CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

PREAMBLE:

Indeed, human history has never experienced such a pervasive interest in the
Until now, history has never come across such a splendid civilization whose legal
legitimacy is exclusively based on a single spiritual and legislative source other
than Islamic civilization. The latter indeed reached great heights of excellence
while its intellectual, cultural, scientific, political, economic and legislative
legitimacy was derived solely from the holy Qur‘ān. However, in spite of the
differences in the scholarly fields of disciplines and besides the incongruity of
intellectual and cultural backgrounds along with their ensuing implications on
“how to view” the holy Qur‘ān, the movement of interpretation and understanding
the holy book of Allah has been from its early prime time, bound by clear and
invariable legal criteria of exegesis. Therefore, every eligible scholar who wants
to undertake the interpretation of the holy book must recognize these criteria, at
least, at the theoretical level. These criteria have been summarized by al-Zarkashi
in the following four points:

1. To admit all the authentic Prophetic sayings (‘Aḥādīth) related to the
Qur‘ānic exegesis.

2. To admit the legal legitimacy of the Prophet’s Companion’s sayings
(‘Aḥādīth al-Ṣahābī), especially, in fields where there is no room for ‘ijtihād,
for instance, the issues of the Unseen World, and the rules of abrogation of
texts (Nāṣikh wa al-Mansūkh).
3. To admit the unconditional meanings allowed by the language (Arabic) while taking the necessary precautions not to shift the meaning of verses from their genuine significance.

4. To admit what is required by reason and indicated by the shari'ah. Throughout history, Muslims showed a tenacious compliance with the above said criteria when dealing with *al-Qur'ān*, also upon applying their mental reasoning, and through their belief that *al-Qur'ān* contains the knowledge of the past and future eras, as it is the source of their guidance and pride. This remained so up to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whereby most of the Muslim nations were caught under the colonial hegemony, followed thereupon by the wide prevalence of colonial methodologies and philosophical theories that spelled intellectual confusion and perturbation for our Muslim world, in general, and the Arab world, in particular. Consequently, the Arabian mind started to question what were being held in society as sacred truths and axioms, and eventually ended up conceiving them as mere postulations and man's mental speculations that are not fit, in his view, to keep pace with the prevailing modern methodologies and philosophies. Thus, after the Arabs had developed a gloomy-like image of their self-esteem, and realized their stark backwardness and alienation, and then their self-disenchantment over the epistemic resources that had nurtured their thought for long centuries, under the belief that these resources were virtually the source of evil and falsehood; as a result, they began to search for a drastic solution to their critical and stagnant intellectual conditions. The Arab had then to undertake a very daring and rash decision; daring in the sense that he attempted to obliterate the local epistemic resources, and set himself to purify
and liberate Arabs from all that is attached to *al-Qur'ān* and all that had been yielded therefrom during the previous thirteen centuries. It was also a rash decision because of his undaunted trial to attach himself to an imported pool of ideas, like materialist philosophies without the least regard to certain objective conditions or biological disparities between two extremely different civilizational schemes, namely, the Islamic and Western teachings. As a result, the latter approach had further heightened the gravity and enervated the weakened body of the Arab nation as this stirred up a hot conflict among Arab elites, particularly, between those advocates of imported methodologies and philosophies and those who still believed in Islam as the most convenient solution to the Arab crisis. This intellectual bickering became more pronounced and culminated in a more systematic and organized conflict since the advent of the thirties', whereby every party sought to eliminate its foe both intellectually and politically. As such, the Arab masses, and elite, in particular, have been broken into two different intellectual blocks:

a. The Islamic block, which represents the Muslim Brothers Movement along with some societies and reformist figures.

b. The Arab Modernists block, including the whole spectrum of thought, namely Marxist, Socialist and Liberal trends. The Arab modernists, within certain conditions, had, ever since their political ascendancy, striven to impose their ideas and implement their liberational and development projects; however, all their attempts had been flashes in the pan, and had spelled nothing more than perturbation and disunity.

