Bridging Conservative and Modern Approaches: Muhammad's 'Abduh's Interpretation of al-Fatihah

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Abstract

Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) is a modern Moslem scholar of Egypt. He was known as a reformist and an architect of Islamic modernism. Through his modernism, he introduced a synthesis of Islamic teachings and modern thought in order to bridge between conservative and modern approaches. This present paper is analysis of his tafsīr on al-Fātiḥah to understand his mix approches. The author found that 'Abduh's tafsir applied conservative language to reflect his radical ideas. However, 'Abduh also introduced modern approaches in his tafsīr. Finally, it is found that al-Fātiḥah in 'Abduh tafsir contains the substantial messages of the Qur'an.

Keywords: Muḥammad 'Abduh, Muslim Reformist, Modern Tafsīr, Al-Fātiḥah.

A. Introduction

The science of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*) has an important role in the development of Islamic thought. *Tafsīr* makes the Qur'anic text understandable and relevant since the aim of *tafsīr* is to explain the meaning of the Qur'anic verses, textually and cotextually (*asbāb*

al-nuzūl).[1] The development of *tafsīr* has fostered various disciplines in Islamic studies, and even in natural sciences a couple of centuries afterwards. In the field of Islamic thought, for example, different opinions about the *tafsīr* of certain *āyāt* (verses), has an effect on the emergence of various theological groups, such as Khawārij, Murji'ah, Muta'zilah, Ash'ariyah, Matūridiyah, dan Shi'ah. Some groups treasure *al-ḍalā'il al-naqliyah* (transmitted authoritative scriptural arguments) over *al-ḍalā'il al-'aqliyah* (rational arguments), while others prefer reasons over revelation. For the last category, the Mu'tazilah was known to be particular. This rational view of the Mu'tazilah has influenced many Muslim thinkers of later generations on developing or promoting a new applicable *Tafsīr* that suits the actual needs of the Muslim Ummah.[2] Among them was Muḥammad 'Abduh,[3] one of distinguished Egypt modern thinkers, who considered as the pioneer of Muslim Modernist of the twentieth century.[4]

Muḥammad 'Abduh was known for having a keen interest in many subjects, ranging from politics, economic, education, Islamic thought, to *Tafsīr*. Hence he earned many titles: *al-Ālim* (a reliable religious scholar), a mufti, a patriot, a reformist, a nationalist, the architect of Islamic modernism, etc. In his modernism, 'Abduh introduced a synthesis of Western and Islamic cultural values to fill in the gap between classical understanding and modern knowledge. Due to the penetration of Western culture in most of Muslim countries, 'Abduh persistently encouraged Muslims, particularly his

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[1] Asyraf Hj Ab Rahman et.al, "The Development of Tafsir from the Time of thr Prophet Muhammad Down to Ibn Kthir," *The Social Sciences* 12 (7, 2017): pp. 1185, 1190.

[2] Hourani, Albert, "MUHAMMAD 'ABDUH," In Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 130-60, DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511801990.008. For more detail info about Islamic Reform see Taha Jabir al-Alwani, "Major Features of the Reform of Islamic Thought ang the Islamization of Knowledge," *Islamic Thought: An Approach to Reform*, (London, Washington, International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2006), translated from Arabic by Nancy Roberts, pp. 50-95, stable URL https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvkc67q1.10, DOI: 202.43.95.117 accessed on Thu, 04 March 2021 08:06:41 UTC.

[3] Miftahul Huda, "Mu'tazilahisme dalam Pemikiran Teologi Abduh," *Religia* Volume 14, No. 2, (Oktober 2011), pp. 169-188. DOI:

[4] Maḥmūdul Ḥaq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh: A Study of a Modern Thinker of Egypt* (Calcutta: Institute of Islamic Studies Publication of Aligarrh University, 1970), p. 1.

Egyptian fellows, to accept modern sciences and rationalism and leave *taqlīd* in order to catch up with the western world. He insisted that only by doing so could Muslims free themselves from a sense of inferiority to the West as well as from colonialism. To make his ideas touched various layers of audiences, he actively published his works in journals, magazines, and books. His progressive ideas, unfortunately, were not always welcome. He, for example, experienced accusation of being a follower of the *Mu'tazilah*,[5] those who withdraw, or stand apart, even by his own mentor, al-Afghani.[6]

There are piles of works on Muhammad 'Abduh. Some discuss his reform ideas on education, some are about his political views, some are about his *tafsīr* and his *fiqh,* and some others are about his life story. To a mention a few, *firstly*, Mark Sedwick[7] who writes about 'Abduh biography. His book consists of ten chapters begins with 'Abduh's education in details; followed by 'Abduh introduction to the world of politics where he became acquainted with Afghani's pan-Islamism and Urabi Pasha's freemasonry, 'Abduh exiled to Paris and Beirut, his return to Egypt, his appointment as Mufti, his fatwas on finance and on the Transvaal State—now part of the Republic of South Africa—which caused a lot of criticism, even from the Khedive. This book is concluded by a general presentation on public life, Islam, and views about 'Abduh. *Secondly*, Zaki Badawi[8] who criticizes the views of three major reform leaders of Egypt: Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Rīḍā.

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[5]"Mutazilites, also called *Ahl al-'Adl wa al-Tawḥīd*, in Islam, political or religious neutralist; by the 10th century CE the term had come to refer specifically to an Islamic school of speculative theology (*kalām*) that flourish in Basra and Baghdad (8th-10th century). The name first appears in early Islamic history in the dispute over 'Alī's leadership of the Muslim community (*ummah*) after the murder of the third chaliph, 'Uthmān (656). Those who would neither condemn nor sanction 'Alī or his opponents but took a middle position were termed the Mu'tazilah. See https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mutazilah, accessed 07 March 2021.

[6] Ḥaq, *Ibid*, p.5.

[7] *Makers of the Muslim Worls: Muhammad Abduh*, a series (London: Oneworld Publication, 2016), https://oneworld-publications.com/muhammad-abduh-hb.html, accessed 09 March 2021.

[8] *The Reformer of Egypt: a critique of al-Afghani, 'Abduh and Ridha* (Slough: Open Press, 1976).

