

The Socio-Political Role of Intellectuals: A Study of the Leading Egyptian 'Ulamā' (1798-1870)

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(A) Introduction

Egypt (1798-1870) is a typical model society in the modern period of Islamic civilization. "Situated at the meeting point of two continents, Asia and Africa, Egypt is a geographical phenomenon".¹ Geographically African, culturally Asian (Arab), diplomatically and mythically European (Mediterranean), it is meeting place of the East and the West and here the tradition and the modernity (or innovation) interact. This gift of the Nile, as Herodotus² called it, has been the world's wonderland. The French occupation of Egypt in 1798 marks the beginning of a new era in the history of Arabia in general and in the history of Egypt in particular. Napoleon entered Egypt along with a team of French scholars and an Arabic printing press. His was not merely a military occupation but a thorough cultural aggression. To colonise Egypt he laid the foundation of *Institut d' Egypt* or *Institut Egyptien* or *Institut Francais* which may be considered as a library, a laboratory, an observatory, an academy and a research centre— all in one. This was the first important interaction between Islam and the West in the modern period. What Baghdad did in the ninth century A.D., when Greek thought was interacting with the Islamic, Cairo was to do the same somewhat more consciously and cautiously due to the changed circumstances. Baghdad had been a strong, independent and

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formidable political power, but comparatively weak and decadent Cairo was a colony. Baghdad then had to meet the thought only but Cairo now had to react to political enableness as well.³

No doubt the French were made to vacate the country within a couple of years, but the interaction, impact and the response had already started as an undying process. Muhammad 'Ali Pasha who came to power after the French evacuation proved to be catalytic agent, a promoter and prompter of the new synthesis.

The only intellectual elite were the '*ulamā*'. They represented the political reactions and responses of the Muslim *ummah*. They were the leaders of the masses to be appeased, reckoned with and consulted by Napoleon and later on by Muhammad 'Ali and his successors. They were a check on Mamluk oppression till their annihilation (1811). They delivered the masses from the Mamluk tyranny and exploitation by supporting Muhammad 'Ali. Under their influence and leadership Western colonial encroachment and Khedives' extravagance was challenged.

Just as '*Ilm* (the knowledge) is indivisible, similarly the role of the '*ulama*' is indivisible; that too especially in Egypt during the period under study. Their role was vast, encompassing and embracing almost all the fields and any watertight compartmentalization in their case is almost impossible, that too especially because of the world-view these '*ulamā*' held. What is more important is the conception of Islam inculcated by the '*ulamā*' in the popular mind and its role that made the Egyptian masses to seek, acknowledge and obey the leadership of the '*ulama*'.

Directly or indirectly these Egyptian '*ulama*' have the credit of awakening the world of Islam from a slumber of centuries, to put an end to the Decline and Medievalism, Colonialism and cultural pollution and to pave the way for the efflorescence of culture, literature and education and to usher in an era of revival, rejuvenation and a particular kind of revolutionary renaissance and evolutionary reformation, which was clear enough in the end of the 19th century under al-Afghani, Muhammad 'Abduh and the like.

Side by side, the seeds of 'Arab Nationalism'; Pan-Islamism and Modern

Arabic language and literature were being sown. Social change sets in, journalism is introduced, new forums, platforms and stages are set up; fundamental questions are raised. *Jamūd* is shattering and *ijtihād* and *jihād* are resorted to. It is to say that all the personalities, thoughts, movements and cross-currents that emerged in the 20th century Islamic world have their roots in this period beginning with the landing of Napoleonic expedition in 1798 and ending with the arrival of al-Afghani in Egypt (1871). Muhammad 'Ali (r.1805-48), himself an illiterate fellow who started learning the alphabet only after the age of forty, was what may be aptly termed as, an "Enlightened Despot". His modernising plans coupled with the conscious and unconscious efforts of his successors and reaction and response of the '*ulamā*', opened the Western gates to Egypt and it proved to be a bridge between the world of Islam and the west.