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1It is worthwhile to note that in spite of the ostensible internal differences among all these currents, they all, however, come to terms with one common objective, namely, battling what they conventionally call “Reactionism”, which lies in the religious currents along with their sources of knowledge.
PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

After a protracted period of critical years, and under overwhelming conditions, more specifically after the 1967 setback, there arose some radical changes in the style of modernist discourse. At this stage, the modernist seemed to have more interest in the study of Turāth, in general, and the holy Qurʾān, in particular. They even espoused a new outlook that distinguishes between the core source (*manba*) and secondary streams (*yanābi*); that is to differentiate between *al-Qurʾān* as a source of knowledge and the interpretative scholastic fundamentalist methodologies, which are described as secondary tools relating man to *al-Qurʾān* in our Arab and Islamic world. As such, the modernists came to relinquish the prior modern philosophical theories and methodologies such as historical materialism, anthropology and modern linguistics in favor of the tools of Islamic exegesis methodology. These new tools became their prerequisite method in the understanding of *al-Qurʾān*. Based on this new approach, the modernist wound up with unorthodox sayings, for instance the belief in the historicity of *al-Qurʾān*, that it is made of transcendental legendary structure, and that it is a product of certain political and historical conditions, and hence it does not represent the true and genuine Qurʾān. Moreover, they believe in the “Principle of Constancy” in the legislation and the variability of the (legalistic) form, in addition to their claim that *al-Qurʾān* contains the Darwinian Evolutionary Theory, etc. All these baseless allegations, collectively pose a real problematic contention that inevitably draws the researcher’s attention to critically investigate, thoroughly analyze, and ultimately decide on the legitimacy of these claims in the light of the requirements of scientific research.
IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

The importance of this study lies in the following overriding facts:

1. Regardless of whether modernist endeavors are held valid or not, they still, at least, deal with *al-Qur'an* in an unprecedented approach that gave rise to new problematic contentions that are certainly not customary to the Muslims’ intellectual agenda, the impulse that requires more scholarly works in this respect.

2. The clarity of modernists’ call for the renewal of the understanding of *al-Qur'an* in a way that suits the dictates of the contemporary era. This was due to their explicit condemnation of the traditional methodologies of Islamic exegesis, and alternatively, their compliance with the imported theories and methodologies. All the preceding renders it as an imperative task to elaborate an academic research for the sake of ascertaining the scientific reality.

3. Despite the wide prevalence of this odd phenomenon (Modernism vs. *Qur'an*), and its predominance over large cultural and even popular segments, the Islamic bibliography is still putting up with a desperate shortage of adequately systematic and critical studies about this topic. To my modest knowledge, I don’t see any specialized scientific research that treats this phenomenon with a thorough and critical analysis within its historical and epistemic context, except for some references that appear either as commentary writings about some particular books. For example, like the works addressing the book of Muḥammad Shuhrūr²: “*al-Kitāb wa al-Qur'ān*” (*The Book and the Qur'an*) or simple writings that lay out one particular

² He is from Syria. He is an engineer.
opinion, and then analyze it, but without relating it to its inherent epistemic and historical contexts, and without observing clear methodological norms; for example the book of Kāmil Saʻfān: "Hajmah ’Ilmāniyyah Jadidah wa Muḥākamah al-Naṣṣ al-Qur’ānī" (A New Secularist Assault, and Prosecuting the Qur’ānic Text). Therefore, the present research will be a crucial step in filling up this gap, and good initiative for many studies to come.

