

## THE LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF SHEIKH MUHAMMAD ABDO, THE CREATOR OF ARAB-MUSLIM THOUGHT OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of writing this article is a holistic study of the life and scientific work of the Islamic reformer and modernist Sheikh Muhammad Abdo. To substantiate the thesis that Muhammad Abdo's modernism is a synthesis of Islam and modern thought. The socio-philosophical works of the thinker were aimed at uniting civilizations and overcoming contradictions and conflicts. To show that Muhammad Abdo's activities were multifaceted, he especially clearly showed his talent in the educational sphere, in reforming the system of higher religious education and journalism.

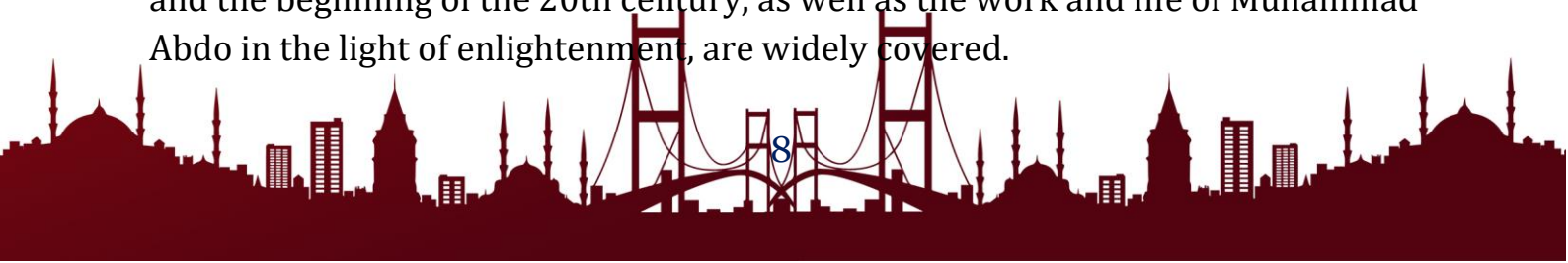
Keywords: Islamic reformism, Islamic modernism, "Risalat at-tawhid", "Al-Urwa al-wusqa", al-Azhar, Muslims and Christians, the Qur'an, logic, rhetoric, monotheism, pedagogy.

### INTRODUCTION

After gaining independence, Uzbekistan established economic and cultural relations with all the countries of the world, the Far East, India, Pakistan, Arab countries, Iran, Turkey and other countries on the basis of mutual friendship and beneficial cooperation, and this relations are developing more and more. Interest in the culture, spirituality, and socio-philosophical thinking of the peoples of the East is undoubtedly growing. The reason for this is that due to the common history of the peoples of the Arab East and Central Asia, there is a closeness and harmony in their philosophical, religious-ethical and spiritual heritage.

Sh. M. Mirziyoyev, in his speech at the ceremony dedicated to the 32nd anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan, noted: we will raise beneficial cooperation relations to a new level."

In this article, the flow of the Arab Enlightenment, which took a place in the socio-philosophical thinking of the Arab peoples at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, as well as the work and life of Muhammad Abdo in the light of enlightenment, are widely covered.