Next study is by Ahmad Tolabi Kharlie[9] who analyzes ʿAbduh's and Rīḍā's method of *tafsīr*. Kharlie concludes that either ʿAbduh or Rīḍā were both great Muslim Thinkers, and had a significant impact on *Modern Tafsīr*. Their comments particularly are deep and comprehensive concerning Qur'anic legal verses.s *Lastly*, Nurlaelah Abbas[10] who talks about ʿAbduh's concept of rationalism. In her conclusion, Abbas acknowledges that Abduh's was both a rationalist and reformist. He introduced a moderation in thinking, neither clinging to tradition or *taqlīd*, nor overly follow Western thinking. Abduhs ideas have encouraged the emergence of modern scholars in Egypt and the Arab world. For example, Musṭāfā al-Marāghī, Musṭāfā ʿAbd Rāziq, Tanṭāwī Jauharī, ʿAli Abd al-Rāziq and Rashīd Rīḍā in the field of *Tafsīr*; Farīd Wajdī, Aḥmad Āmin, Qāsim Āmin in the field of Islamic studies. Even reform movements in Indonesia such as al-Irsyad movement by Ahmad Surkati and the Muhammadiyah movement by Ahmad Dahlan, were also influenced by Abduh's reform ideas.

This work is a descriptive analysis of Muḥammad ʿAbduh tafsīr *about al-Fātiḥah*. Henceforth, in the following will be discussed, firstly, about ʿAbduh's biography in brief to provide an overview of the factors that contributed to his being a reformer. These include his family background, the community he lived with, and his education from the early age to the university level. Inevitably this also include his tutors either in academic, movement (ḥarakah) or politics. *Next,* a brief list of his works will be displayed. The following item will give an overview of the development of *tafsīr* and its various methods in order to specify the category of ʿAbduh *tafsīr* deductively. Only after that will be fair to discusse his ideas *about al-Fātiḥah*, verse by verse. *Finally,* this study will be sum up with some concluding remarks.

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[9] "Metode Tafsir Muhammad Abduh dan Muhammad Rasyid Ridha dalam Tafsîr al-Manâr," *Tajdid* [Online], Volume 25 Number 2 (21 August 2018), pp. 119-140, https://doi.org/10.36667/tajdid.v25i2.323, accessed 09 March 2021.

[10] "Muhammad Abduh: Konsep Rasionalisme dalam Islam," *Jurnal Dakwah Tabligh*, volume 15 number 1 (2014), pp. 338-648, https://doi.org/10.24252/jdt.v15i1.338 accessed 09 March 2021.

B. Discussion

A Brief Bioghraphy of Muḥammad 'Abduh

Muḥammad, son of 'Abduh Ḥassān Khayr Allāh[11] and Junainah,[12] was born in 1849 AD (1266 AH)[13] into an Egyptian peasant family of Maḥallat Naṣr, a small village in Gharbiya province of the Nile delta in the period of Muḥammad 'Ali Pasha (1805-1849).

'Abduh had started his education in the age of seven.[14] His father, Ḥassān Khayr Allāh, directly taught him how to read and write. At the same time the young 'Abduh was also sent the house of a ḥāfīz to learned memorizing the Qur'an. He, then, was able to memorize the entire Qur'an in only two years and earned the title of al-qāri' and al- ḥāfīz. The first is an honorific epithet for someone whose ability to recite the Qur'an rightfully and beautifully, and the second is for one who knows or memorizes the Qur'an by heart. This achievement was regarded as unusual for such a young age.[15] 'Abduh also received his elementary religious education from other teachers.[16]

In 1862 his father sent him to a school attached the Aḥmadī Mosque in Tanta, a well-known Qur'anic teaching center next to the Azhar University, the oldest and the greatest Islamic learning center in the Muslim world. Here he was introduced to classical Arabic

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[11] 'Imārah Muḥammad, *Al-Imām Muḥammad 'Abduh: Mujaddid al-Dunyā bi tajdīd al-Dīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1988), p. 24.

[12] Muḥammad 'Abduh, A*l-Iḥtifāl bi Iḥyā' Dhikrā al-Ustādh al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Manār, 1922), p. 22. See also Aswita Taizir, *Muhammad 'Abduh and The Reformation of Islamic Law,* Thesis Master for the Master Degree in the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, Canada, 1994, p. 1.

[13] This is the date most commonly accepted by Islamic historians. C.C. Adams in his *Islam and Modernisme in Egypt* (New York: Russel & Russel, 1968), p. 19, says that neither the birth place nor the date of birth of Muḥammad 'Abduh is exactly known since several dates have been found in different writings about him. See also Ḥaq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh*, p. 1.

[14] Muḥammad, *Al-Imām*, p. 25. Yet Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād mentions 'the age of ten' in his book *Muḥammad 'Abduh* (), p. .

[15] C.C. Adams, "Mohammed Abduh: The Reformer," *Muslim World No. 13* (1929), p. 266.

[16] Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Rāziq, along with his brother 'Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq, who was a student of Muḥammad 'Abduh at al-Azhar University, widely wrote on him and his ideas, and also collaborated with M. Bernard Michel on a French translation on 'Abduh's *Treaties on the Unity of God*. He broadly respects 'Abduh's expertise on the Qur'anic school.

grammar. Having pursued advanced studies until 1864, he eventually decided to leave the school because he disliked the teaching method and its lack of encouragement for advanced studies saying that "I have studied for one and half years but I have learned nothing."[17] The teachers used a barren and uncoordinated teaching method, and required all novice learners to memorize the technical terms of both grammar and jurisprudence—of which he was completely ignorant—without any effort to explain their meaning to those who did not understand. 'Abduh refused to memorized a book when he understood neother the text nor its commentary—such as the commentary of al-Kafrāwī[18] on his *al-Ajrūmiyah*.[19] Despairing of success, he returned to Maḥallat al-Naṣr with the intention of a profession in agriculture and determined never to resume his studies. He was married in 1865, at the age of sixteen.[20]

Since his father compelled him to resume his studies, he went away to Kunayyisat Awrīn,[21] a village in the Shubrakhit district of Buḥayra province, where most his father's relatives from the maternal side lived. Here 'Abduh got in touch with his father's uncle, the Ṣūfī Shaykh Darwīsh Khaḍr, who introduced him into Sufism and the religious sciences. Immediately, the lessons in Sufism influenced 'Abduh's thought and rescued him from his spiritual crisis. This period was the turning point in the life of young 'Abduh.[22]

In the month of October, 1865,[23] Muḥammad 'Abduh, on the advice of Shaykh Khaḍr, went back to the Aḥmadī Mosque to continue his studies.[24] A few months later, in February 1866, 'Abduh took up his studies at Cairo's al-Azhar University until

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[17] 'Abduh, A*l-Iḥtifāl*, p. 19.

[18] Ḥaq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh*, p. 2.

