ON MODERNITY, ISLAMIC WORLD AND INTERPRETATION OF QURAN

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Abstract

In this article, the historical background constituting sub-periods of modernity and its fundamental characteristics have been dealt with. Then in this period, the general situation of Islamic world the movements took place and their simplications for the interpretation of Quran have been mentioned. Finally, a general assesment is drawn.

Key Words: Quran, interpretation, modernity, Islamic world.

Modernite, İslam Dünyası ve Kur’an Yorumu Üzerine

Özet

Bu makalede, önce modernitenin alt devrelerini oluşturan tarihi arkaplana ve onun temel özelliklerine yer verilmektedir. Ardından, Batıda modernitenin oluşum sürecinde İslam dünyasının genel durumundan, bu dönemde meydana gelen hareketlenmelerden ve bunların Kur’an yorumuna etkilerinden söz edilmektedir. Sonuçta ise, konu ile ilgili genel bir değerlendirme yapılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kur’an, tefsir, modernite, İslam dünyası.

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Introduction

In the historical procedure, the criticisms towards Islam were stemming from a religion, let's say, from Christianity or Judaism. But in modern times, criticisms arise from systems and ideologies which have little to do with the religion. This is, however, a very new situation.

From the 19th century and on the question, to what extent a religion complies with the reason and science has been the most important point in assessment of religion. The factors such as controversy inherent in mediavel church’s history along with such movements as renaissance, reform, enlightenment and rationalism which, to a large extent, come out as a reaction to the institutional church highlights an immense impact on such a change. Although the church’s history has an unimaginable influence on the process and these events take place in the West, they have been influential in Islamic world, as well. In the West all of the religions, just as Christianity, have been taken as unsubstantiated.

On one hand, Muslims, as will be dealt later, think that it is an unfair attitude to generalize and validate such an argument for Islam. And as a consequence, in order to defy these charges and falseness of such accusations, Muslims try hard to prove the compatibility of Islam to reason and science.

It is true that the Islamic world has deeply been influenced by the West for a few hundred years. In due course, in general sense, the West has been actively influential part while the latter’s been vice a versa. Accordingly the developments taken place in the West need to be seriously studied. Since, being eleborate on the this aspect of the matter will go far beyond the scope of this article, we will go through basic arguments and historical background of modernity and then give a few examples for Islamic world and interpretation of Qur'an.

I. Structure of Modernity and its Historical Background

As for modernity, there are those who claim that renaissance and reform movements provide the outset of the historical background of modernity while some others tend to take the 17th century’s scientific and philosophical revolution as a starting point.

In spite of the view that the transformations and novelties in the 17th and 18th centuries paved the way for the infrastructure on which modernity is erected, putting forward these views as independent of each other will hinder understanding or, at least, may result in misunderstanding of the subject.

It can be said that all of the ecoles such as renaissance, reform, enlightenment and positivism have an important part in formation of modernity to a certain extent, and the roots of modernity trace back to renaissance and reform movements, and that all of these ecoles make up the sub-periods of transition to modernity.

The great technological accumulation occurring in the 17th century brought together an economical growth which resulted in an institutional and cultural change opened a new way of life and a sort of organisation which has a worldwide effect. In a sense, many
characteristics of 20th century began to appear distinctively in 17th and 18th centuries. Each of scientific, political, cultural and industrial revolutions has a certain role in the course of transition to modernity.

Despite an intensive discourse and innumerable publications on modernity, founded in Europe and aftermath prevailing almost worldwide, it is still hard to assert that there is an unanimously definition of modernity. Yet, modernity which refers to social lifestyle and organisation, defines the thing emerging after a radical change. Because modernism is a reaction against tradition and modernity includes the view which is different and has different practices from that of old times. The opinion that the modern situation is different from all sorts of pre—modern ones does not only state the difference but it also includes the assumption that it is superior to those pre—modern ones.

