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## Abdul Razik, Moustafa Hasan

By: Abdul-Latif, Emad

**(1885–1947),**

university professor and Imam, was born in 1885 in Abu Gerg village in Minya, Upper Egypt, to a wealthy and prestigious family. His father, Hassan Abdul Razik Pasha, was a prominent politician, and his mother, Khadooja Abdul Salam Al Shureiy, descended from a famous family in Upper Egypt. He studied at Al-Azhar under Sheikh Muhammad Abdou, who deeply influenced his ideologies. After obtaining his Alamyya certificate in 1908, he traveled to France to complete his studies at the Sorbonne University and then the University of Lyon. Upon receiving his doctorate, he settled in Lyon to teach the Arabic language and Islamic Law. World War I put an end to his stay in France. By the end of 1914 he returned to Egypt, where he worked as an employee at Al-Azhar and then a judge in the Islamic courts. Upon his appointment in 1927 as an associate professor at King Fouad University (now Cairo University), Moustafa Abdul Razik became the first Egyptian to teach Islamic philosophy in the university setting. Eight years later, he became the chair of the department of philosophy at the same university and was then appointed the minister of awqaf (religious endowments) three times from 1938 to 1945. In September 1945, he was appointed Sheikh of Al-Azhar, but he died two years later at the age of sixty-two.

One of the most eminent contributions of Sheikh Abdul Razik in the field of Islamic philosophy is his book *An Introduction to the History of Islamic Philosophy* (1944), a collection of the lectures he delivered at Cairo University over a period of seven years. This book had a great influence on Arabic philosophical studies as Abdul Razik refuted the claims of some Orientalists regarding Islamic philosophy, especially those based on ethnic discrimination between Semites and Aryans. In 1945, he published a book about two distinguished Arab philosophers, Al-Kindi and Al-Farabi, and another book about Al-Farabi entitled *The Philosopher of Arabs and the Second Teacher*. In addition, Moustafa Abdul Razik published a book in French entitled *Sufism and Islam*, in collaboration with the French philosopher Massignon. Besides his close relationship with his students, Abdul Razik's philosophical writings created an influential generation of Egyptian students of philosophy in the interwar period. The Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz was among those who were influenced by Abdul Razik's lectures, which he attended at Cairo University in the early 1930s.

In addition to his philosophical studies, Sheikh Abdul Razik produced writings on sundry topics. He wrote books on several distinguished literary and religious figures including Al Bahaa Zoheir, a thirteenth-century Egyptian poet (1930); Al Imam Al-Shafiey (1945); and Sheikh Muhammad Abdou (1946). Moreover, he wrote introductions to books on scientific figures such as Jewish physician Moussa Ibn Maymoon. Further, he wrote his autobiography in two literary works, *The Memoirs of a Traveller* and *The Memoirs of a Resident*.

Sheikh Abdul Razik made significant contributions to the development of religious thought in the Islamic world. In his book *Religion, Revelation and Islam* (1945), he presented an advanced approach to the role of religion in society. In other writings, he addressed stern religious doctrines such as Wahhabism, which he referred to as "the religion of the people of Najd." In addition, he supported art and literature in the face of those Islamists who criticized them. On the practical level, he participated in reform efforts as early as 1909 when he cofounded an association of intellectuals to reform Al-Azhar. Busy with that effort, he quit his work as a teacher at the judiciary. As Sheikh of Al-Azhar between 1945 and 1947, he indulged in important reform activities such as teaching foreign languages at Al-Azhar and sending students from Al-Azhar to complete their studies in France and England.

Sheikh Abdul Razik was part of the Egyptian enlightenment movement in the first half of the twentieth century. He made close ties with the leading figures of this movement. He wrote extensively on Sheikh Muhammad Abdou, the symbol of religious enlightenment in Egypt, and with Bernard Michele cotranslated into French his book *Resalat Al-Tawhid*, which was published in Paris in 1952. Abdul Razik was also the head of the association "The Sons of Muhammad Abdou," which was established by those influenced by the sheikh's reformist views. Additionally, Moustafa Abdul Razik was a proponent of the prominent political reformist Saad Zaghloul. Likewise, he was a close friend of Taha Hussein, one of the most notable enlightened intellectuals of the first half of the twentieth century. Upon Abdul Razik's death, Taha Hussein wrote the introduction to the book in which his lectures and studies were collected. Sheikh Moustafa Abdul Razik was the brother of another prominent figure in the Egyptian enlightenment movement, Sheikh Ali Abdul Razik. Sheikh Ali was the author of the book *Statecraft in Islam*, which caused a tumult in Egypt in the 1920s and 1930s because of its refutation of the religious basis for the caliphate. [See also Mahfouz, Naguib]

### **Bibliography**

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