

Codicological Description of the Manuscripts of “Sharh At-Ta’wilat” by Alauddin Samarkandi

Ikhtiyar Abdurahmanov

Chief Researcher of the Imam Maturidi, International Scientific Research Center

Abstract. *This article provides information about the manuscript copies of Alauddin Samarkandi’s work “Sharh al-Ta’wilat”. Manuscript copies stored in library funds all over the world and their codicological classifications are revealed in it. In addition, the unique information found in the manuscripts of the work, the series of teachers of the Maturidi doctrine, the nasikhs and the information written in its margins are cited. The article also provides information such as the fact that this work was considered an authoritative commentary in the scientific circle in the 12th century in Mawarannahr, and that it was studied by foreign experts. It is noted that Alauddin Samarkandi himself read Maturidi’s work “Ta’wilat” together with Nasafi, he added comments to the places he found necessary, and later turned these comments into a separate book. In addition, it is highlighted that the work is a rare source in the direction of Hanafi tafsir.*

Keywords: *manuscript, nasikh, commentary, electronic copy, line, super-commentary, imla, sheet, page.*

The main part

There are more than 10 manuscript copies of “Sharh al-Ta’wilat” in the library funds of the world. Some of these copies are complete and some contain some parts. Electronic copies of 12 of these manuscripts were collected during the scientific research work. In two of them, the work is completely copied. One is the manuscript number 176 in the Hamidiyya fund of the Sulaymaniyah library, and the other is the manuscript number 179 in the Topkapı Library. But in the copy of Hamidiyya, after the chapter “Kahf” there is “Ta’wilat al-Qur’an” itself, and there is no commentary in it¹. Among the remaining copies there are several valuable ones, in which the work is incomplete.

Two of the oldest copies of these manuscripts are available in the fund of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan and are kept under numbers 3249 and 3155². Both of these are from the library of Khoja Muhammad Porso³.

Manuscript copy number 3249 is considered one of the valuable manuscripts. The work was written in Muharram/November 695/1295 and covers the exegesis of the first three chapters (chapters 1–3) of

¹ Imam Maturidi. Ta’wilat al-Qur’an // ed. Turkish researchers. – Istanbul: Dar al-Mizan, 2007. – Vol.1. - P. 33.

² These two copies were described by Muminov and Ziyadov and were introduced into scientific circulation for the first time. Muminov A., Ziyadov S. Nouvelles des Manuscrits du Moyen - Orient. Paris. – 1998. – No. VII/1, Fishlar. 235–236.

³ It is known that in the territory of Central Asia, many works were copied and there were many manuscript collections. These copies were kept mainly in palaces, madrasas, mosques, or caravanserais. Among them, the library associated with the name of the famous Khoja Muhammad Porso (1348–1420) is of particular importance. In this library, there were also works related to the sciences of kalam, fiqh, hadith, and Sufism. It is worth noting that works related to Maturidi and Maturidiyya are preserved in this library. see: Muminov A., Ziyadov S. L’horizon intellectuel d’un érudit du XVe siècle: nouvelles découvertes sur la bibliothèque de Muhammad Parsa. Patrimoine manuscrit et vie intellectuelle de l’Asie centrale islamique // Cahiers d’Asie Centrale. – 1999. – No. 7. – P. 77–98.

the Qur'an. It was copied by Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Mumin. The scribe is known as Imad al-Qala' (The Pillar of the Castle). This manuscript consists of 318 pages, and each page is numbered in Arabic letters at the top left. Each page is not written in the same style, but consists of 29-33 lines.

The feature of the manuscript is that it also contains corrections and comparison with another copy. This increases the value of the work even more. Its most remarkable feature is the first sheet (1a). It contains two isnads. The title of the manuscript begins with these phrases:

إسناد تصانيف علم الهدى رئيس أهل السنة أبي منصور الماتريدي - رضي الله عنه وأبائه الجنة - قال: أخبرنا الشيخ الإمام حافظ الدين محمد بن محمد بن نصر البخاري، قال: أخبرنا الشيخ الإمام العالم الرباني الحبر الرحمانى صاحب الأصول و الفروع شمس الدين محمد بن عبد الستار بن محمد العمادي الكردي - رضي الله عنه، تغمد الله بالرحمة والرضوان - قال: أخبرنا الشيخ الإمام نجم الدين أبو حفص عمر بن محمد بن أحمد النسفي، قال: أخبرنا الشيخ الإمام القاضي أبو اليسر محمد بن محمد بن الحسين بن عبد الكريم النسفي، عن أبيه، عن جده، عن أبيه عبد الكريم، عن الشيخ الإمام علم الهدى رئيس أهل السنة أبي منصور محمد بن محمد بن محمود الماتريدي السمرقندي - تغمد الله بالرحمة والرضوان.

