

**ACCOMMODATING ISLAM AND MODERNITY:
THE CASE OF ABDULLAH CEVDET'S *İCTİHAD*
(1904-1926)**

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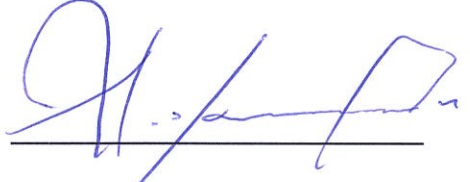

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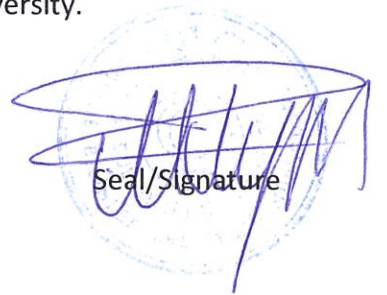
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Ahmet Fatih CEYHAN

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ahmet Fatih CEYHAN', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

ABSTRACT

ACCOMMODATING ISLAM AND MODERNITY:
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(1904-1926)

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This study is an alternative to the “conflict paradigm” which approaches Ottoman modernization as a battle between “conflicting parties” like modernists and Islamists or Westernists and traditionalists. Instead of the conflict paradigm, I embrace Ardiç’s “accommodation paradigm” which argues that religion was the single most important legitimation tool for all modernist movements in the Islamic world until 1924. In this way, this study points out the paradoxical relations between secularism/modernism and Islam/religion in a larger sense contributing a better understanding of Ottoman modernization in the case of Abdullah Cevdet’s *İctihad* through employing discourse analysis method. The study also, aims to contribute to an alternative to Euro centric, one dimensional and reductionist historiography and help fill the theoretical as well as the methodological gap in the literature.

Keywords: Conflict Paradigm, Accommodation Paradigm, Discourse Analysis, Abdullah Cevdet, *İctihad*.

ÖZ

İSLAM VE MODERNİTE İNTİBAKI:
ABDULLAH CEVDET'İN *İCTİHAD*'I ÖRNEĞİ
(1904-1926)

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Bu çalışma Osmanlı modernleşmesini, gelenekçiler ve Batıcılar, İslamcılar ve modernistler gibi muhalif gruplar arasında süregelen bir savaş olarak gören “çatışma paradiması”na alternarif teşkil etmektedir. Bunun yerine, İslam dünyasında vuku bulan moderneşme hareketlerinde dinin 1924 yılına kadar tek meşrulaştırıcı unsur olduğunu iddia eden “intibak paradiması”nı benimsemektedir. Bu şekilde, çalışma Abdullah Cevdet'in *İctihad*'ını söylem analizine tabi tutarak sekülerlik/modernlik ve İslam/din kavramları arasınaki paradoksal ilişkiye dikkat çekmekte ve daha geniş manada Osmanlı modernleşmesinin daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlamayı hedeflemektedir. Ayrıca bu çalışma Avrupa merkezci, tek boyutlu ve indirgemeci tarih yazımını sorgulamakta ve literatürdeki teorik ve metodolik boşluğun doldurulmasına yardımcı olmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: “Çatışma Paradigması”, “İntibak Paradigması”, Söylem Analizi, Abdullah Cevdet, *İctihad*.

DEDICATION

To my dear mother Şeyma and my dear father Mehmet



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CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY OF THE THESIS

1.1. Research Topic and Questions

Abdullah Cevdet was one of the most influential Ottoman intellectuals in spreading Westernist currents of thought such as biological materialism and social Darwinism. For this reason, Islamists marked him as an atheist and the enemy of the religion of Islam. It thus might seem odd that he would name his journal as *İctihad*, one of the central concepts of Islamic jurisprudence –*fiqh*, and that he would fill its pages with Qur'anic verses, prophetic hadiths and the exemplary stories and cases from the early period of Islam. Why does Cevdet, translator of materialist thinker Ludwig Bucher's *Nature and Geist* (quoted in Hanioglu, 1997, p.134) and Reinhart Dozy's *Historie des Mussulmans* (1997, p.137), use Islamic terms and quote freely from the Qur'an and the hadiths of the prophet Muhammad in his journal? How can we explain this apparent contradiction? In other words, what was the role of Islam in Cevdet's secular discourse in his *İctihad*? This study aims to answer this question. My specific research questions include the following: What are the main discursive strategies and techniques that Cevdet employed in his discourse? Why did he employ an intense Islamic discourse, and to what extent was it instrumental? Finally, did the way he used this Islamic discourse change over time? By applying the discourse analysis method on the *İctihad* journal to answer these questions, I try to demonstrate how modernity and religion went hand in hand in Cevdet's discourse, which may have implications for the broader process of Ottoman modernization.

In this sense my study is an alternative to the "conflict paradigm" which approaches Ottoman modernization as a battle between "conflicting parties" like modernists and Islamists or Westernists and traditionalists (Ardıç, 2012). I question mutually exclusive concepts like Islamists-Westernists, secular –traditional; reformist reactionary. Instead of the conflict paradigm, I embrace the "accommodation paradigm" offered by Ardıç (2012), which argues that religion was the single most important legitimization tool for all modernist movements in the Islamic world until

1924. In this way, this study points out the paradoxical relations between secularism/modernism and Islam/religion in a larger sense contributing better understanding of Ottoman modernization in the case of Abdullah Cevdet. I also aim to contribute to an alternative to Euro centric, one dimensional and reductionist historiography and help fill both the empirical and theoretical gap in the literature.

1.2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The theoretical ground which this study will be built upon is Nurullah Ardiç's conceptualization of "accommodation paradigm" (Ardiç, 2012). His conceptualization connotes that historically we observe more accommodation than conflict between modernity and Islam in the eyes of political and intellectual actors in the Muslim World. If an author in the literature supports the idea of conformity between religion and modernism Ardiç (2012) classifies him under the umbrella of the accommodation paradigm; and if an author in the literature believes that there is a conflictual relation between religion and modernity, Ardiç classifies him under the conflict paradigm. To understand these paradigms, it is necessary to look at the "secularization thesis" in the sociology of religion literature.

To begin with, one of the central prominent theses of sociology of religion, 'secularization theory', depends on the assumption that there is an unending tension and conflict between religion and politics/state. The term secularization denotes the separation of religious and political institutions and of worldly and heavenly matters (see Tschannen, 1991). In the European experience it implies the separation of church and state (Davutoglu, 1994). There are two basic approaches to the separation of religious and political affairs.

The first is classical secularization theory, according to which scientific advancements and achievements and rapid industrialization in modern society will either wipe religion out completely or destroy its influences in politics as well as in mobilizing society for the common good. The second is neo-classical secularization theory, which argues religion will not diminish completely but will retreat into the individual-private sphere and lose its institutional importance (Köse, 2014).

Several questions can be asked about the validity as well as the legitimacy of the theory: Is it possible to apply secularization theory to the Middle East or more generally to the Islamic world? Is it a universal theory that is applicable in every part of the world? Are there alternative experiences to those of Western Europe? Are there any “alternative modernities”? (quoted in Ardiç, 2012).

There are several critics of secularization theory in its application to the Middle East and Islamic World: According to Talal Asad (2011, p.181), the secularization process, “the separation of religion from politics, economy, science and so forth”, is part of the cultural and historical experiences of Western Europe and America - it is not universally valid. Pointing out the problematics of reading and describing Islam and other world religions from European experiences, Esposito states, “The post-Enlightenment tendency to define religion as a system of belief restricted to personal or private life, rather than as a way of life, has seriously hampered our ability to understand the nature of Islam and many of the world’s religions” (quoted in Ardiç, 2012, p.15).

1.2.1. The Conflict Paradigm

Similar to the “secularization thesis”, the traditional approach in the literature on the Ottoman-Turkish modernization depends on the idea that the process of modernization caused conflict and tension between the state and Islam. This is what Ardiç (2012) calls the conflict or confrontation perspective. As an example, Berkes (2017) reduces the whole Ottoman modernization process to a battle occurring between “modernists” and “traditionalists”. He labels all the ideas opposing and challenging the specific modernization projects as a resistance aiming to return to traditional ways of life and political regime – *istibdad*.

Similarly, Berkes’s student Feroz Ahmad (1993;200; 2015) interprets the Turkish modernization process as confrontation; he argues, for example, that “the notion of Islamic State was anathema to Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his supporters” (1993, p.53). Additionally, he presents the political struggle between the governments of Istanbul and Ankara as a struggle occurring between reformists and traditionalists

(1993, p.65). However, this reading is methodologically problematic; because secularism needs periodization. To explain, in the first assembly, about half of the parliament was composed of *ulema*, Islamic Scholars, and in the parliamentary building there were many Islamic symbols like Qur’anic verses and prophetic hadiths. That is to say that the Ankara government, till abolition of the khalifate, had no plans (or power) to destroy Islam at all. On the contrary, the main declared purpose of leading figures, including Mustafa Kemal Pasha, in the war of independence, which khalifate, Istanbul, safe and rescue it from the occupation of the “infidels” (Kara, 2016, p.24, 26).

Feroz Ahmad (2015, p.397) proceeds in the same confrontational way of interpretation in his *Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey*. He states that the newspaper published by Derviş Vahdeti “attacked the constitutional regime for bringing with it tyranny regime and the age of devils”¹. However, Vahdeti never rejected the constitutional regime and never aimed to bring old institutions back. In fact, he supported the Union and Progress Party (*İttihad ve Terakki Partisi*) in their struggle for constitutionalism and freedom of thought and conscience, *hürriyet-i fikriye* (Vahdeti, 1324, pp.1-4), and their efforts to benefit from technical development and scientific advancements of the West (1324, p.4) . He proposes in *Volkan* that the admirer of positivist Auguste Comte, Ahmed Rıza, and the proponent of decentralization, *adem-i merkeziyet*, Prince Sabahattin, as well as the so-called “faithless” materialist Abdullah Cevdet should all be parliament members, since they are the ones that struggled most in the eyes of the people (1324, p.3). What is more, he presents Ziya Gökalp, an intellectual figure behind the revolutions of the Turkish Republic as the most benevolent of his teachers (1324, p.1).

An early Republican intellectual himself, historian Tarık Zafer Tunaya (1970, p.51; 1962, p.69-73) also builds his arguments on the confrontation paradigm. The

¹ See the same line of argument in Akşin (2015) “31 Mart olayı son çağa girmenin şoku karşısında geleneksel kesimin bir tepkisidir”; Aksoy (2008, p.65) “Vahdeti orduda ve idarede yeniliğe taraftar değildi; padişahı başka bütün idarecilere cephe almıştı”; see also Zurcher’s *Turkey: A modern History: “The counterrevolution of 1909”* (2004); and Tunaya (1962, p.118; 121)

conflictual thesis appears in his argument that conservatives claimed to bring Islamic principles back vis a vis reformist attempts, resisted against Western currents of thought while modernists asserted an Islamic Renaissance for the renewal of Islam. Similar to Feroz Ahmed, Tunaya (Tunaya, 1962, p. 234) claims that the purpose of Mustafa Kemal and his friends in the national struggle was to eliminate the khalifate and sultanate and establish a secular government. He emphasizes confrontation rather than accommodation.

1.2.2. The Accommodation Paradigm

The “accommodation paradigm” (Ardıç, 2012), on the other hand, does not read Ottoman modernization and religion as being mutually exclusive. Rather, it stresses the paradoxical relation of Islam and modernity. This reading is a challenge to classical secularization theory’s separation of religion and modernity in general, and to the conflict paradigm’s conflictual and contrasting reading of Ottoman modernization in particular. It is a challenge because instead of offering an evolutionary and progressive reading, it reads history through dialectical processes of dynamic power relations, and exchanges. This approach sets it apart from simplistic, reductionist, and one dimensional readings of the relationship between modernity and religion (Ardıç, 2012).

Several important scholars have, in different degrees, adopted this paradigm. For example, Rustow (quoted in Ardıç, p.19) highlights that, Abdulhamid II. an important figure in Ottoman modernization who is characterized as obscurantist and reactionary within the conflict paradigm, was in fact the stimulated modernization. He opened *meclis*, the parliament, managed *meşrutiyet* constitutionalism, modernized the military, increased and popularized the number of secular primary schools (mekteb) and colleges (Mekteb-i Mülkiye) in which modern sciences were studied, and encouraged and financially supported intellectuals to go to Europe for modern education (Zürcher, 2016, p. 95).

Eric Jan Zürcher (2004, p.) underlies continuity instead of a teleological reading in which the Ottoman Empire is a primordial and primitive stage for the new Turkey. He

sees the Turkish Republic as the continuation of the second constitutional period. Ignoring the declaration of the Republic of Turkey, he treats the second constitutional period and the Republic's single party period under the same title "Jon Turks Period".

Similar to Zürcher, Şerif Mardin (2017) contributes to the 'accommodation paradigm' through emphasizing continuity elements. Criticizing the official as well as ideological history writing, Mardin (2017) points out the continuity of relations, rather than rupture between Ottomans and the Republic of Turkey. Secondly, Mardin (2015) stressed the importance of religion in the socio-cultural and political life of Turkish society. This is a direct critique of official historiography and some historians who ignore the central and motor power of religion/Islam in socio-political and cultural change.

Another important figure in modern Islamic thought which we can include in Ardiç's "accommodation paradigm" is İsmail Kara (2001, 2014, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). Similar to Mardin, he marks the relation between modernity and religion. Kara (2014) claims that modernist movements in the Islamic world are also religious movements. While not forgetting the secular aspects of modernism and modern movements, Kara (2017a, p. 93) emphasizes Islamization rather than secularization. In support of this, he claims that in the entire Islamic World reformists had Islam as central focus as did all of the political and intellectual streams of thoughts and ideologies, including Islamists, nationalists, Westernists and socialists in Turkey till 1924. This is because all of the modernization and secularization processes had been designed and discussed in relation with Islam. Rescuing the state and religion were intertwined.

Suat Mertoğlu (2001) is another central figure accentuating the relation between modernity and Islam. Mertoğlu (2001, p. 91) in his Ph.D. thesis tries to indicate how Qur'anic verses were used in order to legitimize social and political developments before the First World War. In addition to Mertoğlu, Erdem (2003) also could be analysed within the framework of the paradigm. His stress is on how modern reforms were justified and legitimised through using or misusing one of the central concept of fiqh, *ictihad*, during the Second *Meşrutiyet* period.

Lastly, Nurullah Ardiç (2012), like the aforementioned authors, emphasizes the relation between Islam and modernity. Ardiç, observing the khalifate institution from 1908 to its abolishment in 1924, identifies that both the supporters and the opponents of the khalifate used a similar Islamic discourse. He also identifies “traditionalists” and “modernist” Islamists and “secularists” as the three major power actors during the struggles for modernization in Turkey as well as in the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa and India, arguing that they all employed an Islamic discourse using different discursive strategies and techniques in order to strengthen and consolidate the conflicting ideological positions they adopted. Ardiç also emphasizes the instrumental nature of the secularists’ Islamic discourses. Abdullah Cevdet, too, belongs to this group.

1.3. Abdullah Cevdet in the Literature

I classify the academic literature on Abdullah Cevdet in two groups: confrontation literature, and accommodation literature. Confrontation literature draws Cevdet as the one who adopted and internalized Westernist ideas, tried to spread biological materialism and Darwinist thought in Ottoman society, and saw the religion of Islam as an obstacle to scientific progress and technological advancements and so on. On the other hand, accommodation literature which is employed in this study too, while reading Cevdet, takes the context into account. My analysis of Cevdet emphasizes and focuses on Islam as playing central role in the secular projects and modernist attempts as being the cornerstone of Cevdet’s modernization project. That is why I abstain from categorizing him as hardcore Westernist, vulgar materialist or social Darwinist. Rather, I take Cevdet as an Ottoman intellectual who grew up in a conservative society and who knew how powerful Islam would be in any attempt of social mobilization. Once he said:

Muslims can accept the advancements of civilization only if they come from a Muslim source. Therefore we, who have taken it as their duty to inject new blood into the Muslim vessel, should find those progressive principle that are abundant in Islam (quoted in Hanioglu, 1981, p.131).

Hanioglu is the leading figure in the confrontation literature on Cevdet. His effect on the literature is so great that almost all the theses written on Abdullah Cevdet take it

as their main reference source². I have checked all of the theses written on Cevdet and realized that most of them are grounded on Hanioglu's arguments in *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi* (1981). Although this is the most extensive and comprehensive book on Cevdet, which deserves a lot of credit for providing rich information on him, Hanioglu's interpretations are at times reductionists and ideological: Hanioglu states almost on every page of the book that Cevdet aimed the religion of Islam to remove so that biological materialism could penetrate into Ottoman society. Also, Hanioglu (1997, p.136-137) argues that Cevdet "viewed Islam a tool to cast religion aside" and states that "each issue of one of (*İctihad*) contained an open attack on Islam". This reductionist view is a main obstacle to understanding Cevdet and Ottoman modernization more generally. This ideological interpretation marks him as an atheist, the enemy of Islam and religion³. However, Hanioglu later has shifted his confrontationist view toward accommodation. In fact he admits his fallacy in the book (Hanioglu 2005). This is because of the republican ideology's approach towards religion that interprets Cevdet's thoughts simply as atheism and the enemy of religion. A superficial outlook could easily fall into this ideological trap, as Hanioglu (2005a) states.

Abdullah Cevdet never bought the idea that religion as an institution is an obstacle to the progress and technological advancement. Rather, he thought that the religion of Islam was not an obstacle but pushed for elements of progress, new developments, and modern sciences to be acquired (Hanioglu, 2005a, 2005b). I agree that Cevdet was not a devoted Muslim or hardcore Islamist. But I argue that the conflict literature is incapable of understanding aforementioned complexities. What is needed here is a wide range, explanatory, and multi-dimensional outlook.

In addition to Hanioglu's later arguments on Cevdet, Gündüz (2007) also, has an exceptional place in the accommodation literature. He compares and contrasts three different journals; *İctihad*, *Türkyurdu*, and *Sebilurreşad* on education, language and

² See e.g. Bürüngüz (2005); Tansü (2002); Çebi (2010), Alpay (2007, p.8).

³ See also Hanioglu's (1997, p.136) arguments: he "(...) viewed Islam a tool to cast religion aside.

women and argues that these three opposing and rivalry journals did not much differ on those subjects.

Although Gündüz (2007) points out accommodative aspects of those journals so that he can be included the accommodation literature, and inspite of his comprehensive analysis, his work on aforementioned journals are not subjected to a clearly pronounced methodological assessment. My study in this sense aims to fill this methodological gap first time in the accommodation approach by employing discourse analysis method. This enables us to see the significant place of Islam in Cevdet's modernisation project, the transformation of his discourse over time and Cevdet's instrumentally employed Islamic discourse.

1.4. Methodology: Discourse Analysis

The strategic use of discourse plays an important role in justifying the arguments and the positions of agents. They legitimize their claims through the discourses they formulate. At the same time, discourse plays a role in the elimination of opponents and challengers (Van Dijk, p.263). Actors impose a "legitimate vision of the world" through discourses. As Bourdieu (1989, p.20-21) states, "the words, the names, which construct social reality as much as they express it, are the stake par excellence of political struggle, which is a struggle to impose the legitimate principle of vision and division". To put it differently, they determine the "definition of the situation" through hierarchies, values and ideologies which express themselves in the discourse. That is to say, it is a "symbolic capital" that construct subjects, legitimate world vision and social reality (Bourdieu, 1989 p.21).

A "legitimate vision of the world" (Bourdieu) is achieved through the discursive formation of objects, subjects, and concepts (Fairclough, p.64). In this way, alternatives in hand, existing claims, and actors of power become legitimate or illegitimate (Van Dijk, p.263). Some names and concepts are sanctified, others demonized (Bourdieu, p.23). That is to say, discourse is "a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (Fairclough, p.64).

As for the constitutive aspect of discourse, “ability to define, classify and determine things” (quoted in Ardiç 2012, p.33-34), we can distinguish its three aspects. First of all, it helps the construction of “social identities and subject positions for social subjects and types of self”. The construction of social relationships between people is the second aspect of it. The last aspect is that discourse helps the “construction of systems of knowledge, and belief” (Fairclough, p. 64). This implies that every discourse helps to transform identities, interpersonal relations, and society, and culture (Jenner and Titscher, 2000, p.149).

For Foucault transformative and constitutive aspect of discourse are closely related to the production of knowledge, truth, and power. “The legitimate world view”, or the “truth”, is determined by the process of the production of knowledge. Knowledge is power in the sense that it determines, defines, categorizes and classifies things, ranks hierarchies of values, and identifies subjects and objects. Power, Foucault emphasizes, does not always surface in negative ways (Ardiç, 2012: 34). In other words, in the absence of observable and actual conflicts, there would be what Steven Lukes calls a “latent conflict” (2004, p.28): “A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants” (p.27).

In the Gramscian terminology, it is the “hegemony” wherein power is implicit thereby leading to the internalization of behavioral codes, social practices, and ideologies as they are normal and natural. The ruling classes, or broadly speaking actors of power, maintain their domination by winning consent (Allen, 2012, p.9). This cognitive way of control is more effective than conventional uses power, namely, violence and force, because it is “enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to change the mind of others in one’s own interest” (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 254). Power, as “hegemony” in the Gramscian sense, or as “latent” in the Lukean sense, is normalized, naturalized, and consolidated by institutionalization. This means that “power may be sanctioned by courts, legitimated by laws, enforced by the police, and ideologically sustained and reproduced by the media or textbooks” (p.255).

The ability to control the areas where decisions are made is not simply individual, but is sustained “by the socially structured and culturally patterned behavior of groups and practices of institutions” (Richardson, 2007, p.31) as well as by social relations and the practices of society. This is to say that, as Foucault emphasizes, power is dispersed throughout social relations and produces certain forms of behavior and thought as well as restricting others (Ardıç, 2012, p.35).

Discourse as an object of knowledge for Foucault constitutes and constructs identities and determines social relations and social structures. The constitutive aspect of discourse makes it an important element for political struggle and social change (Fairclough, 1992, pp.55, 56). But an over emphasis on the constitutive aspect of discourse in Foucault so much as to claim that it contributes to shape social identities, social relationships and determines the systems of knowledge and belief leads him to ignore the pre-established and constituted practices and values of hierarchies in society and institutions (Fairclough, 1992, p.65; see also Ardıç, 2012, p. 35).

I thus assume the central role of discourse in the subject and object construction, in social change and social practices; determining “definition of the situation”, and hierarchies of values; construction of systems of knowledge and belief; justifying the arguments, and the position actors of power holding; positive representation of, and tolerance, help and sympathy for their own group, as well as the elimination of the opponents through “negative representation of others” and by “focusing on negative social or cultural differences or cultural differences”, and “deviance or threats attributed to them” (Van Dijk, p.263), and present a discourse analysis of Abdullah Cevdet in his *İctihad* journal.

By adopting the method of discourse analysis, I aim to understand Cevdet’s construction of subjects, hierarchy of values, and the way that he interprets divine texts (namely, Qur’anic verses¹ and prophetic hadiths) and formulates religious concepts. Discourse analysis will also assist me to understand to what extent Islamic

1 Qur’anic translations are taken from Yusuf Ali’s (2001) translation of The Holy Qur’an.

rhetoric is employed strategically by Cevdet in order to make secular projects palatable to Muslim masses.