4. In spite of the oddness of this phenomenon, and the criticism of some conservative Islamic elite and their vehement reservations about it, I still however strongly believe that the trend of having deep misgivings or solemn rupture with everything new without a valid scientific warranty, or just because it seems different and uncustomary; all that is definitely improper method and it is even contrary to the paramount teaching of Islam. In fact, there are many verses in the holy Qur’ān that express, in full transparency, the opinions and arguments of dissenters in a way that sounds even better organized compared to the dissenters’ own style; these verses reasonably (scientifically) analyze the outlined arguments, and hence admit what is right and reject what is false. Following the same Qur’ānic approach, our Muslim ancestors were to proceed along their scholarly path. For instance, al-’Imām al-Ghazālī used to expound the arguments of the opponent philosophers in a perfect way, and then he discredits what he sees as unfounded falsehood. The same thing applies also to most of ’Ibn Taymiyyah’s writings. As such, the methods of seclusion and introversion are not a part of Islam’s features and civilization. Therefore, inquiring into such phenomenon is eventually responding to one of the everlasting values of religion. Besides, it is of prime importance for it offers good opportunities for the pollination of the past and
the status quo of Islamic thought, which is to be given the proper scientific immunity, and to be thereafter prepared to shoulder the due responsibility, and positively respond to the economic, political, social, and intellectual challenges both internally and externally.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present research seeks to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To thoroughly examine this phenomenon, and attempt to unveil the intellectual and political factors that stand behind its widespread growth within such a very particular time frame. In other words, to put the phenomenon in its correct historical and epistemic context, the fact that knowing the contextual factors is often instrumental to the interpretation of findings.

2. To monitor the modernists’ methodologies and opinions, and critically analyze them within their own conceptual framework, and then test the extent of harmony and compatibility among its methodological constituents. This is the feasible way to assess phenomena and adjudicate them in a reasonable, realistic and plausible way.

3. Contributing to the development of Islamic and expository thought in particular, strengthening it with a purposeful scientific immunity, and bringing it out from the style of seclusion and introversion to the style of initiative, confidence, and intrepidity.

4. The most important of all the preceding is to protect the holy book of Allah from any attempt of misuse or distortion, and rebut all sorts of
suspicions and pernicious fallacies that might have been associated with the Arab modernists’ contentions whether this happened on purpose or not.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is worthwhile to indicate that the studies addressing this topic are, indeed, in short supply. To my knowledge, there is no such specialized scientific study that ever draws on this phenomenon of the Modernists’ Understanding of *al-Qur’ān* through a lengthy critical analysis, yet within its historical and epistemic contexts except for few commentary writings, which can be incorporated, here, as background studies to our present research. These studies are divided into two categories:

The first category represents those partial and commentary writings that touch upon one or a group of works ascribed to one particular writer. For instance, the studies addressing the book of Muḥammad Shuḥrūr: “*al-Kitāb wa al-Qur’ān*” (*The Book and the Qur’ān*), we find, let’s say, the work of Nash‘ah al-Ḍīfān: “*Raddun ‘alā Muḥammad Shuḥrūr*” (*A Reply to Muḥammad Shuḥrūr*), the book of Munīr Muḥammad Tāhir Shawwāf: “*Tahāfut al-Qirā‘ah al-Mu‘āṣirah*” (*Paradoxes of Contemporary Interpretation*). Perhaps the most significant work among all these writings is certainly the book authored by Māhir al-Munajjīd under the title: “*al-‘Ishkāliyyah al-Manhājiyyah fi al-Kitāb wa al-Qur’ān; Dirāsah Naqdiyyah*” (*the Methodological Problem in the Book and al-Qur’ān; a Critical Analysis*).