Throughout this marvellous epoch-making and pace-setting period (1798-1870), the explicit role of the '*ulama*' is clearly discerned and felt. There is the fight among the Mamluk bays in Ottoman Egypt and the '*ulamā*' represent the masses and lead them against the oppressive Mamluks. Napoleon comes and has to seek the support of the '*ulamā*'. The response varies from time to time and from '*alim*' to '*ālim*', but in general their response to his imperialism is befittingly harsh and revolutionary, while their reception of his modernising and educating schemes is positive and co-operative. The role of the '*ulamā*' is still more conspicuous under Muhammad 'Ali, although he reduced their role to the lowest ebb. Before sending his expedition against the "Wahhabis" in Arabia and the Greeks in Anatolia, he has to seek the opinion of the '*ulamā*'. Every social and educational reform introduced by him has to be referred to the '*ulamā*'. The role of the '*ulamā*' becomes still more important and prominent in response to the bankruptcy of Egypt under Muhammad 'Ali's successors and the consequent Western subjugation.

Jami'ah al-Azhar, the oldest University in the world which had hardly undergone any reforms or changes, experiences a gradual and steady improvement, development and progress in this period under the '*ulamā*'. To the '*ulama*', al-Azhar was the citadel and centre of activity. The Azhari *ulamā* studied

modern Western thought side by side with the traditional Islamic 'ulum, paving the way for the innovations introduced by al-Tahtawi, the 'alim-turned-bureaucrat, in the modernization of education in Egypt, and preparing it for the modernizing lectures (1871-79) of al-Afghani on various subjects e.g. the fall and rise of nations and pan-Islamism.⁴

The biographical sketches and character and achievements of the selected prominent and leading '*ulamā*' are analysed in the following pages. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1870, arrival of Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Afghani in Egypt in 1871 and the establishment of the Dar al-'Ulum in Cairo in 1872, a new socio-cultural phase and a fresh politico-economic chapter begins. And it is, therefore, appropriate to conclude here (1870) the present work start (1798) with Shaykh al-Jabarti (1754-1825), an eye-witness to and chronicler of the events at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century.

(B) Leading 'Ulama'

1. Al-Jabarti (d.1825)

Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Hasan al-Jabarti⁵ (1754-1825) is one of the greatest historians of the Muslims world of all times and by far greatest historian of the Arab world in modern times.⁶ He is the famous chronicler of the modern Egypt and, according to Hourani, "the last great historian of the ancient tradition."⁷ He is extremely valuable for the study of Mamlukdom, for his central and pivotal theme is the history of Mamluk society from the end of the seventeenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁸ Of the local historians of Ottoman Egypt he stands out as "a giant among dwarfs".⁹ The other chronicles of this period (1517-1811) are important mainly as the supplementary sources to his chronicle.¹⁰ He is the valuable source for the history of the period under discussion, especially that covering the late eighteenth century to the rise of Muhammad 'Ali. He is the contemporary historian and eyewitness to the events that took place during the period.

E.W. Lane, who saw and studied thoroughly the Egypt which al-Jabarti

has described, held a very high opinion of him: "The Shaykh... a native of Cairo, particularly deserves to be mentioned as having written a very excellent history of the events which have taken place in Egypt since the commencement of the twelfth century (A.H.)"¹¹ Lane is so much impressed by al-Jabarti that the latter is one of the very few Egyptian scholars mentioned in his book, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* written in 1833-35, about eight years after the author's first visit to Egypt, just before the death of al-Jabarti, and first published in 1836.

According to Toynbee, "The great historian al-Jabarti... would undoubtedly figure on a list of candidates for the distinction of ranking as leading historians of civilized society up to date."¹² Almost all the authors writing about Egypt of the period under discussion make very thorough use of his chronicle.¹³

This chronicle written by al-Jabarti is entitled *'Ajā'ib al-Athār fī al-Tarājim wa'l-Akhhār* (4 vols; Cairo, 1913).¹⁴ Cheikh Mansour Bey (Shaykh Mansur Bay) and others have translated it into French as *Merveilles Biographiques Historiques du Cheikh Abd el-Rahman el-Djabrarti* (9 Vols; Cairo, 1888-1996).¹⁵

According to Ayalon, al-Jabarti "did not spring from any school of historians, nor did he create a school of his own. His monumental work is purely isolated phenomenon"¹⁶ Hourani, however, considers him as "the last great historian of the ancient tradition".¹⁷ Al-Jabarti's chronicle open abruptly with the year 1100 A.H./1668 A.D. and closes with the year 1236 A.H./1821 A.D.

