

# THE ROLE AND UNIQUE STYLE OF THE WORK “TAWILAT AHL AL-SUNNAH” IN THE TRADITIONS OF TAFSIR

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## Abstract

The article analyzes the unique style of interpretation in Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī's work “Ṭāwilāt ahl al-Sunnah”. The commentator uses narration and reason in harmony, and sheds light on issues of faith with an analytical approach. The work demonstrates a high scientific style, based on the beliefs of Ahl al-Sunnah and relying on refutation, interpretation, and logic.

**Keywords:** al-Māturīdī, Ṭāwilāt, tafsīr, ta'wil, people of the Sunnah, refutation, analytical method.

## Introduction

Abu Mansur Maturidi's “Ta'wilat ahl al-Sunnah” is a comprehensive, scholarly, and eloquent commentary with a strong style. While studying this work, one can see, along with some general trends, Maturidi's unique and distinctive interpretation styles.

A number of Maturidi scholars have studied in detail the unique way of interpretation of Allama. By comparing the information provided by these scientists and summarizing the results obtained during the research, the main distinctive aspects of “Ta'wilat ahli-s-sunna” can be expressed as follows:

–The method of debate and refutation plays a central role in the legacy of Maturidi. The main reason for this was the desire to eliminate doctrinal differences, which are the root cause of all problems in the Islamic world, and to unite Muslims in a single belief - the belief of the people of the Sunnah. The scholar takes an objective approach in refuting the erroneous sect, first thoroughly studying the sect's claim, then presenting evidence from the Quran and Sunnah, and then from reason, logic, and philosophy.

–In expressing his opinions and refuting opposing views, Maturidi uses the method of persuasion more often. In addition to narration, he also attached great importance to reason and science in order to convince his interlocutors. Therefore, on the one hand, while citing relevant narrational evidence, on the other hand, he supports his opinion with the help of reason and logic, as well as sociological and historical evidence [1:48].

–Previous interpretations relied mainly on narrations. That is, while most of them were known for their “at-tafsir bi-l-ma'sur” approach, Maturidi was able to combine two methods, namely “at-tafsir bi-l-ma'sur” and “at-tafsir bir-r-ra'i” [4:75]. As a result, Maturidi's personality can

be clearly felt in his interpretation and it can be seen that he was not just a narrator and collector of narrations, like his predecessors [2:V.1:334]. The interpreter first tries to interpret the verse. If no firm evidence is found regarding the meaning of the verse, he interprets it in accordance with the beliefs of the Sunnis.

– In the early period, the interpretations were based mainly on the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the words of the companions, and the opinions of the followers. In this case, the commentator often cited the full chain of transmission of the narration. Unlike them, Al-Maturidi, when explaining narrations, does not cite the full chain of transmission, whether it is a hadith or another narration. Sometimes, he does not mention the names of the narrators at all, but simply states “as it is said” and is limited to words like “it is said”.

– In the process of explaining the meaning of the verses in “Ta’wilat Ahl al-Sunnah”, great attention is paid mainly to the analysis of faith issues. The information and views related to these issues are thoroughly researched from all sides.

– When interpreting verses, scholars express several possible meanings: “there is a possibility” and “there may be several aspects.” He uses phrases like: “and in our eyes” and “in our eyes is the truth” and then he presents the interpretation that he prefers, that is, considers superior. This situation indicates that the verse is being interpreted with opinion, that is, it is being interpreted [2:V.1:113-117].

– The commentator does not pay attention to the analysis of the lexical meanings of words unless necessary. In rare cases, he uses poems to explain the meaning of a word. He also rarely turns to the sciences of rhetoric and eloquence.

– In his interpretation of jurisprudential verses, the scholar relies on the opinions of Imam Abu Hanifa or his followers and through them refutes the views of other opposing commentators [3:V.1:15]. He often focuses on controversial points between Hanafiism and Shafi’ism.

– Tafseers prior to Maturidi’s work, as mentioned above, rely on narrations, while Ta’wilat ahli-s-sunna relies mainly on analysis. Allama cites different narrations and views, compares them, and then gives his comments and conclusions regarding the verse.

– In “Ta’wilat Ahl al-Sunnah”, when the interpretation of each new surah begins, it goes directly to the commentary of the verses, without an introductory section like in most interpretations. That is, it does not pay attention to information about the virtues of the surahs, their Meccan or cultural origin.

– Majdi Basallum, while discussing the specific methods of Imam Maturidi’s interpretation, says that the commentator did not pay attention to the abrogation of verses [2:V.1:331]. The incorrectness of this reasoning can be seen in the scientific works of the Turkish researcher Omer Dinç. This researcher comparatively studies the interpretation of verses related to the topic of abrogation in the interpretations of Tabari and Maturidi. The evidence he cites shows that Maturidi paid serious attention to the abrogation of verses in his interpretation and relied on the Hanafi school of thought in this regard [5:50-103].

When a scholar discusses a religious group or sect, he avoids speculation. If there is no specific information, he cites all available information and leaves the reader to draw their own

conclusions. This prevents speculation from being accepted as scientific fact. For example, this can be clearly seen in the interpretation of the verse about the Sabians [2:V.1:147].

Also, Maturidi stopped at clarifying the information that was not clearly stated in the verses only if there was a scientific interest in clarifying it, otherwise he referred his exact knowledge to Allah and left the discussion. For example: In his commentary on verse 35 of Surah Al-Baqarah, he cites the various opinions of the commentators about the tree that caused Adam (pbuh) and his wife to fall from Paradise, but he does not confirm any of them and does not enter into a discussion. Rather, he expresses his attitude to this topic as follows:

“It is not permissible to say anything about its essence without revelation. Because no revelation (i.e., verse) has come regarding its interpretation. Therefore, it is not permissible to firmly affirm any of these opinions” [2:V.1:90].

Summarizing the above information, it can be said that “Ta’wilat Ahl-ul-Sunnah” fully embodies the achievements of the science of exegesis of the 13th century. Al-Maturidi fully explained the Holy Quran from beginning to end and used an analytical method in this. That is, he analyzed the interpretations given to the verses of the Quran and singled out those that corresponded to his interpretation of the verse. The main reason for this was the attempts of the innovatory factions and schools to adapt the verses of the Quran to their own ideas through interpretation and distortion (i.e., changing their meanings). Therefore, anyone who reads the commentary will see that the commentator has placed great importance on compiling comments, mainly on matters of faith.

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