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**Critical Approach of Mohammad Rashid Rida in
Interpretation of the Quran
Belayet Hossen, Bouhedda Ghalia***

Abstract

This paper discusses the critical approach of Muhammad Rashid Rida in interpretation of the Quran. It also credits Rida as one of the greatest and most famous Islamic scholars of twentieth-century. He is not only renowned in the Muslim world but also in the Western world. His popularity as an early Islamic reformer and renowned scholar has been spread out in both worlds because of his critical approach in interpretation of the Quran and his unique thinking that has kept him alive in the mindset of Muslims around the globe. In addition, in this research paper, the researcher has conducted an intensive study concerning his tafsir Al-Manar where he used critical approach in interpreting some verses of the Quran, which has distinguished him from other interpreters and commentators of Islam. Moreover, this article has explored

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his outstanding ideas and ways by which he has interpreted the Quran and approached some controversial issues with distinctive reasoning while expressing his opinion, he refuted some interpretations of several commentators with strong proof and reasoning power pertinent to some serious issues related to the interpretation of the Quran. Besides, the paper has commemorated his contributions in the field of reformation in many significant sectors which assisted Muslim Ummah (the global Muslim community) in the development of their collective affairs which really were needed to be reformed and revived. To this end, he strived his best to upgrade and reform the Islamic world from all aspects, and tried endlessly to provide proper solution to the existing problems of that time throughout Muslim world.

Key words: Rashid Rida, Critical Approach, Interpretation, Tafsir al-Manar, Contribution.

1. Introduction

The Quran is the best and final collection of all divine books of Allah (s.w.t.) which has been revealed upon the last Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) in the necessity of various types of questions, arguments and guideline for the mankind of this world during the 23 years of Prophethood of Muhammad (s.a.w.) in cooperation of Gabriel (a.s.). Until today a lot of interpreters and commentators interpreted this Quran. The number of this interpreters is such big that no one counted it so far. And no one exactly knows that how many tafsirs have been written up to this time. Lots of Mufassirs (interpreters) have explained this Quran from various dimensions. Someone explained from scientific dimension, someone explained from Sufi perspective, and someone interpreted from social affairs perspective and many more.

However, Mohammad Rashid Rida is one of the renowned Islamic scholars of twenty -century. His interpretation of the Quran is called "Tafsir al-Manar". He was one of the critical interpreters among his contemporaries. Beside the adopting evidences from the Quran and Sunnah; he used his reasoning and wisdom in case of interpretation. In addition, he critically interpreted some issues from unique dimension which no one did till now. He refuted several

interpretations of some Mufassirs who interpreted before him. His approach depicts that he not only depended on other verses of the Quran and Prophetic Hadith but also, he utilized his thinking and ratiocination which differentiated his interpretation from others. He critically analyzed some very crucial issues from unique aspect such Riba, building statues, species of Jinn, taqlid (blind imitation), excesses of Sufism, the stagnation of the ulama, and the resulting failure to achieve progress in science and technology, and Jihad in the modern realities and so on. Moreover, he talked regarding the reality of magic, seeing Satan, miracles of Prophet, committers of major sins and fiqhi matters. Thus, here has been discussed his early life and meeting with Mohammad Abduh and other reformations which he did during his life time. Finally, this research has followed and fulfilled major requirements in case of referencing and translation, and lastly, it has been finished with conclusion and bibliography.

2. The short biography of Muhammad Rashid Rida

2.1. His Birth and Dynasty:

The exact date of his birth is 23 September 1865. The birth place is known by his own speech: "I was born and grown up in a village called Al-Qalamoun on the Mediterranean

coast in Mount Lebanon approximately three miles away from Tripoli, Syria.¹

As for his dynasty, he mentioned that he was from "Al-ashraf", his descendant reached Hossain (r.t.a.), the younger son of Ali (r.t.a.). It is found that once he wrote regarding the Ameer Al-Mo'miniin, Ali (r.t.a.): "Our grandfather is Ali Murtada (a.s.)" and in another place, he mentioned: "Our grandfather is Hossain (a.s.)"². Sometimes, he wrote his name in preference of his books and articles: "Mohammad Rashid Rida Al-Hossaini"³. As he was always very interested in order to match the title with his name "Al-sayyed", as he said: "Al-Sayyed Mohammad Rashid Rida Producer of Al-Manar". And the complete name of Rashid Rida is Al-Sayyed Mohammad Rashid Rida Bin Al-Sayyed Ali Rida Bin Al-Sayyed Mohammad Shamsunddin Bin Al-Sayyed Bahauddin Bin Al-Sayyed Monla Khalifa Al-Baghdadi.