Al-Jabarti vehemently attacked Muhammad 'Ali and his son, Ibrahim. And for this very reason the publication of *al-'Ajā'ib* was forbidden in Egypt. A. Von Kremer, who first visited Egypt in 1850, states that this chronicle had become a rarity because the Egyptian government bought copies of it wherever it could and destroyed them. He knew of only one copy in Cairo, access to which had been very difficult. The ban on the book was lifted towards the end of the seventies and the press of the Alexandria newspaper *Miṣr* published in 1878 the section dealing with the French occupation. The French translation, mentioned above, Ayalon holds, is "an extremely inaccurate" and bad translation and is "very dangerous to

use".¹⁸ However, the work itself is unbiased and objective and "can serve as a model to any modern European historian". The uncompromising denunciation by him of such a strong man as Muhammad 'Ali, who crushed his opponents without mercy, serves as a striking proof of al-Jabarti's personal courage.¹⁹

Compared to this al-Jabarti praises the Mamluks for their respect to the 'ilm and the 'ulumā'. He has nothing to say of Mamluk society as a whole for "laxity in or improper attitude to religion." On the other hand he vehemently criticises the Ottoman contingents in Egypt for their irreligious acts. In this context it is significant to note that al-Jabarti whole-heartedly supported the "Wahabbis" and was himself "imbued with Muslim puritanism". Referring to the execution of the Mamluks by Muhammad 'Ali in 1126 A.H./ 1811 A.D., al-Jabarti quotes an eyewitness saying that they read the Qur'an and said the two *Shahādahs* and the *Istighfār* and some of them prayed two *rak'as* before being beheaded. Those who could not get water for *wuḍū* (ablution) performed *tayammum* (ablution with sand).²⁰

Al-Jabarti's chronicle remains one of the main and most reliable sources on the French occupation both in Muslim and European history.²¹ Himself a Shaykh ('ālim) of al-Azhar and a witness to the occupation, he says that it was the beginning of a reversal of the natural order and the corruption or destruction of all things.²² He concluded that the French were "unfortunately habitual drunkards, fond of frivolities, and dedicated to the search of pleasure"²³ However, he does not hold back the credit due to the French when he sees things of which he can approve. He praises the French savants and their *Institut Francais* established for scientific research. At the same time he was ever conscious of 'the danger to religion and morality inherent in non-Muslim rule. The arming and training of Christians, the power given to the Copts, the innovations introduced into the legal system defiling the *Shari'ah* and the corruption of women, were the main thrust of the French occupation and he viewed all this with full alarm.²⁴

The chronicle is of high value as a source for Muhammad 'Ali's reign. Almost all the European writers have praised and glorified him. Being in one way or the

other a party to his Westernising mission, they could hardly view the darker side of his autocracy. To this they were almost blind. "Few witnessed the extremely cruel and barbarous methods which Muhammad Ali employed in accomposing his grandiose plans..."²⁵ The other side of the picture is depicted by al-Jabarti who was an eyewitness to this drama. He describes the darkest and blackest shades as well. "His chronicle serves as an excellent counter-balance to numerous other sources which are biased in the opposite direction."²⁶

Al-Jabarti's second chronicle *Muḥhir al-Taqdīs bi-dhahab dawlat al-Fransis* covers the few years of the French occupation of Egypt. It was dedicated to Yusuf Basha, the Grand Wazir who commanded the Ottoman armies which participated in the final expulsion of the French from Egypt.²⁷

There are certain other works also attributed to al-Jabarti. He is said to have revised and edited *Alf-Laylah wa-Laylah*, expunging or altering whatever was grossly offensive to morality without reducing its quality of wit. However, this edited copy is extinct.²⁸ He has also written on certain other subjects, e.g. mathematics and astronomy.