In the very essence of all sorts of movements tracing back to 16th century and influential till the 20th century which pave the way for modernity, lies some sort of reaction against the tradition and established religious structure which is a part of tradition. Since the measure for the ‘truth’ is its measurability and experimentability through five senses and with the modernity, it is seen that the God, through Christianity, has been perceived as a ‘humanized’ being and transferred to the reason. In this sense, reason, as a freedom for exerting power, has a strength for salvation in any case.

In reply to such a question that ‘who determines the conditions of truth’, the quest for a metaphysical search is given up and a pure secular structure is adapted. No other field except beyond the reason but only the reason is recognized as the unique guide directing human relations. In other words, the very essence of modernity can be defined as follows: The reason should penetrate and influence all parts of life, and assume itself as the self—appointed and unique authority excluding all others. Because reason is humanity’s common and prenial unique value on which man’s power is based. Therefore it is not surprising that the reason remains the sole measure for recognizing and understanding the existence.

Another remarkable feature of modernity is that it seems as if appreciating pluralism and differences which in fact deny all sorts of differences and puts the subject in the very essence and centre of everything and obviously tries to reestablish all the existence through the principles within itself. To put it in another way, modernism can be identified as modernity, a name for a cruel structure which aims to establish a life style and a world culture striving for melting all the other cultures in its pot. In that sense, modernity legitimizes itself by pointing out the peaks of freedom and gains attractiveness; but on the contrary, it destroys freedom and removes the differences in another form.

Secular structure, too, prevailing in modern times and having modern characteristics, has come forward on a base characterized by not mingling with other elements but melting them within itself.

Viewing modernity’s course of action in west, the birth place, it can be argued that modernity, affecting all of the world somewhat differently, has been influential for religious structures, notably Christianity. In the meantime, Christianity, tends to be an ‘earthly’ religion. Especially, the protestant trend of liberation gives rise to Schleiermacher’s (1768 – 1834) theological liberation which finds its best expression in the formulation of liberal theology’. In accordance with this formulation, metaphysical elements in Christian tradition have been removed or put down to a minimal level in the name of a ‘natural’ religion in which reason and emotions are satisfied2, and all the efforts, in the last analysis, have been put into action for the sake of removing the fog of irrationality falling down on the religion by redefining it.

The Western society has been far away from religion and the tradition formed by religious structure for the last four hundred years3. Modern man has isolated God from all parts of life, rebelled against Him and has esteemed the data from the reason and senses superior to anything. Modernity has changed the relationship between man and nature with the religion. Modernity is based on the idea that man should be free from all of authorities or boundaries and becomes the unique subject of the knowledge. This subject has nothing to do with the trancendental or the sacred one, in other words, it fights these aforesaid.

II. General Situation in the Islamic World and the Quran Interpretation in this Process

Let’s have a look at the Islamic world. By the 16 th century, Islamic world, was still powerful and dominant despite such arguments as being scientifically stagnant. However, by the 17th and 18th centuries, unlike the Western world which was culminating since the 15th century, Islamic world, in addition to ideological stagnation, was continually losing power, as well. Welding together religious and social institutions, Islamic world has undergone a great change as a result of Western’s culminating power and influence. The influence which accounts for a great modification in internal structures of muslim societies, manifested itself in various ways in each part of Islamic world.

The Western world, with the material power provided by the development, tried hard to establish its hegemony on other societies, particularly on the Islamic world. It was not able to exert power immediately but equipped the infrastructure for the process. They made great effort to drag the societies into the political, ideal and commercial system established by the Western world. This process has been resulted in the colonization of the cultural structure of the societies which was shaped free from religious impact4.

Particularly Russians, Netherlanders and the British captured northern and southern parts of Asia and India, certain parts of Islamic world and colonized them. By the 1920s, almost all of the Islamic world, except for Albania, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and the

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Arap Peninsula, were under the European rule\(^5\). Thus, the East, became Europe's the oldest and the richest colonized area. For Europeans, it was a right and a must to impose their system on these underdeveloped (less developed!) countries and they were striving for establishing their order.

The colony rule, whose impacts have been felt till nowadays, caused a turmoil among the pre – modern era institutions of muslim public by shaking the equilibrium and tranquility of people. Thus gave rise to a rapid recession of Muslim world\(^6\). In the meantime, Muslim peoples were under the hegemony of the West while Enlightenment, Positivism and rationalist viewpoint was at the peak.