Shakib Arsalan said regarding the immigration of Rashid Rida's family to Al-Qalamoun, he mentioned that the

¹ Rashid Rida, Mohammad, *Al-Manar wa Al-Alajhar*, published 1353 Hijri, p.133.

² Mazallat al-Manar, al-Muzallad 13, p.132, wa al-Muzallad 15, p.78.

³ Shakib Arsalan, *Al-Irtisaamaat al-Lataaf*, 1350 Hijri, and *Mazallat al-Manar*, al-Muzallad-1, p.8, wa Muzallad-12, p.15.

descendant of Rashid Rida reached the strain of Holy Prophet and they were from "Al-Ashraf al-Hossaineen", their origin was from Hijaj and immigrated to Iraq and settled at An-Najaf then displaced from Iraq to Syria where they stayed in a village called Al-Qalamoun, on the coast of sea near to Tripoli, Syria. The person who firstly accepted the settlement in Al-Qalamoun, he was Monla Ali Khalifa Al-Baghdadi.¹ Whatever the case investigation ratio of Rashid Rida is not important to us in our study that it is important to note here that Rashid Rida's keenness to confirm the rate to the house of prophecy many of his writing even in his interpretation of the Quran.

3. Critical Approach of Rashid Rida in Interpretation of the Quran

3.1. **His Production in Tafsir** When we follow what Shaik Rashid Rida has written in interpretation of the Quran from the critical point of view, we must find that he was the most productive of madrasah of Shaikh Mohammad Abduh in interpretation of the Quran; and the tafsir what he has written was named "Tafsir Al-Quran Al-Hakim wa Al-Mashur bi Tafsir Al-Manar". He started from the beginning of the

¹ Shakib Arsalan, *Sayyed Rashid Rid*, Published 1356 Hijri, P.809-811

Quran and finished here: *“My Lord, You have given me some authority, and taught me some interpretation of events. Initiator of the heavens and the earth; You are my Protector in this life and in the Hereafter. Receive my soul in submission, and unite me with the righteous”* (12:101). After this he had died before completing the whole tafsir. This interpretation was printed in 12 volumes and the 12th volume was finished here: *“Yet I do not claim to be innocent. The soul commands evil, except those on whom my Lord has mercy. Truly my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful”*, (12:53). And later the Ustaz Al-Bitar has completed interpretation of sura Yusuf, and the interpretation of this sura was printed fully in the name of Shaikh Mohammad Rashid Rida.

The Ustaz Bitar interpreted from the short suras such as: Sura Al-kausar, sura al-kafiruun, sura al-ikhlas, sura al-falaq and sura an-nas. We do not find any production of his interpretation except these. It is to produce a fair amount. There the image of teacher was reflected mixed in student's interpretation. The sources are the same sources, the objective is the same objective, the methodology is the same methodology and the thoughts are the same thoughts. There

is no difference between both except a little bit.

3.2. His sources in interpretation

As for the sources of his interpretation are that he used to take assistance from other verses when he used to interpret any verse of the Quran. When many verses of the same meaning would come to him, he used to interpret in the way that seemed to him the accurate interpretation based on the narrations from the Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) and the trace that followed the saif solihin from companions of Prophet, their disciples, and he adopted the styles of Arabic language and he described the existing laws of Allah among His creations in the universe. And after that he used to utilize his independent and reasoning without imitating interpretation of other Mufasssirun except the opinions which pleased him and the opinions of his Shaikh especially. Some students of Rashid Rida stated regarding him to us that he did not used to repeat what he has written in tafsir except after writing of his understanding in the verse fearing the influence of sayings of other Mufasssirun upon himself. When Allah (s.w.t.) gave him any outstanding perception in interpretation of the Quran which did not approach him before or he did not know aforetime except he has got after his writing then he used to describe to his brothers who were around him with huge gratefulness to

Allah. And sometimes he used to describe to his family being overjoyed and pleased.

3.3. His goal of interpretation

As for goal of his tafsir is the exact what his teacher Mohammad Abduh intended. When Al-ustaz al-Imam used to explain that the goal of tafsir is "It is understanding of the writer where it is religion leads the mankind to their peace and tranquility in their worldly and hereafter life". Indeed, our company clarifies like this in many places of his tafsir. He said that after condemnation came to him from those who interpreted the Quran from the rules of sciences, matters of arts, fabricated hadiths, Israeli myths and narrations which deviate people from the guidance of the Quran, he said: "*Verily, the necessity of mankind has become severe towards a particular interpretation which is regarded as the first care where guidance is available from the guidance of the Quran based on the verses which really resemble and discuss matters of people contextually from the direction of characteristics, cause of the revelation from warning, glad tidings, guidance, and reformation*".¹

He wished that his interpretation would contribute to this ground to fulfill the necessity of people according to time and space. In another place, he said: "Indeed, our goal of

¹ Tafsirul Manar, (1/17).

interpretation is to describe meaning of the Quran and ways of getting guidance from it in this period"¹.

