

Dār al-Mīzān's Publication of *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*

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Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān. By Abu Mansūr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Māturīdī al-Samarqandī; edited by Ahmet Vanlıoğlu, Mehmet Boynukalin, Ertuğrul Boynukalin, Hatice Boynukalin, Halil Ibrahim Kacar, Murat Sulun, Ali Haydar Ulusoy, Mustafa Yavuz, Murteza Bedir, Muhammet Masum Vanlioğlu, Abdullah Basak; revised by Bekir Topaloğlu. Istanbul: Dār al-Mīzān, 2003-2011. 19 volumes.

Abū Mansūr al-Māturīdī's (d.333/944) commentary on the Qur'ān, titled *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, is regarded as one of the earliest reason-based (*dirāyah*) exegesis. He was a prolific theologian and a contemporary of al-Tabarī (d.310/923) who is famous for his own tradition-based (*riwāyah*) exegesis. This early important work has been published a few times, partially and completely with editors using a few manuscripts, but the Turkish Dār al-Mīzān (Mizan Yayınevi) edition has certain salient features that distinguish it as being the foremost edition thus far. This nineteen volume publication, which includes a volume of introduction and selected translation in Turkish as well as a volume of indices, has taken certain necessary steps to ensure a critically-edited publication. The edition has the potential to be a scholarship standard for publication of early Islamic works especially in the field of *tafsīr*. The editors had access to many manuscripts in their archive that previous editors did not or could not access, which solved many textual errors that plagued previous editions. Their methodology includes looking over the different manuscripts and noting the differences in the marginalia. Arguably the greatest feature of this edition is the partial inclusion of *Sharḥ Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān* by 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d.540/1145). This commentary clarifies many difficult passages in the original text of al-Māturīdī and it could be argued that the editors should have included all of the commentary in this edition. In addition to the *Sharḥ*, the editors also elucidate perplexing phrases and difficult words, include brief descriptions of relatively enigmatic people and places, and intuitive indices. Each individual volume includes an index of verses cited, an index of narrations, an index of individuals referenced, an index of tribes and places, an index of religious groups and sects mentioned, an index of lines of poetry, an index of books cited, and, most importantly, an index of technical terms and primary themes. The indexing of this edition is one of its best qualities. The indexers were able to capture the outlined organization of the *tafsīr* and distill the themes and concepts into indexable terms.¹ These edit features and others are critical and advantageous for readers and researchers.

¹ al-Māturīdī, Muḥammad Abū Mansūr, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān* ed. Ahmet Vanlıoğlu, Mehmet Boynukalin, Ertuğrul Boynukalin, Hatice Boynukalin, Halil Ibrahim Kacar, Murat Sulun, Ali Haydar Ulusoy, Mustafa Yavuz, Murteza

Editing classical texts (*tahqīq*) is essentially about presenting the work as the original author would have intended it. Since some claim that al-Mātūrīdī dictated (*imlā’*) this work and did not write (*kitābah*) it himself, there are bound to be some differences in the written text. This is even found in the title itself: some manuscripts title it as *Ta’wīlāt ahl al-sunnah*, others *Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān*, and some title it as *Ta’wīlāt al-Imām al-Mātūrīdī*. This may indicate that he did not title the work himself. The editors laboriously went through the many manuscripts, 36 of *Ta’wīlāt* and nine of the *Sharḥ*, eventually settling on four manuscripts of *Ta’wīlāt* and one of the *Sharḥ*, and noted major and some minor differences. One example is in volume 12 on page 239-240. The editors foregrounded a paragraph of what was clearly part of the previous āyah into its proper place and indicated this through the star symbol while noting the manuscript page and line number. This type of edit is not uncommon in this edition. In addition to these major corrections, they also included minor variances within the margin apparatus. To aid those interested in the manuscripts themselves, they mentioned every few pages, some volumes more frequently than others, the recto/verso (*zahr/wajh*) along with line (*satr*) number. For a key of the abbreviations, see page eight in volume one and for a description of the manuscripts see pages 45-56 in volume one.