Political and economical structures shaped free of religious influence and religion, too, was confined to a mere prayer. As an unfavorable case, the situation led Muslim people to be affected by that culminating idea. Nor the reverse was possible. Because the West became an influential cultural centre and a large pact of Muslim people became acquainted with that culture under the Western rule. Moreover, the sovereignty of the West, didn't include the political area only, but did include economics, cultural area and education as well.

In respect of power, almost all the Islamic societies were alike. Those remained independent were not different either, and, they, unavoidably, were influenced by the Western cultural and social structure to a certain degree.

In general, the Muslim world, with a few exceptions such as Azerbaijan and the Middle Asia under the Russian rule, gained its independence after the World War II\(^7\). With the end of colonial era and emerge of many nation states, the Western influence on the Muslim world ant its dependency did not come to an end, since colonialism has still been influential in spite of getting smaller or losing power superficially\(^8\).

In modern times, it should be remembered that the name of the countries taking place in geographic areas where Islamic culture and religion is dominant is 'the third world' or more politely 'developing countries'.

That the co-existence of the rise of the Western impact on the Islamic world in 19th century with the emergence of quest for improvement and change on a comprehensive level and appearance of certain movements in the Islamic world which is of great significance is not a coincidence. But it does not mean that the innovation movement started off with the rise of Europe or affected by Europe\(^9\).


\(^7\) Rustow, I, 674, 696.


Influential figures such as Muhammad b. Abd al-Vahhab (1206/1792), forefather of the Vahhabi movement in Arabia, in subcontinent of India the leading figure Ahmad Faruk Sihrindi (1034/1625), known as Imam Rabbani (1176/1762); Muhammad Ali as-Sanusi (1275/1859) the forerunner of the Sanusi movement, also known as a sufi way in Libya and other significant religious leaders and their movements emerging in the 18th and 19th centuries have so many points and characteristics in common that all of them can be analysed under the same title regardless of minor differences. Common feature of all these movements can be stated as coming out of Islamic essence and trying to find solutions to social corruption, political incapability and economical decline facing Islamic society.

In this respect, it seems that movements shifted put emphasis on social and moral matters, exalted moral and spiritual values, particularly on removing the failures of Islamic society instead of other matters pertaining to hereafter.

Another important characteristic which is common to all of these movements is their strong emphasis on coming back to the very essence of Islam, that is, Qur'an and the Sunnah (the way of the Prophet) and attribute great significance to the (religious) interpretation.

The sum up, as it can be concluded from those mentioned above, reform or improvements inaugurated as a reaction to the internal conditions long before the West's influence. But the Islamic society came face to face the Western sovereignty's challenge which commenced in the 17th century, culminating in the 19th century and being influential especially in 19th century. Bringing forth the question whether Islam can meet the requirements of modern time or not, the challenge appalled Muslims and provoked a crisis among them. In addition, such problems as the relationship between religion and reason, religion and scientific knowledge which had been disputed fiercely in the West and became a part of Islamic agenda, too. Although it can be argued that, these arguments found their best expressions in early periods of Islamic thought, the main difference between the early and the new was that the latter was not a conflict between religion and thought, rather a dispute between religion and the new scientific world view parallel to the West's agenda.

In this period, the reform movements perceived since the 17th, substituted for the activities of classical Islamic modernism, partly continuation of the reform movements influenced by the speed of early improvements Camaladdin al Afghani (1839-1897), the leading representatives of classical Islamic modernism, and symbols of answers to the intellectual, scientific and sociopolitical effect of modernism on Islamic society, put their programme into action with a new content. These scholars has been defined as classical

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Islamic modernism as they give importance to the problems experienced by Islamic world, being regarded as symbol figures stand for mobility, change and difference, in addition, they shed light on all of the next modernist movements in.