“The leader of Ahl al-Sunnah, the banner of guidance, Abu Mansur Maturidi, may God be pleased with him and enter him into Paradise: Sheikh, Imam Hafizuddin Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Nasr Bukhari (d. 693/1294)⁴ informed us. He said: “Shamsuddin Muhammad ibn Abdus Sattar ibn Muhammad al-Imadi al-Kardari, a sheikh, rabbani imam, rahmani scholar, master of usul and furu’, conveyed to us, may God be pleased with him, may he be blessed with mercy and pleasure.” He said: “Sheikh Imam Najmuddin Abu Hafs Umar ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad Nasafi informed us. He said: “Sheikh, imam, judge Abul Yusr Muhammad (d. 493/1100) ibn Muhammad ibn Husayn ibn Abdul Karim Nasafi (d. 493/1100) narrated us, he from his father (Muhammad), he from his grandfather (Husain) and he transmitted it from his father Abdul Karim, and he transmitted it from the sheikh, the flag of guidance, the leader of the people of the Sunnah, Abu Mansur Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud al-Maturidi al-Samarkandi, may God surround him with mercy and pleasure”.

Also, on this page, it is noted that this manuscript is the first volume of “Sharh at-Ta’wilat” and it was commented by Alauddin Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Samarkandi⁵.

Another copy stored in the Main Fund of Manuscripts of the Institute of Oriental Studies is manuscript numbered 3155, which was written on 10 Jumada al-Ula/22 May 656/1258 in the mosque named after Imam Kardari in Bukhara. The manuscript is very unique. Umar ibn Muhammad ibn Bakhtiyar copied it with the imla (dictation) of Imam Hafizuddin. It is highly likely that the scholar Abul Barakat Nasafi, nicknamed “Hafizuddin”, dictated it. If it was written with Nasafi’s dictation, it becomes clear that the work “Sharh at-Ta’wilat” was also a reliable source among the commentators.

The manuscript consists of 129 pages, each page has 19 lines. Some pages also have seals indicating that it is the endowment of Khwaja Muhammad Porso. One of the unique aspects of the manuscript is that there are some small topics in the margins of the work.

Another of the manuscripts of the work is manuscript number 47, which consists of 287 pages, kept in the Jarullah Library. It was copied with the page number in Arabic letters at the top left of each page. The text on each page is not in the same style, but consists of 25-29 lines. The work begins with the commentary of Surah al-Kahf and continues to the end of Surah Yasin.

It was copied in Bukhara on 15 Ramadan 651/14 November 1253 by Abu Ishaq al-Damighani (d. 682/1283). The importance of this copy is that ad- Damighani copied it with the dictation of his teacher. But for some reason the teacher’s name is deleted. Only his attributions remain. Due to the presence of the name “Hafiz al-milla wad-din” among these attributions, it is also possible that he was the commentator scholar Abul Barakat Nasafi (d. 710/1310).

⁴ He was born in Bukhara in 615. He was famous as a narrator and one who heard a lot of hadiths, he was one of the great scholars who was reliable and eloquent. Husamuddin Sighnaqi, Ahmad ibn As'ad, Abdulaziz ibn Ahmad Bukhari, and Shamsuddin Mahmud Kalabadi received education from him. He was educated by Shamsul Aimmah Kardari and Abul Fadl Ubaidullah Mahbubi. See: Abdulhayy Lucknawi. al-Fawa'id al-Bahiyya. - Egypt: Matbaa al-Saadat, 1914. - P. 158.

⁵ Alauddin Samarkandi. Sharh al-Ta'wilat. Manuscript. - Tashkent. Main Fund of Manuscripts of the Oriental Studies Institute. No. 3249. - P. 1a.

Abu Ishaq Damighani was born in Damighan, Simnan Province, Iran. His full name is Ibrahim ibn Abu Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Tarzi ad-Damighani. He lives in the city of Bukhara for several years and studied science, then returned to his country. It is mentioned in the sources that he took lessons from Sayfuddin Baharzi (586-659)⁶. It is clear from this that, even in the 12th century, in Mawarannahr, "Sharh al-Ta'wilat" was considered an authoritative commentary in the scientific circle. The seekers of knowledge were not satisfied with reading the work "Ta'wilat al-Qur'an" but also made extensive use of its commentary. The dictation of the work by the teacher is also a clear proof of this idea.

A manuscript known as copy number 48 in the Ased Efandi Collection of the Sulaymaniyah Library is also of some value, consisting of 386 leaves. It was copied in naskh script, each page is numbered at the top left, each page has 23 lines. The work begins with Surah al-Fatiha and ends with verse 68 of Surah al-Nisa. This manuscript was copied by Mahmud ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud Nasafi in 715/1316. However, this Nasafi is not Abul Barakat Nasafi, the owner of "Madarik at-tanzil", who died in 710 AH. The manuscript contains some seals and inscriptions indicating ownership rights. Headings were added to some paragraphs in the page margins, and some hashiyas and corrections exist. Some words have diacritical marks. The work was also compared to other copies.

The scribe of the work says at the end of this book that "Sharh at-Ta'wilat" was copied from his first notebook. This proves that there were other parts of this copy that were lost. From the additional comments in the margin of the work, it is known that the scribe was a scholar and aware of the science of interpretation.

