



## THE REFORM OF MUSLIM SOCIETY

PRINCE SAID HALIM PASHA\*

### A B S T R A C T

Prince Said Halim Pasha, an Ottoman statesman and a prominent Islamist intellectual of 20th century, in the back drop of the intent of a great majority of representatives of the Muslim intellectual classes on endowing their countries with barely disguised copies of Western institutions thinking that they can only compass their revival by adopting the principles and concepts of the Indo-Aryan world, saw that Muslim intellectual *elite* no longer had the full conviction that Islam is the religion *par excellence*: religion in its highest and the most complete form that it is civilisation itself in the most perfect sense. Said Halim Pasha saw it to be a flagrant error to believe that institutions with which the Christian world provided itself, as suited to its needs, political or social, can ever suit Muslims, whatever modifications of detail be made in them. He viewed the two worlds in fact so essentially unlike that by no effort can they be brought to share the same concept of individual and collective life.

He, in the present paper, ascribed the distortion of Muslim mentality, which looks for the regeneration of Muslim society as a result of its assimilation to Western society, to the unfortunate influence of the foreign domination endured by Muslims—a domination which played the part of an intellectual dissolvent among them. He proposed to dispel the errors with which that mentality is laden, and to prove that, from the moral and social point of view, the Islamic world has no reason to envy the West; on the contrary, it is Christendom which needs to learn from Islam in those respects. To enlighten minds on this question of supreme importance he opted to describe in plain terms the social work of Islam. Hoping this reminder will convince Muslim intelligentsia that the Reform of Muslim society should consist simply in Muslims learning to understand better, and apply better, the teachings of Islam.

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\* Prince Said Halim Pasha [Sa'id Ḥalim Pāshā] (1281–1340/1865–1921) was a prominent Ottoman intellectual who served as Grand Vizier (Prime Minister) of the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1917. Born to Prince Mehmed Abdul Halim Pasha on 18 January 1865, he was the grandson of the founder of