2. Al-Sharqawi (d.1812)

Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Sharqawi, originally from Tawilah in Sharqiyyah was the famous Shaykh al-Azhar (Rector of the University of Al-Azhar) from 1793 till his death in Shawwal 1227 A.H./ October 1812. He was "one of the most celebrated personalities in Egypt in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries".²⁹ Early in his life this great 'ālim of the age was so poor that he could not afford to cook in his house and had to rely on "charity" for his very meals. From some Syrian merchant he received gifts and help to buy his first house.³⁰

When the French invaded Egypt in 1798 Shaykh al-Sharqawi being the Shaykh al-Azhar was one of the important 'ulamā' who led the people's resistance movement against the French. Once the French conquered and occupied Egypt, in reply to the request made by the 'ulamā' "religious" freedom was assured. Realising and acknowledging the socio-political power and influence of the 'ulamā',

Napoleon sought their advice and they were given full representation in the *diwan* (Council of Notables) constituted by the conqueror. Shaykh al-Sharaqawi was named thrice the president of this *diwān*.

Al-Sharaqawi benefitted from the scientific reasearches carried on by the *Institut Francais* and at the same time worked for the liberation of Egypt from the French forces. The idea of liberty, equality and fraternity, for which Napoleon purported to stand, had no effect upon the '*ulamā*'. Their constant concern, under the leadership of al-Sharaqawi, was libertion from the infidels. As the president of the *diwān*, according to al-Jabarti, al-Sharaqawi made a fortune. His wife, daughter of Shaykh 'Ali al-Zafarani, administered his property and kept all the money he earned. He did nothing without consulting her.³¹ The Egyptian resistance movement, which along with the Anglo-Turkish compaign was the main force that was crowned with success in liberating Egypt from the French, owes much to the intelligence, guidance and activism of al-Sharaqawi.

Following the French evacuation (1801) Egypt was in a state of anarchy till Muhammad 'Ali emerged to power (1805). The power vacuum was filled by the '*ulama*' who finally, under the leadership of Shaykh al-Sharaqawi and Sayyid 'Umar Makram, as the accredited leaders of the populace, chose the hero of the French evacuation, Muhammad 'Ali, as the Pasha. All the conspiracies and back-calls from the Porte³² were foiled by al-Sharaqawi and 'Umar Makram and Muhammad 'Ali's appointment was got confirmed from the Porte. The Porte's order read that since all the '*ulamā*' and the *Sadāt* (decendants of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)) were grateful to him, therefore, Egypt was left in his charge.³³

As Muhammad 'Ali did not fulfil the expectations of the '*ulamā*' and proved autocratic and destroyer of the cultural identity of Islamic Egypt, this Egyptian intellectual, Shaykh al-Sharaqawi was disappointed and he became "melanchly lamenter of 'passing tradition'".³⁴

In addition to the numerous theological works this socio-political activist and the history-maker of his age wrote two books which can be classified as historical works: *Tuḥfat al-Nāzirīn fī-man Waliya Miṣr min al-Wulāt wa'l-*

Sālātīn published in 1281 A.H./1864 A.D. and *al-Tuhfa al-Bahiya fi Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah*. The latter work is a collection of biographies of the theologians (*fuqaha*) of the Shafi'i school up to 1221 A.H./1806 A.D. The author himself was a Shafi'i. Al-Jabarti considers him a very great scholar and holds a fairly high opinion of his theological works on *fiqh*. Both studied together under the same teacher, Shaykh Mahmud al-Kurdi.³⁵ Some of al-Sharqawi's theological works were in vogue in al-Azhar and were highly esteemed.

3. Sayyid 'Umar Makram (d.1822)

The religious orders, *turuq* (sing, *tariqah*) of the sufis were very popular and powerful in Egypt during the period under discussion. There was a large number of these *turuq* catering to the religious, social and spiritual needs of the common masses.³⁶ Even great '*ulamā'* of al-Azhar joined these *turuq*. Shaykh al-Bakri headed the *tariqah* (of the followers of and the descendants of Caliph Abu-Bakr, the first Caliph), called al-Bakriyyah, while Shaykh al-Sadat headed the *tariqah* of *Sadāt* (sing, *Sayyid*), descendant of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and followers of Caliph 'Ali (R.A.). Both these Shaykhs exercised high socio-political power and contended for the posts of *naqīb al-ashrāf*, (the Syndic or Marshal of the Notables), and *shaykh mashayikh al-turuq al-sufiyah*, principal coordinator of all sufi orders. He had a hand in choosing the Syakh al-Azhar.³⁷

Sayyid 'Umar Makram (d.1822) was *naqīb al-ashrāf* from 1793 till he was exiled in 1809. Very little is known about his background. He had great organising capacity and organised the artisans into combat groups on various occasions. He fought the French and the British and with his help Muhammad 'Ali came to power. He later opposed the autocratic and un-Islamic policies of Muhammad 'Ali and got exiled.

