

The History and Historical Research Methodology of Dr. Abdul Al-Aziz Al-Douri

through his Book "Introduction to the History of Islam

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Abstract

This study aimed to understand the scientific foundation of Islamic history study approach at Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Douri, through his book introduction to the history of Islam. Al-Douri identified in his book the places of discrepancy in the old and new historical writing, and the impact factors in the Arabs history that led to its formation and formulation. The study presents an accurate scientific approach to study the Arab-Islamic history based on the comprehensive historical view, the novels' uncertainty, and the refusal to take predetermined opinions without evidences, stressing on the importance of studying novels from all its various aspects. The study concluded that Al-Douri presents a well-established scientific methodology to study the history, based on suspicion in the novel and reading it in its political and social context.

Keywords: Abdul Aziz Al-Douri, Arab and Islamic history, history, research approach

Introduction

Our modern Arab culture urgently in need of studying the product of historiographer and thinker Abdul Aziz Al Douri, due to its scientific value and intellectual standing, and in recognition of his distinguished efforts in writing history and providing the cultural movement with an approved reference books, as well as his role in the rehabilitation of a very large number of scholars, researchers, and historians at both Iraq and Jordan. Al-Douri has laid down the rules of Arab concepts and ideas, and Arab historical study in its most beautiful circles and ages, as well as its role that represents a major aspect of the intellectual and cultural renaissance in the Arab life. In addition, he is one of the first modern Arab thinkers of this era who have exceeded with their contribution to the intellectual and historical aspects the borders of the Arab region to other parts of the world.

Al-Douri was one of the well-known historians in the history science of the modern era, he considers one of the most important professors who sought to lay the scientific foundations for studying Arab and Islamic history, and characterized by his national Arab sensibility in his historical writings (Kotherani, 2013, 129). He was also known for the big impact of his methodologies, researches, and studies on many generations of historians who came after him. In addition, he was among the first Arab historians to sought to rewrite the Arab-Islamic history according to a comprehensive objective scientific approach (Abbas, 2000, 17 & Daher, 2000, 191, 192-193), due to the great importance of history in the Arab nation life.

Dr. Al-Douri was born in 1919 at Al-Dour village north of Baghdad city, and moved to Baghdad where he completed high school, and then he enrolled in a preparatory year to attend London University which he graduated from in 1939/1940 with a bachelor degree and then PhD in 1942. He returned to Iraq after graduation rejecting the offers to stay and teach at the University of London (Group of Researchers, 1995, 6-7) in order to serve his country. In Iraq, Al-Douri joined the teaching field at the High Teachers' House and was given a permission to establish the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and took over its deanship. Then he became a professor of Islamic history after the establishment of Baghdad University in 1958 and took over its presidency from 1963-1968.

Al-Douri had a distinguished scientific approach, and an important and influential scientific production, and one of his earliest books was the introduction to history of Islam, which is especially important due to its presentation of many opinions and ideas about the historical research methodology and the importance of history as a science.

1. Study Problems & Questions

The study problem revolves around the attempt to understand the methodologies and ideas of Al-Douri that used to study the history in a new way based on a different approach. The study finds that the book of "Sadr Al-Islam" or beginning of Islam was an embodiment of this innovative approach, therefore study depended on defining the form of this approach in terms of renewing the research mechanisms method, where the study problem can be summarizes in the following two key questions:

- What is the history science from the standpoint of Al-Douri?
- What is the research method that Al-Douri has adopted, as a scientific approach in his study of the Arab and Islamic history?

2. Study Objectives

The study aimed to understand the pillars of Al-Douri approach in the study of history, and adopting it as a solid scientific approach in the historical studies related to the Arab and Islamic history.

3. Theoretical Framework

- *Al-Douri Book:*

The book "An introduction to the history of Sadr Al-Islam" issued in 1949 considers one of the important books that sought to draw the main lines of Islamic State history and develop a scientific methodology for the historical research. Despite the book importance it didn't receive the attention of historians who studied Al-Douri as a historian (Kotherani, 2013, 277, and beyond), and only few paid attention to its importance, one of those is Dr. Khreisat who described the book as "The summary of his thought and approach" (Khreisat, 2000, 161).