The author of this book attempts to pinpoint the methodological rules, which Shuḥrūr had to observe throughout his analysis, and then tries to use these rules to counter Shuḥrūr’s own arguments. M. Munajjīd has, by far, succeeded
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The author of this book attempts to pinpoint the methodological rules, which Shuḥrūr had to observe throughout his analysis, and then tries to use these rules to counter Shuḥrūr’s own arguments. M. Munajjid has, by far, succeeded
in revealing the points of inadequacy in the work of Shuhrūr, for example the blatant weakness over the command of Arabic language, which is considered as one of the major building blocks upon which the author has elaborated his theory in the comprehension of *al-Qur'ān*. Munajjīd has also succeeded in revealing the intellectual prevision of the author, namely, the Marxist philosophy. Nevertheless, Munajjīd’s attempt remains limited by its partial focus, in that it has overlooked the historical and epistemic backdrop of Shuhrūr’s book as though it is an isolated abstract with no relation to the intellectual motion, political and ideological conflicts, or it is just like a fleeing intellectual entity that does not coexist with the other writings. Another work comes under this category titled as: “*Taqwīm Manhajjīyah al-Madrasah al-Fikriyyah al-Mu'āṣirah fī al-Tafsīr, 'Abū al-Qāsim Ḥāj Ḥamad Namūdḥafi'īn*” (*Assessing the Methodology of the Contemporary Intellectual School in Exegesis, a Selected Reference to 'Abū al-Qāsim Ḥāj Ḥamad*). This work is, actually, the researcher’s thesis that was submitted as a partial requirement for the fulfillment of the Master Degree in Shari‘ah at the International Islamic University Malaysia, 1998 (IIUM). The study was published in the “*Contemporary Muslim*” Journal for two consecutive issues no. 101, 102. Although this research has emphasized the epistemic framework of 'Abū al-Qāsim Ḥāj Ḥamad’s interpretations, and focused on the internal and external critique in the discussion of these interpretations, and then concluded with significant findings; it is still, however, only a partial attempt, which has been employed by the researcher as rudimentary material for the current study.
The second category encompasses almost the same type of writings as in the first category, particularly, in respect to the presentation style of ideas and methodology. However, this category includes those writings, which rather draw on more than a single work for different writers in the same time, but with the same style of laying out a particular view and then critically analyze it away from its historical and epistemic contexts, and without adhering to clear methodological norms. For example, the book of Kāmil Sa'fān: "Hajmah 'Ilmāniyyah Jadidah wa Muḥākamah al-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī" (A New Secularist Assault, and Prosecuting the Qur'anic Text). In this book, the author initiates his arguments by discussing the history of the protracted dīn and uproar (Fitnah) which ensued in the wake of Muḥammad Khalaf Allah's book: "al-Fann al-Qaṣāṣī fī al-Qur'ān" (the Narrative Art in the Qur'ān). This incident took place in 1947 while its aftermaths were stretched forward to more than two decades. The discussion of the history of this uproar takes up nearly two thirds of the book. Thus, apart from the narrative nature of this work, its focus lies far beneath the time we require for the study. The rest of the book addresses the intellectual boom and tumult (Fitnah) that was brought about by the writings of Ḥāmid 'Abū Zayd³, especially, within and without the compound of Egyptian University after he had exploited some of what he, himself, called "Secularists" just to slander religion in the name of religion, and humiliate their foes activists. The author has indeed contrived to detail with that roaring event, and give a clear picture about it, and that is because he had lived the incident from within. Although the latter part of this book was, to some extent, useful to our current research, it is still however limited by the

³ He is an Egyptian. He studied Islamic Studies at Cairo University.
narrative nature. Besides, it does not provide a critical account on the modernists’ methodologies that yield these controversial issues.

If Kāmil Saʿfān had to select two practical examples, another famous thinker, Muḥammad Jalāl Kushk had further multiplied the number to four examples in his book: “Qirā’ah fī Fikr al-Tabaʿiyyah” (A Reading into Dependency Thought). The author, here, assigns one chapter for every example, which together adds up to four chapters. In the first chapter, he discusses “Salāmah Mūsā” whom he considers as the most sinister agent of intellectual incursion, in that he (S. Mūsā) explicitly shows his animosity to the ‘Ummah along with its inherent Turāth, and also he was against Arabic language through his urging call to uphold the local dialect, and substitute the Latin scripts by Arabic scripts.