1.4.1. Strategic Use of Discourse by of Abdullah Cevdet

According to Ardıç (2012, p.4) there are three main reasons for the intense use of Islamic discourse in the Islamic world: “a fundamental concern for legitimacy by different actors”, “Islam’s crucial norm for social mobilization”, and “lack of an alternative “language” and a framework (such as secular-nationalist, or radical working class, or peasant movement that could contain reform attempts in a Muslim society”. He also argues that most secularists used this intense use of Islamic discourse instrumentally. There are three ways to detect instrumental nature of the secular use of Islamic discourse: actors own confessions, inconsistency between their discourse and actions, and sharp change on discourse on over time (Ardıç, 2012 p.303-307). Abdullah Cevdet too instrumentalizes Islamic discourse, particularly in his later writings (post 1980). He confessed that Islam was needed to make reforms acceptable among Muslims society:

Nous avons constate par nos longues experiences: l'esprit musulman fermera toute ouverture a la clarte si elle vient immediatement du monde chretien. Il nous faut donc ia nous qui assumons le soin de transfuser un sang nouveau dans les veines musulmanes, de chercher et trouver tous les principes progressistes dans l'institution de l'Islam meme, et l'islamisme en deborde. Telle est la raison qui nous am ne souvent ia parler des musulmanes et de l'islamisme² (Cevdet, 1905b, p. 89)

² “Uzun tecrübelerimizle biz, Müslüman kafasının doğrudan doğruya Hristiyan aleminden geldiği takdirde aydınlığa bütün girişleri kapayacağını müşahede etmiş bulunuyoruz. Binaenaleyh bizler Müslüman damarlarına yeni bir kan nakletme görevini üzerine alan bizler İslamiyet’te çok miktarda bulunan terakkiperver prensipleri arayıp bulmalıyız”(translated by Hanioglu, 1986); Also see "Müslümanlar terakkیات-I medeniyeyi ancak Müslüman bir menba'dan istinbat ve kabul ederler. Bu dekikeyi bilmeyen anlamayan anlamayan bizim mülâhazamızı abes görür. Fakat Alemi-i İslam'ın i i'tila' ve inkıraz-ı hikmetine muttali' olan vakifin-i kiram isabet-i fikrimizi tasdikde tereddud etmezler ve bizden razı olur" (Cevdet, 1906b, p.2).

Cevdet's instrumentalist usage of Islamic discourse for pragmatic reasons is of secondary importance in this study. The main goal of the thesis, as an alternative to confrontation literature's depictions of Cevdet as the enemy of religion, and a materialist, Darwinist, Westernist, etc. is to evaluate Cevdet within the actual context of his writings and from the accommodation perspective, given his synthetic approach between the East and the West, his intense usage of Islamic concepts and symbols until 1922/1924.

Through my research I have realized that, while in the pre-1922/1924 period Cevdet discourse aimed to glorify Islam because of its progressive and accommodative character to reforms, in post-1922/1924 period however, he started to express that Islam is insufficient to fit to the necessities of the age.

Out of 42 articles Cevdet wrote in *İctihad* between 1904-1926 that I examine, I identify 16 different "discursive strategies" (Foucault, 1972) and for each discursive strategy I find several "discursive techniques" (Ardıç, 2012) that Cevdet employed. For example, the "discursive strategy of invoking the sacred text of Islam for legitimation involves such techniques as abstracting Qur'anic verses and prophetic hadiths from their context", what he calls "decontextualisation" and a "selective reading of foundational text of Islam and its history" (Ardıç, 2012, p.35).

Table 1.1. Discursive Strategies

Themes	Sub-themes	Discursive Strategies
Islamic Values and Subjects	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distinguishing Between Active and Passive Morality 2. Invoking the Sacred Texts 3. Redefining Islamic Concepts
Subject Construction	Constitution of <i>Softas</i> as a Negative Ideal Type	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Sharp Distinction between the Success in this World and the Other 2. Identifying Traditional (softa) Mindset with Fatalism 3. Presenting Christian softas as the model for Muslim Softas
	Constitution of the Ideal Muslim Women	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Referencing to the History of Islam 2. Identifying Muslim Woman with Motherhood 3. De-emphasizing the Significance of Modest Dress in Islam
	Negative Picture of Sultans and Ottoman <i>Shahzadahs</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invoking Early Period of Islam 2. Seeing Sultan as the Perpetrator of Closure the Gate of İctihad 3. Presenting Ottoman Sultans as Incapable of Serving for the Benefit of Nation
Post War Period (1918-1926)	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritizing the Exigence of Time 2. Separating Religion and State 3. Legitimizing Bahai Religion by instrumentalising Islam

1.5. Organization of the Thesis

In the first chapter, I have presented the theoretical background and the methodology of the thesis. In the second chapter, I first briefly, discuss Ottoman modernization process, and then locate Abdullah Cevdet's life story in this context. I try to show a parallel between common discourse in the Ottoman modernization and Cevdet's discourse. Islamic discourse was apparent behind *Tanzimat* and *Islahat* Decrees and constitutionalism and its institutions like parliament and the constitution, *Kanun-i Esasi* as well as the 1921 constitution. This kind of language started to change in 1924 when the caliphate was abolished and all religious schools were close down. Post 1924 period was what Ardiç (p.25) calls the "domination" period, characterized by the attempt at control of religion by the state elite. Ottoman

modernization process, Abdullah Cevdet too employed a religious discourse until 1922/1924 claiming that Islam promoted progress. . In 1922, he proposed Bahai religion as a universal religion as alternative to Islam.

In the third chapter, I present a discourse analysis of Cevdet's 42 articles between 1904-1926, with different discursive strategies and techniques mentioned above. I divide the main themes into three: Islamic values and subjects, discursive construction of softas, Muslim women and sultans and Ottoman princes, and finally post-war period (1908/1926).

In the concluding chapter, I reivew my arguments as well as further arguing that Cevdet's use of Islamic discourse was instrumental in essence. I show this with reference to his own confessions, his decontextualization of Islamic concepts and sources, and the obvious change in his Islamic discourse over time. The discursive strategies Cevdet employed between 1918 and 1926 were similar (especially invoking the sacred texts and Islamic history) to that of pre-war period. However, this time rather than glorifying Islam, he benefited from the content of Islam to make more explicitly secular arguments.

CHAPTER 2

ABDULLAH CEVDET IN THE CONTEXT OF OTTOMAN MODERNIZATION

2.1 Historical Context: A brief history of Ottoman modernization

The Ottoman modernization attempts that started with Sultan Selim III, gained momentum with Tanzimat period, and continued with Constitutional Monarchy. The modernization process created new alternative institutions to traditional ones. The changes and transformations in fields of law, education, economy and military also transformed the intellectuals' ways of thinking. The intellectuals who grew up during the reform periods were affected by the new institutions politically and intellectually. Abdullah Cevdet who grew up during the age of reform, and experienced these new institutions and lived in this cultural atmosphere, of course adopted modern way of thinking and language that largely differed from traditional interpretations. Therefore, the Ottoman modernization constitutes the main context of Abdullah Cevdet's discourse in this thesis.

In this chapter, I discuss the Ottoman modernization, including Sultan Selim III and Sultan Mahmud II's reforms, *Tanzimat* (Reforms) and *Meşrutiyet* (Constitutional Monarchy) periods and ultimately resulting in the declaration of the Republic of Turkey, on October 19th, 1923. The proclamation of the republic in 1923 should not be considered separately from Ottoman modernization process (Kara 1994; Ardiç, 2012; Zürcher, 2007). This is also true in terms of how modernization attempts were justified. Until 1924, Islam appears to be the fundamental legitimation source for the reforms. The post-1924 period witnessed a gradual decline of religion in the legitimization of reforms. Religion of Islam through revolutions during 1924-1928 was tried to be taken under the control of the state. 1928 was also the year in which Article 2, the religion of state is Islam had been removed from the 1924 constitution (Teşkilatı Esasiye).

By the second half of the 16th century, statesmen in the Ottoman Empire started to write some pamphlets in which they pointed out financial, social and bureaucratic

problems. The solution they proposed was returning to the old magnificent days of *Kanun-i Kadim*. These works are important since they were the first signs of the necessity of the regulations in the 16th century and subsequent centuries of the Ottoman Empire (Yılmaz, 2003; Lewis 1967, p.32-33).

The military defeats of the Ottoman Empire against Austria and Russia, and the psychological crisis caused by the Treaty of Karlowitz (26 January, 1699) in which Ottomans lost substantial amount of territories, created a sense that there should be a series of changes in technical, administrative, educational, financial, and the military institutions (Lewis, p.36.).

According to Sultan Selim III (1789-1807), the source of the problem was the army. Thus he started with the reforms in the military. As an alternative to janissary, he established a new army called *Nizam-ı Cedid* (New Order). French experts were brought to train the military. Moreover, he opened military and engineering schools based on Western principles (Lewis, p.39, 57; Berkes, 2012 p.41-44, Zürcher, 2004, p.21-29).

The subsequent sultan, Mahmud II (1807-1839) followed his successor Selim and continued reforms in the military. He wanted to form a new modern army in order to prevent military defeats and territorial losses. He replaced the janissaries with the new army called *Asakir-i Masure-i Muhammediye* (Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad). To train the army he brought in experts from Prussia. He strengthened the central government, centralized bureaucracy, increased the number of secular schools, changed the dress code: Western style of clothing became obligatory for the officials. For the first time, students were sent to Europe. A military medical school was established where modern medicine was taught. As a result of these reforms he was referred as the "Infidel Sultan" by the public (Berkes, p.89-135; Lewis, 89-106, p. 61-109; Zürcher p.39-45).

The reforms of Selim III and Mahmud II paved the way for the new wave of comprehensive reforms of *Tanzimat* (Reforms) period (1839-1876), which started

with the declaration of *Gülhane Hatt-ı Şerif* (The Noble Edict of the Rose Garden). The decree aimed to stop the decline of the Ottoman Empire, to rejuvenate the state and to prevent interference of the European powers by providing equality before the law to all its subjects, Muslims or non-Muslims alike (Zürcher, p.51).

During the *Tanzimat* period (1839-1876), the number of secular *ibtidai* (elementary) and *rüşdiye* (secondary schools) were increased as an alternative to *madrasas* (religious schools). These schools followed Western curricula. A criminal law recognizing the equality of Muslims and non-Muslims came into force. *Nizamiye* (Regulation) courts were formed to deal with the cases between Muslims and non-Muslims. In this courts, rather than the sharia law, secular rules and regulations (*kavanin-i cedide*) were in effect. (Lewis, 1993, p. 113-123; Zürcher, p.62-63; Mardin, 2012, 19-36; Berkes, 1998, p.155-200). However, many of these reforms remained ineffective in reality due mostly to the resistance by the *ulema* (religious scholars) particularly in the legal field (Kenanoğlu, 2004; Ardiç, 2012).

In the *Tanzimat* Edict, the principle of equality between Muslims and non-Muslims was adopted. Following the Edict, non-Muslims were given additional privileges by *Islahat Fermanı* (Reform Edict, 1856). Both *Tanzimat* and *Islahat* Edicts were the first steps of transition from the *tebaa* (subjects) to citizenship principle. *Tanzimat* period (1839-1876) indicated Ottoman Empire's loss of superiority over Europe. The Ottoman statesmen believed that, as an alternative to traditional institutions and laws, Modern Western laws and institutions would stop the decline of the Empire. Nevertheless, incoherence and duality between traditional-religious and modern-secular institutions created problem of jurisdiction in law. The scope of authority was not clearly identified for the old and new institutions. Moreover, the reforms were not welcomed by religious circles, especially provincial *ulema*. Through adopting citizenship principle, European states intervened in the internal affairs of the Ottoman State on the grounds that the principle of equality was ignored when dealing with non-Muslims. Moreover, regulations for market capitalism and foreign trade increased the influence of European states on the Empire (Zürcher, p.56-71; Shaw and Shaw, 2002, p.155-172)

One of the objectives of the *Tanzimat* was to raise an intellectual group that would ensure the continuity of the reforms. Some of intellectuals and statesmen who grew up in the atmosphere of *Tanzimat*, like Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha, Ali Suavi, and Şinasi formed a group to achieve these objectives under the leadership as well as the sponsorship of Mustafa Fazıl Pasha. This second generation *Tanzimat* intellectuals called the *Genç Osmanlılar* (Young Ottomans) wrote articles in newspapers mainly the *Muhbir* and *Hürriyet* on topics like freedom, equality and brotherhood, justice, and consultation (*meşveret*). Also they supported the unification of all Muslims and non-Muslims in the empire under *Ottomanism*. In addition to *Ottomanism*, due to the uprisings in the Balkans, another ideology called *İttihad-ı İslam*, the unity between Muslims within and outside the empire gained importance among Young Ottomans. Also, this group was also demanding *meşrutiyet* (constitutional monarchy) in which the powers of the sultan would be restricted and controlled by the members of the parliament. They believed that constitutionalism would stop the decline of the empire (Çetinsaya, 2015; Türköne, 1998; Mardin, 2014).

In order to realize constitutional monarchy, Young Ottomans helped Abdulhamid II (1876-1909) ascend to the throne. The new sultan opened the first parliament and proclaimed the new constitution, *Kanun-i Esasi*, starting the first *Meşrutiyet* (constitutional monarchy) period in Ottoman history. However, due to the uprisings in the Balkans and Russian declaration of war in 1877, the Sultan abolished the constitution and dissolved the parliament. Until the declaration of the second constitutional period in 1908, he oppressed the opposition, restricted the freedom of thought and press. Sultan Abdulhamid II in his reign pursued the policy of *İttihad-ı İslam* by using the symbolic power of caliphate, increased the number of engineering schools as well as primary and secondary schools, expanded the communication and transportation lines (Shaw and Shaw, 172-178; Zürcher, p.76-78; Lewis, 150-169).

The loss of territories after Turko-Russian war in 1877 with the uprisings in Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina and strong opposition of Young Turks against state policies compelled Sultan Abdulhamid II to proclaim constitutional monarchy again in 1908. Young Turks movement which was a major influence in the

re-institution of the second constitutional monarch was originally a student club founded in 1889 by medical students including Abdullah Cevdet, İbrahim Temo, Hikmet Emin and Mehmed Reşid; later became an intellectual-political club named *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress, CUP). This organization later developed into a militant club with potential to dethrone the sultan on 31 March 1909 (Zürcher, p.73-76; Shaw and Shaw, p.256).

After de-throne of Abdulhamid II subsequent sultan Mehmed Reşad was placed on the throne but he was too weak to rule the Empire (Zürcher, p.98). CUP took control over the empire. CUP reign was full of unsuccessful wars. Ottomans were defeated by the Balkan states in 1912. Moreover, Ottomans formed an alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary against Britain, France, Russia and Italy (p.102-107). With the outbreak of the World War I, Ottomans lost its territories in Arabian Peninsula, Middle East and in North Africa. Arab and Armenian uprisings during the war increased the followers of the Turkish nationalism. The rise of Turkish nationalism was also the reason of those uprisings. The ideology gained political character and it became the official ideology of CUP.

During the war period, reforms continued under the CUP government. *Shaykh al-Islam*, the highest authority in religious affairs was removed from the cabinet and its authority was restricted. The *sharia* courts were placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice in which jurists were appointed and supervised. Religious schools, *madradas* were put under the Ministry of Education. *Evqaf* (Pious Foundations) were given to the authority of the Ministry of Finance under the Department of Pious Foundations. It meant that the field of religious education, jurisdiction, and foundations which were previously under the supervision of the office of *Shaykh al-Islam* were divided into three different ministries. In addition, *sharia* law was limited to family law with some restrictions. For example, the law of inheritance was taken from the German laws. Furthermore, women's divorce rights were extended and polygamy was banned (Shaw and Shaw, p.272-340;. Zürcher p.93-132).

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, The Allies including British, France (Russia had already withdrew from the war because of Bolshevik Revolution) invaded Ottoman territories and imposed Istanbul government an armistice in 1918. Under the leadership of some CUP members including Mustafa Kemal and Kazım Karabekir, "National Struggle" had already started with the formation of *Kuvayi Milliye* (the National Forces) which included every segment of society. As an alternative to the capital city new parliament and a new government were established in Ankara in 1920. The defence forces succeeded in stopping the Greek army penetrating into Anatolia and ally forces began to withdraw. In 1922 Ankara government enacted a new legislation separating the sultanate and caliphate and abolishing the former. This was thought as an only way to eradicate the legitimacy of the Istanbul government. This strategic change allowed Ankara government to attend the Lausanne Conference (with which the Allies recognized Turkish independence) in the representatives of the Turkish nation. But this separation meant the end of what remained of the Ottoman political authority over the Islamic world too. İsmet Pasha representing the Ankara government signed the Treaty of Lausanne with the Allies on July 24, 1923 and the new Republic was proclaimed on 29 October, 1923 (Shaw and Shaw, 2002, p.340-373; Zürcher, p.133-166).

The Republican's People Party (RPP) under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal ruled the New Republic of Turkey. The process of modernization/secularization which began with the *Tanzimat* period (1839-1876) accelerated further with the new reforms. Major transformations were made by three laws enacted in 3rd March of 1923. The first of these was the abolition of the caliphate which had previously been separated from the sultanate. This meant that, the Republic's spiritual bond with Islamic world was broken after the political one. The second law was the *Tevhid-i Tedrisat* (Unification of Education) in which religious schools were outlawed and secular schools were accepted as the only legitimate education institution. The last one was the abolition of *Şer'iye ve Evkaf Vekaleti* (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations). Instead, *Diyanet İşleri Müdürlüğü* (Directorate for Religious Affairs) and *Evkaf Umum Müdürlüğü* (Directorate General for Pious Foundations) were established and affiliated with the prime ministry. This meant that a religious

institution at the ministerial level was reduced to a lower governmental office. In 1928, there was an elimination in the second article of the constitution, *Teşkilat-ı Esasi* (1924) which had declared Islam as the official religion of the republic. In 1937, the new constitution declared the Turkish state was a “secular” one (Lewis, p.239-265; Shaw and Shaw p.384-385; Zürcher, p.187; Kara, 2017a, p.23-25, 92).

2.1.1 Between Islam and Modernity: Accommodative Character of the Ottoman Modernisation

I have shown that the reforms starting with the *Tanzimat* (1839) in the Ottoman Empire were justified mainly through Islamic discourse. Religious rhetoric was the cornerstone of the reforms. Therefore, modernization attempts in the Ottoman Empire (in Islamic world too) were not necessarily interpreted by the actors themselves as secularization. For some authors those attempts are also Islamization attempts (Kara, 2017a). This comment is partly true. But, it was clear that Islamic language had very significant share behind the reforms. The use of religious discourse in the reforms stemmed from two things. On the one hand, religion of Islam in the conservative society of Ottomans was the highest legitimation source for the reforms. On the other hand, reforms made to save the state were also seen to preserve the religion: survival of the state meant the survival of religion. That is why, most of the Islamist intellectuals and the ulema were not against modernization attempts, but supported them, particularly during the second *Meşrutiyet* (Kara 1994, Ardiç, 2012).

The religious discourse behind *Tanzimat* and *Islahat* Decrees was clear. The *Tanzimat* Edict begins with the name of Allah and a Quranic verse, *Surah al Mülk* (67:1). Then, it continues with the reasons of decline, depression and the defeat that the Ottomans had been experiencing for the last 150 years are listed. The reason for this bad course which resulted in weakness and poverty of Muslims was attributed to the failure to obey the *sharia* and its laws (İnalçık, Seyitdanlıoğlu, 2006, p.1).

As everyone knows, the supreme provisions of the Qur'an and the laws of sharia have been fully complied with since the establishment of our state, the power of our

country and the welfare and the happiness of all of its subjects was at the highest level. However, for the last one hundred and fifty years power and prosperity, on the contrary, was replaced by weakness and poverty. This is because of successive turmoils and various reasons causing not to comply with the *sharia* and its prime laws. However, the impossibility of a country's survival that is not governed by *sharia* laws is evident⁶.

Here, as mentioned above, a relationship was established between compliance with the *sharia* laws and the survival of the state. That is to say, the state's existence depends on the extent to which it abides by the *sharia* laws.

Fuat Pasha, one of the most influential figures in the *Tanzimat* reforms, emphasized that saving the state meant saving religion too: "We must adopt these important political and administrative institutions, which are essential and necessary for the survival of any state in Europe, for the security of Islam as soon as possible"⁷ (quoted in Çetinsaya, 2011, p. 55).

According to Ali Pasha, another influential political leader in the *Tanzimat* period, agrees with Fuat Pasha; that survival of the state was inseparable from that of religion. Ali Pasha was aware of some of the drawbacks of the reforms. However, he believes that the Islamic state would lose its independence if precaution is not due to costs. In order to maintain the Islamic state, reforms should be made in line with the needs of the time and ideas need to be exchanged with Europe⁸ (quoted in Çetinsaya, 2011, p.55).

⁶"Cümleye malum olduđu üzere Devlet-i Aliyyemiz'in bidâyet-i zuhûrundan beri ahkâm-ı celîle-i Kur'âniyye ve kavânîn-i şer'iyyeye kemâliyle riâyet olunduğundan saltanat-ı seniyyemizin kuvvet ve miknet ve bi'lcümle tebe'asının refâh u ma'mûriyeti rûtbe-i gâyete vâsıl olmuş iken yüz elli sene vardır ki, gavâ'il-i müte'âkıbe ve esbâb-ı mütenevviaya mebnî ne şer-i şerîfe ve ne kavânîn-i münîfeye inkıyâd ü imtisâl olunmamak hasebiyle evvelki kuvvet ve ma'mûriyyet bilakis za'f u fakra mübeddel olmuş ve halbuki kavânîn-i şer'iyye tahtında idâre olunmayan memâlikin pâyedâr olamayacağı vâzihâttan bulunmuş.."

⁷ "Herhangi bir devletin artık Avrupa'da varlığını sürdürebilmesi için gerekli ve zorunlu olan bu önemli siyasi ve idari kurumları İslam'lığın güvenliği için bir an önce benimsemeliyiz".

⁸ "İhtiyac-ı zamaniyi takip etmeli, icab-ı asr-u zamana evfak hareket etmelidir. Efkâr ve etvar-ı muta'assıbadan sakınmalı, hal-i inziva ya da taassubu hal yerine Avrupa ile mübadele-i efkâr yolu tutulmalıdır".

Transition to constitutional monarchy, *Meşrutiyet*, was an important step toward the modernization process of the Ottomans' political history. As in the case of *Tanzimat* reforms, the first constitution *Kanuni Esasi* (1876), and the new regime type, *Meşrutiyet*, was legitimized through religious discourse (Kara, p.1994, 182-192). Contrary to claims in the conflict literature, pro-Western intellectuals were not the only supporters of constitutional monarchy which was the first step toward the democratization process in the Ottoman Empire. Islamists too, who have undergone traditional Islamic education and even the scholars of religious schools, *madrassahs*, were adversaries of Abdulhamid II and they supported constitutional monarchy against his "oppressive" regime (Kara, 1994, p.131-142).

Islamists who published their articles in the journals of *Sırat-ı Mustakim*, *Beyanu'l Hak*, and *Volkan* during the second *Meşrutiyet* were supporters of the new regime and its institutions, namely the parliament and the constitution. They legitimized constitutional monarchy with the Qur'anic verses, prophetic hadiths and Islamic history. The parliament, *majlis*, was legitimized through the Islamic concepts like *shura* (consultation). Also it was believed that the new constitution was extracted from the Islamic law and the new regime type is practice of rightly guided khalifs after the death of the prophet (Kara, 1994).

The editor in chief of the journal *Sırat-ı Mustakim*, Mehmet Akif [Ersoy], was a symbolic name of the Islamist ideology. He described the reign of Abdulhamid II as ugly (*mülevves*), oppressive (*müstebid*), disastrous (*nekbet*), bloody (*huni*), murderer (*cani*) and tyrannical. In fact, he believed, the oppressive regime of the sultan called *istibdad* is so bad that Satan is preferred to it. On the other hand, Mehmet Akif vis a vis *istibdad regime* viewed the constitutional regime as the harbinger of the happy days; promising, and blessing (quoted in Kara, 1994).

Another famous Islamist Mustafa Sabri Efendi was known to have close relations with the CUP, and he was the editor in chief of the *Beyanu'l Hak* periodical. Mustafa Sabri Efendi like Ersoy supported the constitutional monarchy. He thought that *meşrutiyet* is an ancient (*kadim*) regime form of Islam. Also, he considered the new

regime in terms of opportunity for people to have a greater say in the governance and for people to oversee the government (quoted in Kara p.104; 109).