[19] It was a famous medieval treatise on classical Arabic grammar by Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Ajrūmī (d. 1323 AD). All students were required to master it.

[20] Adams, *Islam*, p. 22. See Ḥaq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh*, p. 2; al-'Aqqād, *al-'Abqarī*, p. 80; 'Abduh, *al-Manār*, p. 381; and Taizir, "Muḥammad 'Abduh," p. 3.

[21] 'Uthmān Amīn, *I'lām al-Islām: Muḥammad 'Abduh* (Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Islāmiyyah, August 1944), p. 11.

[22] Ḥaq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh,* p. 2.

[23] Adams, *Islam,* p. 26.

[24] Ḥaq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh*, p. 3.

1877. At al-Azhar University he faced the similar conditions to those at the Aḥmadī Mosque at Ṭanṭa'. He found its educational system rigid and dominated by the obscurantism of 'ulamā' who discouraged every attempt at change or improvement.[25]

Consequently, Muḥammad 'Abduh went through a religious identity crisis. He indulged in stringent Sufi practices, lived a life of austerity and secluded himself from society. Again, in 1871, his uncle Shaiykh Darwīsh, helped him emerge from this crisis, and urged him to make use of his knowledge to guide people to the true path.[26] But it was Jamāluddīn al-Afghānī who helped him end his devotion to Sufism. Under the influence of Afghānī, 'Abduh began to study classical Arabic texts like Ishārāt of Ibn Sīnā. He then discovered the scientific achievements of the Western world. Soon the spirit of reform awakened in him. So in 1876 'Abduh published his first book *Risālāt al-Wāridāt* (*The Mystical Inspiration*), which shows his admiration of Afghānī. This work was followed by several articles on social and political affairs published in the weekly *al-Ahrām*, a newly established journal in Cairo.[27] In the same year, 'Abduh published his second book *Al-'Aqā'id al-'Adūdiyah*. However, this book was criticized by al-Afghani as showing his leaning towards the Mu'tazilah,[28] for which 'Abduh responded saying "Since I've been freed myself from the blind acceptance of the Ash'arite doctrine, how can be blind adherence to the Mu'tazilite creed would satisfy me? I am therefore, interested in finding proof, and not chaining myself to any form of traditional belief."[29]

In the month of Rajāb 1294 AH/1877 AD, after some with difficulties, 'Abduh passed the exam for the degree of '*ālim*.[30] But because most of al-Azhar's shaykhs did not like his liberal ideas, he thus he received a second-class certificate instead of the first one, of which a liberal Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abbās al-Mahdī—

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[25] Haq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh*, p. 3.

[26] 'Abduh, *Iḥtifāl*, p. 18. Also Taizir, "Muḥammad 'Abduh," p. 4 and Haq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh, p.* 3.

[27] Haq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh*, p. 4

[28] Rāziq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh*, p. 68ff.

[29] Haq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh*, p. 5

[30] The degree used in Azhar University at the time, which certified that the student was qualified for a teaching career.

later on the rector of Azhar—felt he deserved. At the age of twenty-eight 'Abduh began to teach at al-Azhar. While lecturing on theology, logic, and ethics, he also held classes on his own and taught *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* of Ibn Miskawayh and a translation of Guizet's *History of the Civilization in Europe and in France*.[31] During this teaching period 'Abduh joined *Kawkab al-Sharq, the Masonic Order of the Eastern Star*, which members reached 300 participants of the Elite Class. This group worked introducing the idea of unity among people engaged in politics.[32]

Toward the end of 1878, 'Abduh was appointed teaching history at *Dār al-Ulūm*,[33] the School of Sciences and Arab at *Madrasat al-Alsūn*.[34] In the meant time 'Abduh also taught the *Muqaddimah* of lbn Khaldun, which had never been offered before[35] and made great efforts to revive students' interest in classical Arabic literature. Unfortunately, 'Abduh's teaching career ended on June 25, 1879 because Tawfīq Pasha, the Khedive of Egypt of that period appointed by France and British government, did not take to his liberal ideas. He then returned to his village Malḥallat al-Naṣr.[36]

However, in 1880 the Prime Minister of Egypt, the liberal Riyāḍ Pasha, appointed 'Abduh as editor of *al-Wāqāi' al-Miṣriyah,* the official journal of Egyptian Events, and later he became the chief editor. 'Abduh used the journal to call for various political, religious, and social reforms, which resulted in educational reforms in 1881.

For some time 'Abduh had been involved with Aḥmad 'Urabī Pasha, the leader of nationalist army officers who resisted the British occupation in Egypt, and got expelled from the country for three years in 1880. 'Abduh stayed in Beirut for a short time before leaving for Algeria, and then again joined al-Afghānī in Paris. In this city 'Abduh and al-Afghānī managed to

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[31] Haq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh*, p. 5.
[32] 'Abduh, *al-Manar* VIII, pp. 401-403.
[33] Haq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh*, p. 5.
[34] Amīn, *I'lām*, p. 35.
[35] Riḍā, *Tārīkh* III, p. 240.
[36] Haq, *Muḥammad 'Abduh*, p. 6.

run the distinguished journal of *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* (*the Firmest Bond*), up the eighteenth edition in 1884. Yet, after another stay in Beirut, where he taught in an Islamic School, 'Abduh returned to Cairo in 1888. He was then appointed a judge in *al-Maḥākim al-Ahlīyya,* the native courts, established to apply the newly codes — and essentially of non-Islamic—law enacted by the Khedive.[37]

In 1895 'Abduh became a member of the newly formed administrative board of the Azhar University. In 1899 he was appointed the Grand Muftī of Egypt as well as member of the Legislative Council, which among other things served as an advisory, quasi-parliamentary body. As a *muftī* 'Abduh was responsible to supervise the religious court system, into which he introduced some reforms in addition to suggest official advices to the government on matters of Islamic law. During the last period of his life, 'Abduh revived the moribund practice of granting opinions to individuals on personal beliefs and practices, and *fatwā*s,[38] religious decisions, which some scholars regarded as controversial.

Muḥammad 'Abduh's Achievement

'Abduh was a very productive witer. He published numerous articles covering a wide range of topics in the official gazette *al-Waqā'i al-Miṣriyah* and journal al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā.[39] Apart from articles, some of his works are printed in books form. Among these books are:

1. *Al-Wāridah*; the first book he wrote when he was a student of Afghanī at the Azhar University. This book discusses *al-Tawḥīd* from the perspective of sufism.
2. *Risālat al-Tawḥīd*, (Treatise *on the Oneness of God*); which is the most welcomed book by various groups, both Muslim and

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[37] Malcom H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā* (Barkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), p. 104.