3.4. His methodology in interpretation As for the methodology of his tafsir is exact what the al-Ustaz al-Imam followed. He did not keep himself seized into the comments of Mufasssirun, nor he did verdict regarding Aqedah (Creed, faith) in the text of the Quran, nor he dipped himself into the Israeli narrations and myths, nor he clarified the vague in some places of the Quran, nor he came with fabricated hadiths, nor he gathered materials for detective's arts, nor he returned to the terminologies of sciences using the text of the Quran. Rather he explained in very excellent manner. And discovered the meanings by using easier, acceptable words, and illustrated problems of the Quran, and defended them where doubts are prevailed and he described guidance for them, and indicated to the mighty guidance, and stopped of a rule enacted, and medicated social diseases with effective treatment, and narrated laws of Allah among his creations on this earth and universe.

¹ Tafsirul Manar (1/10).

But we find Rashid Rida-may Allah be pleased with him-moved from this methodology in some cases, and this happened after the demise of his Shaikh- Mohammad Abduh. And his independence of work he discussed with us, he said: "And when I have achieved independence of work after his demise, I opposed his methodology to expansion with regard to authentic hadiths whether it in case of its interpretation or its legislation, and in explanation of some vocabularies, or linguistic sentences, and contentious issues among the scholars, and in case of increase of evidences of verses from different suras, and in some digression to bring issues where the necessity of Muslims became severe to get solution of that issues, which affirms the guidance of their religion in this time. Or he strengthens their evidence in dispute from Kuffar and innovators, or in solution of some problems which needed to be settled by which heart becomes relaxed and where soul will get easement".¹

However, it is manifested to us that this expansion what was from Shaikh Rashid Rida especially in social issues. He did not pay attention to these social issues but payed only because of being a journalist which related to his magazine which interconnected with the disputes and walks of people regarding their contentious issues. And there were people

¹ Tafsirul Manar, (1/16).

from religious, atheist, kafir and he wanted to live with all by his writing consequently, faith of religious people would be more strong towards their religion, and atheist would come back to the religion from his atheism and discover the beauty of Islam; hopefully kafir would reach his right destination and return from his denial.¹

3.5.His views in interpretation

As for his views in tafsir are like his Ustaz Mohammad Abduh, based on mass freedom in view and great esteem in understanding, strong confidence regarding knowledge what he had, non-compliance to the views of Ulama; that is why, we find his unique thoughts in interpretation of the Quran where he interpreted independently and in other some places he imitated his Shaikh.

3.6.His view on the committers of the major sins

For example, when He says in chapter 12, verse no: 275: **"and those who transgressed, they are the residents of Hellfire, they will abide therein forever"**. We find him opposing Ahle Sunnah wa al-Jama'at. He confirms that the person who reached the same position of eating riba (usury) and killing someone innocent person in free will, if he dies without repenting from it he will remain in Hellfire forever,

¹ Hossain al- Jahabi, Al-tafsir wa al-mufasssirun -2, p.509.

and he will never get out from it. After that he said: And the person who returned to what he used to eat after being haram (prohibited), they are far from the advice and preaching of their Lord, which does not prevent them except what harms their individuals or group, they are residents of Hellfire who associated with prohibitions of Allah as the company associates with another company, they will abide therein forever.

3.7. His usage of metaphor and simile

Likewise, we find that the owner of Al-Manar withdrawn some Quranic words from the usage of their literal meaning rather used as metaphor and simile. It seems that he imitated the trace of his Shaikh that he followed in his interpretation, and he imitated the trace of Jamakhshari, Mu'tazila and others who used metaphor and simile in order to flee from real meaning of the Quran. For example, chapter no:4, verse no:47, the Almighty Allah says: "*O you who were given the Book! Believe in what We sent down, confirming what you have, before we obliterate faces and turn them inside out, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers. The commandment of God is always done*". We see that here the intended meaning is "Believe in what We sent down confirming what you have before We obliterate faces of your intention what you planed in conspiracy against Islam,

and We will return it in insulting and losing condition to your back making Islam victorious against you, and what you have brought in the name of religion, and the knowledge that the Prophets came with, and they had position, knowledge, and power during the period of revelation of verses. This is we do not interpret by it to make effaced and refuted in your back. Then he narrated some sayings of the Mufasssirun in this verse, afterwards, he explained what he chose that is the opinion of his Shaikh to what he intended in his study"¹.