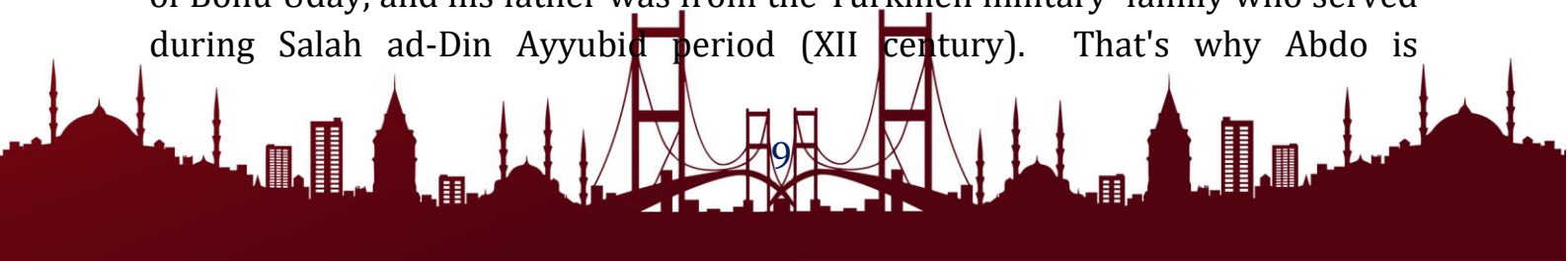
## LITERATURE REVIEW

Many works of Western and Eastern philosophers, historians, orientalists are devoted to the life and work of M. Abdo. The most famous of them are the studies of Zugfried Hunz, Charles Adams, Mahmoud Abbas al-Akkad, Rashid Rida, Shawki Zaif, Muhammad Ammar, Ahmad Amin, Mustafa Labib and others. In particular, although Mahmoud Abbas al-Akkad analyzed the life and work of M. Abdo, little attention was paid to the thinker's reformist ideas in his work. The famous researcher Rashid Rida said in his three-volume work "Ta'rih al-ustad al-imam ash-shaikh Muhammad Abdo" ("The biography of Muhammad Abdo"): "Abdo is considered a source of philosophical thought in Egypt." The first volume of this work, which describes the detailed history of the life of Muhammad Abdo and Jamaluddin Afghani, is of particular interest within the framework of the specified topic. The largest research work on Muhammad Abdo can be considered as "al-Amal-ul-komilati li-l-imam Muhammad Abdo" ("The complete biography of Muhammad Abdo"), this work belongs to the pen of M. Ammar. Osmanmin devoted his research entitled "Renaissance in Egypt" to M. Abdo's life as the founder of his school. Muhammad Abdo and his school, the history of Muslim philosophy. M. T. Stepanyants and L. R. devoted small editions to this reformer. Polonskaya. B.S. Omondulloyev tried to systematically study the main stages of M. Abdo's life and creative activity. Some aspects of this problem were considered by E. J. Babayeva.

The above studies served as a methodological basis for determining the main stages of M. Abdo's life and the formation of his religious and philosophical views. An analysis of Muhammad Abdo's life activity and his religious-philosophical heritage was carried out. In the process of analyzing this article, logicity, historicity, consistency and objectivity, and philosophical hermeneutic methods of scientific knowledge were widely used.

## DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Muhammad Abdo ibn Hasan Khairullah was born in 1849 in the village of Mahalla Nasr, near the city of Damanhour, Bukhara province, Egypt. He is known as an Egyptian Islamic jurist, religious scholar and liberal reformer, one of the main founders of Islamic modernism, and the Grand Mufti of Egypt. One of the early medieval Islamic Mu'tazili scholars, sometimes seen as an exponent of the neo-Mu'tazilism movement. According to some accounts, Abdo was a Freemason and had close ties to the Baha'i faith. His mother was from the tribe of Bonu Uday, and his father was from the Turkmen military family who served during Salah ad-Din Ayyubid period (XII century). That's why Abdo is