[38] Kerr, *Islamic Reform,* p. 104.

[39] Kerr, "Muḥammad ʿAbduh," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 01 January 2001), https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammad-Abduh, accessed 28 February 2001.

non-Muslim. This book is a collection of his lecturing materials in Beirut which explains the ability of humans to grasp the meaning of *al-Tawḥīd* through rational argumentation. It also discusses humans freedom of will and the importance of moral attitude embedded in the Muslim personality, rather than just rituals and dogmas (*al-amru bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahyu 'an al-munkar*, promoting the virtues and preventing the vices).

3. Fragments of *Tafsīr al-Manār* (*The Light House*); completed by his disciple, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, after he passed away.
4. *Al-Islām wa al-Naṣrāniyah bain al-'Ilm wa-Madaniyah*; which is a polemic between Islam and Christianity concerning the advancement of science and civilization.
5. *Al-Islām wa al-Dīn al-'Ilmi wa al-Madaniyah*; which discusses the support of Islam for the development of science and civilization.
6. *Buyūtana kamā yajibu 'an takūn* (*Our Homes Are as They Should Be*); is a book of social studies.
7. *Maqāṣid al-'Aqā'id 'inda al-Imām al-Ghazālī* (*The Objectives of the Creeds of Imam Al-Ghazali*); is 'Abduh's review of the teachings of al-Ghazali.
8. *Fī al-Iṣlāḥ al-Fikrī wa al-Tarbawī wa al-Ilāhiyāt* (About Intellectual and Educational Reform and Theology); where he encouraged readers to be courageous in avoiding a blind *taqlīd* (imitation), and to apply a balanced judgment between reason and revelation in various social problems.

The Development of *Tafsīr*

The development of *tafsīr* can be traced to the time of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. During the lifetime of the Prophet, all exegetical problems were easily resolved by asking the Prophet himself, either for clarifications or explanations. In general, it can be concluded that the first Muslim generation or the *Ṣaḥābah* were knowledgeable and reliable in the field of *tafsīr*. They were well-informed about the meaning of the verses textually and contextually (*asbāb al-nuzūl*). Upon the death of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH,

at the time of the *Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn*,[40] the Companions taught others the Qur'an and its *tafsīr*. The Caliphs were, even, *mufassirūn*, themselves.

The next Muslim generation, the *al- Tābi'ūn*, the Successors, the students of the Companions, faced a rather complex situation. New converts from different faiths and cultural backgrounds made it imperative that the *Tabi'ūn* could not only rely on existing knowledge, but also to develop a new discipline, which later known as '*Ulum al-Qur'ān*, the Qur'anic Sciences. This new discipline had a positive impact in developing a new model of Qur'anic interpretation by incorporating it with other trustworthy Islamic legal references such as *Hadīth* (the sayings, the deed, and takrir of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH), *Sunnah* (everything that is attributed to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, i.e his sayings, doings, comfirmations, attitudes, character, and his life journey), *khabar* (reliable report up to the time of the Prophet), *athār* (sayings of the Prophet Companions), *ijtihad al-'ulamā'* (independent judgement of 'ulema), and even the story of *Ahl al-*Kitāb (the People of Book, i.e. Jews and Christian) at the time of later generations, i.e. the *Tābi' al- Tābi'īn* and beyond.

In its early development, *Tafsīr* was not written as a separate work. It was written in conjunction with other Islamic studies, such as the study of Ḥadīth, Islamic history, *Fiqh*, etc. The first works on *Tafsīr* that was been preserved and recorded by history are from the beginning of the fourth century of Islamic callendar (After Hijrah/AH). For example, the work of Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (310 AH), *Jāmi' al-Bayān fi Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, which is better known as *Tafsīr Ṭabarī*. During the early stage of *Tafsīr* development, the most frequently term used for it was *ma'ānī* (lit. meaning). In the third century of Islamic calendar, the term *ta'wīl* (lit. to return to the beginning, to interpret, to elaborate) substituted the first term. After that, this term gradually also replaced by a new term *tafsīr* (lit. explanation, interpretation, commentary). Yet these terms used

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[40] *The Rightly Guided Caliphs* who succeeded in leading the Muslims Ummah after the death of the Prophet, respectively were Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq—the Prophet's close friend and also father-in-law; 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb al-Farūq, father in-law of the Prophet; 'Usmān Ibn 'Affān, son-in-law of the Prophet; and 'Ālī ibn Abī Ṭālib—the Prophet's cousin as well as son-in-law.

interchangeably for a long period up to the fifth century of Islamic calendar. Since then, the term *tafsīr* has been retained as the technical term for Qur'anic exegesis.[41]

Along with the terminological change, the method of conducting *tafsīr* has also developed, which eventually has initiated several models of interpretation. These models can be categorized into four general types: a) *Tafsīr Ijmālī*, b) *Tafsīr Taḥlīlī*, c) *Tafsīr Muqāran*, and d) *Tafsīr Maudū'ī*.

1. *Tafsīr Ijmālī* (global interpretation) is a brief *tafsīr* whith global commentary on Qur'anic verses without any details other than the intended meanings. It is a kind of contextual meaning of the Qur'an itself with a verbatim explanation and sometimes accompanied by a brief description of the *asbāb al-nuzūl* (contextual reason of the revelation) and the hadith of the Prophet. In other words, the *Ijmālī Tafsīr* is just a superficial analysis, and not a sharp and insightful study.[42]

   This type of *tafsīr* is a model of interpretation at the beginning of Islam at the time of the Prophet and his Companions. At that time, no detailed explanation was needed because many of the Companions were well versed in Arabic and knew the *asbāb al-nuzūl.* Therefore to understand a verse did not require a detailed explanation, but it was sufficient with global cues and commentaries.[43]

   After the death of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, the Companions applied three ways of interpretations: *firstly, tafsīr* Qur'an with Qur'an; referring one *āyah*(s) to another *āyah*(s) with additional information(s) concerning certain topics. *Secondly, tafsīr* Qur'an with Hadith of the Prophet; and *thirdly,*

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[41] Ammar Fadhil, "An Analysis of Historical Development of *Tafsīr Mawdūī*", *Jurnal Usuluddin*, Volume 20 (2004), pp. 89-104, https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JUD/article/ download/4212/2059, accessed 16 March 2021.