3.8. His opinion regarding magic

After that the writer of tafsir al Manar, does not consider the magic except like the example of camouflage and deceiver, and it does not has reality, as the Ahle Sunnah says, and he agrees with the saying of his Shaikh and the saying of Mu'tazila aforetime; and that is why, we see him when he interprets the verse of Sura Al- an'am: "*Had We sent down upon you a book on paper, and they had touched it with their hands, those who disbelieve would have said, "This is nothing but plain magic"*". We find him saying: "The verse indicates that the magic is tricked and void, imaginary

¹ Rashid Rida, Tafsir al-Manar-5, p, 145,146.

description, in reality it has not basement”¹.

3.9. His view on two kinds of Satan

Here we see that Rashid Rida critically approached in case of defining the Satan and Jinn. This speech means that he has utilized his rationale to find out the Characteristics and power of Satan over human being which other interpreters sometimes escaped or ignored it. But here we see him exceptional from others. He thinks that the Satan is Jinn, it does not have the authority over human being except seduction. And he said: “All the claims of some of the quacks from the dominion of Satan, or kings of Jinn over some people, and their power over their benefits and harms, it is untrue and trick from Satan from human being alone”².

3.10. His opinion on Jinn

In case of seeing Jinn by human being, Rashid Rida refused the claims of those who claimed that they saw Jinn. Here he critically explained why for mankind seeing Jinn is not possible. As he sees that the Jinn is never visible by human being in any case, it is likely the claimer who claims visible of jinn; it is nothing but conjecture and imagination, there is no reality of it, or he perhaps saw any giant animal like

¹ Tafsir al Manar 7, p. 311.

² Look up the tafsir al- sura al falaq, p.129-134.

some monkeys, later he thought that he saw jinn¹. He said that this then displays in the (margin) to mention talk from Abu Horira (may Allah be pleased with him); those who stolen charity and informed the Prophet he was Satan- and it is in Bukhari. And there are some hadiths without this which indicate that human being sees Jinn, then he says after finishing the narrative of the novels “and the true thing is that it is not available in this narrations all, authentic hadith”². Rather, we find him increasing that which is legal to be one kind of microbes of diseases from Jinn, and that is why he said when he was interpreting the verse, chapter number:2, verse no: 275: “*Those who swallow usury will not rise, except as someone driven mad by Satan’s touch.....*”. “and the commentators say: “indeed, the Jinn is an alive hidden object, you will not see it, we have said in the Manar not once: Indeed, it will be absolute to say that the alive hidden objects that is known in this modern time by magnifying glasses and it is called microbes, it will be authentic to say that it is one kind of Jinn, and it has been proven that it is liable for many diseases”³.

3.11. His opinion on miracles of the Prophet

In terms of the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.),

¹ Tafsir al manar 7, p.516.

² Ibid.

³ Tafsir al- Manar-3, p,96.

he critically denied some of them which are not confirmed by authentic hadiths and verses of the Quran. Along with this he used his reasoning why certain miracles are not true. Muhammad Hossain Al-Jahabi said:

“We find the owner of Al-Manar following a far school of thought in case of the miracles of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), he acknowledges that there is no miracle of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) except the Quran, and he denies some cosmic miracles, he interpreted the verses that have been sent down supporting the splitting of moon and he denies the authenticity of hadiths that have been described supporting the splitting the moon and the proofs that have been acceded from some cosmic verses. These are for the respect of Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w) from his Lord. In his opinion, it is not be half on miracles, or proofs on the claim of his prophethood. He brings this verse as the evidence: “Nothing prevents us from sending miraculous signs, except that the ancients called them lies. We gave thamoood the she-camel, a visible sign, but they mistreated her. We do not send the signs except to instill reverence” (17:59). And another narration like this saying of Prophet Mohammad-peace be upon him- narrated by Abu Huraira-may Allah be pleased with him: Every Prophet from the Prophets was given similar thing upon which mankind believed in, but

what have been given me by revelation or the Almighty revealed upon me, so it is hoped that I will have the most followers at the Day of judgement¹.