During the Mamluk rivalry in the Ottoman Egypt towards the end of the 18th century, Sayyid 'Umar Makram worked for justice and order. He negotiated the return of Murad Bay and Ibrahim Bay to power. It is this role that made him the *naqīb al-ashrāf*.³⁸ He was "a dark horse" about whose ancestry nothing is

known, although he claimed to be a Sharif (descendant of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) through Hasan ibn-‘Ali).³⁹

At the time of the French occupation of Cairo (1798) he organised the resistance-groups which became a common phenomena later at all the critical junctures in the history of Egypt. In 1800, when the Ottoman forces arrived to liberate Egypt from the French forces, he organised similar popular resistance groups to help the Ottomans. Although General Kleber defeated the Ottomans at ‘Ayn Shams (Helipolis), yet ‘Umar Makram's infused spirit of *Jihad* pervaded and led to the assassination of Kleber at the hands of an Azharite, Syalayman al-Halabi.

After the French evacuation when Khurshid, the Ottoman Pasha of Egypt, failed in giving justice to the people, the ‘*ulamā*’, under the leadership of ‘Umar Makram paved the way for his dismissal. Khurshid, in a dialogue with Makram, asked, "How do you forget the divine commandment to obey Allah Almighty, His Prophet (ﷺ) and those in authority over you"? Makram, the Egyptian leader, replied, "Those in authority referred to in the Sacred Book (the Qur’an) are the noble Shaykhs, the law givers and the just Sultan... it is customary from the earlier times for the people to depose their governors and even kings or khalifas if they misgovern or persecute the nation... We have the authority of the Shaykhs and the Chief Judge to fight you, because you have opposed the nation and acted contrary to the commandments of Allah"⁴⁰

Khurshid was deposed by the ‘*ulamā*’ and Muhammad ‘Ali was appointed as the Pasha. The whole movement was led by ‘Umar Makram and Shaykh al-Sharqawi. Muhammad ‘Ali, in his early period of reign, depended on Makram whose talents were obvious to the Pasha. The Porte tried to uproot Muhammad Ali, and again ‘Umar Makram, the leader of the people, was instrumental in organising the mass resistance and sealing and signing a manifesto sent to the Ottoman Khalifa /Sultan in this regard. In 1806 the Khalifah (Sultan) had to confirm the appointment of Muhammad ‘Ali as the Pasha for the ‘*ulamā*’ like ‘Umar Makram had elected him to this post.

The English expedition (1807) was defeated by the people, who along with the students of al-Azhar under the leadership of ‘Umar Makram, defended Egypt. Referring to the role of Sayyid ‘Umar Makram in this regard, Rifat Bay states:

The famous national hero [‘Umar Makram], came forward and, thanks to his instructions, guidance and example, the people armed themselves and the students of Al-Azhar deserted their lectures and volunteered with the populace to march to Alexandria or Rosetta to fight the enemy, who had planned to avenge their defeat at Rosetta.⁴¹

The defeat of the English expedition by the people at Rosetta (21 April, 1807)) led to the treaty of peace between the British General Frazer and Muhammad ‘Ali. It was a victory for the people under the leadership of Sayyid ‘Umar Makram. The English were made to withdraw from Egypt in September, 1807. The Ottoman Sultan showed his appreciation by transferring Alexandria, which was under the Turkish Captain (Qapudan) Pasha, to Egypt. Ibrahim, the son of Muhammad ‘Ali, came from Istanbul (Constantinople) with valuable presents for his father, his assistants and ‘Umar Makram.⁴²

