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# Great Leaders of Last 100 Years

## [Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi](#)

The crisis the ummah faced in the 20th century was encountered in a profound manner by the great exegete Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979). He pioneered a movement *ijtihad* at the level of thought and institution building and offered an ideological alternative to the modern world. Aware of the impact of ideological challenges of the Capitalist, Marxist and Fascists ideologies of the 19th century Europe, Sayyid Mawdudi encountered the challenge at three different levels.

## [Sayyid Qutb](#)

Sayyid Qutb, the doyen of the *Ikhwan al-Muslimun*, had a very profound impact on the Muslim Arab youth coming of age since late 60s. Western writers in recent years have focused on him as one of the two most influential Muslim thinkers of this century, the other being Sayyid Mawdudi. Qutb's writings prior to 1951 are more of a 'moralist'. It was after he was introduced to Mawdudi's ideas, especially his emphasis on Islam being a complete way of life, and establishment of Allah's order on earth as every Muslim's primary

## [El-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz](#)

After his break with Elijah Muhammad, he changed his name to Malik el-Shabazz. The Muslim honorific title El-Hajj would later be added to his name after his trip to Makkah to perform the Hajj. The new Malik Shabazz also chose the mainstream Sunni Islam as his religious creed. In doing so he became the vocal denouncer of his former master and his teachings. He confessed to several audiences around the US and abroad that his activities and speeches gave greater visibility to the heretical teaching of the NOI. He told his audiences that now that he has seen the light of true Islam, he would do everything to teach, elucidate and pass on the true teachings of Islam to African-American.

## [Ruhullah Musavi Khomeini](#)

Imam Khomeini began his education by memorizing the Qur'an and he became a *hâfiz* by the age of seven. After his arrival in Qum in 1922, the Imam first devoted himself to completing the preliminary stage of *madrassa* education known as *sutûh*. However, from his early days in Qum, the Imam gave an indication that he was destined to become more than another great authority on Ja'farî jurisprudence.

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responsibility that Qutb changed into a revolutionary. His two years sojourn (1948–1950) in the US opened his eyes to the malise of the western culture and non-Islamic ideologies.

[Muhammad Iqbal](#)

Born in November 1877 in Sialkot, Punjab (now Pakistan), Iqbal achieved high proficiency in Arabic and Persian languages at an early age. After completing graduate studies in philosophy, he became a college lecturer in Lahore at the age of 24. Later he moved to Cambridge, England for higher studies and earned Ph.D. from Munich University, Germany at the age of 30. He became barrister-at-law in 1908 and returned to Lahore to practice law. He was actively involved in the Muslims' cultural and political strivings and was elected in 1920 a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. He was an outstanding and highly popular poet of Urdu and Persian languages and also delivered scholarly addresses at various occasions.

He showed an exceptional interest in subjects that not only were usually absent from the *madrasa* curriculum but were often an object of hostility and suspicion: philosophy, in its various traditional schools, and gnosticism (*'irfân*).

[Muhammad Ilyas](#)

Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas, the founder of the Tablighi Jama'at of South Asian subcontinent, is arguably one of the most influential, yet least well-known, figures of the twentieth century Islam. Despite his enormous contribution towards the development of a powerful grass root Islamic Da'wah movement, Mawlana Ilyas has not received much attention in the literature on modern Islamic movements. Most of the Western, and even Muslim, scholarships have remain occupied with the more spectacular and dramatic manifest ions of Islamic revivalist upsurge.

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