

The Internet, Traditional 'Ulamā', and Self Learning	
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Traditionalists	<p>Muslim scholars who consider adherence to a madhab, 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	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
Madhhabs	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
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 dāīls for their legal opinions
Ramadān al-Būtī	<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	A common analogy is that of physicians being challenged by patients brandishing internet opinions about treatments and diagnoses
'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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