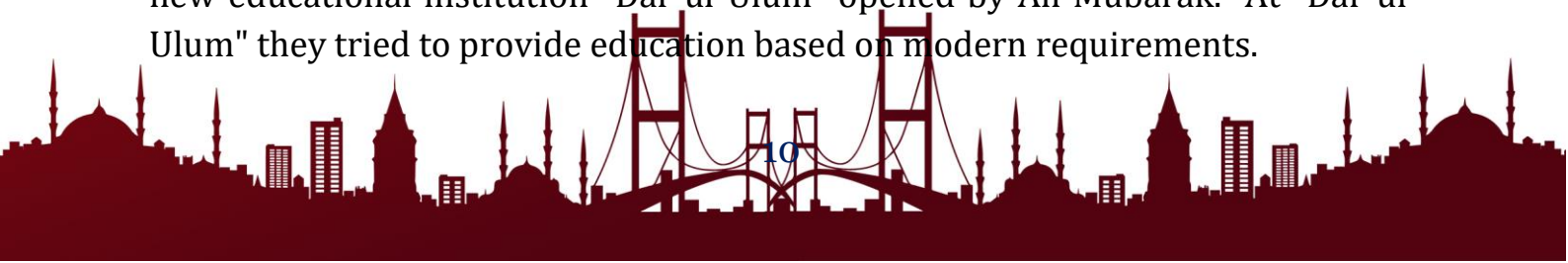


sometimes called "al-Turkamani". His parents were self-sufficient farmers. He did not attend primary school, but studied at home. Then his father sent him to the Sufi Said Badawi College near the Ahmadiyya Mosque. Before that, Abdo had completed the entire Qur'an. Abdo dropped out after a year because the college curriculum consisted only of memorizing the text of the Qur'an and its commentary. Even his father's strong disapproval cannot stop him.

Sufi shaykh Shauqi Darvish Khidr Muhammad Abdo had a special place in his life. When Shauqi Darvish went to Tripolitania on business in his youth, he joined the ash-Shaziliya sect. The conversations of Shauqi Darvish, who was given to Sufism, about religion, took place in the heart of the young Muhammad, and he fell into a spiritual frenzy, became obsessed with Sufism, and lived as a dervish in a Sufi dress. Sheikh Darvish himself, who is far from fanaticism, helps to bring him back to life, proves the importance of reading and explains the shortcomings in the development of Islamic jurisprudence to the best of his knowledge. Muhammad Abdo later recalled: "I found a teacher in the person of the sheikh, he guided me and gave me advice so that I could achieve what my heart desires... He freed me from the shackles of ignorance and directed me to the open field of knowledge, showing the way to spiritual union with God, freed from blind imitation" . Having come out of a mental crisis, Muhammad Abdo returned to college with the advice of the sheikh and continued to diligently study Islamic sciences. Soon after that, he himself became a sheikh to his friends and students.

In 1865, he graduated from the Ahmadiyya College and entered the famous al-Azhar University. Although Al-Azhar was famous, its curriculum was limited to fiqh, hadith, tafsir, Arabic, and public speaking. Because mathematics, geography, biology, chemistry and other subjects were not included, education was not fully meeting the requirements of the time. Muhammad Abdo was not satisfied with the religious education system at Al-Azhar. Later, he wrote: "Studying Arabic books in the Al-Azhar style damaged my mind. I tried to clear my mind for several years, but I never succeeded."

Abdo studied at Al-Azhar for 12 years and received a doctorate in Islamic theology and law in 1877. But without worldly knowledge, he felt ignorant. He always remembered Darvish's words that a real scientist should be literate in all aspects. From 1877, Abdo taught logic and belief at Al-Azhar, the history of Arabic language and literature at the "School of Languages", and history at the new educational institution "Dar ul-Ulum" opened by Ali Mubarak. At "Dar ul-Ulum" they tried to provide education based on modern requirements.



