

The Internet, Traditional ‘Ulamā’, and Self Learning	
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Traditionalists	<p>Muslim scholars who consider adherence to a madhhab, speculative theology, and Sufi orders to be representative of the true embodiment of Islam</p> <p>Traditionalism is a commentary tradition where it is essential to cite and take into consideration previous scholarship</p>
Teachers	<p>Mere instruction, without reliable teachers who properly embody Islamic teachings, cannot produce properly acculturated religious subjects</p> <p>Without a teacher, students may arbitrarily study advanced texts they are ill-equipped to deal with</p> <p>Learning with a teacher ensured that texts were not distorted or misconstrued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many Arabic texts were written without vowels and diacritical marks <p>Scripture was always divinely sent with a Prophet to explain its contents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Prophet’s explanation of the Qur’an was meant to preserve its meaning, without which the text would be misunderstood <p>The teacher-student relationship was meant to ensure that students learn from their teacher's spiritual state</p>
Anti-clerical	Muslim feminists, progressives, secularists and Salafis share an anti-clericalist approach that views the ‘ulamā’ as barriers that prevent people from identifying the true teachings of Islam
Transmission of knowledge	<p>Traditionally, knowledge was meant to be transmitted through the teacher-student isnād</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditionalist Muslim scholars believe that the transmission from a teacher to a student creates and transfers authority
Approaching scripture directly	<p>Traditionally, students were given the tools to understand scripture before approaching scripture directly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was understood that novice students, let alone laypeople, cannot extract rulings from these sources independently - This was the task of the mujtahid

Sāriq al-hadīth	<p>Taking a hadīth directly from the teacher's book without having read it to the teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This individual would not be considered an authority in the hadīth because of the manner by which he obtained it
Spirituality	<p>In traditional Islamic learning, a teacher is primarily a murabbī</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education is not merely information, but it consists of fostering morally upright individuals - A student was expected to absorb his teacher's spiritual state in intellectual exchanges and in mundane activities <p>Madrasas were often paired with khanqahs</p>
Reformers	<p>Criticized traditional education as being limited to the memorization of texts and the study of legal commentaries that had little bearing on the contemporary world</p> <p>Muhammad 'Abduh deemed traditionally-trained 'ulamā' to be backward, irrelevant and out of touch with contemporary issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Led the way for replacing traditional learning methods with the modern university system - Muhammad 'Awwāmah rebuked 'Abduh for petitioning a method of studying Islam that was critical and dismissive of classical scholarship
Modern universities	<p>The adoption of the modern university system over the traditional education diminished the authority of the 'ulamā and paved the way for others to be considered authorities</p>
Madhhabs	<p>Traditionalists responded to the diversification of authority in the contemporary world by insisting that following the madhhabs protects individuals from inconsistent application of Islamic law</p>
Al-Albānī	<p>Self-taught Salafi scholar criticized taqlīd and over-reverence of the scholarly class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He encouraged laypeople to ask scholars to provide dalīls for their legal opinions
Ramadān al-Būṭī	<p>Influential traditionalist who explained that there are certain texts that are easy to understand for both scholars and non-scholars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are other verses that common Muslims cannot properly understand
Expertise in other fields	<p>A common analogy is that of physicians being challenged by patients brandishing internet opinions about treatments and diagnoses</p>
'Abd al-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah	<p>Syrian-born Hanafī hadīth scholar who described interpreting religion without proper qualifications as "the affliction of modern times"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Some people think if they read a few books on hadīth they become muhaddiths"

Relying only on books	<p>Self-taught individuals bypass teachers in hopes of not performing taqlīd, but instead end up performing taqlīd of printed books</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Without a teacher, typographical errors are unknowingly accepted - Autodidacts do not have anyone to correct their misunderstanding of texts
Internet	<p>Online learning poses a threat to Traditionalist expertise by creating a space where laity mistakenly equate a sermon or a post with rigorous study of Islam under a scholar</p> <p>Traditionally, students were required to leave their homes, sit at the feet of a teacher, mingle with other students, pray in congregation and live the lifestyle of a student of religious knowledge</p> <p>Traditionalists have embraced the internet in order to remain relevant and to compete with others who claim to speak on behalf of Islam</p>

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