In his book, Al-Douri sought to demonstrate the importance of history in the live of peoples and nations, especially the Arab nation, where its an essential and constant part of its identity, a living and vital topic that has an impact on its culture, an important basis for it, a subject related to its faith, and its the most important foundation (i.e. the history) for the cultural, social, and ethical formation of the Arab nation. Its study is particularly important to understand the conformation of Arab and Islamic nation, and understand its features and potentials, since it has a permanent impact on the Arab awareness, life, and view where many of its events still have a major impact on Arab thought and perspective (Al-Douri, 2007, 15, 7, Al-Douri, 2009, C8, 231, 218, and 203).

History is an influential science in people's lives, and has its importance and risk between the different types of sciences (Al-Douri, research in science, 7), and according to the opinion of Al-Douri isn't just recitations, stories, and news, where the historical events are worthless without the criticism, and the history is a science based on analysis, interpretation, and explanation since the recitations and news are like the firm structure that has only bones in it, therefore the analysis is the basis for studying the history and can't be done without it (Al-Douri, 2007, 35).

Whoever understand Al-Douri and his awareness of the importance of history as a science, saw that Arabs should have a scientific starting point based on a precise methodology that used to purified the history from any plotting or suspicions, therefore his book the subject of the study was his first way to present the features of a precise scientific approach based on the criticism and analysis which study history as a science.

Al-Douri has developed his book for two purposes, the first one: to direct historians to reconsider the way they study the Arab nation history by criticizing the followed study approach, and the second: to give an overview of the history of Islam (Al-Douri, 2007, 11, 7, Al-Douri, 2016, 222) that allow the historian to access a comprehensive interpretation of the history (Al-Douri, 2009, C8, 28) through the development of a historical scientific approach, based on clear foundations and precise features to make this approach a way for Arabs to understand their history and purify it from blots and impurities. Al-Douri's book was nothing but an invitation for Arab historians to make an agreement on the general scientific frameworks to study the Arab-Islamic history.

- Factors of historical imbalance:

Based on the desire of Al-Douri, he established clear scientific foundations for the study of history and went toward criticizing the methodology of historians, which came with distorted results that lack the objectivity, since history in the opinion of Al-Douri depends on the circumstances of its occurrence and its writing, and isn't subject to laws and rules in its writing, but its subject to different tallymen or individual recorders who have different qualifications at different time and place (Al-Douri, 2007, 19).

Despite the confirmation of Al-Douri that Arab-Islamic history has been recorded with a lot of scrutiny, investigation, and control but it suffered from serious problems that have affected it a lot and distorted it, where Al-Douri has shown most important reasons and problems, **First one:** the separation of historical periods and division of history into topics and elements, which makes it necessary for the historian to conduct a comprehensive study for the era or period that history covered away from divisions, **Second:** the need to pay attention to the role of partisanship, and religious and local trends that influence history writing, especially with the association of history with politics and the science of Hadith, **Third:** The oversight of introductions and various historical developments prior to the historical era at various levels, therefore things that historians recorded are results and developments that took long-time, **Fourth:** the mistakes of copiers or transcribers, which lead to the creation of events, things, and thoughts that don't have anything to do with the truth, and to contradict with the history facts (Al-Douri, 2007, 19, 15, 16, 26, 27, 28), **Fifth:** recording and registering the history according to the ruling families, which leads to two influential outcomes, the first: not paying attention to the nation and its development, and the aspects of its life therefore the result indicates that history shows a series of interrupted periods which don't have a link between them (Al-Douri, 2007, 28, Abu Showk, 2001, 63), while the second: methodology leads to image complexity and mix the

developments of events with each other, in relation to what happened at later period with a previous period, which leads to the oversight of different factors and streams in the movement of history, **Sixth:** Al-Douri emphasizes the need of historian to identify the various sources, understand its recording method, and realize its importance (Al-Douri, 2007, 28, 31), **Seventh:** the importance of criticizing and studying the sources, in terms of its origins, trends, tendencies of its authors, and the motives of historical writing (Al-Douri, 1993, 9), due to the importance of all that on the analysis of narrations and recitations, and its judgment in term of acceptance or rejection, **Eighth:** appreciate the value of the developed narrations and its implications to the historian, where Al-Douri raises the issue of making use of stories and legends as an important source and a role for clarifying the image of era that took place, and understand the general mentality of people and their types of thinking (Al-Douri, 2007, 32).