Al-Mātūrīdī often mentions a portion of an āyah or hadith, the editors would include the remaining portion in the footnote along with tracing the sources. These short but important inclusions provide direction for facilitate future research. Differences in the honorifics like *jalla jalāluhu* or *ta’ālā* would not be noted for obvious reasons.²

Previous editions

Ibrāhīm ‘Awdayn and Sayyid ‘Awdayn published a one volume edition in Cairo, containing Sūrat al-Fātihah and āyāt 1-140 from Sūrat al-Baqarah.³ Another one-volume edition was edited by Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman.⁴ His edition, published in Baghdad in 1983, contains up till the end of Sūrat al-Baqarah. He also has an introduction, written in English, elaborating on the details of al-Mātūrīdī’s life and works.⁵ Mustafizur Rahman’s edition of *Ta’wīlāt* does utilize

Bedir, Muhammet Masum Vanlioğlu, Abdullah Basak, and revised by Bekir Topaloğlu (19 vols. İstanbul: Dār al-Mīzān [Mizan Yayınevi], 2003-2011). See the *faharis* volume, pg 239-330 specifically and the indices in each volume generally.

² Further details can be found in the introduction, vol. 1 pg 57-60.

³ *Ta’wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah*, ed Ibrāhīm ‘Awdayn and Sayyid ‘Awdayn (1 vol. Cairo: al-Majlis al-A‘lā l-shū’ūn al-Islamiyyah, 1971?) Surat al-Fatiha and 1-140 from Surat al-Baqarah.

⁴ *Ta’wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah*, ed Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman (1 vol. Baghdad: Maṭba‘at al-Irshād, 1983). Surat al-Fatiha and Surat al-Baqarah.

⁵ Mustafizur Rahman, Muhammad, An Introduction to al-Maturidi's *Ta'wilat ahl al-sunnah*, (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, 1981).

different manuscripts which he notes in the marginalia but he does not mention sufficient details about his methodology of textual criticism (*tahqīq*). In his two-page introduction he does state that he takes a comparative approach in producing a verification (*taṣḥīḥ*) of the *Tafsīr*. The main works he compared it with were *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* of al-Jassās (d.370/981), *Tafsīr al-Tabarī*, *al-Durr al-Manthūr* by al-Suyūṭī (d.911/1505), and *Sharḥ al-Ta’wīlāt* of al-Samarqandī. After the completion of *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, there are seven pages of manuscript images; three from Istanbul, one from Cairo, two from Damascus, and one from Berlin. The description of these manuscripts are not given in the Baghdadi edition, but can be found in his aforementioned Introduction.⁶ To see the full range of Mustafizur Rahman’s contribution to Māturīdī’s *Ta’wīlāt*, one must read both his English introduction and Arabic edition of the *Tafsīr*.

More recently, two complete editions have been published in Beirut. One has been edited by Fāṭimah Yūsuf al-Khaymī in five large volumes, but with small print, and published by Mu’assasat al-Risālah in 2004.⁷ The other one is edited by Majdī Bāsallūm and published in ten volumes by Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah in 2005.⁸ This edition relies on three manuscripts, two Egyptian and one Turkish but only one of them was complete.⁹ Additionally, Bāsallūm has a 300+ page introduction to al-Māturīdī providing a backdrop to his influences and theological contributions.

Dār al-Mīzān’s edition utilized a collaborative effort to produce the *Ta’wīlāt*. There were 11 editors who worked on one to three varying volumes. See image 1. However, in some places, the editors were not completely consistent with their editing methodology (*manhaj al-tahqīq*). For example, al-Māturīdī often references his teacher Abu ‘Awsajah Tawbah b. Qutaybah al-A‘rābī¹⁰ when explaining the lexical meaning of an obscure word (*gharīb*) in the Qur’ān. The index volume shows that Abu ‘Awsajah is quoted in volumes 4-17, with the exception of volume 16. However, it is only in volume 11, and onwards, in the first occurrence of each volume, where there is a footnote explaining who he is. The same issue occurs for al-Quṭabī (d.276/889), a dynamic linguist who has authored books across various disciplines. Al-Māturīdī seems to draw mainly from his *Gharīb al-Qur’ān* and *Mushkil al-Qur’ān*. Also, the reader will find varying levels of details in the marginalia that depended upon the works cited by the editor of that

⁶ pg. 94-108

⁷ *Ta’wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah*, ed Fāṭimah al-Khaymī (5 vols. Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 2004).

⁸ *Ta’wīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah* ed. Majdī Bāsallūm (10 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2005).