Derviş Vahdeti, the owner and the editor of the *Volkan* newspaper, was always presented in the confrontation literature (see Aksoy, 2008, p.65; Hocaoglu, 2010, p.139,318-322; Kutay 2000; Akşin, 2015; Zürcher, 2015, p.397; Tunaya 1962, p.118; 121) as an obscurantist, and ardent critic of the constitutional regime, reactionary opponent of reforms and the provocative behind the 31 March uprising. Contrarily, he supported the constitutional regime and advocated freedom⁹. He proposed in *Volkan* that the admirer of positivist Auguste Comte¹⁰, Ahmed Rıza; the proponent of decentralization *adem-i merkeziyet*, Prince Sabahattin; and so called faithless materialist Abdullah Cevdet to be members of parliament since they struggled the most in the eyes of the people (1324, p.3). What is more, he presented Ziya Gökalp, an intellectual figure behind the revolutions of Turkish Republic, as his most benevolent teacher (1324, p.1).

His colleague Said Nursi in the newspaper argued despotism as the source of cruelty, inhumane, destructive, humiliation and poison for humanity (quoted in Kara, p.127). He viewed the constitutional monarchy as the first gateway to the Islamic world that will lead to heaven in the future¹¹ (p.101). When Nursi told the Kurds about the gains of the constitutional regime, he made the following statements: “*meşrutiyet* makes

⁹ Bilad-ı İslamiyede tatbik edilecek kavanin-i ecnebiye tahsil-i vesait-i nakliye-i berriye ve bahriye, tevsî'i daire-i umur-i sınaîyye, temin-i muamelat-ı ticariyye inhisar etmelidir”. See also “Eğer din ile dünya ve şeriat ile medeniyet bir noktada içtima edemez zannediyorsanız pek büyük hata ediyorsunuz. Zira sanayi ve ticaret vasıtasıyla iktisab-ı servet ederek esbabı umrana tevessül ve düşmana karşı elden gelen kuvvetleri i’lada tevassul için pek çok ayat-ı kerime ve ehadis-i şerife vardır.”(332/3) ... “medeniyet ise imarat ve asayiş ve rahatı muhafaza ile cümleye ibrazı teshilat ve muamelatta oluna hukuku ammeyi sıyanet ve hukuk-u en’amdan adalet ve müsavâtı ta’min ederek kaffe-i milelin mal-u canlarının ve ırz-u namuslarını muhafaza etmekten ibarettir ki bunların cümleleri Kur’an-ı Kerim ve ehadis-i şerif ve onlardan instinbat olunan kütüb ii kadime ve cedide bize emr ediyor” (1324, p.4)

¹⁰ See also, “*Volkan*” (1324 p.4-check it). “Pozitivister ...şüphe yoktur ki, dindarlık davasında bulunup da mukallid olanlardan ve “inna vecedna abauna” diyenlerden her halde evladır” Din aleyhinde bulunmadıkları sürece “bunları muaheze etmek muvafık-ı şiar-ı İslamiyet değildir.”

¹¹ “Alemlî İslamiyetin istikbaldeki firdevs-i terakkisinin birinci kapısı(...).”

everybody sultan and you should try to be sultan by supporting freedom”¹². Nursi believed that the sovereignty of the nation is strengthened by the elimination of despotism (Kara, p.105). He also thinks that the constitutional regime is the true and the legitimate *sharia* ruling thereby raises the greatness of Islam and the words of Allah¹³ (p.110).

The two important institutions of *Meşrutiyet*, constitution - *Kanun-i Esasi* (1876) and parliament -*meclis* were also justified with reference to *sharia*. Islamists invoked Qur’anic verses and hadiths to prove that parliament should be including both Muslim and non-Muslim deputies. The most frequently used verses were what is called consultation *müşavere* verses: “...and consult them in the matter” (3;159); “whose affair is determined by consultation among themselves” (42:38). Also, the prophetic hadiths are employed to justify the *majlis*: “The one who consults does not regret”; “Allah’s hands are on the congregation” (Kara, p.165-72; see also Mertoğlu 2001, Ardiç 2012). So many Islamists did not see the involvement of the non-Muslims in the parliament as a problem from an Islamic perspective.

In addition to justification attempts for parliament by Islamic references, the same strategy was employed for the constitution: *Kanun-i Esasi*. While some works indicate that the constitution was drafted from the French and Prussian constitutions, Islamists insisted that *Kanun-i Esasi* is extracted from *sharia*¹⁴: Well-known Islamist İskilipli Atıf Efendi stated that the constitution was taken from the glorious *sharia* of prophet Muhammed¹⁵. İskilipli claimed that since the constitution conduces survival and exercise of *sharia* law, the protection of it is a religious duty, *farz*. Naqshi Sufi leader Ömer Ziyaeddin published a pamphlet trying to prove in each article that the constitution is compatible with Islam (Kara, 184-192).

¹² “Meşrutiyet herkesi birer padişah hükmüne götürüyor. Siz de hürriyetperverlikle padişah olmaya gayret ediniz”.

¹³ “İ’la-yı şevket-i İslamiye ve i’la-yı kelimetullahın vasıtası olan meşruta-i meşruayı şeriat”

¹⁴ See: “Kanun-u Esasi’ miz şeriata temessükün bir senedi-i kavimidir”; Kanun-i Esasimiz şer-i şerifle müeyyedir” (quoted in Kara, p.183).

¹⁵ “Şeriatı garrayı Muhammediyemizden muktebes olan Kanun-i Esasimiz”.

2.2. From Accommodation to Confrontation: 1921 and 1924 Constitutions

I have asserted that Ottoman modernization context would help having better evaluation on Abdullah Cevdet. I found that there was a change in the discourse of Cevdet post 1924 period. I would say that till 1924, Cevdet did not oppose to religion. He never thought that Islam was an obstacle for progress; on the contrary, he always claimed that Islam promoted progress. These claims gradually ended in 1922/1924 period. For example, in 1922 Cevdet argued that Bahai religion was a universal and international religion, and two years later he proposed to find new set of moral rules as an alternative to Islam. I realized that a similar change took place during the Ottoman modernization process. By the year 1924, the fundamental significance of religious legitimacy began to disappear. As opposed to the 1921 constitution, adapting ethnically based nationalism with the 1924 constitution indicates the transformation in the process.

Unlike the *Teşkilat-ı Esasi* (1921), *Kanun-ı Esasi* (1876) had emphasized the superiority of the caliph-sultan which was both the protector of Islam and the Ottoman dynasty (Ardıç, p.54). Compared to the 1876 constitution, the 1921 constitution would be considered a step towards the creation of the modern state based on to the principles of national sovereignty, *hakimiyet-i milliye*. But the term “nation” here was used as a reference to Islam. It was not defined on the basis of ethnicity. So, the term “nation” here does not exclude Muslim Arabs, Kurds, etc. This is because the Turkish state was not established yet. The constitution’s discourse was also truly Islamic: it was specified in the constitution that rules and laws should be in conformity with Islamic jurisprudence, *fiqh*, which was the ultimate objective of the newly launched Grand National Assembly (GNA) administration (pp. 58-59).

Three weeks after the proclamation of the new republic (October 29, 1923), on March 3rd, 1924 the caliphate was abolished and all religious schools were outlawed and 1924 constitution was adopted. New constitution, much like 1921, signified the national sovereignty, although it is also defined the state as an “Islamic” one (Article No:2). The term “nation” was used mostly on the basis of secular nationalism, since it ignored the existence of other identities and ethnicities by referring to all

inhabitants of Turkey as Turk. Also, unlike the previous one, in the 1924 constitution compliance with the *sharia* was not mentioned. In 1928 Article 2, which declared Islam as the religion of the state, was removed. This was followed by the radical reforms like hat, alphabet, and other cultural “revolutions” (Ardıç, p.60-62).

As argued above, starting with the *Tanzimat* period (1839-1876), modernization attempts were justified through Qur’anic verses, prophetic hadiths and Islamic concepts. Unlike what confrontationist historians argue, most Islamists were actively involved in the modernization process. Accommodation between modernization and religion lasted until 1924. Religious tone gradually diminished by subsequent reforms. This was a signal that the relation between Islam and new reforms was occurring in the confrontation line.

It is claimed that Ottoman-Turkish modernization attempts, reforms, beginning from the *Tanzimat* period until 1924 was in conformity with Islam. The reforms were legitimized with reference to religious texts. The accommodation between reforms and Islam was also true for the all the political and intellectual stream of thoughts and ideologies (Kara,2017a, p.92). I have showed Islamic figures’ involvement in the modernization process; a similar argument can be made for so-called Westernists, particularly Abdullah Cevdet. Contrary to the confrontation literature’s presentation of Cevdet who was depicted as a hard-core pro-Western, materialist, anti-religionist, and extreme Westernizer (Tunaya, 2016, 1998; Hanioğlu, 1966, p.9, 24, 135, 140, 295, 325, 363, 389, 389; Berkes, 2014, p.412, 424, 441, 444, Zürcher, p.128); he employed religious discourse, gave reference to Islamic concepts, used Qur’anic verses and prophetic hadiths until 1924. This means that so called “extreme Westernizer” Cevdet saw Islam as the main source of justification in his discourse at least until 1924. Before analyzing his discourse in his journal *İctihad* between 1904 and 1924, I briefly present Cevdet’s life, intellectual networks and his journal *İctihad* in order to have a better understanding of his discourse.

2.3. The Life of Abdullah Cevdet

Abdullah Cevdet was born in 1869 in Arapkir, a district of today’s Elazığ. He received his primary education through his uncle who had served as a local imam and his

father who was a middle class civil bureaucrat. According to Cevdet's statement, the environment he grew up in was composed of imams, religious teachers (hodja) and conservative people (Haniođlu 1986, p.5).

His formal education started in *Arapkir İptidai Mektebi* (primary school), and later he attended *Mamurat'ul Aziz Askeri Rüştiyesi* (military secondary school) in Elaziđ. He continued his education in *Kuleli Askeri Tıbbiye İdadisi* (military medical high-school) and graduated in 1885. Although anti-government thoughts were widespread during his education in medicine (*Tıbbiye*), Cevdet remained indifferent to such ideas for the duration of his study (Haniođlu, 1981, p.6). During this period, he started to write poetry and work at *Tuluat*, and even wrote a *Naat-ı Şerif* (praise of the Prophet). According to his friends in medical school, Cevdet was dutiful in fulfilling his religious rituals (Kuran, p.30).

After the *idadi* (high school) education, he joined *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Askeriye-yi Şahane* (Imperial Military Medical School) in 1888. Here he translated a part of Ludwig Buchner's *Kraft and Soft* (Force and the Matter) as *Fizyolocia-i Tefekkür* into Turkish. Also, he wrote *Dimađ ve Melekatı Akliye* (1915) in which he refers to Karl Vogt, Ernest Haeckel, and Herbert Spencer (Haniođlu, 1988, p.90).

A confrontationist commentator could conclude that those translations indicate that Cevdet was under the influence of biological Darwinism and materialism. But when his other translations of romantic thinkers like Byron, Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante and Alfieri (Cevdet, 1906, p.10) as well as translations of Eastern classics like Mevlana (Cevdet, 1329g), Gazali (Cevdet, 1329h), and Hayyam (Cevdet, 1330b) with references from Sadi Şirazi (Cevdeti 1327a) are taken into consideration, it will be realized that such conclusions are simplistic and one dimensional. In fact, he never intended to eliminate religion; rather his aim was "to provide knowledge from the West to East and from East to West" (Cevdet, 1905g).

During his *Tıbbiye* years together with İbrahim Temo, Hikmet Emin and Mehmed Reşid, he established *İttihad-ı Osmani Cemiyeti* in 1889¹⁶ which would be renamed *Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Ottoman Unity and Progress Committee-CUP) five years later (Hanioğlu, 1981, p.26). After graduating from *Tıbbiye* in 1894, he started to work in Diyarbakır as an ophthalmology assistant and continued his political, scientific and intellectual activities. Here he became friends with Ziya Gökalp and through his efforts, many joined the Committee. He also published Büchner's work *Natur and Guest* as *Goril* in Turkish¹⁷ (Hanioğlu, 1988, p.90). Because of oppositional political activities against the reign of the Abdulhamid II he was exiled to Tripoli where he worked as an arrested ophthalmologist in Tripoli hospital. At that time, he wrote articles against the regime in *Meşveret* and *Mizan* journals, which had been known to have a close relationship with CUP (Kuran, 32).

In 1897, Cevdet escaped to Paris where he participated in Young Turks movement. Meanwhile, due to the disputes in the movement, he acted with the director of the CUP's Paris branch Ahmed Rıza and continued to spread his ideas in Rıza's journal, *Meşveret*. In the same year, together with leading opposing figures İshak Suyuti and Tunali Hilmi, Cevdet started to publish a journal called *Osmanlı* in Geneva. He also continued to write in Ahmed Rıza's *Meşveret* and other publishing organs of CUP like *Kanun-i Esasi*, *Sadayı Millet* and *Kürdistan* (Hanioğlu, 1981, p.50). Moreover, he published a pamphlet *İki Emel* which highly influenced Young Turks. At that time, Cevdet (1906, p10) was questioning the legitimacy of Abdulhamid II's caliphate, previous Ottoman sultans, and the sultanate itself with an emphasis on the concepts

¹⁶ Ali Birinci (1988) argues that the Committee was founded in 1885 and Cevdet is not among the founding members of it.

¹⁷ The affect of Büchner on well-known Islamist Mehmet Akif Ersoy is one of the signs of the complexity between modernity and Islam (see Gündüz, 2008, p.30).

of liberty, equality, and brotherhood¹⁸, he was also calling people to participate in this intellectual struggle.



Figure 2.1. The verse in the Qur'an about consultation, "wa-shawirhum fil amr" is used in a Comte admirer, Ahmed Rıza's Mesveret just below the head of the newspaper.

Nevertheless, the financial problems of Cevdet and his friends in printing the journal led them to negotiate with the Ottoman government. In return for 1500 frank per month, Cevdet accepted the deal to stop targeting Abdulhamid's regime in his articles. In spite of the deal Cevdet was sending his articles to CUP's publishing organs with different names. A year later in 1889 due to the Cevdet's disregard of the agreement, the government cut the subsidy. Because of mentioned ongoing financial problems, Cevdet had to make another deal with the government. He was appointed as a doctor in the Vienna embassy, provided that he did not engage in any oppositional activities against the government. Cevdet continued this diplomatic mission until 1903, when he insulted the ambassador of Vienna, Mahmut Nedim Bey who informed the palace that he had secretly pursued his political activities. (1988, p.91).

Because of the diplomatic pressure of Istanbul on Vienna, Cevdet had to flee to the Habsburg Empire and travel to Paris in order to continue his political and intellectual

¹⁸ It is not a coincidence that Cevdet (1906, p.10) makes translations from Hugo, Byron, Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, Alfieri and Voltaire. Through these translations, his aim was to spread the concepts of freedom and brotherhood in the community.

activities with CUP members. However, one of the influential figures of CUP in Paris, Ahmed Rıza, did not welcome him due to his deal with the regime. Moving to Geneva, Cevdet started to republish the *Osmanlı* journal with Edhem Ruhi with whom he established *Osmanlı İttihad ve İnkılab Cemiyeti* (Ottoman Unity and Revolution Society) in March 1904. In addition to these activities, Cevdet founded the *İctihad* publishing house with a financial support from Ahmet Pasha in September 1904. The *İctihad* magazine would affect the Turkish cultural life for many years to come (p.91).

Cevdet's publications disturbed the Istanbul regime, and Ottoman officials were soon pressuring the Swedish government to deport Cevdet. Despite Cevdet's appeal to Swiss officials, he was finally deported. In the absence of Cevdet therefore, *İctihad* was published by Hüseyin Tosun in Geneva (p.91).

At the beginning of September 1905, Cevdet went to Cairo and continued to publish *İctihad* here. During his stay in Egypt (1905-1910), he established a close relation with Prince Sabahattin, a prominent liberal intellectual (and a member of the royal family), who was spreading the idea of *adem-i merkeziyet* (decentralization). His article called "Hanedan-ı Osmani" in which Cevdet questions the legitimacy of Ottoman dynasty sparked a huge reaction among Jon Turks. Despite the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy, he preferred to stay in Cairo due to disagreements with CUP leaders (1981, p.56).

In 1908, Cevdet translated the Dutch orientalist Reinhard Dozy's book *Essay sur l'histoire de l'Islamisme* as *Tarih-i İslamiyet*, which received a great reaction by the Islamists¹⁹ since the book consisted of heavy criticism toward Islam and its prophets and violating the long established cultural conventions of Ottoman society.

Two years after the declaration of the constitution Cevdet returned to Istanbul where he continued to publish *İctihad*. The prominent figures like Celal Nuri (1882-1936)

¹⁹ See Islamist critics; Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı (1328, Muharrem) "Tarih-i İslamiyet", Sırat-ı Mıstakim, nu.72;74; İsmail Fenni Ertuğrul (1928). *İzale-i Şükük*. İstanbul.

and Kılıçzade Hakkı (1872-1960) was already included in the *İctihad* publication team. The liberal atmosphere of the Second Constitutional Era allowed Cevdet to become a member of *Osmanlı Demokrat Fırkası* (Ottoman Democratic Party).

Besides political activities, one of the important works Cevdet did in the constitutional period was the translations of Shakespeare's works. In 1898 Geneva, he had already published *Ode*, this was followed by the translations of *Hamlet and Julius Caesar* in Cairo, in 1908. Later in Istanbul, he published *Kral Lear* (1917), and this was followed by *Klaepatra* (1921). In addition to Shakespeare translations, the second edition of the work *Ruhu'l Akvam* (which was first published in Egypt in 1907) was published in İstanbul in 1913. Also, Cevdet translated Le Bon's work *Les Aphorismes du temps present* as *Asrımızın Nüsus-ı Felsefiyesi* in İstanbul in 1914. (1981, p.92). Cevdet's other works included: *Asırların Panoraması yahud Tarih-i Kainata Bir Nazar* (*History of Civilization* by Weber, 1913), *Rubaiyat-ı Hayyam ve Türkçeye Tercümelere* (Ömar Hayyam of Iran, 1914), *Fenn-i Ruh* (Psychology, 1911), *Fünun u Felsefe ve Felsefe Sanihaları* (Natural Sciences and Philosophy, and Philosophical Reflections, 1913), *Dimağ ve Melekat-ı Akliyenin Fizyolojiya ve Hıfzısıhası* (Brain and Health-Care and Physiology of Intellectual Faculties, 1915.).

During the warfare period, the most striking political activities Cevdet engaged in was his relations with "İngiliz Muhipler Cemiyeti" (Friends of England Society) and "Kurdistan Teali Cemiyeti" (Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan) which was known to have a close relationship with Great Britain. In fact, Cevdet was advocating British mandate at that time (Hanioglu, 1981, p.321).

Cevdet after national struggle, supported new established Republic of Turkey and its ideology in his writings. Cevdet, who was expected to become an Elazig deputy, went to Ankara to meet with Ataturk but failed to get results due to his indifferent attitude in the national struggle (1925, p.3813). Then, Cevdet devoted himself to publications. Between the years of 1904 and 1932 he has published 358 issue of *İctihad* and he did numerous translations. In November 1932, he died of a heart attack.

2.4. Abdullah Cevdet and *İctihad* Journal

According to Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, the first ideology of *Tanzimat* is the idea of civilization (quoted in Çetinsaya, 2011, p.55). This idea is not independent from the idea of progress (*terakki*) which is one of the fundamental elements of the civilization project for many Ottomans. They considered progress as the most important factor for the welfare of the civilization. The rhetoric that Islam was not the cause of decline also meant that it was open to progress.

The claim that Islam advocates progress was legitimized by one of the central concepts of *ictihad*, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). *İctihad* means legal method of reasoning and interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and hadiths. *Müctehid* - high ranked jurists - who are capable of making *İctihad* "derives or rationalizes law on the basis of the Qur'an, the Sunna and/or consensus" of the scholars of Islam (Hallaq, 2009, p.173).

Seeing himself as a *müctehid* of modern times, Cevdet decided to publish a journal in Geneva in 1904 titled *İctihad*. The journal published 358 issues in three different locations: Geneva (1904-1905), Cairo (1906-1910) and Istanbul (1911-1932). The death of Cevdet in 1932 marked the end of the *İctihad's* publications.

İctihad was closed down several times during its 28 year publication period. During World War I (1914-1918) the government closed down *İctihad* on the grounds that it insulted religious feelings. Therefore, Cevdet had to publish the journal under different names such as *Cehd*, *İşhad*, *İştihad*: reminiscent of the name *İctihad*. The



Figure 2.2. Just below the title *İctihad* it is written that “published once a month, it is free, Ottoman and Islamic journal”.

name *Alem-i Ticaret ve Sanayi* was an exception to those names. When Cevdet was unable to publish the journal in any way he continued to disseminate his ideas in publications like *Hak*, *Roj-u Kurd*, *Hetav-ı Kurd*, *Serbesti*, and *Türkçe* (Hanioglu, 1988, p.93).

Although *İctihad* journal is shut down several times due to its derogatory language towards religious feelings (*hissiyat-ı diniye*), Cevdet explained that *İctihad* defends the truth and aims to purify Islam from superstitions. For instance, after *İctihad*'s temporal closure²⁰ due to Kılıçzade Hakkı Bey's articles, “Yunus Hoca” and “Sahte Softalığa ve Dervişliğe İlan-ı Harb”²¹ in which softas' superstitious beliefs were criticized, Cevdet (1329, p.1302) clarified that his colleague's goal was not to eliminate the softas but to clean them from superstitious beliefs.

²⁰ *İctihad*'ın tatiline mucip olan ve *İctihad*'ın 58.'inci numarasında münderic bulunan bir makaleyi tenvir ve ikmal edeceğim. Fazıl ve mümtaz bir zeka ve hamiyet olan Kılıçzade Hakkı Bey biraderimizin mezkur makelesinin intişarıyla infilak eden buht ve gazap malumdur ki, mecmuanın hükümet-i askeriye delaletiyle tatili ve muharriri hakkında muamele-i kanuniyenin derdest edilmesi suretiyle tecelli etti”.

²¹ This is the original title of the article but Cevdet in “Softalara Dair” mentions this as Sahte Softalığa İlan-ı Harb (1329c, p.1302).

First of all, the word “fake” (*sahte*) in the article should be taken into account. And it would be a considered political if the students of *madrassa* did not undertake this article.²²

Being aware of the symbolic power of the concept *ictihad* in Islamic jurisprudence Cevdet makes his own reasoning according to the exigency of the time. Cevdet’s choice of the name *İctihad* is strategic as it occupies an important place in the Islamic tradition. The concept *ictihad* is the source of legitimacy of renewal movements (*teceddüd hareketleri*) in the Muslim world. That is why naming his journal as *İctihad* and his declaration of the journal as “an Islamic and Ottoman journal” in its early years of publication are two important indicators that *İctihad* should be analyzed in an alternative way to the conflict paradigm.

Another element that demonstrates the necessity of an alternative approach in analyzing *İctihad* is the fundamentals in which Cevdet placed his journal. Contrary to the claims of the conflict literature, the West was not the only source of the modernization project for Cevdet. He was trying to make a synthesis between the East and the West by quoting and translations from various thinkers. We can see this in his references to materialist intellectuals like Spencer, Darwin and Büchner and some romantic thinkers like Byron (1904, p.13-16), Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, and his mention of Eastern thinkers Sadi Şirazi (1327a), Ömer Hayyam (1330b), Seyyid Cürçani (1906e) Mevlana (1329g), and Gazali (1329h)²³ in *İctihad*. Cevdet’s accommodative approach is apparent when he specified the objective of *İctihad*: “the goal of publishing this journal is to provide knowledge from West to East from East to West.

²² “Her şeyden evvel makaledeki sahte kelimesi nazar-ı dikkate alınmak lazım gelir ve medrese-i neşinanın bu makaleyi kendilerine asla mal etmemeleri bir nebze siyaset olurdu.”

²³ In response to Celal Nuri Bey’s criticism of Gazali (1329h) and Mevlana (1329g) in *İctihad*, Abdullah Cevdet writes several series of articles that glorify them and expresses his compliments to his colleague in this regard.