Al-Douri sought during his previous presentation to draw the attention of modern historians to the methodological errors in the study of Arab-Islamic history, and show its impact on the historical writing, suggesting at the same time the methods and ways that should be followed in the historical researches, and benefiting in his presentation from the study of Western approach and from the features of Islamic methodology in the historical criticism of ancient Arab historians, especially Ibn Khaldun's writings (Abu Showk, 2001, 63). Therefore, Al-Douri sought through his book to invite the Arab historians to agree on a critical scientific historical methodology.

- Historical Research Methodology:

Al-Douri sought in his book "Introduction to the history of Islam" to draw the features and bases for an accurate scientific methodology to write the Arab-Islamic history, and the first of these bases related to the researcher and the attributes that should possessed , and the methodology to be followed in the historical studies of Arab-Islamic history:

- The historian must possess basic characteristics that help him in his study, the most important are:
 - a. To hold the foresight, patience, and self-esteem: The history is a large, extended field and science (Al-Douri, 2007, 15 & Zreik, 1985, 107).
 - b. To be impartial and to stay away from the effects of origins, environment, culture, and thought (Al-Douri, 2007, 11), by adhering to the neutrality and scientific honesty.
- The historian must criticize the historical narrations, scrutinize it, and view it from the various aspects, and not convey it with its defects: this will be done only by studying the conflicting narratives of the same subject deeply, by analyzing the historical circumstances

of the study period, and by understanding the narrations' objectives and the goals of storytellers, and as a result the history will be purified from any impurities. Al-Douri illustrated this methodology in his analysis of the populism role in the contrasting image of Caliph Harun Al-Rasheed between the pious and the piety; at the time of his reliance on the "Al-Bramikah", and the dissolution and plaything after their catastrophe (Al-Douri, 2007, 24).

- The historian should be warned against falling under the influence of anomalous narratives, which make him fall in the trap of exaggeration and amplification, and omit many facts, such as the recklessness of the "Umayyad" financial system in the sources and references, which was only a continuation of the "Rashidy" era financial system (Al-Douri, 2007, 80).
- The study of historians' tendencies and their trends in the historical writing (Al-Douri, 2007, 32, Al-Douri, 2007, C10, 36), by tracking and analyzing the type and direction of narrations that are narrated and selected by the historians, the methods of their historical writings, and the resources of their writings, since these elements are the basis for analysis and judgment of the narrations (Al-Douri, 2007, 9-10).
- The need to understand the motives of historical writing by historians, and the impact of this understanding on the ability of historian to analyze the historical narrations, in terms of its acceptance or rejection, where these motives played a major role in distorting and falsifying history, such as the distortion of Arabs history before Islam by some Muslim historians to glorify the history of Islam (Al-Douri, 2007, 45).
- The study of historical periods comprehensively and jointly by handling all its aspects and events, where there is no way to understand the features of development and advancement in the nation's life (Al-Douri, 2007, 32) without a comprehensive study that moves away from the tiny parts.
- Use the logic and mind to judge the historical narrations, and extent of its agreement with the logic and historical reality of study period (Al-Douri, 2007, 23).
- Historians must not surrender to any previous opinions or results, and to be careful from drawn after the previous judgments, and this is what many modern historians have fallen into, and therefore Al-Douri stresses on the fact that all opinions and conclusions should be subject to suspicion without excessiveness, which is the most important way to reach the historical truth. Al-Douri also warned about the mistake of relying on the continual news and narrations in the sources and references without auditing, where the continual news

may be based on one source and the rest of the sources transfer it without scrutiny, and he even sees that repeated narrations in a particular subject may be sometimes suspicious (Al-Douri, 2007, 21, 33, 80, 45).