[42] Tinggal Purwanto, *Pengantar Studi Tafsir al-Qur'an: Sejarah, Metodologi dan Aplikasinya di Bidang Pendidikan*, revised edition, (Yogyakarta: Adab Press, 2013), p. 41.

[43] Mannā' Khalīl al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 7th edition, (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, n.d.), p. 327.

tafsīr Qur'an with *al-Fahm wa al-Ijtihād* (individual reasoning and judgement).[44]

This method was applied, among others, by al-Suyūṭī in his book *al-Jalālain*, and al-Mirghānī in his book *Tāj al-Tafsīr*,[45] and the lates by Muḥammad 'Ali al-Ṣābūnī in his book *Ṣafwat Tafāsīr*.[46] The systematic writing of *Tafsīr Ijmālī* follows the order of the *āyāt* and the *sūrahs* in the Qur'an.

2. *Tafsīr taḥlīlī* (analytical interpretation) is very different from the *Ijmālī Tafsīr*. This type of *tafsīr* analyzes the *āyah* in greater detail from different aspects. It examines vocabulary and pronunciation, the intended meaning, the intended target, the content of the *āyah*, the legal terms can be drew from the *āyah*, and also the correlations between verses in the previous and the following *sūrah*(s) in accordance with individual comprehension and tendency. So this type of interpretation includes the *asbāb al-nuzūl* of the *āyah*, the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, the *riwāyah* of the Companions and their pupils, and individual reasoning or judgement (*al-fahm wa al-ijtihād*).

Tafsīr taḥlīlī can be both in forms of *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* (commentary with trustworthy chain of transmision), and *tafsīr bi al-ra'yi* (rational interpretation). It will be *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* when it accentuates the *riwāyah* (history), be it Hadith, *athār* of the Companions, and the opinions of 'ulema, which then is backing up by the ratio (*al-ra'yi*). Conversely, it will be *tafsīr bi al-ra'yi* if the explanation underlines the ratios, while *riwāyah* serves only to affirm the logical assumption of the interpretation.[47]

Tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr is sometimes referred to as *tafsīr bi al-riwāyah* (narrative interpretation) or *tafsīr bi al-naqli* (traditional interpretation). This method of *tafsīr* bases its commentaries on the verses of the Qur'an itself, the Hadith, and opinions of the

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[44] Jalaluddin al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1987), p.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] Fadhil, "An Analysis," p. 90.

[47] 'Abdul Hayy al-Farmawi, *Metode Tafsir Maudhu'i dan Cara Penerapannya*, translator Rosihon Anwar, (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2002), 26-27.

Companions and the *tābi'īn* (successors or the following generation)*. In short, *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* follows the *Ijmālī Tafsīr* method in maintaining a reliable chain of commentaries of the Qur'an up to the Prophet himself except that it starts from later generations. Many scholars consider this method as the most reliable way in undesrtanding the Qur'an.[48] Examples of this method are *Tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās*, Ṭabarī *Tafsīr Jāmi' al-Bayān fī al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Tafsīr* of Ibn Kathīr *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, , etc.[49]

Tafsīr bi al-ra'yi is sometimes also called *tafsīr bi al-dirāyah* (interpretation with the know-how) or *tafsīr bi al-ma'qūl* (reasonable explanation) which pays more attention to ratio or *ijtihād*. Thus, the basis of this *tafsīr* is the knowlegde of the language of the Qur'an, an understanding of Arabic culture and civilization, an understanding of the language used in communication, regarding Arabic grammar, rhetoric, etymologi, and other knowledges deemed necessary, such as *'Ilm al-Tafsīr*, *'Ilmu al-Ḥadīth*, *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, ect.[50] However, al-Ṣābunī argues that the *tafsīr bi al-ra'yi* based on an adequate knowledge is acceptable. Yet, those are based solely on lust, personal ambition, and refer to a heretical sage, then it is rejected.[51]

Due to its rational inclination, this method of interpretation is often disputed. Some *tafsīr* scholars reject this method, such as al-Qattān, saying that this type of commentary relies on individual understanding[52] which can never be detached from the tendency to certain schools, either in theology, fiqh, politics, philosophy, etc. The examples of this *tafsīr* are *Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib* by al-Rāzī, *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* by Abī Ḥayyān, *al-Kashshāf by al-Zamakhsharī*, etc.

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[48] al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥith*, pp. 338, 340. See also Amroeni Drajat, *'Ulumul Qur'an: Pengantar Ilmu-ilmu al-Qur'an*, (Depok: Penerbit Kencana, 2017), 1st ed., p. 137.

[49] al-Qaṭṭān, *Ibid*, pp. 350-355.

[50] Drajat, *'Ulumul Qur'an*, pp. 148-149.

[51] *Ibid*, p. 150.

[52] *Ibid*, p. 342.

Other than these two types of interpretation, some other types of interpretations can also be categorized as the *taḥlīlī tafsīr*, namely *tafsīr al-ṣūfī* (*Ṣūfī* interpretaion), *tafsīr al-fiqhī* (juristic interpretation), *tafsīr al-falsafī* (philosophical intepretation), *tafsīr al-'ilmī* (scientific interpretation) and *tafsīr al-ijtimā'ī* (sociological interpretation),[53] and *tafsīr al-adabī* (literary interpretation),[54] etc.

3. *Tafsīr Muqāran* (comparative interpretation) can be categorized into three: a) comparing the interpretation of one *mufassir* (commentator) with others; b) comparing the *āyāt* that looks similar or has the same wording but on a different topic, or vice versa, has a different wording but is about the same issue or is suspected to be the same; and c) comparing the seemingly contradictory meanings of the *āyāt* of the Qur'an and the Hadith.[55]

   A *Tafsīr Muqāran* can be categorized as a *mauḍū'ī* as well as *taḥlīlī* when it discusses about one particular topic from different method of *tafsīr* or different *mufassir* point of views before drawing a conclusion which opinion is more favorable.

4. *Tafsīr Maudū'ī* (thematic interpretation) disscuses Qur'anic verses a certain topic at a time in detail. For example, *al-Tibyān fī Aqsām al-Qur'ān* by Ibn al-Qayyim, *Mujāz al-Qur'ān* by Abu 'Ubaidah, *Mufradāt al-Qur'ān* by al-Asfahānī, etc.[56] The *Tafsīr Maudū'* is actually also a form of the *taḥlīlī* since it includes analytical studies.