Besides a synthesis between the East and the West, another objective of the journal as Cevdet indicates is his accommodative approach. Cevdet (1905, p.16) states that the main purpose of the journal is to find the reasons for the backwardness of Muslims and to find ways to revive Muslims. Positioning himself as a *mujtahid*²⁴ (1329d, p.1419), of the modern times, Cevdet (1905, p.16) specifies this goal in the first issue of the journal²⁵:

About the reasons for the decline over the Islamic World, we are opening a field of investigation. These are our questions: What are the reasons for this decline (*inhibitat*) of the Islamic world? What are the most influential cure that gives Muslims a fresh life (*hayat-ı taze*) thereby stops Islam from complete collapse

These two questions specified in *İctihad* necessitate that the journal should be evaluated in an alternative approach to the conflict paradigm. Placing itself in the accommodation approach, this study argues that until 1922/1924, Cevdet in the journal does not directly target the religion of Islam. He never claims that Islam is the root cause of the regression. Contrarily, Cevdet is very much aware of Islam as the most effective social mobilization force and an only legitimizing element in the conservative society. I will be discussing whether Cevdet's use of conservative discourse is genuine or instrumental in the third chapter. But even if his discourse of Islam is strategically employed, this does not harm the accommodation argument, as discussed in the first chapter.

Given that Islam was the most effective social mobilization force in conservative society, and only legitimizing element in socio cultural change, Cevdet's use of such an Islamic rhetoric would not be comprehended fully without a comprehensive analysis, . In fact, he confesses that: "Muslims can accept the advancements of civilization only if they come from a Muslim source" (quoted in Hanioglu, 1981,

²⁴ "Mecmuamin ismi kafi derecede vazihdir. Her müctehid için, hata etsede, isabet etsede nasip vardır. Hata ederse bir, isabet ederse iki ecir kazanır".

²⁵ "Alem-i İslam'ın esbab-ı inhibitat-ı üzerine bir saha-i tahkikat açıyoruz. Suallerimiz şunlardır: Alem-i İslam'ın inhibitatını mucib olan esbab ve ahval nelerdir? Müslümanlara bir hayat-ı taze vererek alem-i İslam'ı inkirazı külliden kurtarmak için en müessir tedbir nedir?"

p.131). That is why, he often talks about “the Muslims and Islamism” (1905b). Cevdet (1329a) used Islamic discourse intensely because he, like many fin-de-siecle French positivist intellectuals who influenced him (Hanioglu, 1997, p.135), believed that religion was the “science of masses” and science the “religion of elites.” The next chapter provides an analysis of his discourse on Islam, and its transformation over time.

In this study, I examine Abdullah Cevdet’s articles in *İctihad* between the years of 1904-1924 and among them 42 articles were subjected to discourse analysis within the framework of the accommodation paradigm. These articles are listed below by year of publication.

Table 2.1. Cevdet’s Articles Subjected to Discourse Anaylsis (1904-1926)

No	Author	Date ²⁶	The title of the	Journal	Volume-Issue	Pages
1	Cevdet, A.	1904	Tahkikat-ı İlmiye	İctihad	1(1)	16
2	Cevdet, A.	1905a	Müslümanlar Uyanın	İctihad	1(2)	7-10
3	Cevdet, A.	1905b	Une profession de foi	İctihad	1(2)	7-10
4	Cevdet, A.	1905c	Rusya Müslümanları	İctihad	1(4)	9-10
5	Cevdet, A.	1905d	Fas hükümet-i İslamiyesi’nin İnkırazı	İctihad	1(5)	70-72
6	Cevdet, A.	1905e	Teselsül-ü Saltanat Meselesi	İctihad	1(6)	86-90
7	Cevdet, A.	1905f	Doktor Gustave Le Bon	İctihad	1(8)	118-120
8	Cevdet, A.	1906a	Emvat-ı la yemut: Şeyh Muhammed Abduh	İctihad	1(11)	164-165
9	Cevdet, A.	1906b	Mısır’da Necmü’t Terakkiü’l İslami Medresesi	İctihad	2(13)	16-17
10	Cevdet, A.	1906c	Fünun ve Sanat Nedir?	İctihad	2(13)	23
11	Cevdet, A.	1909	İcmal-i Mukadderat-ı Nisa	İctihad	2(21)	329-330
12	Cevdet, A.	1327a	Cihân-ı İslam’a dair. <i>İctihad.</i>	İctihad	3(26).	761-762
13	Cevdet, A.	1327b	Kadınlarda Gaye-i Hayat	İctihad	3(28).	798-800

²⁶ Dates appear as their original publication.

Table 2.1. (continued)

14	Cevdet, A.	1327c	Tesettür Meselesi	İctihad	3(29)	809-811
15	Cevdet, A.	1328a	Mutmain Değilim	İctihad	4(52)	1175-1177
16	Cevdet, A.	1329a	Şehzade Mecid Efendi Hazretleriyle Mülakat	İctihad	4(57)	1255-1257
17	Cevdet, A.	1329b	Kastamonuda Kurun-u Vusta	İctihad	4(58)	1271-1257
18	Cevdet, A.	1329c	Softalara Dair	İctihad	4(60)	1303-1306
19	Cevdet, A.	1329d	Vur Fakat Dinle	İctihad	4(61)	1332-1336
20	Cevdet, A.	1329e	Mazlum Zalimlere	İctihad	4(65)	1414-1416
21	Cevdet, A.	1329f	İslam'ın Tekamül-i Dinîsi	İctihad	5(76)	1673-1675
22	Cevdet, A.	1329g	Dilimle İkrar Kalbimle Tasdik Eylerim	İctihad	5(82)	1809-1910
23	Cevdet, A.	1329h	Dil mest-i Mevlana	İctihad	5(84)	1857-1869
24	Cevdet, A.	1329h	Dil mest-i Mevlana	İctihad	5(85)	1874-1876
25	Cevdet, A.	1329h	Dil mest-i Mevlana	İctihad	5(86)	1898-1902
26	Cevdet, A.	1329i	Gazali'de Marifetullah	İctihad	5(87)	1925-1927
27	Cevdet, A.	1329j	Gazaliyat-i Gazali	İctihad	6(88)	1962-1964
28	Cevdet, A.	1329l	Şime-i Muhabbet	İctihad	6(89)	1979-1983
29	Cevdet, A.	1329m	Anadolu'da Müslüman Bir Türkün Şeyhulislam Hazretlerine Son Sözü	İctihad	6(95)	2134-2136
30	Cevdet, A.	1329 n	Softaperverlik mi, Softagirizlik mi?	İctihad	6(99)	2231-2232
31	Cevdet, A.	1330a	El cezire mektupları	İctihad	6(96)	2154-2157
32	Cevdet, A.	1330b	Rububiyat-ı Hayyam	İctihad	6(100)	2258-2260
33	Cevdet, A.	1330c	Büyük Hastalık	İctihad	117	317
34	Cevdet, A.	1330d	Türk İslam ve Ahiret-i medeniyyesi	İctihad	121	382-384
35	Cevdet, A.	1918a	Seciye ve İman Kuvvetine Muhtacız	İctihad	129	2775-2778

Table 2.1. (continued)

36	Cevdet, A.	1918b	Yara ve Tuz	İctihad	132	2823-2826
37	Cevdet, A.	1922a	Mezheb-i Bahauallah: Din-i Ümem	İctihad	144	3015-3017
38	Cevdet, A.	1922b	Hürriyet-i Vicdan meselesi	İctihad	147	3063-3064
39	Cevdet, A.	1923	Şiar-ı din-i hak	İctihad	161	3289
40	Cevdet, A.	1924a	Dinim	İctihad	165	3356
41	Cevdet, A.	1924b	Müşterek Terbiye: Tevhidi Tedrisat Co-education.	İctihad	168	3397-3402
42	Cevdet, A.	1926	Din ve Terbiye-i Vicdaniye	İctihad	197	3862

CHAPTER 3

A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF İCTIHAD (1904-1926)

As I emphasized in the first and the second chapter, confrontation literature depicts Cevdet as the enemy of religion. This argument based on an assumption that Cevdet saw religion as a source of degeneracy and degradation. However, Cevdet (1327a, p.763) never stated that religion of Islam is the reason for decline itself but the following four elements: “oppression of the Islamic rulers”²⁷, “heedlessness of the scholars of Islam”²⁸, “non-Islamic style of women’s veil”²⁹ and “the misperception of the belief on predestination”³⁰.

In addition to the source of the problems in the Islamic World, Cevdet (1327a, p.761; see also, 1904, 1328a, 1329c) rejects the orientalist narrative that Muslims are obscurantist, ignorant, zealot, poor and weak not because of their race, culture and geography but because of their religion, which is the source of all those illnesses and it is the cause of decline. For him, this nevertheless is a superficial outlook. When the subject is examined in depth, it will be understood that Islam is open to progress (*terakki*)³¹. Rather than Islam itself, it is the superstitious beliefs, wrong practices, ignorance, laziness, poverty and powerlessness of Muslims that are the main reasons of decline in the Islamic World.

In 1327 (1911) Cevdet published an article titled "Cihan-ı İslam’a Dair". In this article Cevdet tried to prove that religion of Islam is not an obstacle for progress. To justify his argument, he uses 27 Qur’anic verses and hadiths in total. He republished the same article with the same title eleven years later in 1922. I have examined both

²⁷ “İstibdad-ı hükümdaran-ı İslam”.

²⁸ “gaflet veya mümaşat-ı ulema-i din”.

²⁹ “Mesturiyet-i nisvanın aldığı suret-i garibe-i gayri meşrua”

³⁰ “Akide-i kaderin fehmi galatı.

³¹ “İslam ile mütedeyyin olanlar gayri müterakki, cahil mutaassıb, fakir, iradesiz, inayetsiz, himmetsizdir. Bu halde bu marazi içtimai, ırk ve cinse ve yahud iklimi, muhit coğrafyaya merbut değildir. Sebep ve masdar din-i İslamiyettir ve Müslümanlık mani-i terakkidir, hem Müslümanlık hem de mütemeddin olmak gayri mümkündür hükmünü verir. Fakat mesele ta’mik olunca bu hükmün hata olud olduğu anlaşılacaktır” (Cevdet, 1327, p.761).

copies in depth and found out that there are no differences between these two copies with the exception of minor differences in words of a few sentences. Then it is fair to argue that Abdullah Cevdet does not accept the idea that religion of Islam hampers the scientific progress and contradicts with reason. Thus, how can we argue that he is in fact the enemy of Islam and religion and tried to spread biological materialism in place of religion?

It is a simplistic and reductionist claim that Cevdet aimed to rule out religion as confrontationist commentators propose. Instead of reading Cevdet between dualities like Westernist vs. Islamist, secular vs. modern, and religious vs. anti-religious, I propose to analyze him with an accommodationist approach. This provides a better understanding of his conceptions. Because, based on his articles in *İctihad*, I realized that religion is a cornerstone in Cevdet's modernization project. The legitimate question which may be asked at this point is whether Cevdet instrumentalizes Islamic discourse to make his arguments palatable to society. Thus, this study tries to answer this particular question through discourse analysis of Cevdet's writings. In order to have a satisfied response to that question, I make discourse analysis of Cevdet.

Discourse analysis can be conducted in different forms here. On the one hand, the discursive strategies employed would be listed as titles. On the other hand, discursive strategies could be mentioned under different subject titles. I prefer the former method, what I call discourse-based analysis. The latter one, the subject-based analysis, would exhaust the mind, since he uses the same discursive strategies on various topics several times.

In applying this method, I do not conduct a discourse analysis based on the publication date of *ictihad*. Because until 1922/1924's there was no change in Cevdet's discourse, he mostly refers to Islamic sources. After 1922, he pursued a different discourse strategy: integrating Islam into different belief systems and extending the borders of *ictihad*. In fact, this claim is the backbone of the thesis. In

Ottoman modernization, religion remains a basic source of legitimacy until 1922/1924.

3.1. Discursive Strategies on Islamic Values and Subjects

Out of the 42 articles he published between the years of 1904-1926, I discovered 16 different discursive strategies and in each discursive strategy Cevdet employs different discursive techniques. As an example, in the strategy of invoking sacred texts, he employs three techniques; namely decontextualization, selective reading of sacred texts, and invoking weak hadiths (Ardıç, 2012).³² Let us now examine these strategies and techniques in more detail, starting with his intervention into Islamic morality.

3.1.1. Distinguishing between “Active” and “Passive” Morality as a Discursive Strategy

Cevdet makes a sharp distinction between an “activist” and “pacifist” morality, constructing a hierarchy of values based on this distinction. He overwhelmingly affirms activist morality vis a vis the pacifist one. Concepts like work (*sa’y*), action (*amel*), effort (*cehd*), and will (*irade*) prevails over the concepts like contentment (*kanaat*), trust in God (*tevekkül*), and predestination (*kader*). For Cevdet thinks that the pacifist morality causes laziness, poverty, backwardness, and ignorance whereas the activist morality results in Muslim progress, prosperity, knowledge, power and an honorable life (1905c; 1327a; 1328a; 1329d; 1329m).

In the very first issue of *İctihad*, Cevdet published an article titled “Tahkikat-ı İlmiye” (Scientific Investigations), in which he specified the goal and the objects of the journal:

About the reasons for the decline of the Islamic World, we are opening a field of investigation. These are our questions: What are the reasons of decline (*inhitat*) in the Islamic world? What are the most effective cure that gives Muslims a fresh life (*hayat-ı taze*) thereby stopping Islam from complete collapse (*inkiraz-ı külli*) (1904, p.16).

³² Ardıç (2012) in his book uses these discursive strategies and technics for the first time.

Cevdet argues that the root of the problem: the decline and regression in the Islamic world, is due to the practice and misconceptions of Muslims of trust in God, contentment, and predestination. These misperceptions pacified Muslims, thus led them laziness (Cevdet, 1905c, p.9).

According to Cevdet (1905, p.11) ignorance, laziness and weakness cost complete defeat and regression. If Muslims continue to keep this pacifistic faith and remain silent against the bad course of Islamic world, it would lead to complete destruction of Muslims. This is the natural result of weak, effortless, lazy, divided and ignorant-bigoted nations (1329l; 1918b). Normally, the belief in predestination does not necessarily mean to be oppressed, to live in poverty and being wretched. But Muslims' wrong perception of the notion and statements like "this is our destiny"; "this world is already a prison for Muslims" causes Muslims to be inactive and indifferent (Cevdet, 1329m, p.2135; 1327a, p.766-767; see also 1905c;1905d; 1329d; 1329l).

Cevdet argues that, this kind of fatalism is one of the ongoing fundamental problems among Muslim communities. In order to fix the problem, Cevdet establishes causal relations between effort and success; laziness and loss: nations are successful only when they struggle, work and make an effort. Likewise, hardworking and ambitious communities achieve power and prosperity. On the other hand, lazy and fatalistic nations deserve failure and defeat. Furthermore, defeated and failed nations' people are the people of *tawakkul*, ignorant and lazy³³ (1327a, p.766-767). Thus, for him the causality is bi-directional.

The assumption behind this view is that predestination is the aggregation of all causal relations of things. In other words, what occurs is not predestined; what is predestinated is the combination of the all the necessary causalities for something to

³³ "Cehalet, fesad-ı ahlak, zaaf ve nifak, fakr ve meskenet ve taassub-u cahilane ile bir cemiyetin bir milletin bekasındaki imkansızlığı tarih müdhiş harabiyet levhalarında göstermiştir".

occur (Cevdet, 1327a, p.865).³⁴ So, destiny is not the result but the causal process. This is Cevdet's technique in legitimizing active morality. In order to prove this argument, Cevdet (p.867) gives a couple examples. The first is about death: he argues that death does not occur as a result of fate. Instead, death is the absence of the causes which makes human body alive and leads it to function. Another example he provides is about the burning of the Çırağan Palace. In this case, the event of the burning of the palace is not predestination; the right explanation is that fire, if the conditions of burning are completed, it burns anytime and anywhere.³⁵

In addition to Cevdet's deterministic approach on predestination, the second technique he employs is based on the somewhat contradictory assumption that humans have the complete authority in their actions: he is an ardent believer in human free will. If he is working hard, the result is definitely success. This interpretation makes man the ultimate owner of his deeds; independent from the will of Allah. In this sense, I argue that Cevdet adopts materialistic/deterministic view which limits or removes the will of Allah. He may also *Mutezili* perception, as many of modern thinkers do (regardless of whether Islamist and secular) on predestination. His statement "asking is occurrence" and "what is desired occurs"³⁶ confirms my claim (Cevdet, 1918a, p.2777).

The problem in Cevdet's belief is that the will of Allah is neglected. For him, Allah must fulfill the demands of man when the conditions are well prepared – implying an "irrational" view of religion in the Weberian sense. In fact, the Qur'an states that Allah creates whatever he wishes: "Effector of what He intends"³⁷ (85:16) and "your Lord creates what He wills and chooses not for them was the choice"³⁸ (28:68); "Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs"³⁹ (39:62).

³⁴ "Mukadder olan, fiil veya vakia değildir. Mukadder; bir fiil veya vakianın mükevvin-i mevk'ii olan mevad-u eşnanın kendisinden ayrılmayan havassıdır".

³⁵ Mesela, ateşe her kabil-i ihtirak olan mevadı, şerait-i ihtirak mecmuan mevcud bulunduđu her zaman ve her mekanda yakmak hassası mukadderdir".

³⁶ "İstemek mukadder olmaktadır"; "Murad olunan şey vucüda gelir".

³⁷ "fa'alul lima yurid".

³⁸ "wa rabbuke yakhluqu ma yashau wa yakhar".

³⁹ "Allahu khalaka kulli şey'in wa huve ala kulliqulli şeyi'n qadir".

Despite all this Qur'anic verses and the mainstream interpretations on the predestination, Cevdet preferred determinist or *Mutezili* view because it is a useful instrument for his modernist view. Attributing a high status to human actions is politically useful. In this way, activist morality flourishes and by that means, Muslims would stop the downward projection of the Islamic world. This is Cevdet's (1905c, 1906c, 1327a, 1328a) technique in imagining active, demanding, and willful community.

Cevdet's third technique in the creation of the active community includes referencing to Europe's material capacity as exemplary for Muslims. For instance, he appeals Muslims to have French like wealth and British like naval forces⁴⁰. This is a must, because it is the only way for Muslims to survive and become friend with the Europeans⁴¹ (Cevdet, 1329I, p.1982). This is not to say that Muslims have to use the same techniques as the Europeans, there could be multiple ways of being wealthy, knowledgeable and acquiring power. Whatever method or way is chosen whichever process is sought, Muslims have to have the same result, much like the Europeans⁴² (Cevdet, 1328a, p.1176).

For Cevdet Muslims also should be encouraged and supported to send their children to Europe to receive an education in and learn European languages and modern sciences. This will eventually bring money to the Islamic world. Because for Cevdet (1905c, p.10-11) knowledge essential for acquiring wealth. The reverse is also true:

⁴⁰ See the similar argument of Fuat Pasha (1815-1869) who was one of the piooners of *Tanzimat*: "Terakkimiz İngiltere kadar paraya, Fransa kadar bilgi aydınlığına ve Rusya kadar askerlere sahip olmaya bağlıdır" (quoted in Çetinsaya, p.2011, p.57).

⁴¹ "Fransa gibi zengin, İngiltere gibi büyük bir kuvve-i bahriyeye malik olsaydık, Celal Nuri Bey'in telkin-i husumet etmek istediği milletler bizim dostumuz yahut müttefikimiz olmaz mıydı?"

⁴² "Bizim karşımızda muazzam bir medeniyet var. Bu medeniyet zalim olsun, rahim olsun, iyi olsun, fena olsun biz bu medeniyetin karşısında müstahkem bir mevki almaya, aynı silahlarla, aynı neticelere varan usullerle müsellaah ve mücehhez olmaya mecburuz: dikkat edin aynı usullerle demiyorum. Fakat tutulan tarik ve kullanılan alet ne olursa olsun aynı neticeye vardırmaak şartıyla caizi'l ittihazdır".

without wealth it is improbable to obtain knowledge. Obtaining power and knowledge would lead to power, protection of freedom and rights of Muslims⁴³.

Cevdet (1329l, p.1983) also suggests European working ethics for the creation of an active Muslim community:

Contrary to Muslims, people in Europe work after sunset too. Because after sunset the people's sun rises; electricity. Men and women work hard until midnight. Trains and minibuses run 24 hours a day. A man is shaving, dyeing his shoes, and cutting his nails simultaneously.

Cevdet (1329l, p.1983) argues that the Muslim mind works differently than Europeans'. Europeans say that 'time is money' while Muslims say that 'better late than never'⁴⁴ or 'no matter how long the time lasts, and how hard you work, what happens is fate'⁴⁵.

Cevdet through such interpretations to encourage Muslim communities to take action. This process is twofold. First is loading passive morality with the negative connotations. Second is calling out to the community to be active and to take role in the ongoing negative situations. This means that Cevdet establishes a hierarchy of values. Active morality is connoted positively vis a vis pacifist morality⁴⁶. By this way he specifies the borders of the legitimate and the illegitimate. Since he always keeps Islamic rhetoric in his discourse, as discussed in the next section, the hierarchy he establishes also means what is Islamically true and what is not in his view.

⁴³ "Kardeşlerim! İlim ve para kazanın. İlimsiz para kazanmak, parasız ilim kazanmak ve bunlarsız istihsal ve muhafaza-, hürriyet ve hukuk mümkün değildir".

⁴⁴ "Geç olsun, güç olmasın".

⁴⁵ "Hiç güçlük çekmeyelim, hiç cehd ve kuvvet sarf etmeyeleim, maksadın husulü için ne kadar uzun müddet lazım olursa olsun, kader ne ise o olur".

⁴⁶ "Hiç bir zaman hiç bir yerde tevekkül azme, atalet faaliyete, zulmet nura, cehil ilme tul-u müddet hakim ve galip olamaz. Bu bedihi ve alelade bir kaide-i tabiat ve kanun-u tarihtir. Biz bu kaide-i tabiatte memleketimiz için bir istisna yapamayız" (Cevdet, 1329d, p.1333).

3.1.2. Invoking the Sacred Texts

According to the theory of law - *usul al-fiqh* in Islam, there are two main sacred sources in legal procedures. One is Qur'an, the revelations of Allah -*wahy* and the other hadiths, sayings, actions and attitudes of the prophet Mohammad (p.b.h). The former is accepted by the scholars of Islam-*ulema* as the most sacred source in Islam while the latter is the second major source of law after the Qur'an (Hallaq, 2009, p.16).

Abdullah Cevdet (1327a, p.761) as a responsible intellectual to cure the illnesses of the Muslim world and to bring "new blood into the Muslim vessels" takes the role of *muctehid*. He uses the two central sources of Islam in his argument for the activist morality: Qur'anic verses and the prophetic hadiths.

The question I ask here is whether his *ictihads* have any connection to the classical interpretation of Islam or do they differ from classical interpretations of Islamic sources. Cevdet in this discursive strategy uses three techniques: decontextualization, selective reading of Islamic sources, and invoking weak⁴⁷ and fabricated hadiths⁴⁸. Cevdet in his usage of religious sources, takes the texts out of their context, puts forward some and omits others, and frequently employs untrusted/weak or fabricated hadiths. Below, I will analyze this strategy in depth.

In his article on "Cihan-ı İslam'a Dair", Cevdet makes a comparison between Muslim and non-Muslim countries:

In places where non-Muslims live; order, cleanliness and healthy life seem to be there. Whereas in Muslim areas, pollution and irregularities are conspicuous. In general, it is stated that commerce, art and wealth are not in Muslims. In Islamic countries, people are undeveloped, ignorant, bigots, unwilling and unstable (1327a, p.761).

⁴⁷ A hadith is classified as weak in two ways: because of its discontinuity in the chain of narrators or due to some criticism of a narrator.