In the second chapter, the author sets about berating another figure, namely, ‘Afiʿ Abd al-Razzāq and his book: “al-ʿIslām wa ʿUṣūl al-Ḥukm” (Islam and Fundamentals of Power). Kushk stoutly condemns all the modernist views that have been mentioned in Razzāq’s book, and thereafter points out the motives lying behind such writings, which he accuses of treason and serving the colonial interest. The author concludes his vocal analysis by labeling ‘Afiʿ Abd al-Razzāq with ignorance and hypocrisy.

In the third chapter, the author addresses the roaring incident of Ḥāmid Abū Zayd under the heading: “ʿAkbar Faḍiḥah fī Tāriḵ al-Jāmiʿah” (the ever Biggest Scandal in the University History). He means the tumult and uproar Fitnah stressed earlier by Saʿfān. However, what distinguishes Kushk is that he gives a special emphasis to the article submitted by Abū Zayd, whereby the latter starts out by discrediting the esteem of ʿImām al-Shāfiʿī as he labels
him with bigotry, pro-Arabism, opportunism, etc, all of which have been refuted by Kushk.

The fourth chapter was assigned to debunk the claims and fallacies of Muḥammad Saʿīd al-ʿAshmāwī under the heading: “al-ʿIlmāniyyah wa al-Jahlāniyyah: Taʿlīqāt wa Takhurrusāt al-ʿAshmāwī” (Secularism and Ignorance: Aspersions and Fabrications of al-ʿAshmāwī). The chapter critically discusses and counters a number of al-ʿAshmāwī’s opinions. It is unequivocal from the preceding that the two early chapters of Kushk’s book fall beyond the scope of our present inquiry while the two last chapters have only a meager significance to our study, apart from which the book, overall, is just a set of counter-arguments that have no clear methodological coherence but being sourced from one author.

In addition, among the writings that draw on our target period (time span), we find the book of Fahd al-Rūmī, under the title: “ʿIttijāḥāt al-Tafsīr fī al-Qarn al-Rābiʿ ʿAshar” (Exegesis Trends in the Fourteen Century). This book appears as one of the seminal sources that deal with exegesis methodologies in the present time. However, and despite the abundance and amplitude of input (data), this book remains silent in respect with the Arab modernists’ works, apart from the predominance of the author’s doctrinal predilection, which seems to be a crucial subjective benchmark for truth and falsehood, in that all interpretations and readings that do not pour into his doctrinal mainstream are held as heresy and straying. All that is being concluded through arbitrary prej udgments and premeditated thoughts without adequately clearing the underlying logic and analogy for such resolute claims.
The last work we add to this record is the one written by Muḥammad Rāshīd ʿAḥmad Rayyān: “al-Ḥadāthah wa al-Nass al-Qur’ānī”. This work is, in fact, a thesis submitted to the Jordanian University in 1997 as a requirement for the fulfillment of Master Degree. Overall, the thesis was a work of high significance, in that the author successfully casts light on this phenomenon (Modernists’ understanding of al-Qur’ān). He addresses four prominent modernist figures, namely, Muḥammad ʿArkūn⁴, Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābīrī⁵, ʿAbd al-Hādī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and Naṣr Ḥāmid ʿAbū Zayd while he gives a special emphasis to Muḥammad ʿArkūn. Nevertheless, there are a number of drawbacks found in this work; for instance, the author’s failure to clarify the internal logic that monitors modernists’ interpretations through the orthodox traditional exegesis methodologies, which are initially subject to downright objection by modernists. Besides, he was unable to unveil the epistemic and historical dimensions of this phenomenon. Moreover, contrary to what he has committed at the outset to observe objectivity and shun giving normative prejudgments, the author, in no time, and exactly in the seventh page has already advanced his judgment and indicted modernists for being slanderous and antagonist towards al-Qur’ān.