⁹ See pg 342-343 for further details on the manuscripts.

¹⁰ His date of death was not found. For further details see; al-Nasafī, ‘Umar b. Muḥammad, *al-Qand fī dhikr ‘ulamā’ Samarqand*, ed Yūsuf al-Hādī (Tehran: Mu’assasat al-ṭibā’ah wal-nashr al-tābi’ah li-wizārat al-thaqafah wal-irshād al-islāmī, 1999) pg 115. He is also listed in *Kitāb al-Ansāb* by al-Sam‘ānī but not as a separate entry. See al-Sam‘ānī, ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad, *al-Ansāb*, ed Abdullāh b. ‘Umar al-Bārūdī (Beirut: Dār al-Jinān), 1988, vol. 1, 161.

particular volume. Some editors would include more details on *qirā'āt*, *takhrīj ahādīth*, and quotations of other *tafsīr* sources than others. This does not necessarily mean that they were inconsistent though, some passages may require more clarity and the multitude of works cited can add different details of research. For example, legal āyahs (*āyāt al-ahkām*) would require more legal references and āyahs that have numerous causes of revelations (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) would require more hadith citations.

| Editor (<i>muhaqqiq</i>) | Volumes edited (<i>muhaqqaq</i>) |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Ahmet Vanlioğlu | 1, 2, 17 |
| Mehmet Boynukalin | 3, 4 |
| Ertuğrul Boynukalin | 5, 6 |
| Hatice Boynukalin | 7 |
| Halil Ibrahim Kacar | 8, 10 |
| Murat Sulun | 9 |
| Ali Haydar Ulusoy | 11 |
| Mustafa Yavuz | 12 |
| Murteza Bedir | 13 |
| Muhammet Masum Vanlioğlu | 14, 15, Index volume (<i>fahāris</i>) |
| Abdullah Basak | 16 |
| Bekir Topaloğlu | reviewed (<i>murāja'āh</i>) every volume |

Image 1

Description of Manuscripts¹¹

- Süleymaniye Ktp., Mihrisah, MS number 8

This complete manuscript was the primary (*asl*) one used for this edition. It consists of 930 folios and contains 39 lines on each page. It is written in elegant *naskh* script (*khatt*) with sūrahs written in red and āyahs overlined in red. On the last page of the manuscript it mentions that it

¹¹ These blurbs are extracted from Dār al-Mīzān's edition, volumes 1 pg 49-54 and Mustafizur Rahman's Introduction pages 95-102.

was transcribed by Muṣṭafā b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad from a copy that Shaykh al-Islam As‘ad Efendi transcribed himself. It was completed in the year 1168 hijrī.

ડ - Koprulu Ktp. Fazıl Ahmed Pasa, MS number 47

This is an incomplete manuscript of the *Ta’wīlāt* starting from Sūrat al-Fātiḥah and ending with the completion of Sūrat al-Isrā’ and thus it was only used for that portion of the edition. It exists in two volumes. The first volume consists of 264 folios and contains 35 lines on each page. The scribe’s name is ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Dinūsharī and the completion date mentioned is 997 hijrī. The second volume was written by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Khālidī al-Ṣafadī al-Hanafī. It begins with Sūrat al-An‘ām and consists of 518 folios. Each page consists of 35 lines. The date of completion is not mentioned; however, they were written around the same time since the *naskh* script of the two volumes is similar and the second scribe passed away in 1034 hijrī.

ڦ - Atif Efendi, MS number 76-77

The first volume begins with al-Mātūridī’s introduction and ends with the completion of Sūrat Maryam. It consists of 456 folios. The second volume completes the *Tafsīr* and consists of 432 folios. Each page contains 37 lines and is written in a fine *ruq‘a* script by Aḥmad Husām al-Dīn al-Rāqī. Some pages have marginal commentary and supplementary notes. The transcription was completed in the year 1156 hijrī.

ڦ - Nuruosmaniye Ktp., Nuruosmaniye bölümü, MS number 124

This manuscript was transcribed by Sulaymān b. Abdullāh al-Mullā Randawī and completed in the year 1114 hijrī. It consists of 834 folios and contains 41 lines on each page. It is also written in a *ruq‘a* script and bears a *waqf* stamp of Sultan ‘Uthmān b. Sultan Maḥmūd. The margin contains quotes from *Tabṣirat al-Adillah*, *al-Kashshāf*, *Sharḥ Ta’wīlāt*, and the *Sīḥāh sittah* (the six canonical hadith books). It is a complete manuscript; however, it does have some omissions. It is missing two āyahs from Sūrat al-An‘ām, the majority of Sūrat al-Inshirāh and Sūrat al-Qadr, and the entirety of Sūrat al-Tīn and Sūrat al-Qalam.

