Azerbaijani Enlightenment Thinkers' Attempts to Modernize Islam through the Lens of a Polemic

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Introduction

In 1906, *Həyat* newspaper (No. 106) published an article entitled "Which Sciences Do We Need?" by Mirza Abu Turab Akhundzadeh, a prominent cleric of the time. The argument advanced in this article may seem strange and unfounded to the vast majority of Azerbaijani believers today. Even a century ago, it provoked objections and prompted reformist intellectuals to publish responses. Yet these responses also reveal that, although the article dismayed these intellectuals, its position was familiar and acceptable to the vast majority of the religious population. Indeed, the debate itself demonstrates that a religious injunction whose interpretation most people now accept as an indisputable truth acquired its present-day universal meaning through modernization – in other words, through the changes religion underwent during technological and cultural adoption. The injunction in question is Islam's command to *"Read!"*

In my previous article published on this platform,[i] I sought to examine modernization and the responses of religions – and their adherents – to modernization from a theoretical perspective. There, I emphasized that believers might respond to modernization either by rejecting it or by seeking to adapt to the new order, adjusting their religion accordingly. By the time Akhund Abu Turab wrote the article in question, modernists had already been attempting for decades to interpret religious injunctions of the past in light of new

realities. Azerbaijani intellectuals' efforts in this direction therefore did not begin with this debate. I have chosen this polemic as a case study because I believe it illustrates particularly well how an interpretation that now appears self-evident and is universally accepted is, in fact, the product of relatively recent historical processes.

In this article, I will briefly outline Akhund Abu Turab's argument and the responses it elicited, seeking to show how authors on opposing sides interpreted the same religious sources differently. I will then discuss the social, political, and economic changes that made these radical shifts in the interpretation of sacred texts possible.

The debate, which took place at the beginning of the last century, sought to answer the question of what Muslims should do to overcome their position of defeat and lack of power vis-à-vis the West. To simplify the picture, one side maintained that we should study the transmitted (*naqlī*) sciences, conveyed to us through revelation by way of the Prophet, while the other argued that we should turn towards modern sciences – that is, pursue the rational (*ʿaqlī*) sciences. As we shall see below, however, this generalization is too reductive to be accurate. Those belonging to the group we might call modernist Muslim intellectuals did not argue that we should abandon religion and devote ourselves entirely to modern science.

In Azerbaijani historiography, particularly in textbooks, accounts of Enlightenment thinkers tend to emphasize individual qualities and personal *genius*. In other words, the worldview we embrace today is presented as the fruit of their endeavors. I argue that the attempts to modernize religion that emerged in Azerbaijan under Russian imperial rule cannot be understood by focusing on individual qualities or by treating Azerbaijan or, more broadly, the Muslim subjects of the Russian Empire, as isolated, unique cases. As indicated above, my principal aim is to demonstrate how religious injunctions have been understood differently over the course

of history. I further argue that these changes can be understood only within a global framework that takes account of modernization, colonialism, and new class relations.

The Akhund's Argument

Akhund Mirza Abu Turab Akhundzadeh (1817 – 1914) was a prominent cleric who regularly contributed articles to the periodical press. Contrary to the initial impression that the article discussed here might create, he was regarded as a progressive religious figure. Some sources maintain, for example, that he sent his own daughter to the girls' school founded by Z. Taghiyev to encourage Muslims to send their daughters to school.[ii]

Indeed, it could be argued that the Akhund's principal aim in the article in question was also to reform the schools attended by Muslims. As its title suggests, *Which Sciences Do We Need?* opens a discussion about which sciences it is most important for Muslims to study.[iii] In the introduction, the author discusses how intellectuals of the time encouraged people to pursue education and invoked Islamic sources enjoining learning to support their appeals. Citing relevant Qur'anic verses and prophetic hadiths, the Akhund argues that the reformist intellectuals seeking to promote education were misinterpreting these sources.

He begins with several hadiths attributed to the Prophet that encourage Muslims to acquire knowledge: "Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim man and woman" and "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave" (p. 1).