In general, all the foregoing studies are, in the researcher’s opinion, considerably significant though they are not fully inclusive and integrated works since they all omit the epistemic and historical contexts of this phenomenon. Besides, they fail to test the phenomenon’s methodological mechanisms and empirical findings from within the phenomenon. As such, the

⁴ A native of Great Kabylia, Algeria, he studied at the Faculty of Literature of the University of Algiers and at the Sorbonne in Paris. He is presently Emeritus Professor, La Sorbonne as well as Senior Research Fellow and member of the Board of Governors of The Institute of Ismaili Studies.
⁵ He is from Morocco, a famous Arab Modernist Thinker.
researcher’s contribution comes to reckon in all these inadequacies through this study.

QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The current research attempts to answer the following five questions:

1- What are the underlying motifs that stand behind the appearance of this phenomenon in this very particular period of time? In other words, what is the secret behind the impetuous shift in the modernists’ stand, that is from being staunch adversary to dedicated servant of *al-Qur‘ān* by calling for the renewal of the understanding of *al-Qur‘ān*?

2- What are the scientific warranties admitted by Arab modernists to forsake the conventional exegesis methodologies in the understanding of *al-Qur‘ān*, and what is the extent of their scientism and realism?

3- What are the most important methodologies adopted by Arab modernists in the course of apprehending *al-Qur‘ān*, and what is the extent of their originality, internal coherence, and legitimacy?

4- What is the intellectual and theological alternative given by modernists through the implementation of their methodologies, and what is the extent of its scientism and compatibility with what is core and dogmatic in the teaching of Islam?

5- What is the new legislative alternative given by modernists through the implementation of their methodologies, and what is the extent of its consonance with the spirit and objectives of *Shari‘ah*?
SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research focuses on the study of the pioneering Arab modernists’ works that came into vogue in the last three decades, like the writings of: Muḥammad ’Arkūn, Muḥammad ‘Ābid al-Jābīrī, Ṭayyib Ṭızīnī, Muḥammad ’Abū al-Qāsim, Ḥāj Ḥamad, Muḥammad Shuḥrūr, and others. These writings are characterized by the following features:

1- These writings are well known for their animosity and contempt for Islamic Turāḥ, in general, and Turāḥ methodologies, in particular, beside their dodged trial to marginalize and obliterate thereof.

2- Their explicit call for advocating those theories and methodologies that were originated in the West, and designed to interpret Islamic history and Turāḥ, in general, and the holy Qur’ān, in particular.

3- The authors of these works often associate themselves with glowing terms like: Progressivism, Liberationalism, Modernism, Sophistication (Tamaddun), and Rationalism. By contrast, they label their religious counterparts with gloomy terms in the like of: Reactionism, Darkness, Ancestralism, Traditionalism (Turāḥ), Fundamentalism, etc.

These writings are typically divided into three types:

a. Works adopting one practical methodology, and then applying it to the Islamic Turāḥ, in particular. For example the book of Ṭayyib Ṭızīnī⁶: “Mashrūʿ Ruʿyah Jadīdah Li al-Fikr al-ʿArabī fī al-ʿAṣr al-Wasīṭ ” (A Project of A New Outlook To the Arabian Thought in the Medieval Age), and also the book of Ḥusayn Marwah⁷: “al-Nazaʿāt al-Māḍdiyyah fī al-Falsafah al-ʿArabiyyah al-ʿIslāmiyyah” (Materialistic Tendencies in the

⁶ He is a Syrian Marxist professor of philosophy at Damascus University.
⁷ He is a noted Marxist philosopher from the Arab world.
Arabian Islamic Philosophy). This type of writings is very conducive to the practical presentation of the modernists' methodologies.

b. Works showing practical exegesis examples of the holy Qur‘ān from a modernist prospect, and without giving clear indication to the enshrined methodology; for instance the book of Ḥusayn 'Aḥmad 'Amīn⁸: “Ḥawlā al-Da‘wah Li-Taḥbīq al-Sharī‘ah al-‘Islāmiyyah” (About the Call for Implementing Islamic Laws), and also the book of Al-Ṣādiq Bil‘id⁹: “al-Qur‘ān wa al-Tashrī‘: Qirā‘ah Jadīdah fi ‘Āyāt al-‘Aḥkām” (al-Qur‘ān and Legislation: New Interpretations of the Verses of Legal Judgments – ‘Aḥkām –)