⁴⁸ Fabricated hadith is falsely attributed to the Prophet by different individuals and groups (quoted in Ardiç, 2012, p.99)

Out of this comparison, Cevdet (p.761) criticizes the well-known orientalist narrative on the backwardness of Muslims. He formulates this orientalist narrative as follows: “the cause of the [Muslims’] problem is not sociological, anthropological or geographical. The reason is the Islamic religion which is an obstacle to advancement”. According to Cevdet this is a superficial outlook, he believes (p.761) that Islam is not an obstacle for progress. Not Islam itself but the wrong, superstitious and non-Islamic practices and behaviors prevent Muslims from the progress. To support this claim, Cevdet quotes some verses from Qur’an and hadiths. One of the Qur’anic verses Cevdet (1905c, p.9; 1327a p.762) employs several times is “there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives”⁴⁹ (53:39). By using this verse, he calls out Muslims to be active in worldly matters. He demands Muslims to be strong, rich and hardworking. Also trying to disprove the aforementioned the orientalist comment, he states that Islam is “a religion that says that there is no other reference point other than his effort. How meaningful explanation would be the followers of that religion is unable, lazy and flabby” (1327a, p.762).

Cevdet (p.762) continues to claim that Islam’s active morality is encouraged by the sacred texts vis a vis passive morality. He on the one hand, invokes some prophetic hadiths to push Muslims to make trade and money. On the other hand, he also employs some other hadiths to convince Muslims that material contentment (*kanaat*), which amounts to intentional poverty, and negligence of the worldly affairs are not elements of an Islamic way of life. For example he often invokes the hadiths like “the one who is busy with trade is the beloved to Allah”⁵⁰; “poverty is shame in this world as well as in the hereafter”⁵¹; “the poverty almost be blasphemy”⁵²; “work for the world as if you will never die, work for the afterlife as if you will die tomorrow”⁵³.

⁴⁹ “*Ieyse li’l insane illa ma sa’a*”

⁵⁰ “*el kasibu habibullah*”

⁵¹ “*el fakru sevad ul vechi fil dareyn*”

⁵² “*Kad el fakru en yekun küfran*”

⁵³ “*A’mal li’d dünya ke enneke taiysu ebeden, va’mal lil ahiratuke ke enneke temüt ğaden*”

Considering possible reactions from conservative circles⁵⁴ such as contradicting other hadiths celebrating poverty, Cevdet interpreted those hadiths in a way that strengthens his arguments: “There could be such objections: our prophet states *el fakru fakhri*, poverty is my pride and this world is already paradise for infidels, prison for Muslims". This argument for Cevdet was “ridiculous and nonsense”. He labeled the supporters of this claim as “an atheist infidel”: “O you ignorant! This world is a prison and hell for those who claim to be a believer but infact an atheist infidel like you” (1327a, p.763)⁵⁵. Additionally, (Cevdet p.763) challenges this hadith by his own interpretation:

O you heedless! If you look carefully, it is said that poverty is my pride. Poverty could be the cause of pride for the cleanest of the spirits -the prophet. Because he is the sovereign of hereafter. Poverty in him the sign of generosity. But poverty leads you to be lazy, and results you deprivation from determination and willpower⁵⁶.

Thus, here we can ask whether there are any difference between the interpretations of *ulema*, the scholars of Islam, and Cevdet on mentioned sacred texts. It is legitimate to ask the question as follows: Does modern perception differ from classical interpretation on sacred texts? In order to have a better understanding and a proper answer to the question; a closer look at the text are necessary.

In the methodology of interpretation of the Qur’an (*usul-ü tefsir*) there is a term - *siyak u sibak* which constitutes the backbone of interpretation literature. This important concept argues that Qur’anic verses should be analyzed within the borders of their context. When Cevdet’s interpretation of the verses and hadiths are considered, it is apparent that he detaches the verses from their context. Basically,

⁵⁴ Conservative circles here connotes to the Muslim society not Islamist. Since Islamists would not challenge Cevdet in this issue.

⁵⁵ “... Efendim Müslüman için hitamı dünyanın ne ehemmiyeti vardır. Dünya zaten kafire cennet, mümine zındandır, hem de bizim peygamberimiz değil mi ki ‘el fakr-u fakhri’ - fakirlik benim medar-ı iftiharımdır buyurmuştur: diye saçmalamaya ne hakları vardır? Böyle saçmalıklar söyleyen biçareye: bir insan kalksada behey gafil! Dünya da senin gibi mümin geçinen hakikatte kafir-i bi din olan sersemle hakikaten cehennemdir, zındandır”.

⁵⁶ “Behey gafil! Dikkat etsen ‘el fakru fakhri’ buyuruluyor, ‘el fakru fakhri’ ümmeti buyurulmuyor. Fakr, ezki’n nüfus için medar-ı fahr olabilir. Çünkü o kişver-i maneviyat hükümdarıdır, netice-i en’am ve ihsandır. Zavallı sen, fakirlik sende tembelliğin, teşebbüs-ü şahsiden, azim ve iradeden mahrumiyetin delil-i hüznengizidir”.

he decontextualizes the text and breaks the *siyak-sibak* rule in Qur'anic interpretation methodology. For example, one of the verses Cevdet used was "*leyse lil insani*". He employed this verse to encourage Muslims to be equipped with active morality. Nevertheless, the context of the verse points the charge (*ceza*) of somebody out of his good and bad actions. For example, if somebody does good deeds, he will be rewarded in hereafter. However, if he does bad deeds, he will be punished in the day of judgement. Previous verse of "*leyse*" states that "no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another" (35:18). It means that nobody takes the responsibility of another person's deed and is judged by his own deeds. Cevdet (1327a) without considering the context interprets the verse in a way that favors active morality whereby Muslims will work hard to be rich, to make trade, to have power against their enemies.

In addition to the decontextualization of Qur'anic verses, the hadiths Cevdet invokes are either weak, or selectively chosen or fabricated hadiths. For example, so called hadith Cevdet invoked "work as if you would never die for the world, as you would die tomorrow for the afterlife"⁵⁷ is not included in the main six collection of hadith books. In fact, it is a fabricated hadiths.

Besides usage of fabricated hadith mentioned above, Cevdet (1327a) also invokes some hadiths which are selectively chosen: "poverty is shame in the world and in the hereafter; "the poverty is almost blasphemy". While Cevdet employs these hadiths in order to show that poverty - material contentment is not desirable in Islam, the scholars of Islam interpret these hadiths differently. They claim that the word *fakr* - poverty in these hadiths does not indicate material deprivation but spiritual poverty. What this means is that the poverty discouraged in the hadith is begging people aiming to acquire material benefit by idolizing them. In other words, the poverty criticized in the hadiths is the poverty against people (Çelik, 2001, p.198).

⁵⁷ "amal li'ddünya keenneke taiysu ebeden. Wa'mal lil akhiratuke keenneke temut ğaden"

Another hadiths, Cevdet employs “poverty is my pride”⁵⁸. He thinks that this hadith is particular to the prophet’s personality alone, and does not encompass all Muslims. Cevdet here omits other interpretations. Some classical scholars took the world *fakr* as a sentiment of powerlessness towards Allah. The state of powerlessness in the eyes of Allah is the source of pride for all Muslims. Parallel to this interpretation, prophet address to *Ashab-ı Suffa*⁵⁹ states that “if you knew the reward of poverty you find in the the sight of Allah, you would wish your poverty to increase”⁶⁰ (quoted in Çelik, p.197). Although such interpretations would not seem contradictory to Cevdet’s writings, there is no doubt that he would not confirm such comments due to their possibly pacifying effect on the Muslim community. Then, it is arguable that Cevdet’s comments on such hadiths are one-sided and selective.

Besides alternative comments on the hadith used by Cevdet on poverty, there are some noticeable hadiths against Cevdet’s interpretations on poverty. For example, hadiths like “Allah loves the poor and glorious servant who believes”⁶¹ “the poor will go to heaven before the rich”⁶²; “most people in heaven are poor”⁶³ (quoted in Çelik, p.193-194) are neglected by Cevdet. Omitting the hadiths in which prophet praises the material deprivation -poverty is another sign that Cevdet’s comments are one sided, selective and strategic.

As a *mujtahid* of late Ottoman empire, Cevdet tried to push Muslims to have active community that will rescue the empire from decline and stop its collapse. For this purpose, he renounced the methodology of Qur’anic interpretation and decontextualized the verses. In addition, for the sake of socio-political transformation projects in his mind, he invokes some hadiths that are weak and

⁵⁸ “el fakru fakhri”.

⁵⁹ In the dictionary “suffe” means shadow. It is the name of a shelter near to Masjid-i Nabawi in Madina for the companions of the prophet *ashab*, who are homeless, poor and do not have relatives. These people are called *Ashab-ı Suffa* (Baktır, 2009, 469).

⁶⁰ Allah katında kavuşacağınız mükafatı bilerseniz içinde bulunduğunuz fakr ve zaruretin artmasını isterdiniz”.

⁶¹ “Allah mümin olan fakir ve iffetli kulunu sever”.

⁶² “Fakirler cennete zenginlerden önce gireceklerdir”.

⁶³ “Cennettekilerin çoğu fakirlerdir”.

fabricated and interprets them selectively. Taking all these into account, it can be argued that Cevdet's interpretations on sacred texts are methodologically weak, selective, one sided, and strategic.

3.1.3. Re-defining Islamic Concepts

One of the reasons why the meanings of terms and concepts transform is actors' different attributions and interpretations to these concepts. The Qur'anic term *sunnatullah* (law of Allah) is an important concept to understand how modern actors differed from classical ones, based on its interpretation. The term, *sunnatullah* has been used almost interchangeably with natural law by modernist Islamic thinkers. This conceptual engineering, on the one hand, has changed the hierarchy of values and on the other hand, filled Islamic concepts with modern meanings and contents. To see how this transformation occurred, first I will analyze the term natural law and then *sunnatullah*.

Natural law beginning from the second phase of the 17th century was used for unchanging, static and constant rules of the universe in the West. Parallel to this, by 19th century, it was argued that there are stable rules and orders in social events too. This idea paved the way for the development of positivistic social sciences. The positivistic approach weakened the traditional thought that used to explain the universe and the community on the axis of God's will (Mertoğlu, 2001, p.91-92).

By the second phase of the 19th century, the idea of unchanging natural laws in the universe as well in the social life has influenced Muslim intellectuals. They believed that the positivist sciences (both natural and social) do not contradict with Islam. In fact, many of them including Cevdet himself used the Qur'anic term *sunnatullah* interchangeably with the natural laws (p.92).

In order to understand the semantic transformation employed, I will have a close look at the term *sunnatullah*. The term *sunnatullah* meaning unchanging (la yetağayyaru)

rules and laws of Allah is cited eight times in five different verses in the Qur'an⁶⁴. In these verses, it is emphasized that there are no alterations (*tebdil*) and changes (*tağyir*) in the law of Allah. These rules are specified in those verses (Akçay, 2008, p.134).

If we look at the textual contexts of this term in the Qur'an, we see a number of different cases. One of the verses the term *sunnatullah* is cited (33:38)⁶⁵ is in regards to the marriage of the prophet Mohamed (p.b.h.) with Zeynep. Classical commentators state that Allah's laws on the marriage not only entail the Prophet but it has been a continuous law for the past prophets as well (Akçay, p. 133). The remaining verses on *sunnatullah* (33:62; 35:43; 48:23; 40:85) are about God's law on the punishment of wrong doers. It is stated that the people who intentionally hurt the prophets, the believers of the slanders, hypocrites, infidels, the unbelieving-revolted nations of the past prophets and those who spread the fabricated news, and have diseases in their hearts will be subject to punitive divine law of Allah⁶⁶ which has been in force for a long time (Akçay, p.134-138).

As is clear, none of these cases are related to the modern concept of natural law. In fact, classical scholars of Islam such as Zemahsheri, Fakhreddin al Radi, Beydawi, Qurtubi agreed that *sunnatullah* implies unchanging-established rules and laws of Allah with regard to those prophets who were sent before Islam (Akçay, 2008). Besides those interpretations, many modern Muslim thinkers⁶⁷, Islamists⁶⁸ as well as Westernists like Cevdet too have used the term *sunnatullah* as a counterpart of natural law. This is where modern thinkers differ from classic commentators. This means that modern usage of the term differs semantically from classical one.

⁶⁴ These are: 33:68; 33:63 (2 times); 35:43 (2 times); 46:23 (2 times); 40:85.

⁶⁵ "This is the established way of Allah with those [prophets] who have passed on before. And ever is the command of Allah a destiny decreed"

⁶⁶ See the punishments of the denier nations of the past prophets: 35:26-27;30:10; 43:25; 26:138-139; 29:50; 20:48; 7:136.

⁶⁷ I use the phrase "Muslim thinker" here intellectuals that has produced knowledge in Muslim territories. So those thinkers are not necessarily to be Muslim or Islamist.

⁶⁸ Muhammed Abduh, Ferid Vecdi, Reşid Rıza İzmirli İsmail Hakkı, Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı, Mehmet Fahreddin Ahmet Hamdi Aksekili Mehmet Akif Ersoy (Mertoğlu, 2001, p.95-102).

Abdullah Cevdet, too, often resorts to this strategy in the case of *sunnatullah*. The main discursive technique that he uses is abstracting this concept in its textual contexts in the Qur'anic verses.

Thus, the following question can be asked: why modernist Islamic intellectuals attempted to do such interpretations, and what kind of confrontations did Muslims face the lead them to make such comments? Mertoğlu (p.92) argues Muslim intellectuals were in need of liberation and revival ideologies and concepts after the military defeats of the Muslims by the European powers, In this sense, the Qur'anic term *sunnatullah* became a functional tool and explanatory guide for Muslim intellectuals to create demanding, willful, active, productive and knowledgeable community to take action for the bad course of Islamic world.

Abdullah Cevdet (1327a) with the effect of Newton's mechanic universe agreed that there are natural laws in the universe, and also stable rules and orders in social life. As many modernist Islamic thinkers do, he used the term natural law as a counterpart to the Qur'anic term *sunnatullah*. However, in his usage the term differs semantically from the original meaning: He does not regard context, the way *sunnatullah* used in the sacred text. In other words, by means of decontextualization technique, Cevdet integrates the term *sunnatullah* into natural law. Nevertheless Cevdet (p.765) does not provide any explanation for the usage of the term *sunnatullah* as natural law.

Cevdet after decontextualizing the term, employs mixed techniques. He combines strategy of "distinguishing active morality from passive morality" with the strategy of "redefining Islamic concept". In the former strategy Cevdet had argued that the discourse such as: "this is our destiny" "this world is already prison for believers" "the property belongs to Allah"⁶⁹; "the loss of Muslims because of Muslim's sins", trust in God pacified Muslims and led them to become actionless against bad course.

⁶⁹ "el mülkü lillah"

Cevdet (1327a, p.760) in order to change Muslim's mind on this misperception, employs the term *sunnatullah*. He believes that the loss and defeat of the Muslims is not because of the misperceived belief on fate but Muslims indifference and disregard about *sunnatullah*, constant (*sermedi*) unchanging (*la yetaghayyaru*) rule of Allah which he interprets the term as laws of nature (*nevamis-i sermedi*). He also uses the term *adetullah* and *fitrat* as equivalent to the term constant laws of nature⁷⁰ (p.760).

In this technique Cevdet establishes a relationship between predestination (kader) and the term *sunnatullah*. For him what is destiny is *sunnatullah*. As I discussed above, Cevdet views predestination as the aggregation of all causal relations in nature. It means contrary to misperception on the Muslim community, predestination is not about the action (*fiil*), event (*vakia*), or the result (*netice*). So the discourse like "this is our destiny" for Cevdet is not destiny at all. It is a justification for Muslim's loss and laziness. What is destined is the combination of the all the necessary causalities for a thing to occur (Cevdet, 1327a, p.765)⁷¹.

This means that Cevdet equates predestination with *sunnatullah*, the law of nature. Then, what is predestined (*mukkadder*) is *sunnatullah* itself- unchanging, constant rules in the nature. This truth for Cevdet (p.765) is summarized with a high rhetoric in the Qur'anic verse "and never will you find in the way of Allah any change"⁷² (48:23) which is also a precis of the philosophy of nature⁷³.

In order to prove this claim Cevdet (p.765) provides couple of examples. The first example he invokes is about the conditions of combustion: fire burns flammable

⁷⁰ "Mukadderat fitratın nevamis-i tabi'ye denilen kavanin-i tağayyuru narpezirden ve lisan-ı Furkan'da "sünnetullah" ve lisan-ı kelimada "adetullah" denilen la yeteğayyar kavaid-i sermedi-i tabi'iyeden ibarettir".

⁷¹ "Mukadder olan, fiil veya vakia değildir. Mukadder; bir fiil veya vakianın mükevvin u mevkii olan mevad u eşyanın kendisinden ayrılmayan havassıdır".

⁷² "walan tajida lisunnatillahi tebdila"

⁷³ "walan tajida lisunnatillahi tebdila" ayet-i celilesi bütün bir fese-fe-i muazzama-i tabiatı, eşya ve havassının -dimumet-i kanun-u ezeli ve ebedisini ne kadar bülemlend ve münevver bir belagatle icmal etmiştir".

things when the conditions of combustion meet at any time and any place. When this conditions (law on the nature of fire) are fulfilled, burning becomes predestined⁷⁴. The second example he gives is about poison. Poisoning character is predestined (by its nature) for the poison. If someone injects poison into his body and does not use an antidote, he consequently dies of poisoning.⁷⁵ Because here there is the absence of the conditions that lead to the continuation of life⁷⁶. Here the instance of death is not fate. What death is the elimination of the conditions that makes human body alive and leads its function.

In these two cases, Cevdet tries to prove that predestination is neither end nor the event itself. Rather it is the causal processes that operate depending on natural laws of things. It means that predestination processes according to *sunnatullah*, everlasting (*ezeli*) and eternal (*ebedi*) natural laws. This is where *sunnatullah* and predestination engage with each other⁷⁷.

In a similar way as in the concept of *sunnatullah*, Cevdet (1906c, p.23) equates the attributes of Allah with the laws of physics and nature. He changes the definition of the attributes of Allah arguing that natural sciences are discoveries of the divine attributes of Allah: Allah has infinite perfections (*kemalat*) and the reflections of these perfections are called divine attributes (*sıfat-ı ilahi*). These attributes are conducted by its own rules and laws called mysteries (*esrar*). The study (*mutalaa*) of those mysteries are called the sciences. Since Allah has the eternal divine attributes, it is beyond human perception. But it is not in vain that Allah creates man with

⁷⁴ Mesela, ateşe her kabil-i ihtirak olan mevadı, şerait-i ihtirak mecmuan mevcut bulunduğu her zaman ve her mekanda yakmak hassası mukadderdir”.

⁷⁵ “Zehire tesmin etmek hassası mukadderdir. Zehir içerek bedenine sem idhal ederek, muzad-ı sem istimal etmeyenin mesmumen ölmesi mukadder olur”.

⁷⁶ “Şerait-i esasiye-i hayatın inkıta’ı ecel demektir. Ecelden murad-ı semadani ve mukadderiyet-i ecel budur. İlmen ve mantıken başka türlü olamaz”.

⁷⁷ “Mukadderat fitratın nevamis-i tabi’iye denilen kavanin-i tağayyuru napezirden ve lisan-ı Furkanda “sünnetullah” ve lisan-ı kelamda “adetullah” denilen la yeteğayyar kavaid-i sermedi-i tabi’iyeden ibarettir”(1327a, p.760).

intelligence. So, humans can discover and benefit these mysteries according to their capacity and perception⁷⁸.

At this point Cevdet (1906c, p.23) employs another mixed technique in which he adds the previous mixed technique (combination of active morality, and redefining strategy) invoking sacred texts. He employs verses like “call upon me I will respond you”⁷⁹ (40:60), “there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives”⁸⁰, and “indeed Allah does not fail in His promise”⁸¹. This way he probably aims to increase the possible effects of his discourse – use of sacred texts could have a positive impact on the credibility of his arguments.

Cevdet (p.23) quoting these verses aims to call man to struggle and work hard to discover the mysteries. Via studying mysteries, the laws in the nature are discovered. As an example, the name *el ghalib* (the absolute winner), the attribute of Allah if its causes (*esbab*) and laws (*kavanin*) are studied, will be understood that the condition of victory is having strong military power through producing artilleries, rifles, armored ships, and mitrailleuses (gatling guns). This is a worship specific to the name *el ghalib* as in the case that praying is the worship of the attribute *el ma’bud* - the one who worshipped.

Cevdet (p.23) argues that if a nation always praises God and as a result of this action, it is rewarded by the victory in a battle, this would be unjust and against the nature of law. Because the act of worshipping is specific to the attribute *al ma’bud* and it is rewarded in the afterlife. On the other hand, a hardworking nation that complies with the rules and laws of the attribute *el ghalib* becomes successful in battle. Because

⁷⁸ “Allah bi intiha kemalata maliktir. Bu kemalata sıfat dahi denilir. Her kemal-i ilahi kendi kendine cihandır. Kendisine has idaresi, kavanini, rutubu, mükafatı ve asar-ı mümeyyizesi vardır. Bu kavanin esrar tesmiye olunur. (...) Bu kavaninin yahut esrarın mütalaası fendir. (...) Vakıan idrak-i beşer sıfat-ı ilahiyenin kavaninine nüfuz edemez. Fakat Allah’ın ben-i ademi mazhar-ı akl etmesi beyhude değildir. Bu esrarı bu dereceye kadar ta’mik ile onlardan istifade etmek tarzları hakkında derece-i istiknah ve ittıla’ımız nisbetinde semarat-ı nafiasını iktitaf edebiliriz”.

⁷⁹ “Ud’uni astajib lakum”.

⁸⁰ “İaisha lil insani illa ma sa’a”.

⁸¹ “İnallaha la yukhliful mi’ad”.

working hard to have strong military power is a worldly (*dünyevi*) act and it is rewarded with a triumph over the lazy nations in this world. Thus, victory in battle is a matter of working hard and having military power.

It is noticed that Cevdet (p.23) sees a causal relation (not correlation) between success and working hard. Actually he makes this argument referring to Qur'anic verses; God does not fail in his promise and he responds to whomever calls upon him (40:60). This means that whether Muslim or non-Muslim demands success from Allah and complies with the laws of nature, he becomes successful. Otherwise, this would be unjust.

This argument however ignores the will of Allah in creation. Cevdet (1906) omits some of the attributes of Allah *al murad* and *al cabir* (compeller, irresistible). So this is where Cevdet employs another technique: selective choice of attributes of Allah. Such an argument makes God comply with the nature of law and subject to the will of human. This is contrary to the views of Ashari and Maturidi *ulema* (Aydın and Genç 2016). They argue that if Allah does not wish something to happen, it does not happen even the condition are sufficient for that thing to be. In addition to classical interpretations, the stories of the prophet narrated in the Qur'an is contrary to what Cevdet argues. It is told that although the denials of the past prophets are outnumbered and military more powerful than believers, Allah makes believers prevail vis a vis non-believers. As an example, in the Bedir war, Allah makes believers the winner of the battle although the non-believers army was twice the size of the Muslims. (Quran, 3:13, 3:121-127; 8:7-12).

Cevdet's last technique in this strategy is . In fact Cevdet (1329b, p.1273) argues that the theory of Darwin is implied indirectly in the Qur'an⁸². Some statements he uses imply social Darwinism. For example, statements like "life is a battlefield"⁸³ (1330c,

⁸² "Eğer Gaybendi Hoca'da biraz nur olsaydı tekamül ve Darwin naziyelerinin Kur'an-ı azimu'ş şanda icmalen ve remzen pek ala mevcut olduğunu görürdü".

⁸³ "Hayat bir mübareze meydanıdır".

p.317); “power prevails (1329l; 1981)””; nature does not allow a vacuum” (1329l, p.1983); “The right is nothing but the ongoing force (1330b, p.383)”⁸⁴; “the whole world is the enemy of the weak (p.383)⁸⁵”; “the weak has no right to exist”(1329g, p.1810) indicates the influence of social Darwinism. In fact, we know that Cevdet has numerously quoted ⁸⁶ Herbert Spencer who is one of the founding fathers of social Darwinism. He describes Spencer as the greatest philosopher of the time (1915, p.352).