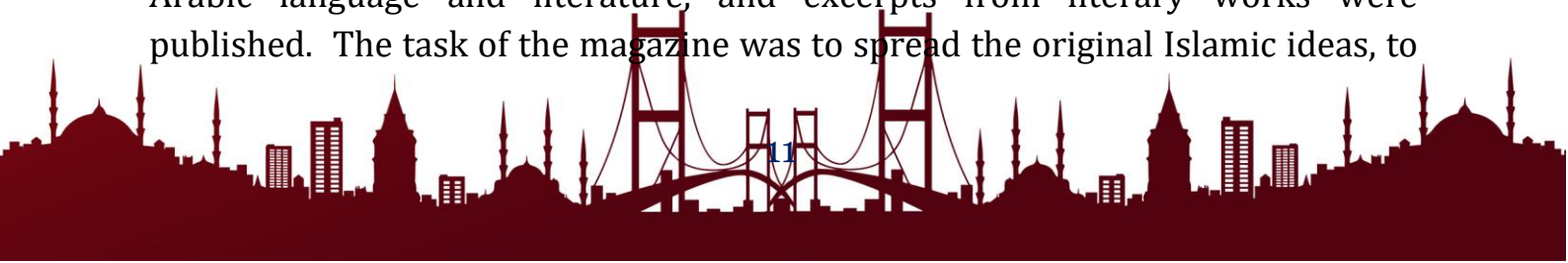
When giving a lecture on Ibn Khaldun's work "Introduction", he tries to connect the thinker's philosophical and sociological views with the times. At that time, Abdo met Hasan Tawil, a mathematician, philosopher and theologian, who also understood politics well. The lectures of Sheikh Tawil, who is courageous and fearlessly speaks the truth to the face of the ruler, imbued with the ideas of restoring the Muslim culture, were distinguished by their depth of thought. These things penetrated into Abdo's heart and mind and encouraged his spirited nature to pursue intellectual pursuits. It was in this mood that he met Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani.

While teaching at al-Azhar, Abdo wrote articles for the Egyptian periodical press, mostly al-Ahram. Riyad Pasha led the government in Egypt when Taufiq was the ruler. He founded the newspaper "Al-waqai al-misriy" ("Events of Egypt"), which was the herald of his intentions to implement the reform. He handed over the post of editor-in-chief to Muhammad Abdo, and he turned the ordinary newspaper into a real herald of social reform and the call of Islam.

Abdo plunges into scientific and pedagogical creativity. He teaches monotheism, logic, rhetoric, history and law in several mosques in Beirut, then in the "as-Sultaniya" school, and reforms the curriculum. His articles are published in the Beirut newspaper "Samarat al-Funun" ("Fruits of Science").

In 1889, Abdo returned to Egypt, which fell under British control. The scholar further acknowledges the importance of reforming Islamic institutions such as al-Azhar University, the Ministry of Endowments, and Sharia courts. He sends his reform project to Lord Cromer, the Governor-General, who is the actual ruler of Egypt. Sheikh Muhammad Abdo intended to become the rector of Dar ul-Ulum. But the British and the Hadid had different plans. He was appointed as a judge of the people's court in Bankh, az-Zakazik, and then in Abidin. In 1895, he became a consultant of the appeals court. He paid special attention to reforms at al-Azhar, increasing student scholarships, improving their lives, using modern teaching methods, and including secular sciences in the educational program.

Muhammad Abdo took an active part in "al-Ahram", "al-Muqtataf" and other newspapers with his articles. In 1898, he founded the magazine "Al-Manar" ("Lighthouse") with the intention of spreading ideas in the spirit of Islamic reformism. His close student, the Lebanese lawyer Rashid Rida (1865-1935), was appointed editor. In the pages of "Al-Manar" issues of theology and Sharia were covered in the spirit of Islamic reformism, articles on the history of Arabs, Arabic language and literature, and excerpts from literary works were published. The task of the magazine was to spread the original Islamic ideas, to



prove its compatibility with modern scientific and social thinking, to educate Muslims in the spirit of religious tolerance, and to spread enlightenment among the masses.

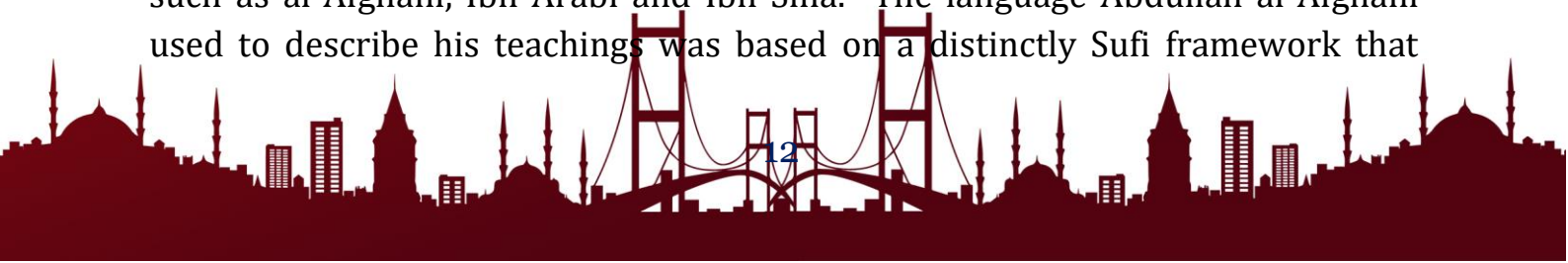
In 1889, Muhammad Abdo was appointed Mufti of Egypt, in the same year he became a member of the Egyptian Legislative Council and held these positions until the end of his life. Muhammad Abdo agreed with the British, gave up the political struggle, and decided to implement his own reforms.