The sacred sources cited by the Akhund would have been familiar to readers at the beginning of the last century and remain familiar today. What contemporary readers may find surprising emerges when he turns to interpreting these hadiths. The Akhund accepts that all Muslims, regardless of gender, must acquire knowledge, but questions which sciences

the term “knowledge” denotes in these sayings of the Prophet: “Is the knowledge whose acquisition is obligatory [for all men and women] geometry or astronomy, … or philosophy and natural philosophy, or arithmetic and medicine, or … is the knowledge whose acquisition is obligatory the science of Sharia?” The Akhund contends that the sciences which contemporary intellectuals encouraged Muslims to study were disciplines other than the science of Sharia. As evidence, he points to the insufficient teaching of religious knowledge in the schools of his time, schoolchildren’s resulting ignorance of religion, Muslims’ failure to attend mosques (and Christians’ failure to attend churches), and intellectuals’ dismissive attitude towards madrasas (pp. 2-3).

In the Akhund’s view, all these problems stemmed precisely from the misinterpretation of the hadiths in question. He maintains that the knowledge which the Prophet declared obligatory for Muslims to acquire was “the science of Sharia.” In other words, the Prophet’s injunction to seek knowledge referred to the religious sciences, rather than mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, or other such disciplines. The Akhund then seeks to substantiate this claim. His first piece of evidence is the Qur’anic verse translated as “I created jinn and humankind only to worship Me!” (al-Dhariyat: 56). To worship God, however, one must first know God, learn the prescribed acts of worship, and become acquainted with the Qur’an and hadiths: “This is the knowledge whose acquisition has been made obligatory for Muslim men and women” (pp. 3-4).

Here, the author immediately moves to the second part of his argument. In his view, studying the rational sciences does not make an individual a good person: “Even if a person were to devote their entire life to the study of mathematics and natural philosophy and attain the standing of the First Teacher, Aristotalis [Aristotle], they would certainly not acquire knowledge and understanding of the paths of servitude to God Almighty [the ways of worshipping God], nor would they enter the city of humanity and civilization.” Addressing

readers who considered the peoples of Europe, with their advances in the rational sciences, to have "attained perfection in humanity and civilization," the Akhund states that Europeans remain "in a condition of savagery [a state of barbarism] because they are free from divine political law [divine laws]" (p. 4).

According to the Akhund, becoming a good person requires heeding the prophets' call and following the path they prescribed. The knowledge that the Prophet commanded people to acquire consists in nothing other than knowing these paths: "By becoming a Jalinus [Galen] in medicine, one may cure bodily ailments [diseases of the body], but one cannot thereby acquire humanity; one must cure spiritual ailments [diseases/defects of the soul] to become truly human[. …] Knowledge of natural philosophy cannot make one truly human; attaining perfection through divine wisdom is what makes a person human" (pp. 5-6).

At the end of the article, the author explicitly argues that studying the rational sciences without knowledge of the religious sciences, in other words, without learning and practising religion, cannot lead a person to civilisation. In the Akhund's view: "If [a person] attains perfection in the other sciences, [but] has no share in the Islamic faith, they will certainly not attain civilisation and humanity. If [a person] possesses knowledge and understanding of the Islamic faith, yet is ignorant of the sciences, this will not diminish their humanity." Only after thoroughly mastering religious knowledge may a person turn to the rational sciences, the study of which will then confer additional merit upon them (p. 7).

To summarize Akhund Abu Turab's argument, the author calls into question the still widespread assertion that "Islam commands us to study." Indeed, the entire article can be said to revolve around a single claim: "To be a good person, one must know religion." What appears to have prompted the Akhund

to write such an article was his dissatisfaction with the conduct of his contemporaries. He attributes schoolchildren's lack of "good morals" to their receiving insufficient religious instruction. He grounds his argument in the Qur'an: "If human beings were created to worship God, they can have no purpose more important than worship; to be able to worship, however, they must learn their religion." Unlike his opponents, the Akhund does not concern himself in this article with the questions that preoccupied many Muslim intellectuals of the period: "Why have we fallen behind, and how can we catch up with the West?" In his view, a Muslim's sole purpose is to be a good person/Muslim. Achieving this purpose requires a thorough knowledge of religion. The sciences to be studied must therefore be the transmitted sciences that serve this purpose. At this point, he rejects Western progress altogether: i-Industrial and scientific advancement without being Muslim is of no significance, and Europeans therefore remain, despite their advances, in a state of barbarism.