When Muhammad ‘Ali started implementing his autocratic and monopolising policies and imposing harsh taxes, he was criticised by the ‘ulama’ particularly by ‘Umar Makram. Sayyid ‘Ummar Makran was an obvious threat to the ruler for he argued that "the people had a right to depose any unjust ruler whether he be a Wali (governor), Caliph or Sultan".⁴³ Several years later, when Muhammad Ali's secularisation and imperialism had shown its teeth and his relations with the ‘ulama’ had consequently strained, ‘Umar Makran declared, "We will write to the Sublime Porte and people will revolt against him and I shall depose him from his throne as I have sat him upon it"⁴⁴

And finally, when Muhammad ‘Ali was on to building his "Egyptian empire" and about to crush all the contending powers within Egypt, he moved rapidly to depose and banish "the most serious threat to his rule, the charismatic ‘Umar Makram".⁴⁵

Exiled to Rosetta in 1809 ‘Umar Makram died there in 1822. The ‘*ulamā*’ had lost their spokesman, the people had lost their leader. The ‘*ulamā*’ “did not preserve their former influence after the exile of al-Sayyid ‘Umar” insists the historian al-Rafi‘i.⁴⁶ And none could depose Muhammad ‘Ali the autocrat, none could challenge his Westernising plans, and no resistance movement is discerned for a long period.

4. Al-Tahtawi (d.1873)

Shaykh Rifa‘ah Badawi Rafi‘ al-Tahtawi (1801-73), a luminary of the intellectual regeneration in the 19th century”,⁴⁷ was educated at al-Azhar. ‘He belonged to an ancient family with a tradition of religious learning, settled in the town of Tahta in Upper Egypt’.⁴⁸ At al-Azhar, where he studied from 1817, he was impressed and influenced by a teacher of eminence, Shaykh Hasan al-‘Attar who was a great scholar and “open-mind man”.⁴⁹ He exposed al-Tahtawi to new Western knowledge to which he himself had been introduced by *Institut Egyptien* (Institut Francais) founded by Napoleon in 1798, staffed by the French scientists and savants and closed down with the evacuation of the French (1801).

Al-Tahtawi was appointed as *imām* of a regiment in new Egyptian army but the turning point of his career came only when he was sent as *imām* of the first large educational mission to Europe in July 1826. The mission consisted of the students belonging to the ruling class. He stayed in Paris for five years and studied a course in translation. His co-curricular and extra-curricular studies there, were of still more importance. He studied well the Western society and delved deep in the Western thought, especially the French revolutionary ideas. He returned to Egypt in 1831 and shortly after that he published his famous work *Takhlīs al-Ibrīz ila Talkhīs Barīs* (The Extraction of Gold in the Summary of Paris) generally referred to as his *Rihlah* or Journey (to Paris).⁵⁰ It is an account of the Western civilization based on his stay in France. He claimed to be the first Egyptian to travel to Europe in that age. He gives the minute details about the society, culture and intellectual life of Europe, “the strange land with strange customs”.⁵¹ The

predominating theme of his books is his emphasis on the political and educational aspects of France.

On his return to Egypt he worked as a translator in the new specialist schools. In 1836 he was made head of the new School of Languages. Here he promoted translations from the European languages into Arabic and trained students for professional schools. Side by side he worked as an inspector of schools, member of educational commissions and editor of the official newspaper *al-waqā'i al-Misriyyah*. In 1841 a bureau of translation, placed under his direction, was attached to the School.⁵²

Two more works of al-Tahtawi, *Al-Murshid al-Amīn fi Turbiyyah al-Banāt wa al-Banīn* (Trusted Guide in Education of Girls and Boys; Bulaq, 1873) and *Manāhij al-Albāb al-Misriyyah fi Mabāhij al-Ādāb al-'Asriyyah*. (The Paths of Egyptian Hearts in the joys of the Contemporary Arts, Bulaq, 1869; Cairo, 1912), are of special significance. In *Al-Murshid* al-Tahtawi tries to convince the Egyptian students of enjoyment and benefit derivable from refined reading and the delightful results of intellectual curiosity. He was convinced that a civilised society could emerge only on two bases: first, the sound moral training of its members by inspiring them with human virtue; and second, the social organisation and administration of the public good to be derived from the natural wealth of the country. Thus civilisation must be both material and spiritual, or cultural. In *Manāhij* al-Tahtawi identifies for the Egyptians what constituted the public interest and the public good. Material wealth, he holds, be considered important but inadequate without a virtuous society.⁵³