3.12. His opinion on matters of Fiqh

Rashid Rida critically discussed the matters of Fiqh too. It is clearly noticed that he attacked on majority Fuqaha in case of getting water for Musafir and his tyammum where Rashid was disagreed with their opinions showing his logics. Similarly, we find the owner of Al-Manar gives himself mass freedom in deriving laws from the Quran which made him opposing majority of Fuqaha, and he found them dull in the way that they followed. If anybody wants the example, he should return to what he wrote in interpretation of this verse, chapter number-2, verse number: 180: “It is decreed for you: when death approaches one of you, and he leaves wealth, to make a testament in favor of the parents and the relatives, fairly and correctly-a duty upon the righteous”. After this, he will soon find Rashid Rida that he did not pay concentration to the matter on which majority of Ulama of Ahle Sunnah decreed that this verse has been abrogated regardless of being abrogator the verse of inheritance or hadith (**There is no**

¹ Muhammad Hossain Al-Jahabi, Al-tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun, Darul Hadith, Qahira, 2005, p.514.

commandment for the inheritor) that Imam Shafi supported its narration to be Motawatir. Rashid Rida claims that the wasiah (commandment) for parents and near relatives is still legal, it has not been abrogated. As he refuted all evidences of majority Ulama, and I will not detail here what he said in this matter. It is enough for you that he finished the research in this issue and said: "and the summary of speech: the verse has not been abrogated by the verse of inheritance; because the verse does not oppose this verse. Rather, it supports it. There is no proof available that this verse has been sent down after the verse of inheritance, nor any hadith because it is not appropriate to be abrogated any verse from the Quran. Rather, the verse is Muhqamah and its order is remaining.

In another example, he admitted that the musafir (traveler), tyammum is legal for him although water is nearby him. There is no reason that prevents him from using water except the condition- he is a Musafir. And he opposed majority of Fuqaha by this issue. And attacked them because of their following the way that they have followed for this issue that tyammum is not legal for a Musafir when water is available¹.

¹ Hossain Al-Jahabi, al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun-2, p.516.

3.13. **His attack on some of the commentators of the Quran:** Indeed, the owner of Al-Manar kept track of previous interpreters, especially, Al-Fakhruddin Al-Raji is one of them, with the harsh speech in many times.¹ Beside this, he criticized those Mufasssirun who cited the fabricated hadiths and Israeli narrations without judging the authenticity, and criticized the Shia and Mu'tazila who misunderstood Islam and went astray from the true teaching of Islam and adopted the unauthentic ideas whose basement is fragile and unexcepted in the main creed of Islam.

3.14. **His attack on innovation and myths**

From his intellectual attacks, those interpreters could not escape themselves who brought many innovations and deviated narrations in tafsir. Rashid Rida constructively criticized them. And proved their fragile position in case of their evidences which they adopted in interpretation of the Quran. Muhammad Hossain Al-Jahabi explained: As he had many digression in case of finding out innovations in Muslims, and discovering its frauds and guidance for its treatment with the stresses and the arbitrariness of it in some

¹Tafsir al-Manar

cases¹.

3.15. His explanation on vague of the Quran that have come in Torah and Gospel

Similarly, the owner of Al-Manar severely criticized the interpreters who brought Israeli narrations in their tafsir, and accepted description for the book of Allah, and he was also engaged in like this acts aforetime, and took explanation for the book of Allah, and he hugely copied many information and histories by which he interpreted some significant matters of the Quran or refuted with it sayings of commentators, and he was a very expert interpreter and extremely opposed those who took side of Israeli narrations, and he forbid copping from the books of Ahle Kitab, especially, he admitted his fault that imitated the path of distortion and changes². That is how he did not tolerate them who took assistance from the Israeli narrations and their fabricated histories which are not compatible with the creed of Islam and Muslims. In this field, Muslims can accept those narrations and histories of Israel which are match-able and do not disagree with the creed of Islam, and which assist explicitly to elaborate the verses of the Quran. In addition to this, this opinion also was endorsed by

¹ Hossain al Jahabi, Al-tafsir wa al-mufasssirun-2, p.517.

² Ibid.

Prophet Muhammad himself- peace be upon him, and he indicated his companions to accept but not by imitating blindly! This is because the Judaism and Christianity also were the religion of Allah but after the demise of the Prophets they distorted the divine books and replaced their own words and started claiming that these were also the words of God which Allah extremely denied and prepared the painful punishment of Hellfire for them!

3.16. His defending Islam

And finally, the Shaikh defended Islam and the Quran, and discovered the doubts and problems, and in this case, he used his mouth and pen through his magazine and tafsir, and these characteristics made this man admirable, and we will never forget his bold and critical approach which brought him to a unique place where other interpreters could not have reached¹.

Thus, we find Muhammad Rashid Rida fighting against those who came to disprove the unauthenticity of the Quran. He not only used authentic hadiths and other narrations and evidences but also, he used reasoning whenever he did not get any authentic evidences from the Quran, Hadith as well as other sources of Islam. He reflected his independent thinking by which it is proven that beside the using

¹ Muhammad Hossain Al-Jahabi, Al-tafsir wa Al-Mufasssirun, p.517.

evidences from the original sources of Islam he also utilized his free thinking by whose reason he is an unique interpreter among all others!