c. Works deliberating over the adopted methodology and its applications. For example, the book of Muḥammad Shuḥrūr: “al-Kitāb wa al-Qur‘ān: Qirā‘ah Mu‘āṣirah” (The Book and al-Qur‘ān: Modern Interpretation), and also the book of ‘Abū al-Qāsim Ḥāj Hamad¹⁰: “al-‘Alamiyyah al-‘Islāmiyyah al-Thāniyyah” (The Second Islamic Internationalization). As clearly shown, this type of works is useful both to the manifestation and applications of the sustained methodology.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study will abide mainly by the following two methodologies:

1. Analytical Descriptive Methodology:

This method starts out by observing the phenomenon within its natural context, and that is due to collecting as much raw data as possible from their

⁸ He is the son of the famous Egyptian scholar 'Aḥmed 'Amīn.
⁹ He is a Tunisian writer.
¹⁰ He is a famous Sudanese politician. He is one of the Eritrean president counsellors.
original sources, that is surveying the writings of modernists, and all what reflects their views and paradigms, then analyzing and ordering them in a systematic pattern that allows us to answer the questions of the study set forth earlier, particularly, the first question, and the first part of the remaining four questions.

2. **Internal Critical Analysis:**

This methodology is designated to examine and evaluate the opinions of Arab Modernists by analyzing their texts, scrutinizing their constituting ideas, and then having a cross-examination thereof. This is for the purpose of testing the degree of harmony and coherence of such scholarly inputs, and also to know the extent of the soundness of their internal analogy, and whether it is, all through, consistent or not. Thereafter, we relate these inputs to their inherent and natal historical context in order to uncover their future tendencies and real objectives. This methodology has both high importance and serious gravity. Its importance lies, essentially, in the fact that its findings are held imperative and binding, mainly because this method examines the text using the same internal logic of the text itself; that is through its underlying assumptions and mechanisms whether by contrasting its subsets to its general framework or vise versa, or else by stretching its general framework to its extreme limits so as to verify the significance of its findings and genuineness of its objectives. As for its gravity, this method is most likely to restrict the researcher to the context of the text under study, and require him to deal with it through its inherent logic and assumptions. This, indeed, seems to be a wearing process, which needs a lot of patience in dealing with the text, apprehending its motion and assimilating its underlying culture with, of course, one’s perseverance to
scrutinize and carefully monitor all its probable conceptual turnings and wrinkles, without omitting even a shred of its detail, because we may end up through a single key term or syntax error by abolishing the entire methodological structure of the text.

RESEARCH PLAN

In order to accomplish such critical assessing work within the requirements of scientific research, this study is divided into seven chapters:

FIRST CHAPTER: It is a preliminary chapter that discusses the problem, objectives, research questions, literature review, scope, methodology, and the proposed plan of the study.

SECOND CHAPTER: This chapter addresses the historical background of the phenomenon; that is surveying the political, economic and intellectual factors that were instrumental in the rise of the phenomenon of understanding the holy Qur'ān from the modernist lens, particularly, during the last three decades, and certainly not before.

THIRD CHAPTER: This chapter provides critical analytical insights on the Arab Modernists' outlook towards the mechanisms of the conventional orthodox methodology in Islamic exegesis along with the modernists' excuses to relinquish thereof.

FOURTH CHAPTER: This chapter focuses on presenting and evaluating the most important methodologies allegedly used by Arab modernists to apprehend the holy Qur'ān.

FIFTH CHAPTER: This chapter was designed to lay out some modernist interpretations in respect to the theological and intellectual aspect. These
interpretations were, thereupon, thoroughly examined so as to determine the extent of its consistency and origination.

SIXTH CHAPTER: This chapter deliberates over some modernist interpretations in regard to the legislative and jurisprudential issues.

SEVENTH CHAPTER: This chapter deals with outcomes of the research.