On the one hand al-Tahtawi was deeply rooted in traditional Islamic *'ulum*, especially the socio-political thought of Islam developed through the centuries and on the other, he was conscious of the French Enlightenment. Hence he attempted to reconcile the two especially in his *Manāhij*, guidelines for the rulers as well as the ruled.⁵⁴ However, Hourani is of the opinion that “what is clear is the contradiction between the two, not their possible reconciliation”.⁵⁵

There is influence on *Manāhij* of the writings of two classical Islamic social

thinkers— Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* and al-Mawardi's *Ādāb al-Dunyā wa'l-Dīn*.⁵⁶ The *Manāhij* represents the revival of practical philosophy of Islam. It is "the first comprehensive treatment of ethics, economics, and politics in Arabic since Ibn Khaldun composed his *Muqaddimah* in the fourteenth century."⁵⁷ Although educated in France al-Tahtawi, "one of the most important figures in the nineteenth century's growing Arab awareness of the West,"⁵⁸ was not an apeing spokesman of the West. Economics and Politics are seen in the Islamic philosophic tradition as the extension of ethics and this concept dominates the *Manāhij*.⁵⁹ To Tahtawi, ethics "is the basis of society, and a people made up of corrupt individuals must perish".⁶⁰

Al-Tahtawi is conscious of moral danger in the form of Western thought. He criticises the French concept of total and exclusive dependence on human reason alone. "Anyone wishing to study French philosophical works must be extremely well-versed in the Book (the Qur'an) and the Tradition (the Hadith) if his beliefs are not to be undermined. Otherwise he might lose his faith", states al-Tahtawi in his *Takhlīs*.⁶¹

Early echoes of Egyptian nationalism (*waṭaniyyah*) blended with traditional Islamic conception of *ummah* are found, according to Hourani, in Tahtawi's writings, especially in *Manāhij* and a number of his patriotic poems.⁶² Egyptian nationalism, however, was a defensive mechanism against the Western political domination and cultural penetration. It was not in line with the Western concept of nation-state that could be contrary to the concept of universal Islamic *ummah*, pan-Islamism or even the Ottoman Caliphate. He represents the first generation of Islamic modernists and reformists in the Middle East paving the way for next generation represented by Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh.

APPENDIX-I Prominent Rectors (Shaykhs) of al-Azhar in the 19th Century A.D.	
Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Sharqawi	1793-1812
Shaykh Hasan al-'Attar	1830-34
Shaykh Ibrahim al-Bajuri (al-Shafi'i)	1847-60
A Board of four <i>Wakils</i> (replaces the Rector) under the Presidency of Shaykh Mustafa al-'Arusi	1860-64
Syaykh Mustafa al-'Arusi (al-Shafi'i)	1864-70
Shyakh Muhammad al-Mahdi (al-Hanafi)	1870-86

APPENDIX-II Hereditary Rulers of Egypt from the 19th Century A.D.				
PASHAS / WALIS				
S.No.	Name	Born	Died	Reigned
1.	Muhammad 'Ali	1769	1849	1805-1848
2.	Ibrahim (Son of M.'Ali)	1789	1848	(June-Nov)
3.	'Abbas I (Son of Tusun and grandson of M.'Ali)	1813	1854 (murdered)	1848-1854
4.	Sa'id (son of M. 'Ali)	1822	1863	1854-1863
5.	Isma'il (son of Ibrahim)	1830	1895 Pasha Khedive	1863-1865) 1866-79
KHEDIVES				
6.	Tawfiq (son of Isma'il)	1852	1892	1879-1892
7.	'Abbas II Hilmi (son of Tawfiq)			1892-1914
SULTANS				
8.	Husayn Kamil			1914-1917
9.	Sultan Ahmad Fu'ad		Sultan King	1917-1922 1922-36
KINGS				
10.	King Faruq I		(abdicated 1952)	1936-1952
11.	King Fu'ad II			1952-53
'Republican' regime established				

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