Responses to the Akhund

Clearly, Akhund Abu Turab was not the only person defending this position in the early twentieth century; indeed, the majority of Muslims probably shared his views. He had studied at prestigious institutions of religious learning, and we cannot attribute his argument to an inadequate understanding of Islam. Yet the fact that most Muslims today, unlike in 1906, agree with his opponents rather than with the Akhund can be explained by the historical defeat of the position he defended and the victory of *modernist Muslims*.

These modernist Muslims maintained that Islam enjoined education, which is why the publication of such an article by an influential religious figure like Mirza Abu Turab provoked their objections. Ali bey Huseynzadeh offered the first response in the same issue of *Həyat*, in an article entitled *His Reverence Akhund Abu Turab and the Science of the Body*.[iv]

In this article, Huseynzadeh states that the Akhund's position "is partly consistent with the editorial stance of Həyat newspaper[…] and partly [inconsistent with it]." In other words, he disagrees with the Akhund but considers it useful to open such a discussion (p. 8). He further maintains that Abu Turab's article was not written to promote "clericalism" and notes that Jean Jacques Rousseau had also written an essay advancing a similar argument. He argues that, unlike Rousseau, who rejected altogether the notion that scientific progress benefited humanity, Akhund Abu Turab neither rejected the rational sciences outright nor called on Muslims to study them, but simply upheld the necessity of studying the religious sciences in all circumstances (pp. 9-10).

Yet Huseynzadeh argues that, in this longstanding debate, which had continued for centuries in both the Muslim East and the West, the issue is less complicated than it initially appears. In his view, the conflict is not actually between religion and science, but "between mullahs who consider themselves the guardians and upholders of religion and men of science and learning who are unfamiliar with the religious sciences." According to Ali bey, readers who see no need for religious education are also "gravely mistaken", and one cannot side with scholars who regard the transmitted sciences as unnecessary (pp. 11-12).

In other words, Ali bey Huseynzadeh advances the argument about "reactionary mullahs" familiar to us from secondary school textbooks. He by no means rejects Islam; indeed, he calls for its study and, like medieval Muslim philosophers, maintains that there is no contradiction between reason and revelation.

Thus, Ali bey Huseynzadeh does not deny the necessity of the transmitted sciences but, unlike the Akhund, maintains that the rational sciences are equally necessary. To make this case, he seeks, just as the Akhund does, to substantiate his argument through religious texts. He recalls the full version

of the hadith quoted in the Akhund's article, "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave," and presents the phrase "seek it even in China" as evidence that the injunction does not refer exclusively to the sciences of Sharia (p. 13).

Ali bey also quotes the hadith "The science of bodies [the bodily sciences] and the science of religions [the religious sciences] are the best of the sciences," which "His Reverence the Akhund, for whatever reason, did not mention," to argue that the Prophet commanded the study of *all sciences*. Interpreting this hadith, which he quotes in Arabic, the author concludes that it enjoins both the study of the natural sciences and the investigation of all religions, rather than Islam alone (pp. 13-14).

Huseynzadeh then observes that the necessity of studying the transmitted sciences is beyond doubt, whereas the importance of the rational sciences requires demonstration. Yet, on the grounds that the truths of the rational sciences, unlike those of the transmitted sciences, are the same for everyone regardless of religion or nationality, he concludes that the rational sciences are more important (pp. 14-15).

Responding to the Akhund's claim that a person cannot attain an understanding of God by reaching Aristotle's standing in philosophy, the author further emphasizes that ancient Greek philosophers upheld the concept of a single God without the assistance of prophets (p. 16). This, too, recalls the arguments of Muslim philosophers during the Islamic Renaissance.