Muḥammad 'Abduh's *Tafsīr*

In searching for a religious and social doctrine, as a modernist, 'Abduh adopted the view which combined reason and revelation. He found the parallels between the Qur'an and science, and denied any conflict between them. A specific divine command

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[53] Badri Khaeruman, *Sejarah Perkembangan Tafsir Al-Qur'an,* (Bandung: CV. Pustaka Setia, 2004), p. 95.

[54] Moh. Nurhakim, *Metode Studi Islam,* (Malang: Universitas Muhammadiyah, 2004), p. 375.

[55] Purwanto, *Pengantar Studi Tafsir,* p. 68.

[56] al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥith,* p. 334.

may directly pertain to ordinary social life issues, without devaluing the competence of reason. In the same way, reason is capable of reaching certain conclusions regarding the nature of revelation. Revelation prescribes details of inheritance law, but says little about government structure. Thus, reason can discover God's existence and His most important qualities, but it cannot correctly determine the form of worship.[57]

'Abduh did not make use of both *Isrā'iliyat* and weak *ḥadīth* in interpreting an *āyah.* He also did not give the *asbāb al-nuzūl*, the reasons of revelation of the *āyah,* neither did he comment on *al-āyāt al-mutashābihah,* the ambiguous verses. Even despite his admiration for modern sciences, yet 'Abduh did not recommend applying it in interpreting the Qur'an.

In his *tafsīr,* 'Abduh started by discussing the *balāghah* (rhetoric) aspect of the *āyah*, clarifying the *āyah* from literary and semantic point of view. He adopted a social approach to the development of Islamic society, particularly in banking institutions. In his rational approach, he sometimes went against the grain of both traditional *tafsīr* the *ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ*.[58] 'Abduh clearly considered the Qur'an, as a book of religion, as the guide to happiness in this world and the next. The main grain of both traditional *tafsīr* and the 'Abduh clearly considered the point is that the Qur'an as a guide is the origin of Islamic doctrines. He extremely rejected magic and superstition.

Based on his reform ideas, 'Abduh felt it is necessary to reinterpret the Qur'an according to the needs of the modem world. For him the Qur'an must play an important role in elevating society, reforming the *ummah's* condition and bringing forth a modern Islamic civilization. Thus, Islam could be interpreted as the champion of social progress and development.[59] But one needs always to refer back to the original Qur'anic text. 'Abduh was a pioneer in the effort to make the Qur'an

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[57] Kerr, *Islamic,* p. 107.

[58] Issa J. Boullata in the *Modern Exegesis* class (Thursday, 8 January, 1998) at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University.

[59] Muḥammad 'Abduh, "al-A'māl wa Ṭalab al-Majd," *al-Muslimūn wa 'l-Islam*, ed. Ṭāhir Ṭanāḥī, (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Raḥmāniya, 1928), p. 76.

accessible to the growing number of educated people, and to insist that it be read reflected on. In this sense, he initiated the trend of personal interaction with and interpretation of the Qur'an.[60]

'Abduh underlined, along with his reforms ideas, the Qur'anic messages as the basic principle of resurrection of a nation. Its universality and comprehensiveness make it uniquely relevant to all mankind beings. He stressed the following points:

1. The primary purpose of the Qur'an is to affirm *tawḥīd*, i.e. the unity of God and all other subsequent doctrines that affirm His action of revelation, the sending of the prophets, and the reality of resurrection and mankind recompense.
2. The Qur'an cannot be applied partially, because is a complete and comprehensive revelation, which must be applied in its entirety.
3. The Qur'an is the primary source of legislation for a righteous society.
4. Muslims must be authentic and true to their own understanding of the Qur'an; they cannot merely follow the *mufassir* of the past.[61]
5. Muslims should use both reason and reflection in interpreting the Qur'an, since the Qur'an urges mankind to search and think about the revelation as well as to know the laws and the principles that govern the universe. 'Abduh added, "The Qur'an is worthy of being called the book of freedom of thought, of respect for the shaping of the individual through research, knowledge and the use of reason and reflection."[62]

In 'Abduh's view the traditional *tafsīr* did not benefit the *ummah* much, since in most cases it discussed the *i'jāiz* the

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[60] Yvonne Haddad, "Muhammad Abduh: Pioneer of Islamic Reform,' *Pioneers of Islamic Revival,* ed. Ali Rahnema (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1994), p. 46.

[61] Muḥammad 'Abduh, *Mushkilāt Tafsīr al-Fatiḥah*, ed. Rashīd Riḍā (Cairo: al-Manar,1330H), pp. 35-53.

[62] 'Abduh, *Ibid*, p. 73. See also Haddad, *Pioneers*, p. 47.

esoteric meaning of the Qur'an altogether with its grammar. According to 'Abduh these aspects were not pressing. People needed to restore their confidence in faith, where they learned about the efficacy of prayer, moral life, and how to keep away from evil. To fulfill this need, *tafsīr* need to focus on a functional Qur'anic interpretation rather than a convoluted interpretation of an *ayah*. This method would be more fruitful in understanding Islamic legislations, doctrines, ethics, and principles. The *tafsīr* should contain a straight forward meaning of the text to encourage Muslims to follow the divine teachings. *Mufassirūn* must have a sufficient knowledge about the Qur'an, and be dedicated to understanding the true meaning of the Qur'an. To achieve this goal the *mufassirūn* must meet the following qualifications:

1. The *mufassirūn* must have a sufficient knowledge of Qur'anic vocabulary and grammar in order be able to interpret the Qur'an according to the intended contextual meaning at the time of its revelation. Of course, there is always a chance to interpret the vocabulary in according with the actual usage, similar to what the classical *mufassirīn* had done in commenting and interpreting the Qur'an according to the circumstances of the first three centuries of Islamic history.

2. The *mufassirūn* must have an excellent understanding of Arabic development so as to ensure the authenticity of interpretation. Just because Arabic has experienced declined and can no longer be a means of confeying works of art and science as it used to be, the solution is not to turn to the handbooks at the Azhar University, but to return to the works of the great scholars of earlier times when Islam was at the peak of glory. [63]

3. The *mufassirūn* must have a good understanding of mankinds. Since the Qur'an talks extensively about mankind nature, eternal divine laws, and the laws governing the ups and the downs of

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[63] Muḥammad 'Abduh initiated various projects to encourage the reform of Arabic, including the forming of the Society for the Revival of Arabic Sciences, which facilitated the editing of classical rhetoric, Arabic philosophy and linguistics.

nations, a *mufassir* has to be conversant in the Qur'anic teachings.

4. The *mufassirūn* must have proficiency in the context of the prophetic period so that they can understand the Qur'anic condemnation of the Arabs life at that time, concerning unacceptable beliefs and practices.