The representatives of classical Islamic modernism made great efforts to purify and clear Islam from superstitions which curtail the brilliant face of Islam. They ascribe a particular significance to the interpretation and fiercely objected to the blindly imitation of the tradition\(^\text{13}\). However, it should not be forgot that classical Islamic modernism emerge after the pressure of European colonialism on Islamic world. In the course of time, the effect of the West especially on socio – political field, on the other hand the Western orientalists’ and missionaries’ criticisms concerning Islam and Islamic world promoted the rise of Islamic modernism\(^\text{14}\). In other words, classical Islamic modernism emerged as a reaction to the Western effect pervading and penetrating muslims both individually and socially in all walks of life\(^\text{15}\). The leading scholars of classical Islamic modernism such as Camaladdin al-Afghani (1839-1897), Muhammad Abduh (1845-1905) and Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) each of whom were a symbol of reaction against the modernism’s intellectual, scientific and sociopolitical effects on the Islamic society ran their programmes with a different content in the light of the method started by the previous reform movements. These scholars which can be regarded as the main representatives of classical Islamic modernism put forward various opinions concerning the structure of the West’s thought, the characteristic of modern developments and the way of approach towards them. For these topics were susceptible and slippery, they tried to produce different opinions and various projects.

The problem, however, is whether the main differences between two civilizations will be perceived or not. If the main characteristics of the target culture to be modelled, the failure would be unavoidable.

The most important scholars concerning for deteriorating Islamic situation were Afghani, the first to call for salvation to the Islamic society, and his disciple Abduh; Cevheri who put stress on the scientific interpretation of Qur’an and Ahmad Khan, the vanguard of the modernist construction of sub – continent of India. Their aim was the keeping pace with the developments in the West and suggesting some solutions to the criticisms raised by the Westerns. The main reason of the problem was the relation between the religion and reason and between religion and scientific knowledge.

The common point between these modernists was that there was no room for contradiction between religion and reason. But the way they prove the case and the references on which their proofs based were varied.


\(^{15}\) Umar, p. 93.
What makes the disputes concerning the relationship between the revelation and reason / religion and scientific knowledge in 19th century different from the previous ones was that this case went far beyond the scopes of a religion’s internal problematique and became somewhat questioning the core of the religion itself. The dispute which is toward the entity of the religion didn’t only remain on theoretical level but also prove itself through certain claims

Ernest Renan and such critics paralel to him as Sir William Muir alleged that the socially and economically underdeveloped state observed in the post – mediavel Islamic society stems from the low quality lying in the very substance of Islamic civilization and that, Islam has a low value on the other hand, regarding the discussions took place among theologians and philosophies as conflicts between the reason and the religion, these critics inferred that the religion of Islam is against the reason

In a similar way, Hegel, too, expressed that Islam with all the particularities and dimensions drew from the historical scene.

The opinions as such are not restricted to the critics above only, but are expressions of a prevailing conviction in the West.

Muhammad Abduh and S. Ahmad Khan, the two forerunner representatives of classical Islamic modernism, were the first to dwell on this matter in the Islamic world. The first represents the Middle East wing, one of two great ecoles of the classical Islam, while the latter represents the Indian wing.

Abduh strongly emphasized the importance on the thought to be free of imitation, and put that we have to understand and practices the religion just as the same way as it was understood and practised by the forerunners (salaf) and provide the reason to be superior to all the situations in which the reason is excluded. He also expressed that the reason for the Muslims being in poor condition caused by the faithful weakness and mistaken beliefs

Broadening the scope of the reason as wide as possible and defining it as ‘the brother of religion’ and the ‘friend of religion’ Abduh, considered to interpretate the Quran based on the reason. On the other hand, he painstakingly tried not be oppose with the predecessors, for whom he has a great reverence

Abduh stated that, the modern world's views concerning the religion which were rejected by Islam, are all but fabrications that ascribed to the religion. In addition, these mistaken views should be corrected and people should make effort to see the pure, honest and true side of Islam\textsuperscript{23}. While substantiating the idea of presenting the Islam in its original form, he particularly argued that the Revelation and the reason do not contradict with each other. He stressed that Islam is a way of life, that’s why, it is improbable to think that it limits the reason, on the contrary, it is Islam, the unique religion which insistently calls for enjoying the reason and investigating the natural world around us\textsuperscript{24}.