Huseynzadeh goes on to affirm the importance of the religious sciences, while drawing on various examples to argue that even understanding them is impossible without the rational sciences. He also emphasizes that we should not reject the advances made and theories developed in the West – which the Akhund describes as being "in a state of barbarism" – because they serve humanity as a whole (pp. 17-22).

Overall, Ali bey Huseynzadeh is a modernist Muslim in the sense in which I use the term in this article. In other words, he neither rejects nor opposes religion. He does, however, propose interpreting it differently from Muslim clerics. This is not simply the case of a believer who retains his faith but takes little interest in religion or pays scant attention to its injunctions. The author turns to religious sources themselves to respond to the cleric; in other words, religious texts retain their authority for him.

Omar Faig Nemanzadeh,[v] the author of another response to Akhund Abu Turab's article, may likewise be described as a modernist Muslim. He, too, counters the Akhund – whom he criticizes more vehemently – with arguments grounded in religious evidence. Nemanzadeh begins by stating that the position defended by the Akhund appears natural because it is *firmly entrenched among Muslims*, yet contradicts both reason and the foundations of religion. He argues that the issue must be pursued to expose "superstition and nonsense cloaked in Sharia" (p. 26).

The author then attempts to refute the evidence presented in the Akhund's article. Nemanzadeh takes the use of the word "knowledge" rather than "fiqh" in the Qur'anic verses and hadiths cited by the Akhund as evidence that the sacred texts refer to the rational sciences (p. 27). Reiterating Ali bey's argument, he maintains that the phrase "seek it even in China" in the hadith in question refers to the rational sciences, and argues at length that these were what the Prophet's injunction intended. Here, Nemanzadeh contends that Islamic doctrine was initially simple and readily comprehensible, and that the knowledge whose acquisition required effort, as envisaged in the Prophet's command, must therefore have been the rational sciences. He also blames unworthy rulers and religious scholars for the subsequent complication of Islamic doctrine and its division into mutually contradictory schools of thought (pp. 29-30). In other words, Nemanzadeh's article

contains an explicit call to return to the approach of Islam's earliest centuries. Indeed, the argument that Muslims should return to the approach of the "Age of Bliss" was widespread among modernist Muslim reformers from different parts of the Islamic world.

Overall, Omar Faig Nemanzadeh responds to the Akhund through reasoning grounded in religious sources. For example, asserting that only 10 percent of the Qur'an's content concerns matters of Sharia (Islamic doctrine, worship, etc.), while the remaining 90 percent addresses history, ethics, and other such subjects, he argues that more time should be devoted to studying this second category in order to understand the Qur'an and God (pp. 30-31).

He does not deny the Akhund's claim that religion is insufficiently taught in primary schools; rather, he argues that more extensive religious instruction is unnecessary (p. 33). Challenging the Akhund's inference from children's behavior that they lack knowledge of Islam, O. F. Nemanzadeh argues that the blame lies with the mullahs and the creed taught to children. Quoting a book written for children, he disputes its assertion that "good and evil come from Allah," arguing that children taught this belief "will not dare to resist oppression." Here, the author rejects the concept of predestination, maintaining that it contradicts justice and the truth of Islam (pp. 34-35). This theosophical question, incidentally, was also among the issues most frequently addressed by modernist Muslims.

Nemanzadeh also discusses the Qur'anic verse cited by the Akhund concerning the creation of human beings "to worship God." In his view, the Akhund's mistake lies in understanding worship solely in the literal sense of the word. Yet each of God's infinite attributes offers infinitely many ways of worshipping Him; from this perspective, advancing in science and industry is also a form of worship. Responding to the Akhund's assertion that engaging in the rational sciences does

not help one to know God, he further argues that knowing God is impossible without knowledge of these sciences (pp. 38-39).

He also challenges the Akhund's claim that those who attain mastery in the sciences but remain ignorant of the Islamic faith cannot attain humanity and civilization, objecting to his exclusion of Islam from the category of knowledge. According to Nemanzadeh, Islam is itself one of the disciplines that must be studied to attain humanity and civilization (p. 45).

