there could be no harm in the Arabs and Muslims borrowing from them in the modern era. They would merely be reclaiming what had been taken from them, while recognising the Europeans' contribution in developing it. This view undoubtedly helps alleviate the psychological impact that one would anticipate as a result of adopting from other sources, which implies recognition of the 'other's' superiority and the necessity of taking on a pupil role in a master-pupil relationship.

As regards powerful, prosperous Europe, that is the Europe that one can see with one's own eyes when travelling through it, this has become familiar, and close, to the Arabs in that they have imported many of Europe's tools, machines and practices. Here the pioneers focused on the positive aspects: economic prosperity, political freedom, science and scholarship, military power, discoveries, inventions etc. At the same time (apart from some references made by Faris Shidyaq and Francis Marash), they more or less ignored other aspects, such as the conditions of the working classes, exposed and condemned by the socialists, or the massive financial scandals such as those that came to light during the building of the Panama and Suez canals, or the violence in the American colonies. This may be interpreted as being due to two factors:

1 *Histoire des Arabes*, Paris, 1854.



First, the pioneers generally acquired their experience of Europe from official, organised trips, so they only saw those aspects of European civilisation that Europe wanted them to see. The only exceptions were people like Faris Shidyaq¹, who lived in poverty among the poor of Europe and saw its other face.

Second, in their descriptions of Europe the pioneers had a reformist, *nahdhawi* agenda and mention of its bad aspects would have run counter to it. Hence, they found it essential to ignore them, particularly since issues such as class, pollution or the destruction of the countryside were hard for citizens of pre-modern-capitalist societies to grasp.

4. Confusion of Terms

A degree of doubletalk was applied in writings about the image of Europe and the goal of *nahdha*. New terms were adopted and Arabised and then placed in juxtaposition to become recognised Arabic terms. For example, Khayr al Din frequently uses the word ‘constitution’ in a transliterated form (*al kanstsitusiyoan*), then makes it more intelligible to his fellow countrymen with the explanation, ‘*Al kanstsitusiyoan*, synonymous with *tandhimat siyasiyah* (political organisations)’². It should be noted that he – Khayr al Din – does not use the word ‘*dastoor*’, apparently because he wished to avoid using terms current among critics of the Ottoman authorities; rather, he endeavoured to make the European systems appear similar to those that were familiar to Ottoman government employees and functionaries. Al Tahtawi, who was earlier than him, does not use the word ‘*tandhimat*’ (‘organisations’) because Egypt was in conflict with Sultan Mahmud II. Instead, he preferred to Arabise the French word ‘*charte*’ (charter) – ‘*sharta*’, when describing the French constitution in his book *Takhlis al ibriz fi talkhis Bariz* (*Delivering Pure Gold in summarising Paris*).

The same approach was applied to the parliamentary system, which

1 See his critique of the lives of the workers and the poor in Europe in his famous book *Al Saq 'ala 'l Saq fi ma Huwa 'l Faryaq* (*One Leg over Another [or The Pigeon on the Tree Branch]*).

2 *Aqwam al Masalik fi Ma'rifat Ahwal al Mamluk* (*The Surest Path to Knowledge Concerning the Condition of Countries*), *op. cit.* p.194.



Khayr al Din calls '*majalis*' ('councils') and portrays as being synonymous with '*hay'at ahl al hall wa'l 'aqd*' ('authority of the people who choose and bind') and the principle of '*al amr bi'l ma'ruf wa'l nahiy 'an il munkar*' ('commanding the good and forbidding the evil') as laid down in the *Qur'an* and the Sunnah. This deliberate confusion of old and new terms was designed to render the modern systems more conceptually accessible to readers, make them readier to accept them and avoid any sense of 'otherness' between the model of the *nahdha* they sought to achieve and the situation that readers were familiar with. At the same time, they aimed to apply religious connotations to some of the terms in order to suggest that *islah* and *tajdid* were required by the Sharia. Hence if *al amr bi'l ma'ruf wa'l nahiy 'an il munkar* belonged to the *fardh kifaya* (collective obligation) category, then the *majalis* were also in the *fardh kifaya* category. **[Tr. note: Fardh kifaya is a religious obligation on the community as a whole, but not on every single individual member of that community.]**

We can see that, while generating an image of a Europe that is simultaneously a source of benefits and a source of fear, the *nahdha* paradigm also produces an image of it as an inspiration for a future Arab renaissance, complete with reasonable and achievable guarantees and safeguards. On this basis, in order to produce a clear picture of what one wishes the Arab renaissance to be, it does not consider it enough merely to switch its focus from the past to the future, and from what has already been achieved to what is at present an aspiration. It also places less emphasis on the debate between *taqlid* (imitation) and *tajdid*, because – in its view – Europe, in former times, 'imitated' the Arab/Islamic world of the past, while *tajdid* was a necessary response to that situation and a driving force behind Europe's prosperity.