I argued that Cevdet employs redefining strategy and through this he decontextualizes Islamic concepts and transforms them from their original meaning. In this technique Cevdet (1329c, p.1304) detaches the word “Islam” from its original meaning and integrates it with the Darwinist theory. Following statements of Cevdet clearly indicates semantic engineering on the term Islam:

we know the pillars of Islam. We also should know that the word Islam is nothing more than a world of peace (*selamet*). In this century and in every century, the condition of peace lies with three aspects and will always be based on these three: the first condition is being powerful, second is being knowledgeable and being virtuous and third is being prosperous. Individuals and nations that have not collected these three conditions in their lives should have no hope of survival and salvation⁸⁷.

So, what this means is that “one cannot become a Muslim by (adopting a Muslim) name” (Hanioğlu, 1997, p.138). Religious duties required of all Muslims like fasting and performing *namaz* (praying) is secondary here (Cevdet, 1906c; 1327a, p.766). The necessary conditions for the survival is to be powerful, knowledgeable and wealthy. Out of these statements, I infer that, a nation that fulfills these three conditions but lacks obligatory prayers is much more preferable for Cevdet, to a

⁸⁴ “Hak devam eden kuvvetten başka bir şey değildir”.

⁸⁵ “Zayıfın bütün dünya hasmıdır”.

⁸⁶ See “Fünun ve Felsefe Senihaları” (1906), *Dimağ ve Melekatı Akliye* (1915).

⁸⁷ “İslam’ın şartı kaç olduğunu biliriz. Ve ‘İslam’ kelimesinin selamet kelimesinden pek başka bir şey olmadığını da bilmeliyiz. Bu asırda ve her asırda selametın şartı daima üçtür. Ve daima üç olacaktır: Birinci şartı kuvvetli olmak. İkinci şartı alim ve fazıl olmak. Üçüncü şartı zengin olmak. Bu üç şartı, hayatlarında cem’ etmeyen fertlerinde milletlerinde beka ve selametden ümitleri münkatı’ olmalıdır”.

nation which is only busy with worshipping. Such view makes a British more Muslim than so called Muslims (Cevdet, 1922b, p.3024). It is seen that Cevdet takes social darwinist terms like power, survival, existence and applies on the word “Islam”.

The question should be asked here is why modernist Islamic intellectuals attempted to do such interpretations, and what kind of confrontations did Muslims face the lead them to make such comments? Mertoğlu (p.92) argues that as a consequence of the military defeats of the Muslims by the European powers consequently, Muslim intellectuals felt liberation and revival ideologies and concepts. In this sense, the Qur’anic term *sunnatullah* became very functional tool and explanatory guide for Muslim intellectuals to transform conservative and passive community towards demanding, willful, active, productive and knowledgeable to take action for the bad course of Islamic world.

3.2. Strategies on Subject Construction

In addition to discursive strategies on Islamic values and subjects Cevdet employs other discursive strategies on subject construction. Through my study, I have realized that Cevdet constructs three groups: *softas*, women, and sultans and Ottoman shahzadahs. For both *Softas* (religious school students) and sultans and Ottoman shahzadahs Cevdet has a negative picture. They are the causes of the decline. The ideal woman profile according to Cevdet is knowledgeable whose main purpose is to raise virtuous children for the benefit of the nation.

3.2.1. Constitution of Softas as a Negative Ideal Type

The word *softa* in the lexicon means a student of *medrese*, But it can also mean religious fanatic or bigoted person (*yobaz, mutaassıb*) (Sami, 1317, p.839). Cevdet prefers to use both meanings of the term. In fact, he combines the two and uses it as “fanatic *medrese* student”. In *Ictihad*, *softas*⁸⁸ are targeted numerous times. One of his closest friend and his colleges in the journal *Kılıçzade Hakkı Bey* (1329a, 1329b,

⁸⁸ I use the term *softas* as the plural form of the *softa*.

1329c) wrote a series about *softas* and criticized their superstitious beliefs through his fictionalized stories. Two of his articles, "Yunus Hoca'nın Kendisi" and "Sahte Softalığa ve Dervişliğe İlan-ı Harb"⁸⁹ caused temporal closure of the journal⁹⁰.

Abdullah Cevdet too draws negative picture of *softas*. Between the periods (1904-1926) that is covered by this Cevdet published 3 articles: "Softalara Dair" (1329c); Softaperverlik mi, Softagirizlik mi? (1329n); and "Mutmain Değlim" (1328a)⁹¹. In these articles, he directly targets this religious group. His picture of *softas* is lazy, unproductive, unwilling. Also, he constructs *softas* as a having superstitious beliefs on predestination and trust in God. Alternatively, Christian *softas* are shown as an ideal and modern examples for Muslim *softas* to emulate; since they are active, hardworking, knowledgeable on health, politics, economy and modern sciences (Cevdet, 1327a; 1328a, 1329c;). While drawing such a negative picture he invokes several discursive strategies: a sharp distinction between the success in this world and the other, identifying traditional (*softa*) mindset with fatalism and presenting Christian *softas* as the model for Muslim *Softas*.

3.2.1.1. A Sharp Distinction between the Success in this World and the Other

One of the reason Cevdet has a negative depiction of *softas* is that he sees a correlation between the defeat of Muslims in the battlefields against European states and *softas* and their superstitious beliefs. He states "Europe slapped us many times. If we do not wake up, will we blame Europe or our pumpkin heads?"⁹² (1329l, p.1983).

⁸⁹ This is the original title of the article but Cevdet in "Softalara Dair" mentions this as Sahte Softalığa İlan-ı Harb (1329c, p.1302).

⁹⁰ *İctihad'ın* tatiline mucip olan ve İcthad'ın 58.'inci numarasında münderic bulunan bir makaleyi tenvir ve ikmal edeceğim. Fazıl ve mümtaz bir zeka ve hamiyet olan Kılıçzade Hakkı Bey biraderimizin mezkur makelesinin intişarıyla infilak eden beht ve gazap malumdur ki, mecmuanın hükümet-i askeriye delaletiyle ta'tili ve muharriri hakkında muamele-i kanuniyenin derdest edilmesi suretiyle tecelli etti (1329, p.1302).

⁹¹ The only difference between the first two is that in "Softaperverlik mi, Softagirizlik mi?" article Cevdet adds three extra paragraphs at the beginning trying to prove that The *İjtihad* community is not enemy of *softas* and he thinks that this truth is not understood well even by his close and likeminded friends (1329n, p.2231).

⁹² Avrupa bize bir değil bin tokat vurdu; biz uyanmıyorsak kabahat Avrupa'nın mı yoksa bizim balkabağı kafalarımızın mı?

During the Balkan wars, Cevdet (1328a, p.1175) published an article called “Mutmain Değilim”. In this article, Cevdet criticizes *softas*’s explanation about Balkan defeat. He predicts that *softas* would correlate the defeat with the laxity of Muslims in worship: Would some pumpkins heads go to Anatolia where it is the only place to spread their corrupted thoughts and say to the public “would Islam ever be defeated? But God is angry with us. They are not praying, fasting, most particularly, they are not giving alms and women in Istanbul are wearing gloves in their hands and so on. An because of these, our soldiers were defeated⁹³

Cevdet (1329c, p.1304) argues that religious belief is not sufficient enough to have strong enmity against foes. What is missing here is the belief in military power to fight with enemies. He quotes from Mahmut Muhtar Pahsa:

There is no doubt that religious faith, a deep belief and absolute submission to Allah stimulates the spiritual strength. Nonetheless, spiritual sentiments is not enough to direct somebody to participate in war if he lacks military and national feelings and also do not believe in the weapon in his hand even through military drills⁹⁴.

Cevdet agreed with Mahmut Muhtar Pahsa because otherwise all of the students of religious schools namely *softas* and pumpkin heads would be the hero. Contrarily, nobody encounters turbaneds during the battles⁹⁵. They prefer to die on their comfortable beds⁹⁶. *Tevekkül*, trust in God, *kaderperestlik*, fatalism, and worship for Cevdet has no effect on the outcome of the battles.

⁹³ “Bir takım balkabakları Anadolu’ya, yegane saha-i faaliyet ve ifsatları kalmış olan Anadolu’ya yayılarak halka esbab-ı inhizamımızı kendi kafalarına göre izah etmeye koyulacaklar mı? ‘Efendim ceşu’l İslam mağlup olur muydu? Lakin Allah bize kızgındır. Namaz kılmıyorlar, oruç tutmuyorlar, bahusus ve bahusus zekat ve fitre vermiyorlar, İstanbul’da hanım kızlar kollarına eldiven takıyorlar. İla ahir, hep bundan dolayı askerimiz mağlup oldu’ ditekler mi?”

⁹⁴ “Amik bir itikadın, Cenab-ı Hakka teslimiyet-i tammenin kuvve-i maneviyeyi ne derece tezyid ettiği müstağni-i beyandır. Ma’a zalik hissiyat-ı askeriyesi ve izzet-i nefsi-i millisi uyanmamış ve sağlam bir talim ve terbiye ile elinde silaha itimadı hasıl olmamış bir askeri, yalnız hissiyat-ı diniye ateşe sevk edemez”.

⁹⁵ “Böyle olmasa medreselerden bed’en ile bütün medaristeki talebe-i ulumun ve sarıklıların her birinin birer kahraman olması iktiza ederdi; halbuki hatt-ı harblerde sarıklı gönüllülere tesadüf edildiğini hatırlıyorum”.

⁹⁶ “(...) nice mütedeyyin adamlar tanırız ki, ba’d ömr-ü tavil rahatça yataklarında evvelki mertebe-i şehadete pek ziyade tercih ederler”.

The problem with *softas*' incapability to perceive the disconnectedness between aforementioned beliefs and success in the worldly matters, stem from their ignorance of law of nature. Worship for Cevdet (1329c, 1906c, p.23) is a matter of afterlife while success in the battle is a matter of the world. The reward of worship is acquired in the second life. On the other hand, victory in the battle is about working hard and having military power. The law of nature rewards communities who produce artilleries, rifles, armored ships, and mitrailleuses (gatling guns) to be victorious in the war, while it punishes the unproductive, effortless, and *tevekkül* and worship communities. If this would not be the case, it would be unjust and against the nature of law.

3.2.1.2. Identifying Traditional (*softa*) Mindset with Fatalism

Besides the wrong correlation between worship and victory, Cevdet (1330a, p.2157) is sure that such fatalism, *kaderperestlik*, the belief that interpreting every event through predestination, is the one that have to be felt enmity mostly: "Bulgarian's cut, burned, annexed, withdrew. But greed, never leaving us, never leaving our blood, always gnawing at us, consuming us, our adversary still lives with us: our belief of predestination, laziness and flabbiness"⁹⁷. This means that such fatalism is more destructive than the Bulgarian attack. Because for Cevdet the former's effect is permanent while latter's is temporal.

Parallel to this Cevdet argues that fatalistic mindset of *softas* which surfaces in statements like 'this is our destiny' and 'the power belongs to God' are more destructive than the artilleries of Bulgarians. The problem Cevdet (1330a, p.2157) detects is not on the outside but on the inside. "Our eternal enemy is neither Italians nor Bulgarians, Russians or Greeks. Our weakness, ignorance and poverty is our eternal enemy"⁹⁸.

⁹⁷ "Bulgar kesti, yaktı, aldı, çekildi. Fakat hiç doymayan, yanımızdan, kanımızdan hiç ayrılmayan, daima bizi kemiren, bizi bitiren hasmımız mevcut ve hükümandır: kaderperestliğimiz, meskenetimiz, iradesizliğimiz".

⁹⁸ See also: "Bizim en büyük hasmımız bulgar değil, Yunan değil; bizim cahilliğimiz, meskenetimiz, tevekkül-ü miskinemiz, taassub-u gafilanemiz, fakr-ı maddi ve manevimizdir" (Cevdet, 1330ai p.2157).

As it is stated above modernist thought is in favor of active morality, vis a vis passive moral. Cevdet (1329c) as a modern intellectual agreed that The Ottomans and in a large sense Muslims could only survive if an active, demanding and fitting religious class is created. In this sense, Cevdet employs a technique that associated the *softas'* salvation with the "nation's" well-being. Cevdet (1329c, p.1304) attributes so much importance to *softas* that he thinks salvation and exaltation of the nation depends on the salvation and exaltation of this group⁹⁹. The reason behind this, is due to the fact that they impact every segment of the community (p.1306).

Every member of the nation would not find the opportunity to receive an education in public schools, but every individual somehow comes into contact with an imam or a priest of a village. It is possible to come across people who have never been to school during their life time, but it is difficult to find people that did not communicate with an imam, monk, and did not listen to sermons in a mosque or in a church or in any temple¹⁰⁰.

Nevertheless, Cevdet realizes that the Muslim *softas* fall behind Christian *softas*. When comparing these two religious group, Cevdet argues that Christian *softas* are much better.

3.2.1.3. Presenting *Christian Softas* as the Model for Muslim *Softas*

Cevdet in this strategy shows Christian *softas* as the model to be emulated by Muslim *softas*. When Cevdet (p.1304) was in Europe he finds an opportunity to analyze Catholic schools in Vienna, Austria: There he experiences how the students of knowledge (talibu'l ilm) has regular and prosperous life: "They do not cook and wash the clothes themselves. They have well ordered classrooms, dining halls; clean and spacious dormitories, physical training halls; and chemistry, philosophy and history

⁹⁹ "Bu milletin suret-i mutlakada ve bütün kanaati vicdaniyemle söylüyorum, tahlis ve i'lası bu sınıfın tahlis ve i'lasına bağlıdır".

¹⁰⁰ "Bir milletin her ferdi için mektepten çıkmak nasip olmaz. Fakat bir milletin her ferdi, köyün rahibi, imamı ile münasebette bulunur; mektep yüzü görmemiş adamlar yüz ve yüz binlerce bulunabildiği halde cami, kilise, veya havra hulasa-i kelim bir mabed görmemiş, bir hoca veya rahip vaazını dinlememiş adam pek az bulunur".

of nature (tarih-i tabiat) museums. Those *softas* are graduated from the schools as a civilized, and intellectual”¹⁰¹.

Cevdet (p.1304-1305) also experienced to stay with *softas* for several days. A graduated *hoca*, religious teacher around 30-35 years old with yellow paper in his hand comes and asks Cevdet a question about *istinca*, lustration: “You are a knowledgeable man, and I will ask something, Halebi may Allah show mercy on him in a section of his book *Adab-ı İstinca* (Manners of Lustration) says that ‘do not lustrate with bones and cowpats because these are the meal of *elfs*, *jinn*”¹⁰².

Muhammed Efendi’s question causes Cevdet (p.1305) to think how Austrian *softa*’s intellectual level differs from Muslim *softas*. “When Hungarian *softas* are graduated from the schools, they are appointed as priests to a village. These *softas* works as doctors, engineers, judges and agriculturists in the village. They are qualified enough in medicine to diagnose and treat epidemic diseases”. They also have veterinary knowledge of medicine to identify domestic animals’ diseases and treat them. In every Sunday sermon they inform the public about sanitation, domestic economy and policies on religion. In short, this village popes are the source of light, and life for the village¹⁰³.

¹⁰¹ “(...) yemeklerini kendileri pişirmezler, çamaşırlarını kendileri yıkamazlar, muntazam dersaneleri, taamhaneleri, havadar nazif yatakhaneleri, terbiye-i bedeniye salonları, kimya, hikmet, tarih-i tabiiye müzeleri vardır. Bunlar buradan hakikaten mütemedding, münevver, fazıl bir adam olarak çıkarlar”.

¹⁰² “Hoca efendi! Siz hekim bir zatsınız size bir şey soracağım: Halebi merhum kitabının (*Adab-ı İstinca*) bahsinde ‘kemik ve tezek ile istinca etmeyiniz. Çünkü kemik ve tezek taife-i cinden olan mümin kardeşlerinizin gıdasıdır”.

¹⁰³ “Macar softaları mektepten çıktıktan sonra bir köye rahip tayin olunurlar. Bunlar gittikleri köyde hem tabiplik, hem mühendislik, hem hakimlik, hem ziraat muallim ve mühendisliği ederler. (...) Sari hastalıkları teşhis edecek ve intişarını men edecek kadar tıp ve hıfz-ı sıhhat bilirler. Hayvanat-ı ehliyyeye ait hastalıkları, anlayacak ve mehma emken tedavi edecek kadar baytarlıktan haberdardırlar. Her pazar günü ibadetten sonra hıfz-ı sıhate, iktisad-ı dahiliyyeye ve siyaseti diniyyeye dair konferanslar verirler. Hasılı bu köy papası, köyün menba-ı nur, ve hayatıdır”.

One of the reason Cevdet (1329c) exemplifies the Christian *softas* is that in Catholic-Christian theology passive morality is attributed positively. Similar to Muslim *softas*, patience, contentment, obedience and destiny is the concepts that hold positive connotations. Even this is so in Catholic theology, this belief does not preclude them to contribute their community in many aspects. Cevdet (1330a, p.2156) states that “if the Bible’s advice that states ‘if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also’ would have been reputable and respected, it would be in effect among the nations of the owner of the Bible”¹⁰⁴.

Being aware of the status of *softas* and *ulema* in the Ottoman society and not to be targated by conservative circles Cevdet employs (1329h) a technique in which his critique does not comprise all *softas* but false *softas* who are deviated from true Islam: “Some people think that *İjtihad* is the enemy of the *softas*. This is a false claim. We have no sentiment for them other than compassion and protection in our hearts”¹⁰⁵ (1329I, p.2231). “Our enemy is never *softas*. Our enemy is both the enemy of *softas* and Islamic World as well as humanity which is the corrupted *softas*”¹⁰⁶. I would argue that Cevdet here contradicts with himself. He is both othering and accommodating *softas*. This kind of discourse is understandable When Cevdet’s concern of legitimacy is considered. If he targeted all *softas* and medrese students, he would get a reaction from the *ulema* and the Muslim community. In fact, Kılıçzade Hakkı Bey’s (1329a) article “Sahte Softeliğe ve Dervişliğe İlan-ı Harb” had already caused temporal closure of *İctihad*.

Although Cevdet’s target is not all *softas* but corrupted *softas*, he does not provide a reference to the original and authentic *softas*, whereby there is a chance of comparison between the alternatives and say that some *softas* are corrupted, degenerated and some are authentic and actual. Nevertheless, he does not show

¹⁰⁴ “Eğer İncil’in ‘yanağına bir tokat vurana diğer yanağını arz et’ nasihatı merğub ve muteber bir nasihat olsaydı incil sahibinin ümmeti arasında muteber ve mer’i kalırdı”.

¹⁰⁵ Bazı kimseler *İctihad*’ı softa düşmanı zannediyorlar. Bu bir za’mı batıldır. Softalar için gönlümüzde şefkat ve siyanet hislerinden gayri bir his yoktur”.

¹⁰⁶ “Bizim düşmanımız softalar asla değil, bizim düşmanımız hem softaların hem bütün alem-i İslam ve insanın düşmanı olan mütereddi softalıktır”.

original Muslim *softas* where corrupted *softas* could imitate them. No traditional Muslim *ulema* fits Cevdet's ideal religious man profile. That is why, Cevdet (1329c, p.1306) gives reference to Catholic *softas* which are supposed to treat the diseases of Muslim *softas*.

As I argued, Cevdet did not refer to Muslim classical *ulema* because they do not fit Cevdet's modernization project. His aim is the creation of a religious class that are active, demanding, willful, and knowledgeable in modern sciences. Nevertheless, Muhammed Abduh (1849-1904), in terms of his hardworking and insistent effort is unique among scholars of Islam according to Cevdet (1906a). Abduh represent the ideal of a true Muslim typology and in this sense he is exceptional.

Four months after Abduh's death, Cevdet published an article called "Emvat-ı La Yemut" (Immortal Dead). In this article Cevdet (1906a) mentions the place, importance and originality of Abduh among other scholars of Islam. For Cevdet (p.164) he is the most distinguished scholar of Islam during his time¹⁰⁷, and even describes him as "Jesus like messiah for the Islamic world"¹⁰⁸. The main reason behind Abduh's exceptionality for Cevdet is his continuous struggle to understand the West (even more than some Western scholars) as much as the East. His constant search for the root of the problems of Muslims makes him exceptional in the eyes of Cevdet (p.124)¹⁰⁹. Also, Abduh's efforts to provide welfare for all people, and to defend the truth and his belief on the sufficiency of the *sharia* rules for the happiness of both this world and hereafter makes him a true Muslim for Cevdet¹¹⁰ (p.124). At the end of the article Cevdet prays the Creator to increase the number of hardworking scholars like Abduh ¹¹¹ (p.165).

¹⁰⁷ "Şeyh Muhammed Abduh ki zamanımızda alem-i İslam'ın ser efraz erbab-ı himmet (...) idi".

¹⁰⁸ "Alem-i İslam için münci-i İsa dem idi".

¹⁰⁹ "Yalnız Şark'ı değil, Garb'ı da Şark kadar ve hatta bir çok Garb ulemasından fazla olarak tedkik ve mütalaa etmiş ve derdimizin nereden geldiğini, ne olduğunu, ne ile kabil-i tedavi bulunduğunu pek iyi anlamıştı".

¹¹⁰ "Ahkam-ı şariat-ı garranın kafil-i saadet-i dareyn olan bu vadilerine nakl-i kalam ve envar-ı feyz-i samedanisiyle tenvir-i basire-i enam etmekte idi".

¹¹¹ "Halık ehl-i himem emsalini arttırsın".

The last technique Cevdet employs in this strategy is the technique of combining two strategies: invoking sacred texts and the construction of *softas* as negative ideal type. Cevdet (1918b, p.2825) blames *softas* for not giving enough importance to the worldly matters. This is because they see the world as worthless, temporal and mortal. The practice of seeing the world inferior for Cevdet (1329d, p.1334) is such a bad thing that it poisons followers and eventually destroys them. The poison is hidden in such sentences: “the world is a carrion those who demand it are dogs”¹¹²; “there is no comfort in this world”¹¹³; and this world is paradise for infidels and prison for believers. Cevdet (p.1334) for this poison proposes an antidote which is a hadith that states: work as if you would never die for the world, as you would die tomorrow¹¹⁴. Nevertheless, as it is discussed in the strategy of invoking sacred text that this is not a hadith at all. It is fabricated.

To conclude, Cevdet defines *softas* in a negative manner. He argues that they are passive, fatalist, and neglecting world matters and are superstitious. They are not to be demolished but corrected. Christian *softas* are presented as an ideal religious class typology: active in the community, knowledgeable about history, philosophy, health and modern sciences. Cevdet argues that, since *softas* impact all segments of society, nations wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of *softas*. Cevdet’s claim that he targets just corrupted *softas* could be interpreted as search for legitimation. Otherwise, Cevdet’s criticism would create discomfort within the conservative community. In my opinion, Cevdet’s celebration of Abduh can also be due to this legitimacy concern.

3.2.2. Constitution of the Ideal Muslim Women

As in the case of *softas*, Muslim women are a social group that Cevdet paid particular attention. Between the years of 1904 and 1926, he published three articles addressing women directly. They are “İcmal-i Mukadderat-ı Nisa” (Precis of the Destiny of Women, 1909), “Kadınlarda Gaye-i Hayat” (The Purpose of the Life of the Women, 1327b) and “Tesettür Meselesi” (About Islamic Dressing, 1327c). The second

¹¹² “*eddunya jife ve talibuha kulab*”.

¹¹³ “*la rahatun fi’ddunya*”.

¹¹⁴ “*a’mal li’ dünya keenneke taiysu ebeden, w’amal lil akhiratuke keenneke temüt ğaden*”.

article is the extended version of the first one. In these articles, Cevdet draws a picture of an ideal Muslim via using different discursive strategies and techniques. For him ideal Muslim women should be willing to have the knowledge of poem, literature, art, history, and rhetoric. But all of these must serve as a tool or guidance for being a good mother and to raise virtuous, moral, patriot and humanist (insanperver) children (1327a, p.762-763; 1327b, p.798-800).