Unlike the Akhund, Nemanzadeh believes that ignorance of the rational sciences is precisely what diminishes one's humanity. In his view, failing to pursue scientific progress and industrial development drives people towards fatalism. He also emphasizes that the "Franks" (Europeans) who have contributed to science are valued by God despite not being Muslim:

Does a Frank who, through great toil and hardship, discovered the method of smallpox inoculation [vaccination], saved thousands of innocent children from untimely death, and stopped the tears of so many fathers and mothers possess no merit in God's eyes? Are Pater, Jenny, Marx, and other celebrated Franks [European luminaries], who devoted their entire lives to human happiness and well-being[…] not engaged in worship? (p. 46).

Overall, unlike Akhund Abu Turab, Omar Faig Nemanzadeh maintains that the rational sciences are necessary for attaining civilization (p. 47). His arguments remain within the framework of religious discourse. He invokes religious sources, discusses how religious instruction should be provided to children, and explores ways of knowing God. Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, another author who responded to Akhund Abu Turab and whom we will briefly discuss here, differs in this respect from the contemporaries considered above.

Jalil Mammadguluzadeh's satirical feuilleton, written under the pseudonym "Molla Nasreddin" in response to Akhund Abu

Turab's article, appeared in *Molla Nəsrəddin* magazine (26 May 1906, No. 8).[vi] I will not discuss Mammadguluzadeh's piece at length here. Briefly, however, Mirza Jalil employs his characteristic irony to criticize Akhund Abu Turab's claim that, unlike ignorance of the transmitted sciences, *not knowing* the rational sciences *does not* adversely affect an individual's ability to be a good person. He juxtaposes quotations from the Akhund's article with passages concerning profiteering by the religious scholars of Tabriz from Zaynalabidin Maraghayi's *The Travel Diary of Ibrahim Bey*. In doing so, he seeks to demonstrate not only that studying religion is insufficient to make one a good person, but also that even the principal custodians of religious knowledge oppress others. Overall, unlike Huseynzadeh and Nemanzadeh, Mammadguluzadeh neither invokes religious texts nor attempts to substantiate his position through them. Instead, he seeks to show that everyday life does not bear out the Akhund's argument.[vii]

As we have seen, the Akhund's opponents continued to accept sacred texts as a point of reference. Yet there were significant differences between their positions and his. First, they acknowledged that Muslim societies had fallen behind the West in terms of progress. For the Akhund, the sole criterion of superiority was adherence to the true religion, knowledge of God, and obedience of His commands. The only concern relating to this world and human well-being emphasized in his article was that of being a good person. Yet even this concern ultimately referred to the afterlife: To earn God's mercy one must be a good person and obey His commands. The Akhund's opponents disagreed. For them, falling behind the West in science and industry constituted a problem, and acquiring scientific knowledge was necessary to overcome this backwardness. For modernist Muslims, however—as Nemanzadeh's article demonstrates—the pursuit of progress itself constituted worship. Thus, in their approach to religion, modernists differed both from traditional clerics and from

those who rejected religion altogether and advocated pursuing the Western model. Although the Akhund's views were accepted by the majority at the time of this debate, modernist arguments were gradually becoming persuasive to a wider public of Azerbaijan, as conditions were conducive to their acceptance.

What Had Changed?

Clearly, this debate did not arise by chance but emerged from the historical processes that had laid the groundwork for it. Nor was the polemic confined to Azerbaijani intellectuals. Akhund Abu Turab and the intellectuals who responded to him were participating in a debate among Muslims within the Russian Empire and, more broadly, across the world. These discussions arose from the increasing subjugation of Muslim states by the West and their transformation, by the early twentieth century, into territories wholly or partly under Western colonial rule – in other words, from attempts to explain this situation.