- The need to track historical narrations in its different names and types of the sources, such as the historical story books, literature, biographies, translations, geography, journeys, history, and poetry books (Al-Douri, 2007, 31, 32).
- Study the basis and references of the narrations, identify the conditions of storytellers, and the degree of their confidence to use the science of invalidation and modification, and as a result it will be possible to judge the text and reference of the narrations (Al-Douri, 2007, 21, 33, Fawzi, 2000, 103).
- Taking advantage of the Archaeology and archaeological findings in the history writing and criticize the various narrations, since Archaeology considers one of the important sciences that forced the historian to expand his horizon and outlook, and took him out of the flounce dilemma and contradictory narrations (Al-Douri, 2007, 45), and changed many concepts. In addition, Al-Douri has used the Archaeology in his studies and researches (Al-Douri, 2009, C10, 49, 73, 74-75).
- Historian must not overlook any of the most effective aspects of history, particularly the economical and financial aspects of the history study along with paying attention to the importance of other factors (Al-Douri, 2007, 78).
- Its importance for historian to take into account the impact of geography and the environment on human life, human nature, and the social, political, and economical development, where geography has a great importance in the interpretation and analysis of history, and there is no way to understand many historical issues without studying the geography (Al-Douri, 2007, 37-38).

4. Analytical Summary

Al-Douri method of historical research has been characterized by high objectivity and logic, with a comprehensive analytical view for the first Islamic period by seeking to clarify its major and general lines. Through his study, he was able to prepare several guidelines for the historical research and alert historians to the methodological errors in historical writing (Al-Douri, 2016, 222), therefore he was able to create a guided map that would help the historians in their researches and studies, and help them to accurately understand the history of the first Islamic period.

Al-Douri's approach was distinguished with a deep analysis of historical narrations and a methodology that characterizes as scientific, careful research, and deep understanding in addition to objectivity, where he went in his study for an inclusive research that goes beyond the small parts or things, and study the trends and analyze the major general streams, in order to reach the truth.

Al-Douri was able to be the owner of a historical school that has its foundations and research methodology, and contributions were he was credited for the development of many new historical terms, such as the term Sadr of Islam, the term of first Abbasid era, and the term of late Abbasid ages (Hussein, 2000, 50). Al-Douri's effort prompted the Orientals to recognize his work efforts and contribution to the development of Islamic history, which include the testimony of Oriental Bernard Lewis, who said: "He became an expert in his subject, but he himself became a historical document" (Al-Alaf, 21/11/2010), where his studies were the source of a generation of British Orientals in the mid 20th century (Al-Jameil, 19/11/2010).

Al-Douri was a historian who commits to his Arabism and Islam, understanding his religion, and aware of his goals and objectives, where Al-Douri headed to prepare scientific foundations for the study of history by developing an Islamic research methodology that align with the nature and sources of Islamic history, benefiting in it from the Western scientific method without being dependent on the Western view. Through his book, Al-Douri contributed to the development of Arab-Islamic historical research methodology and to introduce a new prospective for the Arab-Islamic history, where Al-Douri was able in his historical writings to present a new image of the Arab-Islamic history by incorporating the authenticity of historical research through the ancient Arab historian writings with the analysis and research tools that he derived from the West.

At a very early stage, and particularly in 1949 Al-Douri was able to introduce a book called (Introduction to the History of Sadr Al-Islam) which represents a new vision of the Islamic history, where Al-Douri collected in it his vision of the various factors that contributed to the development of Islamic history which include the factors of faith-believing factors, tribal neurological factors, and economical factors. As a result, Al-Douri combined with his Arab-Muslim vision all the fundamental factors that have an impact on the history, without being prejudice to a particular theory that choose one of these factors on other factors.

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