According to Cevdet (1327a, p.762) both Muslim men and women should seek knowledge, since it is also emphasized by the prophet, “seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim”. In the original version of the hadith, the Arabic word *muslim* meaning Muslims is used. Nevertheless Cevdet instead of the word *Muslim* prefers two singular words: “*müslimun*” (male Muslim) and *muslimetun* (female Muslim). Although the word *Muslim* in the original version of hadiths grammatically encompasses both male and female Muslims, Cevdet (p.762) intentionally omits it and changes the hadith to emphasize the equality between man and woman in seeking knowledge¹¹⁵. For Cevdet (p.762) the followers of such enlightening and supreme religion should refrain from the arguments like: “why should girls seek to acquire knowledge and sciences? It is enough for them to learn verses of prayers”¹¹⁶. The first strategy, Cevdet used on the subject of acquiring knowledge and women is referencing to the history of Islam.

3.2.2.1. Referencing the History of Islam

Cevdet (1327a, 762-763) in order to strengthen the idea of supporting girls to learn knowledge invokes another strategy: referencing the history of Islam. The examples he provides is from Muhammed¹¹⁷ Zihni Efendi’s (1846-1913) book *Meşahir’un Nisa:*

¹¹⁵ “Talebu’l ilmi farizatun ala kulli muslimun ve muslimetun” yani tahsil-i ilim ve irfan erkek kadın her müslim üzerine farzdır der ve taleb-i ilmin emr-i vücudunda erkekleri kadınlardan katiyen tefrik etmez”.

¹¹⁶ “Adam sen de kızlar için ulum ve funün tahsiline ne luzüm var? Namaz surelerini öğrensinler yetişir (...)”.

¹¹⁷ In the Encyclopedia of Islam his name is mentioned as Mehmed not Muhammed (Kılıç, 2003, p.542)

Zübeyde, the wife of Harun Reşid, was a poet and a scholar. (...) She restored the city of Alexandre which was destroyed by Greeks. (...) Sekine, daughter of Huseyin which was the grandson of the prophet, was the owner of marvelous knowledge, art and had open sense. Şehdet'ul Katie lived in the 6th century of the hegira, had given lectures on history and rhetoric and also she was giving diploma to many *ulema*. The sisters of caliph Mansur involved in the Byzantium wars wearing armor. During the reign of caliph Reşid and Memun, women was exchanging views and discussing with ulema¹¹⁸.

However, the equality that Cevdet supports is only in the acquiring knowledge not on the rights between man and women. Aquiring knowledge for women not for the sake of knowledge itself but raising knowledgable and virtuous generations. Since Cevdet (1327b) clearly draws the the duty of women as motherhood he rejects feminist ideology. Narrating from Tefvik Fikret, he states that nations that do not allow girls to have knowledge would left their sons to spiritual orphanage¹¹⁹ (p.762). For him “feminism is a bastard of material progress. He is in search of civilizing (temeddün) not material progress (maddi terakki): “Progress is different, civilizing different. Material progress is a giant body and destructive monster in our century. Progress is gnawing the civilization” (Cevdet, 1327b, p.799; 1329f).

3.2.2.2. Identifying Muslim Woman with Motherhood

Feminist ideology claims equality between man and women on law. But according to Cevdet (1327b, p.799-800) this idea cannot be applicable since “equality on law is legitimate or feasible when there is equally on duties”¹²⁰. Since man are responsible to lead home economically and woman are obliged to manage affairs in the home (child raising, cleaning, and cooking), there cannot be equality between man and

¹¹⁸ “Harun Reşid’in zevcesi Zübeyde ki edibe-i alleme idi. (...) Yunanlılar tarafından tahrib olunan İskenderiye şehrini yeninde yaptırdı. (...) Sekine bint-i Hüseyin ki hafide-i peyamberidir; harika-i ilim ve fetanet idi. (...) Şehdetü’ Katibe ki Hicri altıncı asırda yaşıyorlardı; edebiyat, tarih belagat üzerine konferans verirdi ve birçok ulemaya icazet vermiştir. Halife Mansur’un hemşirezadeleri hanımlar zırh giyinerek Bizans muharebelerine gitmişlerdir. Reşid ve Memun’un zamanlarında hanımefendiler ulema ile ilmi konularda müzakere ve münakaşalarda bulunurlardı”.

¹¹⁹ “Kızlarını okutmayan millet oğullarını manevi öksüzlüğe mahkum etmiş demektir”.

¹²⁰ “Hukukta musavat ancak vezafte musavat bulunduğu vakit meşru veya payidar olabilir”.

woman before law. Thus, his view of women was by no means outside the mainstream patriarchal understanding of the time.

Cevdet in this strategy uses the technique of locating motherhood to high position, arguing that women should not feel themselves inferior vis a vis man. Although they invented neither high mathematical knowledge nor telescopes, there is one thing they produced which is more important than those inventions. It is the highest and greatest invention of world appearing on their knees: "(...) virtuous boys and girls. If a decent girl is raised well, she would raise children looking like her and this would be the greatest shahnamah in the world"¹²¹.

For Cevdet (1327b, p.798), motherhood and family as an institution are so important that it they determine the futures of nations and the destiny of governments. As an example, analyzing a British family and the responsibilities of women in the family could give an idea about the British nation. That is why, woman has an immense effect of the structures of nations. They are like miniature of governments because they raise future generations.

In addition to technique of the putting motherhood to a high position, Cevdet (1327b, p799) also legitimizes motherhood by seeing it as a natural duty of woman. For him motherhood is given to women by nature. Woman have to complete the mission of motherhood given by nature in order to create virtuous, moral, just, tolerant and patient generations. As a result of this divine mission, they write the destiny of generations. When motherhood is considered as a natural obligation of women, then "dying as a result of fight within the borders of nation for the sake of liberation and brotherhood" is not duty of women (p.799). The natural duty of women is to create a generation that will complete aforementioned mission, fighting against cruel foes. Thus, Cevdet made a sharp distinction between man and women in terms of responsibilities and obligations, which was in no way different than a typical Islamic

¹²¹ "Cihanda en ali en muazzam olan bir eser dizleri üzerinde vücüd pezir oluyor: faziletmend bir erkek, faziletmend bir kadın: hanım kız iyi yetiştirilirse kendisine benzeyecek olan evlatlar yetiştirir. Ve bu cihanın en büyük şehname-i asarı olur".

scholar's approach – another evidence for his accommodationist attitude toward Islam.

Another technique Cevdet employs is legitimizing motherhood through incorporating positivist psychology into his Islamic discourse which shows his attitude toward social inequality, which is closely knit with his view of gender inequality: His references are from Ribot's (1839-1916) *Heredite Psycologique*, Guyau's (1854-1888) *Education et Heredite*, Darwin's (1809-1882) *Istafa-i Tabii* (natural selection). "All of these indicates that children becomes successor to mothers' nature and ability rather than fathers". Because of the huge influence of mothers on generations, civilization is the product of women not men (1327c, p.87). Cevdet (p.87) quoting form Sheridan claims that "woman manages us". To put it differently, Cevdet puts woman in a position that they are the most effective component in the creation of nation. If they are educated well, as a result, there will be more enlightened generations (1909, 1327b, 1327c).

3.2.2.3. De-emphasizing the Significance of Modest Dress in Islam

A third strategy Cevdet employs in the construction of ideal Muslim women is his idea that Islamic dress of women is secondary in Islam. Since *tesettür* for Cevdet (1327c) is not from the pillars of Islam, the way woman dress would transform over time. This means that he does not see *tesettür* as an indication of strong belief and true Muslimhood. For him Islam does not have relation with *burqa* and *hijab* and this is not the way, *sharia* orders woman. In this strategy, he employs a discursive technique: identifying true and false Muslims.

Responding to an article (Tesettür-ü Nisvan¹²²) published in one of a well known Islamist journal *Sırat-ı Mustakim*, Cevdet (1327c, p.810), states that "Is Islam a wild bird in the chador so that it say goodby as the chador is opened"¹²³. It is understood that the author of the article in *Sırat-ı Mustakim* connects *tesettür* with Islam as

¹²² The author of the article is unknown (quoted in Gündüz, 2007).

¹²³ "İslamiyet kadınlarımızın çarşaflarının içinde vahşi bir kuş mudur ki çarşaf açılır açılmaz hemen 'pır pır' diye açarak bize veda etsin".

Cevdet (810) confirms: “(...) for the sake of an assumption to repeal covering means the farewell of Islam to us”¹²⁴. Cevdet as a response to the opponents states that as if he proposed an idea that women should dress in the streets as the way they dresses in bedrooms¹²⁵. In this way, Cevdet secures himself from the critics of the Islamists and constitutes a legitimate ground through emphasizing acceptability of his ideas on Islamic dress.

After responding to the opposing views, Cevdet employs another technique: identifying true Islam and Muslims in which he questions Muslims’ faith if do not practice: “Islam is practice and deed not other than that. In fact, faith in the heart necessitates to be proven and it is subjected to question”¹²⁶. Here Cevdet (p.810) disconnects the tie of covering with Islam. For him it is not the sign of a true Muslim. A Muslim who does not practice Islam is not true Muslim for him. By practice he does not mean praying *namaz*, obligatory prayers, fasting, and Islamic dress. As I discussed above, a true Muslim women is educated and the one who is permanently struggles to seek knowledge. He reduces practice to seeking knowledge ignoring the real practice of Islam such as Islamic or modest dress, praying, fasting, and giving alms etc.

One may argue that the ideal Muslim woman model in Cevdet’s mind is close to traditional approach especially his arguments about motherhood. He locates Muslim women as a mother in the family. This means that he separates the obligations of man and woman. Fathers are responsible to lead family economically while mothers manages internal affairs in home like raising children, cleaning and cooking. Since Cevdet gives different responsibilities to man and women, he disagrees with the equality of man and women in law as feminism defends. He also, highlights that women should seek knowledge. Nevertheless, for me this is not for the sake of

¹²⁴ “(...) tesettürün farz-ı muhal olarak ref’i, İslamiyetin bize vedası demek olur”.

¹²⁵ “Evvla bu satırları okuyan bir adamın ‘galiba bu memlekette kadınlarımızın al açık, istirahat odalarında buldukları hal ve kıyafetleriyle sokağa çıkmalarını isteyen bir fırka var”.

¹²⁶ “Müslümanlık amal ve ef’aldedir. Başka hiçbir şeyde değildir. Hatta kalpte olan Müslümanlık bile muhtaç-ı isabat ve maruz-u şüphedir”.

knowledge itself but for the sake of creating knowledgeable generations. Cevdet on the issue of *tesettür* sets apart from traditional thinking. For him *tesettür* is secondary and does not form one of the fundamentals of Islam. That is why, he disagrees with Islamists on the necessity of covering. He presents the defenders of modest dress as extremists to open a space for legitimacy for his own arguments.

3.2.3. Negative Picture of Sultans and Ottoman *Shahzadahs*

According to Cevdet (1327a, p.763) “oppression of the sovereigns of Islam”¹²⁷ one of the root causes of the decline. For him after the rightly guided caliphs Islamic world evolved to oppressive regimes (*istibdat*) which resulted Muslims to be ignorant, powerless and uncivilized (1905c, p.10). That is why, Cevdet has harsh criticism of Sultan Abdulhamid II in specific and of sultans in Islamic history: “The true perpetrator of the atrocities Abdulhamid and Abdulhamid like oppressive and traitor sultans of the Ottomans. If Abdulhamid was not be the enemy of religion and nation, was not be remorseless sultan, within 28 years Turkey would be powerful, and civilized Islamic government”¹²⁸.

3.2.3.1 Invoking Early Period of Islam

Cevdet in the critic of oppressive regime of the Ottomans uses Islamic rhetoric. He invokes early period of Islam as a discursive strategy. According to him *ulema* agreed upon that “although prophet Muhammed (p.b.u.h.) did not have a male child to appoint him as a caliph, if he had he would not say that caliph will be my son”¹²⁹ (1905e, p.86). So, election is a prophetic practice and for Cevdet (p.86) and this is a necessity element that makes sultan’s caliphate in complied with *sharia*¹³⁰. “When asked from prophet the question of who will pass the *Imamate* who is the caliph,

¹²⁷ “İstibdad-ı hükümdaran-ı İslam”.

¹²⁸ “Bütün Müslümanların gördüğü zulmün mes’ul-u hakikisi, kısm-ı azam itibarıyla, Abdulhamid ve Abdulhamid gibi müstebid ve hain selatin-i Osmani’dir. Eğer Abdulhamid din ve millet düşmanı vicdansız bir padişah olmasa idi yirmi sekiz sene zarfında Türkiye; kaviu’ş şekime, mütemeddin bir hükümet-i İslamiye halini alırdı”.

¹²⁹ “Vakian hazreti Muhammed (s.a.v) efendimiz bila veled-i zekür irtihal buyurdular. Fakat zi evlad-ı zekur bulunsalardı ‘benden sonra imam, halife-i İslam şu oğlum olacak’ buyurmayacakları i’ndel ulema sabit ve muhakkaktır”.

¹³⁰ “Halife şer’en mevrus olamaz, ve halife rey-i hodüyle kendisine halef tayin edemez”.

prophet ordered: elect and appoint him with the consensus between you”¹³¹. Cevdet as a result of this historical event, argues that without consensus of the free and independent people, sultan’s caliphate is illegitimate and invalid and those who gives consent on such illegitimate caliphs are ignorant and deviant for Cevdet (p.86).

3.2.3.2. Seeing Sultan as the Perpetrator of Closure the Gate of *İctihad*

In addition to the argument that sultans are Islamically illegitimate, another reason that Cevdet (1327a, p.764) draws negative picture of sultans is because they closed the gate of *ictihad* in Islam. He combines this strategy with the strategy of invoking history of Islam and the sacred texts: Islamic ruler Sultan Mahmud Gaznevi (998-1030) for Cevdet is a symbolic figure behind the interruption of free intellectual thinking. He closed the gate of *ictihad* by controlling knowledge. This practice was illegitimate Islamically due to the prophetic hadith “the *ulema* is the successor of the prophets”. For Cevdet (p.764) the producer of knowledge *ulema* should not be taken under control anyway.

According to Cevdet (p.764) from the very beginning of Islam, the gate of *ictihad* was open. This was an indication that Islam had enough space to respond to the necessities of time, and new occurring social, political and intellectual developments. Nevertheless, free thinking was interrupted at the time of Sultan Mahmud Gaznevi who was first the Islamic ruler used the title *sultan*. For Cevdet being *sultan* has some negative consequences¹³². It necessitates control of knowledge: “Sultan Mahmud Gaznevi in order to be complied with the the title *sultan* as he wishes, burned the philosophy books and declared the punishment of selling and buying of these books”. This event for Cevdet was the most destructive event in Islamic world. A consequence of this, Muslims’ ability of free thinking and reasoning was subjected to destructive indolence, *atalet-i mühlike*. Normally, *ulema* is considered the successor

¹³¹ “Kendisinden sonra kim imamate geçeceği yani kim halife olacağı hazret-i rasulullahtan sual edildikte ‘icma-ı ümmet ile onu siz tayin ve intihab edersiniz”.

¹³² “Alem-i İslam’ın tekamül-ü fikrisine en vahim darbeyi hükümdaran-ı İslamları sultan Mahmud Gaznevi vurmuştur”.

of the prophets as it was clearly stated in the hadith, but most of them are taken under the control of sultans.

3.2.3.3. Presenting Ottoman Sultans as Incapable of Serving for the Benefit of Nation

According to Cevdet (p.87), Ottoman *shahzadahs*, princes could not lead the country, serve the subjects according to their needs and provide benefit of and protection for the nation since they are the son of *carriyes*, female slaves and fed by the milks of of them . Cevdet (1327c, p.87) states:

There is no one among the todays princes of the Ottoman dynasty that have the knowledge of good manners whereby they could save the benefit of the homeland and people according to the needs and exegesis of time. All of these were born from Circassian concubines and female slaves, fed by female slave's milk and raised in the hands of the unfortunate eunuchs whose states cannot be explained ¹³³.

Besides all denigration of slaves and Ottoman princes Cevdet does not take the responsibility of insulting. For him they are humiliated by the oppression of people and the cruel laws of nature, history and psychology. Cevdet (p.87) thinks that slaves over time lose their freedom of spirit, dignity and honor¹³⁴. In order to prove this he employs two techniques: invoking an experimental study on animals: "Babies born out of female animals who are employed in inferior services, no matter how their fathers are superior, they born without being successor to their father's superiority and purity"¹³⁵ (p.87). This means that Ottoman princes and sultans are incapable of to rule the country and bring benefit and welfare to the nation and to provide wellbeing of people due to their inferior slave mothers¹³⁶.

¹³³ "(...) bu hanedan-i Osmani'nin bugünkü şehzadeleri içinde hiç bir ferd yoktur ki ihtiyaç ve iktiza-yı zamana göre umur-u ibadullahı riyazet ederek menafi-i vatan ve milleti temin ve muhafaza edecek bir terbiye ve talim görmüş olsun.

¹³⁴ "Müellef esaret olan zekür ve ünas tedricen izzet-i nefsinı, istiklal-i ruhiyesini, hasılı hürriyet ve istiklal-i ruh ve bedenden gelen hasail-i mübeccelesini zayı' eder".

¹³⁵ "Hidemat-ı sufliyede kullanılan dişi hayvanattan doğan yavruların babaları ne kadar cins olursa olsun yine pederlerinin kuvvet ve safvet-i cinsiyesine varis olamayarak doğarlar".

¹³⁶ "Bunların cümlesi Çerkez cariyelerden esirelerden doğmuş esire sütüyle beslenmiş halleri mustağni-i izah olan bedbaht haram ağalarının ellerinde büyümüşdür".

3.3. Discursive Strategies in the Post-War Period (1918-1926) on Law, State, and Religion

According to my analysis, as of 1918, Cevdet does not use Islamic discourse as much as the pre-war period. In fact, the discursive strategies he used between 1918 and 1926 were similar one (especially invoking the sacred texts and Islamic history) to that of pre-war period. Nevertheless, this time he did not employ them for the sake of glorifying Islam but of making more secular arguments through benefiting the content Islam. This is not to say that Cevdet confronts with the religion of Islam. He follows the line between accommodation and confrontation. For example, while he employs a strategy to defend the outlawry of *sharia* rules on family law after the CUP decided to replace the existing, *sharia*-based family law with the German one in 1917, he re-publishes “Cihan-ı İslam’a Dair” in which Cevdet had used 27 Qur’anic verses and prophetic hadiths. Nevertheless in the same year, he also publishes an article called “Mezheb-i Bahauallah: Din-i Ümem” in which Cevdet integrates the religion of Islam with Bahai religion between the years of 1918 and 1922 is not publicly conflictual with religion. Nevertheless, post 1922 period is the year where Cevdet openly confronts with Islam. For example. In 1924, he supported the draft law on removing the *madrasas*. Two years later, Cevdet rejected the arguments he had asserted in “Cihan-ı İslam’a Dair” arguing that religion is the root cause of decline (1926, p.3863).

3.3.1. Prioritizing the “Exigence of Time” (ilcaat-ı Zaman)¹³⁷

This strategy was one of the widespread strategies used by Ottoman intellectuals (e.g. Gökalp) (Erdem, 2003, Ardıç p.72,73). Cevdet (1918b, p.2825) too uses this claim that *sharia* should be revised and changed according to necessities of the age. He supported the decision about the replacing *sharia* rules on family law with the secular German law in 1917. Cevdet agreeing with the outlawry of the polygamy stated that: “The name of the century is 20th century. You live in the 13th century. You should

¹³⁷ This strategy is not particular to post war period. In fact, he had used the same strategies in pre-war period (see Cevdet, 1905b, 1906b, 1907, 1327a). But this is the first time that he uses in a way of excluding religion of Islam.

live in the 20th century. You cannot enter into the family of humanity with the family draft of four women”¹³⁸ (p.2825). The reason behind this argument is the due to Cevdet’s belief that *fiqh*, Islamic jurisprudence on family law was an obstacle for the membership in the league of nations. In the words, Cevdet thought that Islamic law is inadequate to get involved in the post war international political structure.

3.3.2. Separating Religion and State

Another strategy Cevdet (1918b) employs in post war period is the emphasis on the importance of the separation between religious and state affairs. That is why, he supported the idea to remove the *şeyhulislam* from the parliament. This is must and only way to be recognized as a modern state: “A government with a *şeyhulislam* in its parliament cannot sit side by side with today's states”¹³⁹. This could be interpreted as confrontational argument. However, Cevdet is accommodative in a sense that he legitimizes this idea with a prophetic hadith: “ even the prophet stated ‘you know best about your worldly affairs’ and acknowledged his limit of authorization in the worldly affairs and order to gave affairs to qualified person”¹⁴⁰. This argument is contradictory because of the fact the prophet was already a religious leader. Cevdet’s technique in this strategy is decontextualisation. The hadith was stated as a war strategy in *Bedir* war.

The idea of separating religion and state shows that Cevdet adopts nation state model instead of caliphate system. This symbolizes the transition from multi ethnic, multi religious *millet* system to nation state model: “We must give up the claim of being the leader of Greeks, Arabs and Persians. Since we surrendered to the Allies by accepting Wilson principles, we must end this claim”¹⁴¹ (Cevdet, 1918b, p.2825).

¹³⁸ “Bu asrın adı yirminci asırdır. Sen onüçüncü asırda yaşıyorsun. Yirminci asırda yaşamalısın. Dört kadınlı aile taslağıyla aile-i insaniyete giremezsin”.

¹³⁹ “(...) meclis-i vükelasında şeyhulislam efendi bulunan bir hükümet bugünün devletleriyle yan yana oturamaz”.

¹⁴⁰ “(...) peygamber bile entüm e’lemu fi umuri dünyaküm” buyurarak dünya işlerindeki mahdudiyeti salahiyetini itiraf etmiş ve işi ehline bırakmıştır”.

¹⁴¹ “Biz artık mülk-ü Rum, ve’l Arab ve’l acem olmak davasından vazgeçeceğiz. Madem ki Wilson prensipleri kabul edilerek itilaf zümresine teslim olmuşuzdur. Bu davaya hatime çekilmiştir.”

Instead of the universality of Islam, it seems that Cevdet accepts the limitations of the nation states. Although Cevdet is accommodative in his claim, the separation is legitimized through a prophetic hadith, through decontextualising the hadith he proposed the limited version of Islam.

3.3.3. Legitimizing Bahai Religion by instrumentalising Islam

Another strategy Cevdet (1922a) employs in post 1918 period is using Islam in order to legitimize Baha-i religion. In “Mezheb-i Bahauallah: Dini Ümem” Cevdet invokes the sacred texts of Islam and gives examples from the history of Islam. Although he tries to show that Islam is the religion of peace through employing Qur’anic verses, he thinks that Islam in practice failed to establish peace. Also, Cevdet (p.3016) through using a hadith about the importance of reason claims that Bahatism too is the religion of reason as prophet states. In this sense he proposes Bahatism which is the religion of peace, love, mercy and reason as a universal religion. This means that Cevdet shows Bahatism as an alternative to Islam. Although Cevdet adopts Islamic language in this strategy, I can openly assert that this is not the way that Cevdet formalizes his discourse in prewar period. Although Cevdet is accommodative with regard to using Islamic discourse, he does this for the sake of legitimizing Bahai religion. This article shows that Cevdet intensifies confrontation elements in post war period.

Cevdet (1922a, p.3015) argues that monotheistic religions like Christianity and Islam includes the elements of peace and mercy in it. Jesus was calling people to love each other as prophet of Islam Mohamad stated: “Did not Jesus say love each other? Did not prophet Mohammed, mercy to all creation suggested ‘love each other, do not feel enmity to anybody, do not cause each other's misfortune, do not be jealous of each other, o servants of Allah be brothers?” Cevdet continues to show that Islam has peaceful elements. He then narrates prophet’s another hadith: “Muslim is the one that who does not harm anybody by his tongue or hands”¹⁴².

¹⁴² “Müslüman o kimsedir ki insanlar onu elinin dilinin şerrinden emin bulunurlar.”