Yet Muslims were not unanimous even in acknowledging these defeats, which would appear self-evident to most readers.[viii] As Akhund Abu Turab's article also demonstrates, the vast majority of religious scholars did not accept that Europeans were ahead of Muslims in civilizational terms. Nevertheless, the disparities that had emerged, at least in science, industry, and the military power derived from them, could not be denied. Indeed, Muslim states had begun attempting to emulate the West to overcome this backwardness, particularly in military affairs, before Muslim intellectuals opened these questions to debate.[ix]

Under these circumstances, Muslim intellectuals began investigating the causes of this backwardness. For most, Islam was not the cause. As readers familiar with the works of Azerbaijani Enlightenment thinkers will recall, even when these thinkers linked such defeats to religion, they often

blamed the clerics who exploited the religion. Broadly speaking, the first wave of modernist reformers – as Nemanzadeh's response demonstrates – located the cause in Muslims' departure from Islam in its pure form.[x] Moreover, the very idea of now learning anything from Europeans, who had always appeared uncivilized and insignificant during the heyday of Islamic civilization, provoked horror among Muslims.[xi] When Akhund Abu Turab claimed that Europeans remained "in a state of barbarism," he was perpetuating this older outlook, inherited from centuries of Muslim dominance.

Thus, by the early twentieth century, it was clear, at least to intellectuals with some secular education, that Muslims had lost ground to Europe and needed to seek new ways of overcoming this backwardness. Recognizing this, however, does not fully answer the question posed above. Certain other conditions also had to be in place for intellectuals to be able to voice these ideas.

During the golden age of the Islamic Renaissance, thinkers depended directly on sovereigns or local rulers. In the classical Islamic period, all philosophers and scientists in the Muslim world necessarily worked under the patronage of one ruler or another. By the modern period, this reality had changed. What emerged in Muslim societies, albeit in a weak form, was the phenomenon of *civil society*. Understood in its classical sense as a sphere grounded in property rights and not directly subordinate to the state, civil society had been absent from Islamic countries. Even in Europe, its formation was a product of the modern period.[xii] In the Muslim world, the concentration of ownership in the sovereign's hands, together with his right to confiscate large estates at will, had prevented the emergence of such an intermediate social sphere.[xiii]

The transformation of Muslim countries into European colonies and semi-colonies, however, created conditions for the

emergence of such a sphere, albeit in a weak form. At the same time, the arrival of printing and the daily press in the Muslim world enabled intellectuals to express their views without depending directly on a particular patron. The issue, therefore, was not simply that these intellectuals knew Western languages, read Western sources, or received a Western-style education; they also possessed the economic and social foundations necessary to disseminate and defend their ideas.

Colonial subjugation also deprived the religious scholars of their power. In Tsarist Russia, for example, although the Islamic religious establishment retained certain privileges, it had lost its legislative authority under imperial law and had been *reduced* to the same standing as secular intellectuals.

These conditions led a very small minority of Muslims (such as Mirza Fatali Akhundov) to reject Islam altogether, while prompting most Muslim intellectuals to seek answers to the difficult questions that had arisen within the framework of Islam.

Conclusion

Today, most Muslims regard the assertion that "Islam commands us to study" as an indisputable truth. Moreover, if asked what this injunction means, they would say that they *do not understand it* as referring solely to the acquisition of religious knowledge. Yet a century ago, this very question was contested in the Azerbaijani-language press. In an article published in the periodical press, a Muslim cleric argued that Muslims should first acquire transmitted – that is, religious – knowledge and only then turn to the rational sciences. He justified this position on the grounds that human beings were created to worship God and that learning religion was sufficient to make one a good person.

His modernist opponents, however, drew on religious sources to

argue that Islam enjoined the study of the rational sciences, that the cleric had misinterpreted sacred texts, and that studying religion alone was sufficient neither to build a civilized society nor to make one a good person.

The very fact that this debate took place indicated that the Muslim world, including Muslim communities within the Russian Empire, had embarked on a process of modernization. The religious scholars had already lost a substantial measure of their power, civil society had begun to take shape, and a partially independent intellectual stratum had emerged, distinct from the men of letters of classical Islamic society.

Over the longer term, historical developments would follow a course closer to that envisaged by the modernist camp. As a result, a century later, the interpretation they had defended would come to be accepted by the majority as a self-evident truth.