Another manuscript of Sharh at-Ta'wilat is copy numbered 283 in the collection of Shahid Ali Pasha of the Sulaymaniyah Library. This copy consists of 421 pages. But the numbering of the pages in the work is not finished. Each page has 33 lines. This copy is in color and was copied in naskh script. The work begins with Surah al-Fatiha and ends with the last verse of Surah al-Anfal.

Manuscript numbered 176 of "Sharh at-Ta'wilat" in the Sulaymaniyah Library Hamidiyya fund is one of the complete copies. This manuscript consists of 879 folios, each folio of two pages. Each page has 43 lines. This is a complete copy, beginning with the author's preface and ending with a commentary on the last verse of Surah al-Nas. It was copied in a naskh letter by Haji Ahmad, who was a servant of one of the Naqshbandiyya sheikhs. The copying was completed in 1180.

There are also manuscript copies of "Sharh at-Ta'wilat" in the Al-Haram al-Makki Library, and these copies are in two volumes under the numbers 529 and 530. Each page of the copy is numbered independently, and each page has 50 lines. This copy is complete, after the author's preface, it begins with Surah al-Fatiha and ends with the last verse of Surah al-Nas. This copy was written by Musa ibn Abdulaziz in Persian script. The copying was completed in 1192 AH.

Two manuscripts of this "Sharh at-Ta'wilat" numbered 229 and 230 are stored in the Millet Library of Turkiye. Known as the Jarullah copy, this manuscript consists of two volumes, which are available in numbers 229 and 230. The first volume has a total of 266 pages. Each page of the copy has 23 lines. After the author's preface, this volume begins with Surah al-Fatiha and ends with the last verse of Surah Ali Imran. The scribe of this manuscript is not mentioned and the copying was completed in 752 AH. The second volume consists of a total of 336 pages, beginning with Surah al-Nisa and ending with the last verse of Surah al-A'raf.

Another complete copy of the work is manuscript numbered 179 in the library of the Topkapı Palace. This copy, known as the Medina copy, consists of 1,058 leaves, each page of which has 43 lines, and was written in the naskh script. This manuscript, in its full form, begins with an explanation of the concepts of tafsir and ta'wil and ends with Surah al-Nas. On the manuscript, there is a seal and a mark of endowment by Ahmad Arif Hikmat Bek. This manuscript was copied by Hafiz Muhammad Efendi in 1182 AH.

There is also manuscript numbered 294 in the Bankipore Oriental Public Library in India. This copy starts from the beginning of the commentary and ends in the 238th verse of Surah Al-Baqara. Fuad

⁶ Dhahabi. Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafayat-A'yan. - Beirut: Dar al-gharb al-Islami, 2003. - Vol.15. - P. 464.

Sezgin and Ali Riza Karabulut state that this copy's number is 1470, the number of pages is 184⁷.

Also, in the library of the Topkapi Palace of Turkey, there is a manuscript copy of "Sharh at-Ta'wilat" numbered 179. This copy is considered one of the complete versions of the work.

Manuscript number 10970 kept at Umm al-Qura University in Saudi Arabia is also an important source. Although it is not a complete copy, it contains the interpretation of the 23 verses of the Holy Qur'an - from the 31st verse of Surah al-Baqarah to the 19th verse of Surah al-Ghafir.

Also, the title of the work "Sharh at-Ta'wilat" is clearly stated on the cover of the copy number 283 in the Suleymaniye library's Shehid Ali Pasha fund.

A deeper study of the works of Abu Mansur Maturidi and Alauddin Samarkandi reveals new aspects of the history of interpretation and the science of kalam in Mawarannahr in the 9th-12th centuries. Alauddin Samarkandi's work "Sharh at-Ta'wilat" is an example of the stages of development of the science of tafsir in Mawarannahr, and it will undoubtedly make a great contribution to the research of the characteristics of the science of tafsir in the X-XII centuries and later and to providing new information in this regard.

In conclusion, one of the great merits of Alauddin Samarkandi is that Maturidi and his works, which gained fame in the 10th century, were "forgotten" by the 11th century. By the 12th century, Samarkandi and his comrades "restored" Maturidi. The study of manuscript copies of the work "Sharh at-Ta'wilat" is the basis for discovering various innovations in the field of Islamic studies, especially in the field of tafsir. This work contains the "product" of three manifestations of Maturidi's teaching, that is, Imam Maturidi's interpretation, Abul Muin Nasafi's commentary during the lesson, and Alauddin Samarqandi's additional comments.

⁷ Ali Reza Karabulut. Mu'jam at-tarikh at-turathi. - Kaysari: Dar al-aqaba. Publication date not specified. - Vol. 4. - P. 2555; Fuad Sezgin. Tarikh at-turath al-arabi. - Saudi Arabia: Imam Muhammad University, 1991. - Vol 4. - P. 41; Imam Maturidi. Ta'wilat al-Qur'an // ed. Turkish researchers. - Istanbul: Dar al-Mizan, 2007. - Vol.1. - P. 54-56.