4. **Beginning of Tafsir Al-Manar and its background:**

Rashid Rida mentioned that he suggested his Shaikh before publishing Mazallat Al-Manar (Manar Magazine) to interpret or deliver speech naming a tafsir where he will discuss the spirit of the principles of "Al-'urwah al-'usqah" but Shaikh Abduh delayed to do that. Then Rashid Rida published Al-Manar Magazine in inspiration of Mohammad Abduh to call for the Islamic reformation. After that he returned and exposes idea of interpretation of the Quran and he delivered lectures at Al-Ajhar University and that was regarding his Shaikh Mohammad Abduh and there happened a debate between Rashid Rida and Mohammad Abduh in this case. He did not detach from his Ustaz even he satisfied him in study in interpretation in Al-Ajhar, and he also became convinced to it and started delivering speech in the beginning of Al-Muharram 1317 Hijra. And Shaikh Mohammad Abduh remained constant in lectures of interpretation at Al-Ajhar until middle Muharram 1323 Hijra where he reached the verse of sura al-Nisa, the Almighty Allah says: **"To God belongs what is in heavens**

and what is on earth, and God encompasses everything".

Rashid mentioned that he used to write during the delivering speech of Mohammad Abduh which were very significant and he increased in it in his pastime. After this he suggested for some studies of Al-Manar in Egypt and in other and published in Al-Manar Magazine and he answered to the questions of his students.

And after the demise of Mohammad Abduh, Rashid noticed that the responsibility of making complete the Tafsir upon him, and later he continued in his ways and methodology and he did not shorten in publishing in Al-Manar Magazine. Rather, he published separately in many volumes and named as Tafsir al-Manar for publishing in pages of Al-Manar Magazine.

Rashid Rida followed a special method, then he discussed reasons for revelation in the beginning of sura and indicated contexts between sura and revelation without any increase or decrease. After that he brought a summary which contains speeches regarding creeds and Islamic provisions then he continued interpretation of sura verse by verse.

And there are some affairs which Rashid Rida distinguished from others in his interpretation and the important sides are discussed here shortly.

1. Payed concentration to the care of interpretation by the incoming hadiths from the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) and related archeological narrations which are related to the verse or the sura. Rashid Rida has contributed to it in expansion of having knowledge from hadiths and narrations and criticized their narrators even it became a proof in the Prophetic hadiths.
2. He used to pay concentration to the important introductions of sura, as he mentioned short summary for every sura which contains benefits of each sura, grammar and Islamic provisions¹.
3. He concentrated to the social and natural sciences and indicated to these in the suitable places in tafsir.
4. He mentioned the controversial issues and preferred some sayings upon others.
5. He concentrated and expanded in the refutation of doubts which instigated to the enemies of Islam from atheists, orientalist and ignorant people who invited Islam.
6. Rashid Rida imitated some sayings of the Mufassirun in affairs which needed to be imitated.

¹ Abdullah Mahmoud Shahatah, *Manhaj al Imam Muhammad Abduh fi al tafsir al Quran*, p.223. 1385 Hijra.

7. He warned his Shaikh Muhammad Abduh in some mistakes in his interpretation with complete politeness. For example, in sura Fatiha, Muhammad Abduh mentioned the characteristics of mercy is inevitably upon the Almighty Allah
8. Rashid Rida was not flexible on the position on which his Shaikh Mohammad Abduh followed in interpretation by the reason and opinion in many places.
9. Rashid Rida has been distinguished in his interpretation because of elongation, redundancy and verbosity while his Shaikh tended to the centralization and brevity.
10. He expanded some issues in explanation of some strange words' meanings and concentrated to the rhetorical aspects, indicated to grammatical aspects and brought the literary proofs and evidences which are related to the subject.

5. **Rashid Rida's Critical Approach in Reformation of Politics:**

Like other aspects of Islam Rashid Rida concentrated to the

reformation of Islamic politics. He did not want politics making separate from Islam. Rather, he wanted both as one phenomenon. That is why, he is found very proactive in Islamic politics and he also wrote a separate book on Islamic politics. Rashid Rida is considered to be one of the few dynamic Islamic scholars of modern age whose role and domain expanded reformatory activities in the political field. Even though Rashid Rida used to think that politics is the teased dissension and source of defaming and lying we see him busy with Islamic Arabic politics at his early time. Jomier explained saying this: "When politics and Islam were together or one thing, Rashid was rational with himself in the political field"¹. Before entering the modern age about the strives of Rashid Rida in this field, we should indicate to the two important matters:

Firstly, the researcher observes a plain conflict within political view of Rashid Rida because of a quick political change in his period. We see that Rashid Rida led his activities against the Sultan Abdul Hamid the 2nd and assisted association of the unity and promotion, and later he opposed its rules and regulations, and then we see him busy with Sharif Hossain Malik of Hijaj warmly, after this, he opposed him also and ran along to Al-Saud and remained

¹ Jomier, Op, cit, PP. 41,42.

faithful to them until his death¹.

