friendship

provide the essential validating decree. For some Imami jurists, this meant that Friday prayer had lapsed during the period of the imam’s concealment (ghayba), and holding Friday prayer was, therefore, forbidden until he revealed himself. The debate around the legitimacy of Friday prayer in later Imami jurisprudence became intricate and politically charged, particularly when the presence of a “just jurist” (faqīh ‘ādil) was introduced by some jurists as a legitimating element. During the Safavid period, some jurists argued that Friday prayer could become “optionally” obligatory (wajib takhyirī, i.e., one can perform it or one can perform the usual noon prayers instead, but one must perform one of the two) through the activating presence of the just jurist, who could substitute for the imam. The Safavid state officially supported this view, appointing an imām-i jum’a to each city as the Friday prayer leader. The move was controversial and provoked a series of rebuttals and counter-rebuttals in a debate that continued into the 21st century.

The importance of the Friday prayer event as a political tool within Muslim societies is obvious. Through the khutba, the objectives of the government’s religious policy can be made known, as they have been in modern-day Saudi Arabia. The khutba can also function as a conduit for revolutionary propaganda as it did in the months leading up to the Islamic Revolution in 1979, when Ayatollah Khomeini’s Friday sermons from Najaf in Iraq, and then later from Paris, were smuggled into Iran on cassette tapes. The holding of a communal congregational prayer has, unavoidably, proven to be of great political possibilities, both in terms of its formal requirements and in its potential as a vehicle for social mobilization.

See also Pillars of Islam

Further Reading


ROBERT GLEAVE

friendship

Friendship is an informal, voluntarily entered, and noncontingent social relationship. It is distinguished from kinship and servitude in that it is acquired by choice, not ascribed or inherited. According to the Qur’an, friendship—overwhelmingly but not exclusively rendered by words deriving from the root w-l-y—is to be sought with God, prophets, and other believers, in that order. Those who reject God—for example, Satan and his supporters, and unbelievers who actively oppose the believers—are not to be befriended. God is, because of the succor He provides, the best and most trustworthy friend. Cognizant of this, when Abraham experiences adversity, he rejects Gabriel’s assistance in the expectation of God’s help, which is in fact provided; this earns Abraham the title khalīl Allāh, “the bosom-friend” of God. As might be expected, only the elect attain this level of friendship. The very pious and the saintly do, however, benefit from a special relationship with God and are consequently called awliyā’ Allāh, or “friends of God.” The close relationships—ranging from discipleship to veneration—developed with such saintly figures, notably Sufi shaykhs, have been criticized by many reformist groups (e.g., the Salafi movement).

Friendship with the Prophet Muhammad is described by the term ṣibba, or companionship; thus both intimate friends of Muhammad, such as Abu Bakr and Bakr, and those who had limited contact with him, are called ṣabība, or “Companions,” perhaps because this relationship implies discipleship. Later, in the scholarly context, a disciple, or an advanced student, would, along the same lines, come to be known as a ṣāḥib (literally, companion).

Companionship was the dominant form of friendship enjoined in manuals of guidance and counsel for rulers, so-called Mawri for princes, and was actively pursued by Muslim leaders. From Umayyad times, caliphs and rulers sought courtiers and boon companions (nadür), some becoming favorites or lifelong friends. One courtier, Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi (d. 1023), after decades of mixed fortunes at court, wrote a treatise on the subject, titled Kitab al-Sadaqa wa-l-Saqiq (On friendship and friends). The Kitab Fadl al-Khitab ‘ala Rā’īn min man Labīsa al-Thayb (The superiority of dogs over many who wear clothes) of Ibn al-Marzuban (tenth century) also treats friendship, but, as the title suggests, using humor and satire.

By virtue of the inevitable asymmetry, friendship with God, the Prophet, saintly figures, caliphs, and other high officials, even teachers, resembles patronage; indeed, the term frequently used to describe God, Muhammad, a religious leader, or a ruler, is mawla (Lord, master, protector). Additionally, mawla is the term used to describe non-Arabs who were affiliated to Arabs. This clientele (waldya) was an important feature of early Islam, socially and politically.