This can be clearly seen in the paradigm's practical application, where it provides a powerful impetus for *nahdha* and *islah* and unites all those who are striving to contribute to this great enterprise. However, from a theoretical point of view it also has its negative side; it does not make a serious attempt to understand the nature of capitalism and imperialism. For example, it is content merely to point out that Khayr al Din's *Aqwam al Mamalik* was published in the same year as the first volume of Karl



Marx's *Das Kapital*, the book that exposed the other face of European/modern civilisation as being based on exploitation, expansionism and the destruction of lifestyles that differed from its own. It also presents an excessively optimistic picture whereas, in fact, there was an immense chasm between the civilisations of the east and the west. Nor is the fact that a few enlightened people recognise the importance of science and inventions sufficiently to enable the Islamic world to join the modern scientific revolution that developed over a number of centuries, during which it played no part. Nor is it sufficient for a few rulers to recognise the virtues of non-absolute rule because the nature of a tribal system of government entails political practices that will not evolve into a Western-style democracy. Nor can the fact that there are people who understand the principles of modern economics suffice to open up traditional markets to a globalised capitalist economy that will destroy them and bankrupt them.

Despite all this, the *nahdha* pioneers were right when they pointed out that there was no alternative to becoming part of modern civilisation because a hesitancy to adopt reforms would widen the chasm between the civilisations and increase the weakness and fragility of the weaker party. The more the desire for *tajdid* is delayed, and the longer conservative tendencies continue to dominate, the more difficult the *nahdha* enterprise will become.

5. From Reformism to Fundamentalism

One must accept that it was not theoretical shortcomings that led the modern basis of *tajdid* concepts to fail, because that basis is itself practical, not theoretical. What upset it was the fact that it came up against a series of unexpected events, or events that it did not wish to give priority to in its interpretational approach. The main ones were:

- The expansion of European imperialism into Islamic space.
- European national divisions, the transformation of science into an ideology, and the deaths of millions of people because of the new weapons produced by technological advances.



- The growth of socialist intellectual and political movements that drew a distinction between modernity and capitalism and exposed the latter's expansionist, exploitative nature.
- The revelation that only limited benefits resulted from some *nahdhawi* measures introduced by reformist governments in the Arab/Islamic world.

Hence, the reformist paradigm began to retreat and to be replaced by its opposite, which we can call the 'fundamentalist paradigm'; this emerged during periods of national liberation and the creation of post-imperial states. During these periods Europe ceased to 'dazzle', because by now its geographical proximity and the fact that everybody was familiar with its imperialist nature meant that it had lost its novelty and attraction. It was now 'old hat' and people no longer bothered to record their journeys there. Its inventions were available for anybody who wanted them and people generally had a negative view of it following two bloody world wars. This view was strongly endorsed by critical European thinkers.

We have described the fundamentalist paradigm as an 'opposite', because it uses the same elements and data to paint a diametrically opposing picture. The best example of this can be seen in al Nadwi's *Madha khasira 'l 'alam binhitati'l Muslimin?* (translated as *Islam and the World*), which had a powerful influence on Sayyid Qutb and helped shape his writings and theories¹. The new paradigm turned the old one on its head and changed the question from, 'What should the Muslims adopt from the Europeans?' to 'What have the Europeans lost by not adopting from the Muslims?' The reformist paradigm saw Europe's 'dazzling' face as driving the Arab/Muslim world to adopt from Europe and benefit from it, while the fundamentalist paradigm regarded the 'dazzling' quality as being due not so much to the magnitude of Europe's achievements as to a sense of weakness before it. It was, therefore, necessary to free oneself from the sense of being dazzled in order for the European model to collapse, 'dazzlement' being a quality that existed in the mind of the person being

¹ Abu'l Hasan al Nadwi, *Madha Khasira 'l 'Alam Binhitati'l Muslimin (Islam and the World)*, First impression 1950. Seventeenth impression published by Dar al Qalam, Cairo, 2007.



dazzled, not the model itself. Hence, the idea of adopting from Europe became something negative, because it reflected a desire on the part of the conquered to imitate the conqueror, thereby strengthening the latter's hegemony rather than enabling the former to achieve his own 'home-produced' goal.