Abduh, having criticized the traditional religious interpretations, sort out many unnecessary, superstitions, grammatical explanations and knowledge causing the divine message of the Revelation. He was once quoted:

"Almighty God will not question people for what they said and what they understood, but will question us from his own book which guides us to the strait path and the way of the Prophet which is explanatory of the Quran"\textsuperscript{25}.

This quotation is a meaningful and impressive expression demonstrating his approach towards the traditional religious interpretations. In this respect, Abduh, through critical approach towards tradition, tried to scatter the fog falling on the tradition and open a break through to the Islamic thought\textsuperscript{26}. To put it another way, he made a great effort to provide people to face the message of Quran directly and to make people use their reason to produce the highest performance.

In short, Abduh, on one hand, wants to eradicate the mistaken beliefs and cause the religion into its original form, on the other hand tries to answer and invalidates the criticisms from the West. The most important point in those answers is the compatibility of revelation and reason. According to Abduh, one should take the environmental factors into consideration which account for the conflict between reason and the Revelation. Let’s take the circumstances in Egypt in late 19th century, for instance. The Egypt’s being under the British occupation from 1882 to 1952, the existence of European schools by the foreign governments side by side al-Azhar plus the impact of rationalism procedure triggered by renaissance on the Islamic countries brings forth the question as to what kind of reason does contradict or not with the reason.

In this respect, although Abduh disapprove the West and its science and criticizes blindly imitation of the West and the tradition, it is very difficult to assume that he wasn’t influenced by this procedure in his interpretation method\textsuperscript{27}.


\textsuperscript{24} Abduh, Risalat al-Tawhid, s. 8.


\textsuperscript{26} Kerr, Malcolm H., Islamic Reform, University of California Press, 1966, p. 15.

His approach to the miracles poses the most obvious problem in the case of purifying the religion of superstitions. Abduh, accepting the fact that miracles may take place on theoretical level, underlines however the opinion in bold that, the Prophet did not extend miracles to the level as to cancel the reason and made people to believe them blindly but on the contrary with help of miracles the Prophet addressed the reason itself. Otherwise, regarding the miracles to such an extend that putting aside the reasoning and evaluation potential of the intellect can never be compatible with the history nor it can be correct. Thus an approach like that would bring about a conflict with the fundamental structure of the Quran which always addresses to the reason and aims to activate it.

Abduh, asserted that the content of the narration in the Quran need not to be necessarily true. According to Abduh, for example, in the Quran; God’s saying to angel in case of creation of Adam “I will create a caliph on the earth”, then the angels ordered to pray the Adam, devils objection to the order and Adam’s exodus and fall with related statements, are all the illustrations, moreover what is intended is to explain the creation of human being and the power given to him.

Abduh approaches to Qurans’ narration and deal with them in order to describe.

Abduh’s way of approach to Qurans’ narration and consider some of them in a descriptive sense reminds the studies based on the Old Testament on a rational ground and studies aim to clear the book off mythological characteristics.

It should be noted that Abduh’s interpretation of Quran has influenced most of those came forth in the 21st century. In other words, it gave rise to many interpretations with purer, more elaborate and understanding language than that of traditional scholars. He also contributed to the construction of an actual and contemporary interpretation. It is possible to say that most of the latest interpretations has adapted Abduh’s point of view.

An other scientist to be taken into account is the foremost of Indian modernism S. Ahmad Khan.

Ahmad Khan who strived hard to discriminate the basic values of Islam from those added later, preoccupied with the circumstances causing underdeveloped state of the Islamic society and concluded from imitating the tradition blindly, being close to new ideas and scientific developments which resulted in failure to keep pace with the Western standards.