5. Finally, the *mufassirūn* must acquire knowledge about the life the Prophet.[64]

Therefore, the central goal of Muḥammad 'Abduh's reform project is to return to the Qur'an. In order to utilized the scripture, every individual has to encounter God through the revelation itself or and through the *wali*s. People should replace tradition with a Qur'an-center life and deliberate on the Qur'anic theology. Also, Qur'anic teachings must engage the masses rather than address itself to elite and their concerns. The Islamic *da'wah* should adhere to the verses that insist that there is no compulsion in religion.[65] To foster this understanding of Islam, a new kind of leadership is needed, perhaps who blindly imitate neither the past nor Western ways, and who *ulamā* 'understand the benefits of modem science and the reality of living in the modem world. Such leaders must be able to judge the politician and to emphasize substance over traditional rituals. In other words, they may help regulate the penetration of non-Islamic values, namely the Western people.[66]

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[64] 'Abduh, *Mushkilāt,* pp. 10-13. See also Haddad, *Pioneers*, pp. 47-48.

[65] 'Abduh, *Mushkilāt,* 74. Also Haddad, *Pioneers*. p. 49.

[66] Once a shaykh told 'Abduh that a prominent Christians had converted to Islam, and the Shaykh was teaching the details of ablution. When 'Abduh asked him about what he referring to, the Shaykh said: "for instance I explain the parameters of his face between the two ears widthwise and from the forehead to the chin lengthwise". 'Abduh replied angrily: ' O Shaykh, every mankind being knows his face without the need of a surveyor. Perhaps 'Abduh meant that the essential teachings related to the reason for an act, and not physical parameters. Cited in Haddad, *Pioneers*, p. 62.

Al-Fātiḥah

According to Muḥammad ʿAbduh this *surah is* called both *al-Fātiḥah,* being the opening chapter of the Qur'an, and *Umm al-Kitāb* or *Umm al-Qur'ān,* the summary of the Qur'an.[67] It is sometimes also called *Sabʿ al-Mathānī,* the seven repeated praises, referring to the *āyah* "Indeed We (God) have certaintly sent down to you *seven praises* and the great Qur'an."[68] There is an opinion that it was revealed twice; firstly in Mecca when the command of *ṣalāh* was decreed, and again in Medina when the *Qiblah,* of Islamic *ummah* was changed from *al-Aqṣā* Mosque in Palestine to *al-Ḥarām* Mosque in Mecca. Although the majority of Muslim scholars agree that the *Fātiḥah* is the first *sūrah* revealed in its entirety, yet ʿAbduh was more convinced that it was the first *sūrah* sent down to free all mankindkinds from idolatry regarless of their racial, socio-political, and economic background. He deducted this idea from the verse, "Read by the name of your Lord who created!"[69] ʿAbduh strongly rejected any deduction contrary to the Qur'anic wisdom and Islamic teachings.[70]

It is inferred from the *Fātiḥah* that the Divine rule is established over creation through the enactment of laws, and proceeds from the general to the particular. Divine guidance is like a seed—for the seed grows gradually, and becomes a large and lofty tree with all its branches. Similarly, the *Fātiḥah,* contains what is essential in the message of the Qur'an from which the rest springs. Muḥammad ʿAbduh does not share the opinion that the secret of the Qur'an is in the *Fātiḥah,* that the secret of the *Fātiḥah* is in the *basmalah,* that the secret of the *basmalah* is in the letter *bā',* and that the secret of the letter *bā'* is in its dot. ʿAbduh strongly believed that this saying is not based

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[67] However some says that the *ḥadīth* about it is *maudiʿ; fabricated.* Those who advocate this opinion hold all Qur'anic verses being *al-nāsikh wa al-mansūkh,* the substitution, except *al-Fātiḥah.* They also disagree about how to classify this *sūrah,* whether it is Meccan or Medinan. But they agree that *al-Fātiḥah* must be recited in every *rakaʿah*—bending of the torso from an upright position followed by two prostrations of the *ṣalāh,* Muslim prayer ritual.

[68] Q.S. al-Hijr [15]: 57, وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَٰكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَثَانِي وَٱلْقُرْءَانَ ٱلْعَظِيمَ.

[69] Q.S. al-ʿAlaq [96]: 1, ٱقْرَأْ بِٱسْمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَ.

[70] ʿAbduh, *Mushkilāt,* pp. 25-26.

on anything either the Prophet Muhammad PBUH or the Companions. But that in itself is an absurd claim that leads to the conclusion that the Qur'an negates its own peculiarities.[71]

In his *Mushkilāt*[72] 'Abduh says that the revelation of the Qur'an is for the following reasons:

1. To teach mankinds about *tawhīd,* the oneness of God, since they would be pagans if no one teaches them about *tawhīd,*

2. To explain that every action has consequences, good or bad. For those who obey the teachings of the Qur'an, will be rewarded, while those who disobey will be punished. These rewards and punishments has applied since the life in this world. Whilst the believers are promised to gain victory, tranquility and glory in this world, and enjoy the luxury of heavenly life in the next; the unbelievers are threatened with defeats and restless life in this world, and be thrown into the hellfire in the afterlife.

3. To explain that the core of *'ibādah* (religious observance) is to acknowledge *tawhīd* in the mind and present it in the soul.

4. To leads to the path of happiness in this world and the next.

5. To tells the story of the ancients who were obedient to God and who were disobedient. So that His rules can be applied to those who transgress, or choose *i'tibār wa ikhtiyār*, to take lessons and make choices, to the true path and acknowledge the Divine Rules.

These are the messages of the Qur'an with which mankind will live in happiness and grace here and in the hereafter, and all of which are included in *al-Fātiḥah.* The notion of *tawhīd* is expressed in te verse, "(All) praises are (due) to Allah, the Lord of universe,"[73] which explicitly says that every praise and every eulogy originating from a state of grace, belong to Allah alone. It will not come into reality unless the God, the Owner of all graces, allows it to happen. The *'ibrah* or lessons that the God teaches to humans, such

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[71] 'Abduh, *Mushkilāt,* p. 26.
[72] 'Abduh, *Mushkilāt,* p. 27.
[73] Q.S. *al-Fātiḥah* [1]: 2, ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ, *al-hamdu lillahi rabbi 'l-'ālamīn.*

as growing up and developing, are pointless if they do not consider them to be the actions of the Creator. In the end there is only *Rabb al-'Ālamīn,* the Lord of universe. The word *rabb* (Lord) here contains not only the sense of *al-milk* (possession), but also that of *al-tarbiyah* (education), and *al-inmā'* (development). Man can see this process within himself. For example the change of emotion from distress to joy, from love to detest, etc.[74]

Since *tawḥīd* is the main concept of Islam, no single expression can adequately cover it. So al-Qur'an shows another way of putting it, "*iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn*"[75] (Thee alone we worship and to Thee alone we turn for help). This sentence uproots idolatry and paganism, which spread to all over societies. So those take other than God as protector(s), ascribe to them the imaginary authority, ask them to fill their needs in this world and to bring them closer to God, are both infidels and polytheists.

