

Document 1

Source: Syed Ahmad Khan, educator and founder of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, undated letter to a fellow Muslim, published two years after Khan's death, *Several Notable Letters of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, India, 1900.

If the Muslims do not take to the system of education introduced by the British, they will not only remain a backward community, but will sink lower and lower until there will be no hope of recovery left to them.

If the choice were to lie between giving up and preserving Islam, I would have unhesitatingly chosen Islam. That, however, is not the choice. The adoption of the new system of education does not mean the renunciation of Islam. It means its protection. We are justly proud of the achievements of our forefathers in the fields of learning and culture, but these achievements were possible only because they were willing to act upon the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet said that knowledge is the heritage of the believer and that he should acquire it wherever he can find it. He also said that the Muslims should seek knowledge even if they have to go to China, which at that time was one of the most civilized countries in the world, but it was a non-Muslim country and could not teach the Muslims anything about their own religion. Did the early Muslims not take to Greek learning avidly? Did this in any respect undermine their loyalty to Islam?

Europe has made such remarkable progress in science that it would be suicidal not to make an effort to acquire that knowledge. How can we remain true Muslims or serve Islam if we sink into ignorance?

Document 2

Source: Ahmad Lutfi as-Sayyid, founder of the Egyptian People's Party in 1907, *Memoirs*, Egypt, 1965.

Among our forefathers were those who maintained that the land of Islam is the fatherland of all Muslims. However, that is a colonialist formula used to advantage by every colonizing nation that seeks to expand its possessions and to extend its influence daily over neighboring countries. Today the [traditional Islamic] formula has no reason to exist. We must replace this formula with the only doctrine that is in accord with every Eastern nation that possesses a clearly defined sense of fatherland. That doctrine is nationalism.

Our love of Egypt must be free from all conflicting associations. We must suppress our propensity for anything other than Egypt because patriotism, which is love of fatherland, does not permit such ties.

Our Egyptian-ness demands that our fatherland be our *qibla** and that we not turn our face to any other.

*Marks the direction of Mecca, to which a Muslim turns in prayer.

Document 3

Source: Abul Kalam Azad, Indian Muslim leader, imprisoned several times by the British for political activism, article in a Muslim newspaper, India, 1912.

It drives me mad today to see the deplorable sight among Muslims where there are only two kinds of leaders. For the traditionalists there are the *ulama**; for the modernist group, the Western-educated intellectuals. Both are ignorant of religion and both are paralyzed limbs of the community. The first group is beset by religious superstitions, prejudices, and stagnancy, while the other is caught in atheism, imitation of the West, and love of power and position.

*Islamic scholars.

Document 4

Source: Taha Husayn, Muslim literary figure and Egyptian nationalist, *The Future of Culture in Egypt*, Egypt, 1938.

We Egyptians must not assume the existence of intellectual differences, weak or strong, between the Europeans and ourselves or infer that the East mentioned by Kipling* in his famous verse "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" applies to us or our country.

We want to be like the European nations in military power in order to repel the attack of any aggressor and to be able to say to our English friends, "Thank you, you may go, for we can now defend the Suez Canal." Who wants the end must want the means; who wants power must want the elements constituting it; who wants a strong European-type army must want European training.

We also need economic independence. I do not mean we should be independent of Arabia, Syria, and Iraq, but independent of Europe and America. We must therefore use the same means that the Europeans and Americans use to defend their national economies.

*English novelist, journalist, and longtime resident of South Asia.

Document 5

Source: Moufdi Zakaria, Algerian nationalist, Fourth Congress of the North African Student Association; speech, Algeria, 1935.

Islam is our religion; North Africa, our fatherland; and Arabic, our language.

Every Muslim in North Africa, believing in the oneness of North Africa, believing in God and in his Prophet, is my brother and shares my soul. I make no distinction between a Tunisian, an Algerian, or a Moroccan; nor between a villager and a city dweller, a settled person and a nomad. I consider anyone who incites division among the different components of my fatherland as the greatest enemy of my fatherland and of myself. I will fight him with every means, even if it is against the father who begat me or against my brother.

We do not hate races. All men are creatures of God. We respect the Europeans established among us, as long as they respect us. We shall do them no harm as long as they make no assault on our liberties, on our dignity, and on the riches of our country.

Our fatherland is North Africa. Uniting us with it for eternity are the links of language, of Arabness, and of Islam.

Document 6

Source: Ahmed Ben Bella, military leader of the Algerian National Liberation Front in the 1950's and first prime minister of Algeria, speech, Islamic Council, Switzerland, 1985.

For nearly fourteen centuries the Islamic factor has represented the crucial dilemma and the core of our identity. We are the product of the challenges it has undergone or made others undergo. The relationship with the Christian world, which has often been a relationship of confrontation, has helped shape our history and draw the contours of our world of today. But this relationship is not linear, is not made merely of confrontations. There were also great moments of synthesis, of opening toward the other, of spaces opened for greater comprehension. They coincide, in short, with the great moments of our history. Universal inheritances—like the teachings of Aristotle, of Plato, or of Socrates, for example—were saved from oblivion by the Muslims. It is there that the humanist quest would take on its myriad colors, where the German poet Schiller's "Ode to Joy" has had its deepest echoes.