According to Cevdet, theoretically both Islam and Christianity have peaceful teachings, in practice it is quite contrary: Both religions are war religions: “military campaigns on the half of Islam, Saint Barthelemy’s, holy wars etc. is not the character of mercy and peace” Cevdet (p.3016) specifies his argument through invoking early period of Islam. He claims that man from the tribe of Ben-i Kurayza were beheaded and thrown into a well and their wives and children were sold as concubine and slaves. According to Cevdet, this historical event contradicts with the teaching peace and mercy. For him, only religion that will provide peace and mercy is the Bahai religion¹⁴³. Cevdet (p.3016) quoting from Bahauallah, the founder of Bahai religion “Avoid causing split between people and avoid planting thorns of doubt to the hearts”¹⁴⁴.

In addition to the elements of peace and mercy in Bahai religion, Cevdet (p.3016) claims that Bahatism is convenient with reason and its teachings do not contradict with science: “Bahatism who was founded by Bahauallah and arranged and spreaded by Abdulbaha¹⁴⁵ does not have any teachings and principles that contradict with reason. Rather here is harmony between them”¹⁴⁶. One could ask that why the reason is important for a religion. Cevdet’s respond grounds on the religion of Islam that appreciates reason. So, in this strategy his technique is getting legitimacy from the prophets’s hadith: “religion is reason (aql) the one is deprived of intellect has no religion”¹⁴⁷. Though the hadith clearly refers to the legal fact that the mad could not be held accountable for their actions, he as usual abstracted it from its historical context and cited to justify an entirely different argument for a modern(ist) version of Islam. This also means that Cevdet uses Islam to glorify Bahatism, which he probably saw as the most modern version of Islam. Cevdet thus claimed that Bahauallah was

¹⁴³ “Bu din ancak Bahauallah’ın oğlu Abdulbaha’nın va’z ve tesis ettiği din-i muhabbet ve merhamettir”.

¹⁴⁴ “İnsanlar arasında tohum-ı nifak etmekten, gönüllere rey-i şüphe dikenleri dikmekten sakınınız”.

¹⁴⁵ He is the son of Bahauallah (Cevdet, 1922a, p.3015).

¹⁴⁶ “Bahauallahın tesis, Abdulbahanın tanzim ve neşr ettiği Bahailik akıl ile muarız hiç bir fikri, hiç bir hükmü ihtiva etmemektedir”.

¹⁴⁷ “Din akıldır, akli olmayanın dini yoktur”.

the true prophet who had destined to lead humanity to the peace, mercy and brotherhood¹⁴⁸.

This refers to a radical transformation in Cevdet's discourse which contains intense elements of conflict towards the religion of Islam. Confrontation language aroused serious discomfort in the conservative circles in the government. After the investigation he was sentenced two years of prison in December, 1922. Nevertheless, because of regime change the provision became invalid and after four and half year of trial in 1926 he was released by the court. The cost of conflicting with Islam lead him called a heretic (Hanioğlu, 2005, p.60). Nine days after the publication of his article on Bahatism, Cevdet (1922) republished, as a response to heavy criticism, "Cihan-ı İslam'a Dair" in which he tries to disprove religion of Islam is and obstacle for progress through intense usage of Islamic symbols, concepts, Qur'anic verses and prophetic hadiths.

I argued that between 1918-1922 Cevdet's discourse is between accommodation and confrontation, but he also expanded the limits of confrontation. He uses Islam to provide basis for Bahai belief system. This transformation naturally approximate his discourse to confrontation. As I showed in the Bahai example, he gives Bahatism higher status vis a vis Islam, presenting it as a religion which fits best to the 20th century. Post 1922 period, specifically as of 1924, he gradually increases confrontational language towards Islam. In this period, he claims the the perception of the religion an obstacle for progress and insufficient to provide virtue, welfare, happiness and material wealth.

3.3.4. Separating the Concept of Religion from the Education of Conscience

In 1926 Cevdet publishes an article called "Din ve Terbiye-i Vicdaniye" in which he clarifies why he prefers to use the phrase *terbiye-i vicdaniye* (education of conscience) instead of the term *din*, religion. Cevdet (1926, p.3862) argues that Islam

¹⁴⁸ "Merhamet ve uhuvvet talim eden bir peygamber-i hak, tedhişsiz, silahsız olarak kişver-i kulubtaki futuhatı ikmal eder ve peygamber olduğunu hiç iddia etmediği halde (...)"

in practice does not lead to happiness, wealth and high morality. In order not to cause misunderstanding, he uses the phrase *terbiye-i vicdaniye*, which means that a set of moral principles and rules that will bring power, wealth, knowledge, progress, welfare and happiness (p.3863). Then, the main technique Cevdet employs in this strategy is attributing religion negatively. It is negatively attributed because it is unable to change laziness, poverty, misery, and wretchedness of Muslim society. In fact, in “Cihan-ı İslam’a Dair” Cevdet (1327a) had argued not the religion itself but the wrong, superstitious and non Islamic practices and behaviors prevent Muslims from the progress and he had seen Islam as the cause of progress, wealth, welfare and happiness. Contrary to those arguments, Cevdet (1926) in post-1922 period defines religion as the way that it is practiced by its followers rather than its progressive moral teachings that could elevate as Europeans. Despite the moral teachings of Islam, it becomes the root cause of decline.

According to Cevdet (p. 3862) concepts could transform over time and their meanings could change according to places, tribes, and races: “The meaning of religion in America certainly differs from its meaning in France, Italy, Turkey and Arabian Peninsula. (...) If the perception of religion in us was the same as it is perceived in America, I would not hesitate to translate it as religion (...)”. Instead of the word religion, he prefers to use *terbiye-i vicdaniye*. His basis on this argument is as follows: “The value of religions is not measured by the principles defined in their primary books but measured through its reflections in the real life”¹⁴⁹. Cevdet thinks that religion in Muslim countries is corrupted: “today, religion especially in the East is the knowledge of second life, but in terms of its present effect, religion is the corrupted word”¹⁵⁰. The value of a religion for him is evaluated by the happiness, welfare, and high moral it provides its followers. In other words, if a religion does not result the goodness of society, it is valueless. Moreover, the principles of high morality is secondary if these principles are not practiced by the society. At this point

¹⁴⁹ “Dinlerin kıymeti ana kitaplarındaki mestur prensiplerinde değil, şe’ni hayattaki tecelliyatında mekindir”.

¹⁵⁰ “Bilhassa Şark’da, bugün din bir ilm-i uhrevidir ve bizdeki tesirat-ı hazırası itibariyle din muharreb dünyadır”.

Cevdet (p.3862) questions whether Islamic principles elevate Muslims society in the real life:

Although in the primary sources of a religion (Islam) there are the principles of high morality and although in our walls such statements are written: ‘purity is half of the belief’; ‘seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim’; ‘the one who is busy with trade is the beloved to Allah’; ‘poverty is shame in this world as well as in the hereafter’; “there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives’ etc., cleanliness, trust in knowledge, property, welfare and characteristic of avoiding poverty will be seen in non Muslim countries rather than in Muslim countries¹⁵¹.

It is clear that Cevdet thinks that the high moral principles of Islam does not lead Muslim society to the happiness and progress. He implies that Islam is incapable and insufficient to transform Muslim community according to its principles.

Cevdet (1926) in this strategy employs what I call *assumption* technique, inferring the legitimacy or illegitimacy of something through an assumption. To explain, Cevdet (1926, p.3862) claims that if the prophet Muhammed (p.b.u.h.) or any other enlightened prophets resuscitated, they would not pleased with and abhorred from the followers of them”. He specifies why the prophets would be displeased by Muslims: “You hurt somebody, stole something, humiliated poor people, told lies, made oppression (...) and then you say ‘Allah’ once with a great love then, your sins, as the yellowed leaves fall under the influence of the wind, fall and you become spotlessly clean (...)”¹⁵². Here Cevdet (p. 3863) implies that morality (*ahlak*) is independent from the belief (*iman*). He thinks that belief does not make somebody

¹⁵¹ “Dinin esas kitaplarında istediği kadar ahlak-ı fazıla prensipleri bulunsun, istediği kadar duvarlarımıza nezafet imandandır, tahsil-i ulum ve funun erkek kadın her Müslim üzerine farzdır, kesb ve ticaretle uğraşan kimse Allah’ın sevgilisidir, fakirlik dünyada ve ahirette yüz karasıdır, insan için mesaisinden başka istinadgah yoktur ibareleri levhalar halinde duvarlarımıza asılsın yine nezafet Müslüman mahallelerinde değil, gayri Müslüman mahallelerinde bulunmaya devam edecek, ilme itimat Müslümanlardan ziyade gayri Müslümanlarda görülecek, servet ve refah tahsiline ve fakrden tebaude ihtimam Müslümanlardan ziyade gayri Müslim’lerde göze çarpacaktır”.

¹⁵² “Can yak, hırsızlık et, fukarayı ez, yalancılık et, saf adamları dolandır, zülm et (...) sonra bir kere şevk ile Allah de, bütün günahların, sonbaharda sararmış ve dökülmeye amade olmuş yaprakların, rüzgar tesiriyle dökülmeleri gibi dökülür sen pir-u pak olarak ortaya çıkarsın (...)”

moral. If you somebody loose morality, regardless of his devotion to Allah, he could harm people.

In short, Cevdet in this strategy separates between the term *terbiye-i vicdaniye* and *din*. The discourse that religion of Islam is incapable of leading sociality to goodness is the distinctive elements of his post 1922 period. Cevdet seems to confront with Islam, when he interprets religion according to wrong practices of Muslim whereas he had argued not the religion of Islam but Muslims are responsible for the decline of Islamic world (Cevdet, 1327a). Although Cevdet does not honestly blame Islam, he implies that Islamic teachings and principles ineffective in the transformation of the community. He eventually concludes with the counter arguments that he had argued in “Cihan’ı İslam’a Dair” (1926, p.3863):

We know that other factors causing decline of the Muslim East. Nevertheless non of these reasons are as influential as the ominous perception of religion. Unless the the perception of religion would have the progressive and constructive characteristic and power instead of decline and destruction, calling the name religion will cause the destruction of East. That is why, the Turks’s source of light are invited for the creation of new domination conscience free from superstition¹⁵³.

¹⁵³ “Müslüman şarkın bu sukut-u husranında diğer amillerinde bulunduğunu bilmez değiliz; fakat bu amillerden hiç biri, telakki-i meşumuyla, dini amiller kadar kudret-i tenzil ve tahribe malik değildir; din telakkisi tenzil yerine i’la ve tahribe bedel tamir edici bir seciye ve kudret iktisap etmedikçe ve tadını değiştirmedikçe adını “Şarkta” anmak mehlek olmakta devam edecektir; binaenaleyh, Türk menabi-i nuru, Türk’e hurafeden münezzeh yeni bir hakime-i vicdan yaratmaya davetlidir”.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION: CEVDET'S INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF ISLAMIC DISCOURSE

İsmail Kara (1994, p.9) states that the Islamists' arguments in the Second Constitutional period can be summarized as follows: The Ottomans and the Islamic world is in the state of decline and collapse (*tedenni, tevakkuf, inhitat, inkiraz*); and of powerlessness and laziness; the reason for the decline is not the religion of Islam but the oppression of rulers, *softas* and Muslims' wrong practices and superstitions, and misperception on the destiny. Kara (p.9) also states the solutions put forward by Islamists for aforementioned problems: creating more dynamic, willful and active community as an alternative to stagnant and dormant community; returning to the true Islam; complying with exigence of time through adopting new methods and ways; and struggling against oppressive and absolutist rulers.¹⁵⁴ Considering these arguments and my above discussion on Abdullah Cevdet's discourse, can one easily discard the idea that Cevdet, so called extreme Westernizer, atheist, the enemy of the religion, does not radically differ from Islamists? On the contrary, one cannot but notice the interesting similarities. That is why I have argued confrontation literature is incapable of explaining this diffusion.

My study located itself in Ardiç's accommodation paradigm in which the relationship between modernity and Islam is conceived to be characterized more by accommodation than confrontation until 1922/1924. I agree that contrary to conflict literature Islamic language had a significant role of legitimation in the Ottoman modernization attempts. Religious discourse was the cornerstone behind *Tanzimat*, and *Islahat* Decrees and constitutionalism, and its institutions like parliament and the constitution, *Kanun-i Esasi*. This was until 1924 where the caliphate was abolished and all religious schools were outlawed. Post 1924 period was what Ardiç (p.25) calls

¹⁵⁴ See also Türköne's (1997, p.27-30) statements about the main arguments of Islamism which overlaps with Kara's (1994) one.

the “domination” period, characterized by the attempt at control of religion by the state elite.

As in the case of Ottoman modernization, I have argued, Cevdet’s modernist discourse was accommodative up until 1922/1924. As opposed to confrontationist literature’s depiction of Cevdet as the enemy of Islam and atheism’s prophet as well as pro Western, and materialist, I have shown that Cevdet densely employed an Islamic discourse, referencing Qur’anic verses, prophetic *hadiths*, Islamic history, and Islamic values and concepts. His intense use of Islamic discourse was because he was very aware that religion of Islam was the single legitimation tool for any modernization projects. The transformation of his discourse towards conflict became visible in the post-1922 period. This was the year that he had proposed a new religion, Bahatism. While the post-1924 period was one of controlling Islam at the state level, Cevdet in this period increased the intensity of conflictual discourse towards Islam. His poems, in particular, were openly against mainstream Islamic teachings. In 1926, he even demanded to adopt a new set of rules as an alternative to Islam.

Discourses play an instrumental role in justifying the arguments and the positions of agents and are functional in the elimination of the opponents’. In this sense, to understand how Islamic discourse is employed and formulated by Cevdet as a legitimation tool for secular aims, I have adopted “discourse analysis” as a method in this study, which helped me identify the discursive strategies (Foucault, 1972) that Cevdet employed in *İctihad*. In each discursive strategies, I have also detected discursive techniques (Ardıç, 2012). All of these revealed how Islamic elements, like Qur’anic verses, prophetic hadiths, Islamic history, and Islamic concepts are accommodated to a secular worldview. In addition, this also indicates how Islam was transformed in Cevdet’s modernisation ideals. This meant that Islamic values and concepts are re-defined and re-formulated by Cevdet in a way that radically differed from classical interpretations.

As I have stated in the second chapter, Cevdet published *İctihad* in three different places, Geneva (1904-1905), Cairo (1906-1910) and Istanbul (1911-1932), and within

four different periods: pre-constitutional, post-constitutional, “national struggle” and republican eras. Bürüngüz (2005) and Hanioglu (1986) argue that Cevdet’s discourses differed in these periods. While Bürüngüz claims that Cevdet developed different discourses according to limitations and challenges he faced during these different areas. Hanioglu (1986) states that Cevdet’s discourses differed in pre- and post-constitutional periods: he was much more confrontational toward Islam in the latter than in the pre-constitutional period.

I argue, however, that from 1904 to 1922/1924 there was no substantial change in Cevdet’s accommodative discourse. Based on this argument, I propose, parallel to Kara’s (2017, p.23-25) periodization of secularism in Turkey, that Cevdet’s discourse might be better analyzed in two different periods: pre-and post-1924 periods. While in the former Cevdet’s discourse had an accommodative character, his discourses turned confrontational in the later. Since almost all theses written on Cevdet refer to Hanioglu (1981), Cevdet has been analyzed mainly through confrontation line – though Hanioglu later largely changed his view (2005a, 2005b). Unlike these studies, I have refrained from categorizing Cevdet as a hardcore Westernist, stressing the paradoxical and much more complicated relations between modernity and Islam and thereby contributing to the accommodation paradigm with an examination of the case of Abdullah Cevdet, whose discourse was mostly instrumental in character.

Like most seculars (including secular) actors during the late-Ottoman era, Cevdet often had to resort to Islam because it was the “single most important source of justification” (Ardıç, 2012, p.12). The fact that he republished his article titled (1922) “Cihan-ı İslam’a Dair” after he was harshly criticized for his positive view on Baháism is a clear sign that only employing the Islamic discourse was the way to make his discourse acceptable in a religiously-dominated environment.

Ardıç (2012, p.303-307) argues that Mustafa Kemal and other secularists had an essentially instrumentalist Islamist discourse, and offers three ways in which to understand this instrumental character: Actors’ own confessions, the discrepancy between their rhetoric and their actions, and a radical change in their discourses over

time. We can apply this to Cevdet too. But because of the limits of this study, I could not analyse the the discrepancy between Cevdet's rhetoric and actions.

Throughout my analysis of *İctihad*, I have found three reasons that indicates Cevdet's instrumentally employed discourse: his own confessions, decontextualization of Qur'anic verses, prophetic hadiths and Islamic concepts, and the transformation on Cevdet's discourse in post 1922/1924 period.

One of the indicators of Cevdet's (1905b, p.7) instrumental usage of Islamic discourse is his own statements. He does not reject that he used Islam as an instrument to actualize his political agenda:

With our long experience, we have seen that Muslim mind will close all entrances to the light if it comes from directly from the Christian sources. Therefore, we, taking on the task of injecting a new blood to the Muslim vessels, must seek out the progressive principles found in Islam in large quantities¹⁵⁵.

Parallel to that Cevdet states that Muslim can accept the advancements of civilization only if they come from a Muslim source (quoted in Ardiç, p.5).

A second sign of instrumentally employed Islamic discourse is the way Cevdet uses the sacred texts and Islamic concepts. As I indicated in my discussion on his strategy of the invoking the sacred texts, Cevdet frequently decontextualizes the verses. Also, the hadiths Cevdet invokes are selectively chosen, often weak and some even fabricated. Cevdet does the same thing in the strategy of redefining Islamic concepts. He decontextualizes the term *sunnetullah* what I called "semantic engineering". These instrumental discourse is because I argue that as a result of the military defeats, a search for functional and explanatory guide for Cevdet in specific and Muslim intellectuals in general to transform Muslim community in the light of European centric new currents of thoughts.

¹⁵⁵ "Uzun tecrübelerimizle biz, Müslüman kafasının doğrudan doğruya Hristiyan aleminden geldiği takdirde aydınlığa bütün girişleri kapayacağını müşahede etmiş bulunuyoruz. Binaenaleyh bizler Müslüman damarlarına yeni bir kan nakletme görevini üzerine alan bizler İslamiyet'te çok miktarda bulunan terakkiperver prensipleri arayıp bulmalıyız" (translated by Hanioglu, 1986).

Thirdly, transformation of Cevdet's discourse over time is another element of his instrumental discourse. I argued that discourse of Cevdet changes in post 1918 especially in 1922/1924 period. Until that time, he had not confronted with Islam. In 1918, he argued that change in the *sharia* rules on family law. In the same year, he proposed the separation for religious and state affairs and parallel to that he argued that caliphate's political authority is ended through the accepting the Wilson principles. In fact, he had previously supported the the office of caliphate due to its power in connecting Turkey to Islamic world and had rejected to idea of Turkism out of the concern that it could separate Turkey from the Islamic world and it could make Turkey politically weaker (Cevdet, 1906b, p.18; 1330d, p.382-384).

The strategy of legitimizing Bahai religion through instrumentalising Islamic elements is another discursive shift that Cevdet could not argue in pre 1918 period. In this strategy Cevdet had implied the incapability of Islam to lead community to "goodness." Lastly, there is a great inconsistency in how Cevdet explained the decline of Islamic world over time. In 1911 Cevdet (1327a) had argued that not Islam itself but the wrong practice of Muslims is the one to blame about the decline of Islamic world. Nevertheless, 15 years later Cevdet (1926, p.3863) made the opposite argument: religion was the cause of backwardness in the East – and proposed a new belief system to elevate Turks.

I can argue that this new belief system is a new religion proposal because in post 1922 period Cevdet (1923, p.3289) starts to question Islam itself. The concepts of love, peace and mercy are the center in his religion perception. In "Şiar-ı Din-i Hak" (The Sign of the True Religion), a poem Cevdet wrote states:

Ever day, loving more and pitying deeper,
I think this is the religion,
The most beautiful the highest
and the most real¹⁵⁶.
(...)

¹⁵⁶ "Her gün daha geniş sevmek, daha derin acımak; budur bence din, en güzel, en yüksek ve en gerçek".

These statements are convenient for the post war political structure: a pacifist religion that does not challenge and the question post war status quo. In addition, the ideal religion for him the one that does not contradicts with science. Also, this new religions worship rituals and pillars are different that of Islam. For example, in another poet, “Dinim” (My religion) he says that

My God is the idea of virtue;
My prayer is loving every helpless and powerless creature;
My *qibla* is eternal space, stars,
and golden beads of my rosary¹⁵⁷.

In short, the character of Cevdet’s new religion is progressive, rational, love and mercy centered and pacifist (Cevdet, 1924a¹⁵⁸, p.3356).

The last example indicating discourse change is about *softas* and *medreses*. Cevdet (1329I, p.2231) had argued that he does not target all *softas* and *medrese* students. His enemy is the enemy of *softas* and Islamic World too, namely false *softas* which corrupt Islam and poison Muslim community. Contrarily, Cevdet (1924b, p.3397) in another article, “Müşterek Terbiye, Tevhid- Tedrisat” (Coeducation, Unification of Education) targets all *medrese* institution and *softas* and supports government draft law to outlaw *medreses*. For him this law will stop the destruction of thousands of young men: “By closing madrasas where scholasticism has been though for centuries, he (Ministry of Education) saved thousands of young people's lives and should from being ruined every year” (Cevdet, p.3397).

I have detected 3 reasons indication instrumentally employed discourse. One is Cevdet’s own confession. He argues that since Islam is the only legitimacy source in Muslim world he had to benefit from its power of legitimation to make his agenda palatable to Muslim society. Another sign of instrumentalisation is decontextualization of the sacred text,, Qur’anic verses and the selective usage of and invoking weak and fabricated hadiths. The transformation in his discourse over

¹⁵⁷ “Mabudum fazilet fikridir; namazım sevmektir her canı aciz, muktedir; Kiblem nihayetiz feza, yıldızlar, tesbihimin altın taneleridir”.

¹⁵⁸ Cevdet publishes this poem in 1925 and 1931 too.

time is the third manifestation of the instrumental usage of Islamic discourse. In the post-war period, Cevdet uses Islamic discourse less frequently and occasionally confronts Islam. In this period, Cevdet shows Bahaism as an alternative to Islam, proposes new belief system, and defends the total elimination of *madrasas*.

My purpose in this study has been to indicate how modernity and religion goes hand in hand without excluding each other through examining Abdullah Cevdet's *İctihad*. Although I have tried to fill the theoretical gap as well as the methodological in the literature, this dissertation has certain limits at temporal, horizontal, and thematic levels. First of all, it has covered Cevdet's writings in *İctihad* from 1904 to 1926. Analyzing Cevdet's discourse from the beginning of *İctihad*'s publication (1904) to its very end (1932) from a fresh perspective would be more helpful. Secondly, studying the discourses of other important figures in *İctihad*, like Celal Nuri and Kılıçzade Hakkı, would contribute to a better understanding of both the *İctihad* journal and the ideas of prominent Westernist intellectuals in general. In the second chapter, moreover, I have touched on some Islamist figures like Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Mustafa Sabri Efendi, Derviş Vahdeti and Said Nursi who were actively involved in the modernization projects in the Ottomans. But we need broader and comprehensive comparative studies between aforementioned Islamists and Westernists as well as between Islamic journals like *Sırat-ı Mustakim*, *Beyanu'l Hak*, *Volkan*, and "Westernist" journals like *Mizan*, *Meşveret* and *İctihad*.

Lastly, my study is also confined thematically. I have only analyzed Cevdet's discourse with reference to Islam, Islamic values and subjects. Examining Cevdet's other books, translations and publications, and his ideas on other important themes, such as civilization, science, history and anthropology, would be helpful for a comprehensive understanding of his idea(s). All these limitations invite further research on the above-mentioned topics, names and themes. I hope that in spite of all these confinements, this study may help better understand Abdullah Cevdet in particular, and the process of Ottoman modernization in general, and contribute to the accommodation paradigm.

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