During his interest in Sufism (1874), Muhammad Abdo wrote the work "Risalat al-Waridat" ("Treatise on Mystical Inspiration"), in which he described the teachings of the famous Sufism theorist Muhyiddin al-Arabi. At that time, the teachings of Sufism, with its spiritual aspect, requirements for achieving spiritual perfection, having inner faith, and a critical view of official fanaticism, captivated Muhammad Abdoni. He later renounced this teaching. His desire to interpret the Qur'an in a rationalist spirit was expressed in the five-volume authoritative Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Hakim. The author could not finish this interpretation, it was continued by his student Rashid Rida.

Abdo's other major work, Risalat al-Tawhid (Treatise on Monotheism), was published in 1897. It describes the religious and philosophical views of the thinker. This work was compiled from the lectures delivered in 1885 at the al-Sultaniya madrasa. Its text was recorded by his brother Hammuda Bey Abdo. In 1908, the second edition of Risalat al-Tawhid was published with additions and corrections by Rashid Rida. The work was published in French in 1925 and in English in 1966. The English edition is called The Theology of Unite .

During his scientific and pedagogical activities, he published the works "Tafsirs on the course of rhetoric" and "Badi az-Zamon al-Hamadani". His articles were published in "Al-urwa al-vusqa", "Al-Ahram", "Al-Muqtataf" newspapers, "al-Manar" magazine and other publications. Most of these works were devoted to religious reformation, socio-political and philosophical issues. Abdo's legacy consists of about 30 works, many of which have been lost .

Abduh was sympathetic to Sufism and al-Ghazali cosmology, despite strongly condemning excessive veneration of saints. He explained the philosophical and esoteric Sufi traditions of Islam in the treatise "Risalat al-voridat fi Sirr at-Tajalliyat" ("Treatise on Sufi Inspirations from the Secrets of Revelation"), which expressed the philosophical and mystical teachings of his teacher Jamal. Religion embodies the spiritual ideas of medieval Sufi saints and philosophers such as al-Afghani, Ibn Arabi and Ibn Sina. The language Abdullah al-Afghani used to describe his teachings was based on a distinctly Sufi framework that



represented Ishraqi philosophy. The treatise considered the issues of substantiating philosophical arguments for the existence and nature of God, the development of Sufi cosmology, and the development of rationalist concepts of prophecy. 'Abduh followed the cosmological doctrine of "Wahdat ul-Wujud" developed by Sufi Islamic philosophers, according to which God and his creation are co-existent and co-eternal . Abduh defended the teachings of Sufi philosopher and saint Ibn Arabi, Suhrawardi and others, "Wahdat ul-Wujud" and wrote:

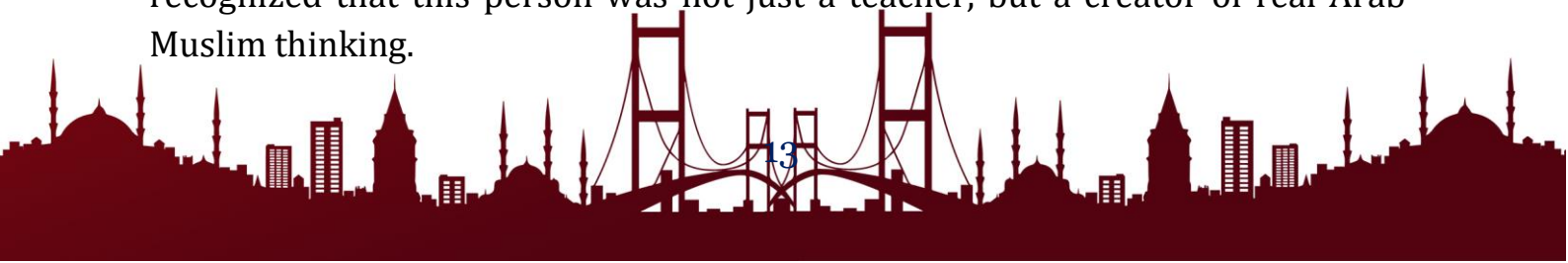
... we believe: There is no existence and quality other than His existence. It exists and nothing else exists. The first commanders of the believers (al-umaro'ul-awwalun), may Allah be pleased with them, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, said: "You have never seen Allah in front of you, behind you and inside you. You don't feel anything. "

One of the researchers of Muhammad Abdo's legacy, the great scientist Usman Amin published the work "Imam Muhammad Abdo, the creator of Egyptian thought" ("Raid al-misriy al-imam Muhammad Abdo") in Cairo in 1955. In it, the author analyzed Abdo's religious-philosophical, socio-political views, quoted excerpts from his works that Muslims were suffering from ignorance of their religion and the tyranny of unjust rulers. Abdo died of renal cell carcinoma on July 11, 1905 in Alexandria.

## CONCLUSION

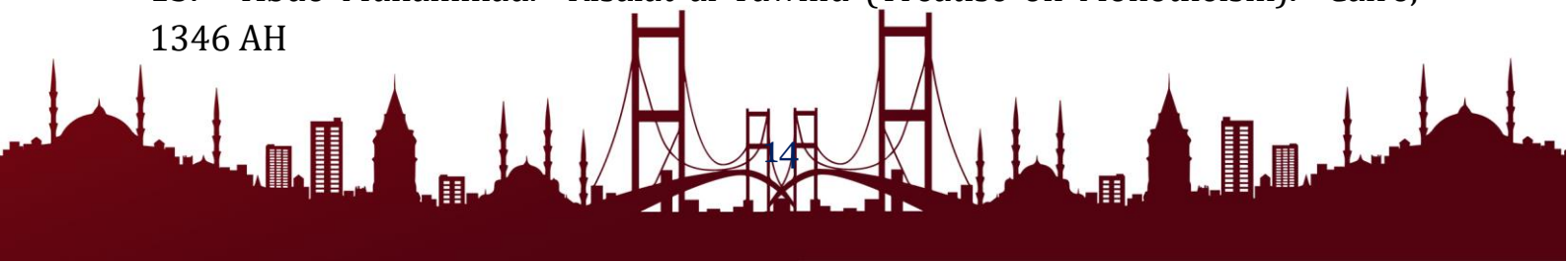
Today, the analysis of the philosophical views of Eastern philosophers is one of the urgent issues. At the same time, the importance of analyzing Muhammad Abdo's philosophical views and conveying them to the younger generation is endless.

As a conclusion to this article, I say that Muhammad Abdo, an Islamic reformer and Arab modernist, was considered a person who had an important influence on our society, culture, religion and life in general, not only in the 20th century, but also in the current 19th century. I think that it is not wrong to take Muhammad Abdo's religious-philosophical ideas as our basis even today. As mentioned in this article, rationalism, modernism, reformism, enlightenment views occupied the main place in the thinker's ideas. In this regard, I believe that all the points made about Muhammad Abdo are clear and correct. Through this Islamic scholar and his mature works, we can witness that our people were attracted to independence and enlightenment in their lives. It should be recognized that this person was not just a teacher, but a creator of real Arab-Muslim thinking.



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