30) Look Bakara, 2/30-38.
31) Abduh – Rıdha, I, 263, 269; Abduh, Risalet al-Tawhid, p. 88 and etc.
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Having a critical approach towards the traditional interpretations Ahmad Khan, asserted that these interpretations dealt with such theological matters as Quran’s relation to the Islamic law and the study of Quran (Kalam) or secondarily matters as the miraculousness or miraculous aspects of Quran. Regarding the Quran’s spirit as the foundation of Islam, Ahmad Khan stressed on severting to Quran and put emphasis on the necessity of Quran’s being the unique guide. In order to put his theories into practice, he inscribed an interpretation characterized by modern and rational structure in Urdu language between 1880-1895. He interpreted Quran till Surah – Kehf but failed to complete.

The main feature of Ahmad Khan, maintaining that Islam is an esteemed religion and compatible with the modern Western standards is restricting the measurement of religious truth to mere norms of reason and refuse everything seems to contradict with the natural rules. In his view, therefore, two main points constituting modernism, are reason and nature.

His approach to miracles is different from that of Abduh. He tries to explain the case of miracle in the light of argument which asserts that there is no discrepancy between the God’s book and man and universe as God’s art. The main point here is reason. Reason leads man to the idea that universe suns through certain laws and not otherwise. This miracle which means violation of universal laws or cancellation cannot take place. In fact, the events prescribed in divine revelation and defined as miracle are not extra ordinary phenomena but just ordinary events which take place in accordance with the universal laws. Thus these phenomena, should be understood and interpreted in accordance with the entirety of Quran and principles of reason. Because ona should seek the measurement of religious truth through natural norms of the reason.

As his starting point is pure reason, it bears no fruit. Consequently, the miracle as a religious perception becomes utterly meaningless.

Ahmad Khan, for instance, on commenting on the 142th verse of Saffat Surah gives a highly different and extreme example of interpretation concerning the swallow of Enoh by the whale. He claims that there isn’t any obvious text in the Quran regarding Enoh's

33) Smith, p. 17; Daabla, p. 29; Zobairi, p. 177-178.
34) Smith, p. 15; al-Bahiy, Muhammad, al-Fikr al-Islami al-Hadis wa Silatu hu bi al-Isi’mar al-Gharbi, Kairo, undated, pp. 34-35.
36) Smith, p. 15; Gibb, p. 58.
37) Ahmad Khan, p. 331; Zobairi, p. 176; Jawed, p. 81-82.
39) Smith, p. 17; Gibb, p. 58; Zobairi, p. 175,178; Daabla, p. 29.
swallow by the whale, since the word ‘ıltakama’ instead of ‘ibtalaa’ is passed in the ayah which means ‘take in mouth’; so one should not be mistaken to interpret it as swallow⁴¹. According to him, there is no room for pecularity in this case⁴².

In a similar way, Abraham the Prophet’s thrown into the fire, Jesus’s birth without father are not extra ordinary phenomena since there is no information about them in Qur’an so it could be mistake to understand these events as mentioned.

As a result of Ahmad Khan’s efforts by decontextualizing and going far beyond the limits of lexical meaning, the aforesaid phenomena becomes only ordinary ones.

Rationalization of the religion, undoubtly, hasn’t started off by ahmad Khan, as Mutazilah school is viewed as a rationalization of religion procedure. But what differentiates Ahmad Khan and his followers from Mutazilah and other rationalist ecoles lies in his understanding of reason and nature. In this respect, the role and value he attaches to reason, bears certain similarities to the Western rationalism formed by the reaction to the mediavel scolasticism, philosophy of Christianity and the church’s pressure on man and his reason.

Ahmad Khan’s basic starting point finds its best expression in identity and convenience of the revelation and natural laws⁴³. According to him the divine revelation corresponds with God’s utterance while nature correspondans with his action. Since their source is same, naturally, a balance and compatibility exists among them. If the utterance contradicts with the action, then, it means that the utterance is not God’s word⁴⁴.

Ahmad Khan’s attitude together with abovementioned arguments urged him to take a defiance position and cause him to build his opinions on this ground. In this opinion, there are those who assume that Quran includes pristine and outmoded perceptions, rude attitudes and order. Thus he put a great effort to rationalize the divine book (Quran) in order to provide those with the truth. But he was mistaken for he didn’t make a distinction between irrational and suprarational which accounts for bringing about structural problems in the perception of the religion.

