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978-1-107-09645-5 - Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age: Religious Authority and Internal Criticism

Muhammad Qasim Zaman

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MODERN ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN A RADICAL AGE

Among traditionally educated scholars in the Islamic world there is much disagreement on the crises that afflict modern Muslim societies and how best to deal with them, and the debates have grown more urgent since 9/11. Through an analysis of the work of Muhammad Rashid Rida and Yusuf al-Qaradawi in the Arab Middle East and a number of scholars belonging to the Deobandi orientation in colonial and contemporary South Asia, this book examines some of the most important issues facing the Muslim world since the late nineteenth century. These include the challenges to the binding claims of a long-established scholarly consensus, evolving conceptions of the common good, and discourses on religious education, the legal rights of women, social and economic justice, and violence and terrorism. The debates, marked by extensive engagement with Islam's foundational texts and legal tradition, afford vital insights into the ongoing contestations on religious authority and on evolving conceptions of Islam in the Muslim public sphere. This wide-ranging study by a leading scholar of Islamic intellectual history provides the depth and the comparative perspective necessary for an understanding of the ferment that characterizes contemporary Islam.

Muhammad Qasim Zaman is Robert H. Niehaus '77 Professor of Near Eastern Studies and Religion at Princeton University. He is the author of *Religion and Politics under the Early Abbasids* and *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, among other works.

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A Note on Transliteration, Spelling, and Other Conventions

With the exception of the ` to signify the Arabic letter *`ayn* (as in *`Umar* or *shari`a*) and ' to represent the *hamza* (as in *Qur'an*), diacritics are not used in this book. The hamza itself is only used when it occurs within a word (as in *Qur'an*) but not when it occurs at the end (thus *`ulama* rather than *`ulama'*). With the notable exception of the term *`ulama* (singular: *`alim*), the plural forms are usually indicated by adding an "s" to the word in the singular, as in *madrasas* (rather than *madaris*) or *fatwas* (rather than *fatawa*). In the interest of consistency, the spellings of Arabic and Urdu words, and of Muslim names, follow the convention used for Arabic consonants by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

Certain terms that occur repeatedly in the book, such as *shari`a* and *`ulama*, are not italicized. Other Arabic and Urdu words are italicized at their first occurrence, but usually not afterwards. When the fuller version of an Arab name is not being used, I also dispense with the Arabic definite article *al-* (e.g., *Yusuf al-Qaradawi* but subsequently *Qaradawi*).

Unless otherwise noted, translated passages from the *Qur'an* follow M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an: A New Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), with occasional and minor modifications.

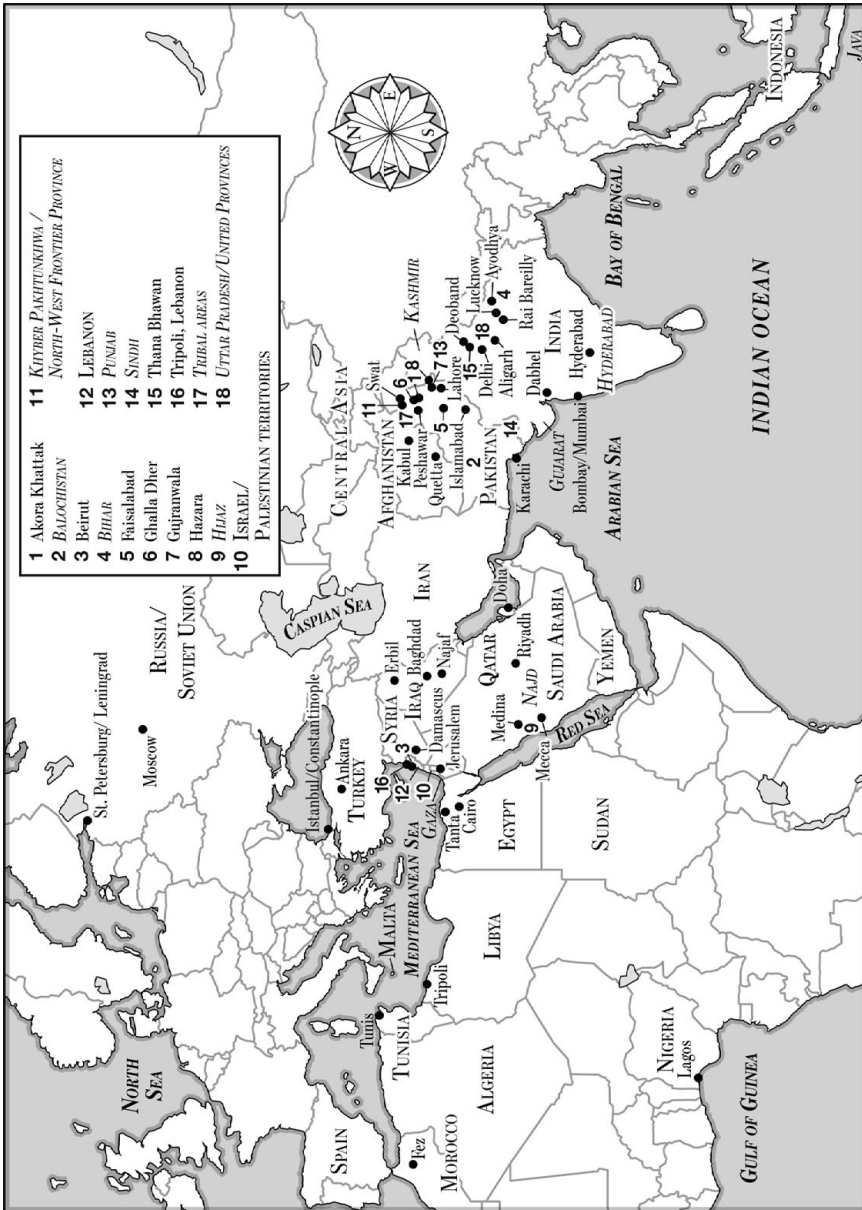
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This map identifies the principal places referred to in the book. Since it is not limited to a single period, some of the place names and what they denote have changed.