Notes and References:

[i] Araz Bagirov (2026), *Modernisation and Religion*, Baku Research Institute, https://bakuresearchinstitute.org/en/modernization-and-religion/ .

[ii] Əbu Turab Axundzadə (1993), *İslamın təfriqəsi səbəbləri*, Azərbaycan Dövlət Nəşriyyatı, Bakı, Ön söz (imzasız), p. 6.

[iii] Axund Əbu Turab və b. (1907), *Bizə hansı elmlər lazımdır*, Qeyrət Nəşriyyatı, Tiflis, səh. 1-7. *Note:* This edition contains Akhund Abu Turab's article alongside three responses to it. All three responses—by Ali bey Huseynzadeh, Jalil Mammadguluzadeh (Molla Nasreddin), and Omar Faig Nemanzadeh—have been republished in editions of their respective authors' works. However, I have not found a reprint of Mirza Abu Turab's article in either the Cyrillic or Latin

alphabet. For all four articles, I will cite the aforementioned 1907 edition printed in the Arabic script, while providing references to more recent editions when discussing those articles available in the Latin alphabet. Henceforth, references to this Tiflis edition (page numbers) will appear within the main text. For interested readers, a digital version of the Arabic-script edition used as the principal source is available on the National Library's website: (http://web2.anl.az:81/read/page.php?bibid=vtls000595095).

[iv] əli bəy Hüseynzadə (2007), *Axund əbu Turab həzrətləri və elmi-əbdan*, *Seçilmiş əsərləri* daxilində, Şərq-Qərb nəşriyyatı, Bakı, səh. 122-130; *Bizə hansı elmlər lazımdır?* (1907), *əli bəy Hüseynzadənin cavabı*, pp. 8-22, (hereafter, page references in the text refer to this edition).

[v] Ömər Faiq Nemanzadə (2006), *Bizə hansı elmlər lazımdır?*, *Seçilmiş əsərləri* daxilində, pp.144-157, Şərq-Qərb nəşriyyatı, Bakı; *Bizə hansı elmlər lazımdır* (1907), *Ö.F. Nemanzadənin cavabı*, pp. 26-47 (Hereafter, page references in the text refer to this edition.).

[vi] Cəlil Məmməqduluzadə (2004), *Hansı elmlər lazımdır?*, *Seçilmiş əsərləri*, 4 cilddə, II cild daxilində, Öndər Nəşriyyatı, Bakı, səh. 36-38; *Bizə hansı elmlər lazımdır*, *Molla Nəsrəddinin cavabı*, pp. 22-25.

[vii] My reason for not discussing Jalil Mammadguluzadeh at length here is precisely my hesitation to describe him as a "modernist Muslim." If we take Mirza Jalil's memoirs (*Jalil Mammadguluzadeh (2004), pp. 4-98*), published after the establishment of Soviet rule, as our basis, reforming Islam was never his aim, and any activities that gave this impression were undertaken out of necessity. Nevertheless, his activities before Soviet rule effectively served the modernists' objective of "purging Islam of superstition." In any event, Jalil Mammadguluzadeh's engagement with Islam

requires a separate discussion.

[viii] See: Christian Lekon (2019), *Modernist Reformers in Islam, Hinduism and Confucianism, 1865–1935*, Routledge, Nyu-York.

[ix] See: Bernard Lewis (2002), *What went wrong?* Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

[x] Christian Lekon (2019), *Modernist Reformers in Islam,* I Fəsil (Salafiyya): The reader should not confuse "Salafiyya" with Salafism here. Figures associated with the Salafiyya current, such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, were modernist reformers. Salafism, by contrast, is *modern*—in the sense that it emerged in the modern period—but is not *modernist*.

[xi] Bernard Lewis (2002), *What went wrong?* pp. 25-26.

[xii] On this issue, see: Jürgen Habermas (1991), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, MIT Press, Massachusetts.

[xiii] Şerif Mardin (1983), *Din ve İdeoloji*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, pp. 113-115.