Thus, because of Europe's prosperity and progress in the fields of science, invention, discovery, governance and administration, this 'dazzlement' ceased to be an objective factor and became a psychological phenomenon produced by the Muslims' sense of subjection. At the same time, although the psychological dimension was indeed extant and valid, it was not the only dimension and focusing solely upon it would conceal the objective reality of Muslim decadence, ignore the deepening chasm between European civilisation and the civilisations of the rest of the world and create a view of modern civilisation as a Western phenomenon that the Muslims did not need. At the same time, it would also fail to consider the Muslim world's need for modern civilisation's scientific, technical and philosophical achievements, or limit them to materialist/consumer aspects such as technically advanced gadgets.

The fundamentalist paradigm also pointed out that this failing could easily be rectified if the Muslim world recovered its self-confidence and freed itself from 'alien pollution'.

The reformist paradigm sees the 'other' as a threat but regards the fact that it is a threat as a motive for adopting or borrowing from it in order to 'protect oneself from its evil'. The fundamentalist paradigm, on the other hand, takes a diametrically opposite view and believes that the way to get rid of the threat is by deepening one's difference from the 'other' and immunising oneself against imitating it. Here too we can observe that the centre of gravity is also psychological rather than objective; the fundamentalist paradigm appears to regard defending oneself against the threat as being impossible, so the priority should be to concentrate on one's own affairs rather than concerning oneself with adopting from others, since the latter course leads to further decadence or backwardness and does not strengthen one's ability to counter the threat.



The reformist paradigm sees the problem of ‘otherness’ as being resolvable by drawing a distinction between civilisation and religion. According to this view, adopting from civilisation is permissible, while adopting from religion is not. However, the fundamentalist paradigm refuses to make a distinction between religion and civilisation and considers civilisation to be an extension of religion. While religion is an ‘otherness’ factor in itself, it believes every religion establishes its own civilisation that caters for its values. And since Muslims believe that their religion is the best, they must also regard their civilisation as being superior to all other civilisations, so there is no need to adopt anything from elsewhere. The superior civilisation is the civilisation of the superior religion and there is nothing worth adopting from a civilisation founded upon anything other than the religion of Islam.

This is a brief explanation of the different (and tangled) views and concepts of *taqlid* and *tajdid* in Islamic discourse. The focus of reformism was on adoption – or borrowing – from any source provided that it was not religious, while fundamentalism focused on the ‘otherness’ of the other party’s religion and civilisation without distinguishing between the two. In the reformist view, *tajdid* is an imitation (*taqlid*) of the past, since it is the past that provided it with its inspiration to endorse the principle of adoption, even from outside sources. In its view, *taqlid* is actually *tajdid* if it aims to imitate something that has shown itself to be superior and has proved its usefulness for mankind as a whole. Examples of this are the Muslim adoption of the sciences of the Greeks in the Middle Ages and their adoption of European knowledge and science during the modern era. However, the fundamentalist view regards adoption as an objectionable imitation of the ‘other’ and understands *tajdid* to mean getting rid of the residue of that adoption and reverting to one’s own original, unsullied identity.

Both reformists and fundamentalists use the same terms taken from their common religion and heritage. However, this should not conceal the fact that they espouse different paradigms and use the terms in different ways. If we understand these differences we shall have no difficulty in avoiding confusion over the concepts and we will recognise that it



is essential to differentiate between the reformist and fundamentalist discourses.

The current trend towards globalisation has rendered them both obsolete, because globalisation makes no distinction between the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ in that it breaks down the barriers between human beings.

<p>Reformist paradigm</p>	<p>The ‘other’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ‘Dazzling’ = I adopt from it to benefit from it – ‘Threatening’ = I adopt to ‘protect myself from its evil’ – ‘Otherness’ = I make religion the dividing line between me and it 	<p>Adoption and interaction</p>
<p>Fundamentalist paradigm</p>	<p>The ‘other’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ‘Dazzling’ = I prevent myself from being dazzled by it – ‘Threatening’ = I deepen the distinction between me and it – ‘Otherness’ = I assert my superiority to it 	<p>Differentiation and confrontation</p>