As a main concept, *tawḥīd* implies several derivative concepts or a universe of meanings, such as *al-wa'd. AI-Wa'd*, the promise (of the God), is implied from the phrase "*al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*,"[76] the Compassionate and the Merciful. The notion of *raḥmah,* mercy, in the beginning of the Qur'an is to show the God promise of reward to those who do good deed. The promise, as one of derivative concepts of *tawḥīd*, is mentioned twice in *al-Fātiḥah*. It is as a form of grace from the God for the righteous.

In the next *āyah* comes, "*māliki yawmi 'l-din,*"[77] the Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. This *āyah* implies the notions of *al-wa'd* and *al-wa'īd*, the promise of reward and the threatening of punishment. Theses meanings are excerpted from the essential meaning of *al-dīn*, religion, i.e. submission and obedience. The *āyah* also implies that on the Day of Judgment all power and might absolutely belong to Allah alone. No one can avoid Allah's provisions, whether he will receive rewards for his good deeds or will receive punishments for his sins on the Day. After all, the whole universe actually follows His decree.

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[74] 'Abduh, *Mushkilāt*, p. 28.
[75] Q.S. *al-Fātiḥah* [1]: 5, إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
[76] Q.S. *al-Fātiḥah* [1]: 3, ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ
[77] Q.S. *al-Fātiḥah* [1]: 4, مَٰلِكِ يَوْمِ ٱلدِّينِ

Therefore, on that day, man has no other choice but to seek His mercy, and fear His punishment. This is the implication of *al-wa'd* and *al-wa'īd*. *Al-dīn* also contains notion of *al-jazā'*, rewards for the righteous and punishment for the sinners. These promises and warnings are followed by a freedom either to follow *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, the true path, or not. So whoever follow the True Path will succeed; and those who do not will go astray.[78]

The notion of *'ibādah*, which is also derived from the verse, is closely related to the next point, the law of *al-mu'āmalah*, social interaction, and *siyāsat al-ummah*, national policy, which are inferred from the coming *āyah* "*ihdinā 'l- ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm.*"[79] This means that God has already prescribed a path for humanbeings; He develops and delimits it. He grants happiness to those who follow His path, and disgraces those who ignore it. Indeed, the inner meaning of *ibādah* is to stand firm in His path. A similar wording is also mentioned in another *sūrah* "I swear by the declining day that perdition should be the lot of men, except for those who have faith and, good deeds, who exhort each other to the truth and fortitude."[80] Having received *tawḥīd*, Muslims should urge each other to follow the true path and to endure; this is considered as the essence of *ibādah* after the *tawḥīd*.

The *Fātiḥah* and its verses inspire the spirit of *'ibādah.* They inspire reflection on it, fear of God and awe before His dignity. They lead to the expectation of His grace, not just through the actions and movements of tongue and body. The *Fātiḥah* mentions *ibādah* before mentioning *ṣālah* and fasting, which means Muslims must first have a zeal of *ibādah* before they are obliged to perform physical rites, or before the command of it *ṣālah* was decreed. For 'Abduh, physical activities or ritual are meaningless if they are not based on the true meaning of *'ibādah,* worship or servitude to Allah. Therefore, for 'Abduh, the essence of *'ibādah* is the combination of reason and revelation.[81]

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[78] 'Abduh, *Mushkilāt,* p. 29

[79] Q.S. *al-Fātiḥah* [1]: 6, ٱهۡدِنَا ٱلصِّرَٰطَ ٱلۡمُسۡتَقِیمَ

[80] Q.S. *al-'Aṣr* [103]: . See also 'Abduh, *Mushkilāt*, pp. 29-30

[81] 'Abduh *Mushkilāt*, p. 30.

The last point is *al-akhbār* and *al-qaṣaṣ*, news and stories (of the people before). This notion is extracted from the *āyah*,, "*ṣirāṭ al-ladhīna an'amya 'alahim*,"[82] the path of those whom You favored. This verse refers to people lived before our time, those to which God prescribed His guidance. He urges Muslims to consider the example and tells His Messenger to follow the former prophets, since they had been guided by God. Indeed, these stories are the best examples as the *āyah* continues, "*ghairi 'l-maghdūbi 'alayhim wa lā 'l-ḍāllīn*," not of those who have evoked (Thy) wrath, neiher of those who have gone astray. The last part of the *āyah* indicates two types of people who did not receive God's favor: those who ignore His path and those who fight and oppose His prophets. They lived in disgrace and in God's anger. The Qur'an relates these stories that Muslims may take guidance in leading their conduct in this world, so as not to go astray.[83]

C. Conclusion

In conclusion, 'Abduh was conservative in his language and manner, but radical in many of his teachings. For a reformer to be too doctrinaire or systematic is not always a virtue. One may admire humanity, tolerance, and conciliatory spirit that prevented 'Abduh from being so.

However, some may say that 'Abduh was also prudent and pragmatic. He avoided sharp breaks with traditional dogmatic formulas. His though elaborated only to the extent demanded by clear and present needs. In this way he made his messages more palatable to the orthodox and established a common ground of discourses between them and the proponent of modern secular education. However, it is not very clear how far 'Abduh departed from the traditions since he did not organize his thought in a systematically logical way. He is more or less likely, nevertheless, to be regarded as a kind of radical. 'Abduh drew his conclusion that the *Fātiḥah* contains the basic principles of the Qur'an. The

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[82] Q.S. *al-Fātiḥah* [1]: 7, صِرَٰطَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ
[83] 'Abduh *Mushkilāt*, pp. 30-31.

revelation of this *sūrah* was similar to that of the Divine Law at the beginning of Creation. That is why it also called *Umm al-Kitāb.* In comparison, we may take the example of the palm seed. Basically, the seed contains what will later become a palm tree. Unlike what some people say, the mother comes first, and then the children.[84]

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[84] 'Abduh, *Mushkilāt*, 31.

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