Lastly, the political view of Rashid Rida excels from his errorless personality, and he sees that in Islam there is a legislative and political outstanding although Muslim nation has been engaged into justice and prosperity². He walked with rapidness of politics according to his political view. Therefore, he walked with specific political direction or specific political personality like Association of Union and Progress and for example, Sharif Hossain. Then it has been clear to him the deviated direction of this political personality from true Islamic theory, then he returned to other and thus. Through the following matters, the political view of Rashid became manifested.

6. Rashid Rida and Ottoman Empire:

Rashid used to observe that the Ottoman Empire is facing its many internal and external political errors, he wished if there were any broad field of providing consultations and advices by which Ottoman empire should be corrected and later he intended to publish his reformatory thoughts³. But there was no freedom to publish this, he was banned to publish his opinions which are against the Caliphate, then

¹ Solah Uddin al-Munzad and Yousuf Khuri, *Fatawa al-Imam Mohammad Rashid Rida*, Vo-1, p.22.

² Rashid Rida, *al-wahy al-Muhammadi*, p.211, 1380 Hijra.

³ Mazallat al-Manar-1, p.13.

Rashid Rida migrated to Egypt in 1315 Hijra and there he published Al-Manar Magazine to spread his advices and reformatory thoughts.

From the things, which afflicted Rashid from the politics of Ottoman Empire was the behavior of Shaikh Mohammad Abi al-Huda Al-Siyedi, he was a close Sufi person to the Sultan Abdul Hamid and beside this, he had heavy religious authority, in addition to this, he was an imitator of Rifaya Tariqa, and he used to dislike Jamal Uddin al-Afghani and cursed him. That is why, there was no a good relationship with Rashid especially after writing his book "Al-Hikmah Al-Sharia fi Mohakamah Al-Qadiriya wa Al-Rifa'yyiah" refuting the books of Abu Al-Huda Al-Siyedi regarding Sufism¹.

Therefore, Al-Manar Magazine has been prohibited by Ottoman Empire from entering its all provinces before fulfilling its half year of publication, and it was accomplished by the indication of Sultanate. Even, if the presence of Al-Manar Magazine was available in any person he would have been punished by Sultanate.

7. Rashid Rida and King Abdul Aziz Al-Saud:

It is obviously true that the relation between Rashid and

¹ Rashid Rida, al-Manar wa al-Ajhar, p.189.

King Abdul Aziz Al-Saud and Suadi state was more strong than leaders of Arabic and Islamic world during his period. The important thing that distinguishes this relation it was a continuous lasting relationship where there has been no change in its different stages, it has been established on mutual respect between two personalities.

8. Rashid Rida and European Colonization:

Rashid Rida lived such an era when weakness and motionless prevailed upon the Muslims and their state, Ottoman Empire. Then the colonial states started to attack on it from all sides and snapped in possessions and increased their weakness and stagnant even Ottoman Empire was defeated in the first world war which divided its possessions within Arabic countries. Rashid lived in a contemporary world when he noticed all these sufferings by own eyes then indeed he became the reformist Muslim scholar which brought to him remarkable attitude with the colonizers. And when Rashid established Al-Manar Magazine in Egypt, the most important objectives were to defend creed of Islam and Muslim states from the conspiracies of their enemies against their controversies. That is why we find him attacking hardly on the British colonizers who collaborated Christian missionaries in

engagement efforts in evangelize of Muslims¹.

9. Critical Approach in Reformation of Al-Ajhar University:

In 970 A.D, it was the period when Al-Ajhar University was established during the regime of Fatimids in Egypt, and the main purpose of the establishing of this university is to preach the ideology of Shia Rafidiyyah throughout the Islamic world since its inception.

1171 A.D, Al-Sultan al-Islami al-Mujahid "Salah Uddin Al-Ayubi raided on Fatimids and on their Da'wa activities in Egypt, then entered Al-Ajhar for this in possession of Sunnis². And the way of earning knowledge in Al-Ajhar was on freedom.