His efforts to put these views into effect in accordance with the Western rationalism⁴⁵, resulted in merging Islam with certain Western origin views.

While putting such views, one should bear in mind that Ahmad Khan and his followers were obviously influenced by the time and place in which they lived, since at that time, the Western rationalism was enjoying a golden age while muslims were living in the worst period ever seen and that India’s being a British colony for hundred of years which in the last analysis, profoundly affected on the emergence of such views.

⁴¹ Ahmad Khan, p. 329.
⁴² Ahmad Khan, p. 328-329.
⁴³ Ahmad Khan, p. 329; Smith, p. 15,17; Troll, p. 268-270; Daabla, p. 29-30; Jawed, p. 81.
⁴⁴ Ahmad Khan, p. 325; Zobairi, p. 176,178.
⁴⁵ Smith, p. 12; Troll, p. 263; Zobairi, p. 176; In addition look Jawed, p. 82.
In the case of revelation, faith — reason, science relations, Abduh’s goal was to revive the Mutazilah school based on the reason and reformulate it in accordance with the situation. While asserting that there is no dichotomy between the revelation and reason / religion and science, he defined them as having distinct functional areas which accounts for solving the problem causing dualism. Ahmad Khan was not merely influenced by such mediavel scholars as Averroes and Avicenna, but also effected by 19 th Europe and philosophy of nature.

Considering the reason as a basic criticism, Ahmad Khan states that nothing in Quran contradicts with the reason. He seeks reconcile the Quran with the modern world view and alleges that nothing opposed to the reason can take place. According to him, there exists a cause – effect mechanism which justifies the judgement that no extraordinary event may occur. He, as can be inferred from what he put forward, then, rejects the phenomenon of miracle.

Another point to be mentioned is striking similarity between Ahmed Han’s viewpoint that a heavy emphasis on mere Quran rejects and criticizes all of the data belong to the tradition and that of Luther’s criticisms related to Catholic church and takes merely the Old Testament in to the consideration. Consequently, Ahmed Han’s reform movement implies that he was affected by the developments concerning the old Testament, in other words, he implemented the criticisms and approaches regarding to the Christianity.

Conclusion
While dealing with Quran in the last period of the 19th century and early years of 20th century, classical Muslim modernists should evaluate the developments taking place in the west in the last 400 years and muslims facing the Western challenge. So through the method, only will it be clarified whether the problems and solutions put forward based on the Islamic thinking itself or the data presented by the Quran is interpreted or not. The main factor in formation of Classical Islamic Modernism is the West’s scientific and technological development and the challenge posed by the Western civilization. On the other hand, Islamic World is in a rapid recession and tries to defy the challenges. Although it seems that Islamic scholars are unable to react social and psychological thoughts and behaviours, but the arguments they use should be accepted as secondarily factors.

These modernists’ emphasis on the reason raises suspicion since considering Islam as a religion based entirely on reason cause another problem of what the status and value of the Revelation will be. The claim that Islamic truths can be understood by a reasonable approach, will, again, resulted in meaninglessness of the prophethood.

47) Livingston, p. 224.
49) Jawed, p. 81; Troll, p. 270.
While modernist are of great significance in revival of Islamic thought and raising an awareness regarding the deteriorating state of muslims, it should be expressed that their movement was characterised by reaction. Therefore the agenda is defined by the West. As a result, it was indispensably characterized by defensive, emotional and reactive rhetorics.

In brief, it would be unjust to be sceptical about the efforts put forward by those scholars who aim to save muslims and provide a new perspective to Quran and prove the universal truth of Quran to all the humanity. But sometimes they tended to be reactive, emotional, most importantly, were deprived of developing an original programme. But it should be remembered that if those who criticize them at present, would have been raised in same educational circumstances, they would probably act but in similar way. So what falls on us is that, to know the last three or even four hundred-year history of both West and Islam including theoretical discussions, evaluate them through critical thinking, in addition, develop an original programme instead of wasting time in reinterpretation of those imported or to-be-imported aproaches. However, it is not easy to deal with it. But in order to put a humble contribution, one should assume responsibility of this long and weary duty.