Waldya is also the term used to describe political alliance; its antithesis, barda’, means disassociation or disavowal. These are both variously discussed in historical, religious-political, and juridical Sunni texts, even latter-day tracts produced by the likes of Mulla ‘Umar, the spiritual leader of the Talibani and, from 1996 to 2001, de facto head of state in Afghanistan. For Shi’is, these concepts appear as two theories of fundamental principles of belief, tanwīl and tabarrī (also tabarrī and Persian tabarri). These doctrines developed in connection with early theological discussions about disassociation (barda’) from the first two caliphs, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar b. Al-Khattab, regarded as usurpers of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib’s rightful succession to Muhammad, and about the consequently implied allegiance (waldya) t who first d unhappe t basis for t the histori be shan ne Muslin norm na an unma relations, as brother remains if by obligat resembled mad ceme and the See als

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Those who believe in the Quran and in God, even if they are not Muslims, all believe in the same God. It is only a matter of time before they all join the ranks of Islam. This belief is based on the fundamental principle of the unity of religion, which all Muslims adhere to. The Quran itself states that there is no compulsion in religion, and that everyone should follow the path they find to be the most suitable for them. This principle is known as the Shahada, which is the declaration of faith in Islam.

Further Reading

SHAKAT M. TOORAWA

Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism refers to contemporary religious political movements that aim to establish the primacy of scriptural authority as a defense against the moral, political, and social decay that supposedly defines the modern world. It is also often used in everyday language to designateflexible and dogmatic beliefs of any kind, religious or otherwise. Such common connotations tend to obscure the specific cultural and historical circumstances that produced both the term and the movement it originally described. The term “fundamentalism” was coined in 1920 by Protestant Evangelicals eager to rescue American Christianity and culture from what they characterized as the degeneration inaugurated by “modernism in theology,” “fundamentalism in philosophy,” and “materialism in life.” Committed to “do battle royal for the Fundamentals,” such warriors for God launched an offensive against liberalism, Darwinism, and secularism in particular, declaring the Bible the authoritative moral compass for American life, infallible not only in regard to theological issues but also in regard to matters of historical, geographical, and scientific fact.

The broadened understanding of fundamentalism presumes that there is sufficient commonality and overlap among Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, and other kinds of religious revivals to warrant a single rubric despite significant cultural, historical, and linguistic differences. There are some good reasons for this assumption. In general, these are historically contemporaneous, distinctively religious movements that assert the authority of transcendent truths and timeless traditions in response to a perceived crisis precipitated by rapid cultural, social, and economic transformations. As urbanization, industrialization, and the crises they are said to engender are distinctive to the contemporary epoch, fundamentalism has, as Bruce Lawrence writes in *Defenders of God*, “historical antecedents, but no ideological precursors.” Fundamentalists may well see themselves as custodians of continuity, yet it is precisely this self-description that distinguishes them from believers for whom tradition was simply lived rather than justified. Tradition becomes a conscious commitment in need of systemic justification when long-time rituals, beliefs, and practices can no longer be taken for granted. Paradoxically, then, defenders of tradition are actually reconstructing it in response to challenge and change.

Fundamentalism and Modernity

This means that efforts to restore the primacy of supposedly timeless truths and traditions inadvertently reveal how thoroughly intertwined contemporary religious-political movements are with the conditions, ideas, and processes fundamentalists oppose. This is evident in fundamentalist depictions of modernity as a condition of decay or disease evinced by pervasive corruption, disorder, relativism, and immorality. Fundamentalists contend that such ills are the wages of human hubris, by-products of the misguided assumption that the ever-enlarging scope of human mastery evinced by rapid scientific and technological advances demonstrates the irrelevance of metaphysical sources of knowledge about the world. Such an assumption transfigures sins into natural urges, recasts selfishness as the wellspring of collective life, and reduces the divine plan for the universe and all things in it to a system of physical causality just waiting to be mastered by human ingenuity. Stripped of the moral compass only faith in God provides and bereft of the religious scaffolding that endows life with meaning and purpose, humans are portrayed as lurching toward an abyss we no longer have the ability to recognize, let alone navigate. At this critical juncture, we are told, only the righteous attuned to God’s will are capable of charting the path to redemption. Like the prophets of Cassandra, however, their warnings and guidance are largely destined to fall upon deaf ears.

To the degree that this perspective characterizes a wide range of contemporary religious-political movements, fundamentalists can be said to share an ambivalence toward modernity and the rationalist epistemology, or human-centered theory of knowledge, that in part constitutes it. Scholars have interpreted this ambivalence in quite different ways, however. Some portray fundamentalism as the last gasp of atavistic impulses and archaic commitments, the residue of premodern beliefs and practices rendered obsolete by scientific advances, technological innovations, and the globalization of...