The student was vested to a teacher and there was no any specific methodology or period fixed by teacher. Rather, when any student used to finish learning from one Shaikh, he used to go to another Shaikh, and it is a way resembles to a big portion of the organizing teaching system of modern universities in our time from the policy of achieving knowledge, policy was based on freedom of teaching and personal responsibility, for this reason many distinguished scholars have been produced on this methodology in

¹ Mazallat al-Manar-33,p.234.

² Rashid Rida, *Al-Manar wa al-Ajhar*, p.6,7.

different Islamic and Arabic sciences. Later, the university started to be declined and stagnant because of the following reasons:

1. The system of teaching has become stagnant and motionless which its Shaikhs followed, and this happened due to preferring the books of Muta-akhireen (late comers) on the books of earlier imams. And the books of late comers included footnotes, then these footnotes were explained and later the report of footnotes also was explained similarly. Therefore, the stagnation of the student and his Sheikhs became analysis of these explanations, footnotes and reports, and student started spending many years in Al-Ajhar without learning pure speaking or writing there.
2. The Al-Ajhar University neglected important sciences which is the center of Islamic studies and these are sciences of Hadiths and its terminologies.
3. The Al-Ajhar University lost its position in society, it did not play any role in the field of politics, social and other reformations.
4. The European colonizers entered Egypt and along with different sciences and arts also entered there. Al-Ajhar was left far from being benefited from

these sciences by which Islamic society could be lead towards the development of knowledge staying in the circle of Islam.

5. The Al-Ajhar University had not any big role in society in order to create inspiration to the people and against its enemies-European colonizers who looted the wealth of Muslim countries and distorted respect of Islam¹.
6. There was expansion of many types of innovations, myths, imitations and distorted habits which were so far from the spirit of Islam and its teachings that destroyed the creeds and characters and good deeds, and there was scattered of cheating and fabrication among the Muslims which led them towards the outrageous, filthy and evils, especially innovation of birth day celebration of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) and worshiping of graves. Against these evil deeds, the Al-Ajhar University its scholars did not stand with any role in opposition. Rather, some Sheiks of this university attended there, and other some scholars were silent from preventing and opposing such activities. All these disadvantages made the

¹ Abdul Mut'al al -Sa'edy, *Al-Mujaddidun fi al-Islam*, p.521, 1st edition, and Ahmad Amin, *Jua'ma' al-Islah fi al-'Asre al-Hadith*, p.310.

reformation process of the university from significant necessities at that period after losing the decent position for long time which lasted around two centuries.

And there have come out some scholars demanding the reformation of Al-Ajhar University and Mohammad Abduh and Jamal Uddin Alafghani were in the frontline of this que¹.

In 1897, Rashid Rida migrated to Egypt and in the first meeting between Rashid and Mohammad Abduh, there happened discussions between them regarding many reforming issues, the most important of the issues was the reformation of Al-Ajhar University². In this case, Al-Manar Magazine played the prime role in the leadership of Sheik Muhammad Abduh and became a strong supporter and assistant for it³.

Similarly, the stance of Mohammad Rashid Rida was very determined in front of indulgence of Ulama of Ajhar in spread of innovations, myths in society, rather most of them used to attend there, and the examples of these are celebration of birth day of

¹ Ghaji al-Tubah, *Al-fiqri al-Mu'aser al-Islami*, p.12.
² Rashid Rida, *Tarikhul Ustaz al-Imam*, Vo.1,p.325.
³ Mazallat al-Manar, vo.1, p.822-826.

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), paying respect to graves and desiring blessing from its residents, and their engagement in various types of shirks. And he wrote many articles in his magazine al-Manar¹.

10. Conclusion

Muhammad Rashid Rida was somewhat different from other interpreters of the Quran. This is because he not only depended on the verses of the Quran and the authentic hadiths but also, he approached the Quran critically, he used his reasoning power. He tried his best to remove the stagnant and backwardness of the Muslim world extracting solution from the book of Allah (s.w.t.). He tried his best to restore Islamic Caliphate system and he tried his best to bring unity among the Muslim Ummah. Furthermore, he worked for bringing Shia community into the main fold of Islam removing misunderstanding from Shia and Sunni. He never wanted that Muslim Ummah should remain undeveloped in education and other sectors. In order to develop the education system, he spent endless efforts so that Muslim world get back prosperity and richness in all aspects like the western world. All these strives he did only for the welfare of Ummah interpreting the Quran from the

¹ Ibid.

critical approach. So, it is suggested that the role of Muhammad Rashid Rida should be known by the Muslim youths so that they can have inspiration from his activities which he did to revive the Islamic nation. And it is hoped that Muslim world will get back its lost glorious history and civilization which ruled the world for around one thousand years. That is why, all Muslims should come forward in this regard.

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