ڦ - Süleymaniye Ktp., Hamidiye, MS number 176

This complete manuscript consists of 879 folios and contains 43 lines on each page. It is written in a clear *naskh* script that is also vocalized. Completed in 1180 hijrī by al-Hājj Aḥmad, this manuscript was heavily relied upon for corrections and clarifications. The editors utilized this

Sharḥ to clarify many difficult passages and also to correct mistakes that were not found in the above manuscripts of *Ta’wīlāt*. This fact is evident in every volume of this edition and is a tremendous reading aid.

Sharḥ Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān

Commentaries on lengthy works are rare. Usually one would find abridgments (*mukhtaṣarāt*) of such works, and thus al-Samarqandī’s commentary on *Ta’wīlāt* provides a rare look at this subset within the genre of *shurūḥ wal-hawāshī* (commentaries and marginalia). These glosses were a result of constant interaction with certain books and so we can conclude that the *Ta’wīlāt* was a work that was studied often in *tafsīr* circles and a staple of curriculums. One of the most influential circles was that of Abū al-Mu’īn al-Nasafī (d.508/1115) whose lessons are the main source for al-Samarqandī’s commentary. Additionally, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Bukhārī (d.730) in his work on Ḥanafī law and jurisprudence, *Kashf al-asrār*, references this commentary often.

It was here where al-Samarqandī popularized the view that:

the K. *ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān*, which is ascribed to Abū Maṣṣūr al-Mātūrīdī, unlike the K. *al-tawhīd*, the *Maqālāt*, and the K. *ma’khad al-sharā’i*, does not belong to the works which Mātūrīdī composed himself; rather, his prominent students eagerly took it from his lectures (*wa-innamā akhadhahu min-hu aṣḥābuhu l-mubarrizūn talaqqufan*).¹²

However, there are some places where al-Mātūrīdī is quoting directly from his other works, for example the ten-page discussion on the beatific vision (*ru’yah*) is precisely the same in *Ta’wīlāt*¹³ and in *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*.¹⁴ This also indicates that Mātūrīdī wrote/dictated this *tafsīr*, partially or totally, after *Kitāb al-Tawhīd* which was written after *Kitāb Radd wa’id al-fussāq lil-Ka’bī*.¹⁵ It is not uncommon to find scholars writing their *tafsīr* works, oftentimes their magnus opus, at the end of their lives. Some even pass before completing it as was the case of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Mahallī (d.864/1459) and Shaykh al-Hind, Mawlānā Mahmood Hassan (d.1329/1920). On the other side, Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman is very adamant in claiming that this *Tafsīr* is his own composition and that al-Qurashī (d.775/1374) in *al-Jawāhir al-muqdī’ah fī ṭabaqāt al-*

¹² Rippin, Andrew. *The Qur'an: formative interpretation*. Ch. 10, Manfred Gotz. Mātūrīdī and his *Kitāb Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate) 1999. pg 184/4.

¹³ al-Mātūrīdī, Muḥammad Abū Maṣṣūr, *Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān* (18 vols. Istanbul: Dār al-Mīzān (Mizan Yayinevi), 2003-2011, Vol 7 pg 48-58.

¹⁴ al-Mātūrīdī, Muḥammad Abū Maṣṣūr, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu & Muhammed Aruci (Istanbul, Irshad & Beirut, Dar Sader), 2007, pg 141-151, *mas’alah ru’yat Allah*.

¹⁵ al-Damanhūrī, Aḥmad Sa’d, *Imām al-Mātūrīdī wa-manhaju ahl al-sunnah fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, (Aman, Darannor) 2018, pg 65.

Hanafiyah and al-Tamīmī (d.1105/1694) in *al-Tabaqāt al-saniyyah fī tarājim al-Hanafiyah* inform, using unequivocal language, that *al-Ta’wīlāt* is from al-Mātūrīdī’s own pen.¹⁶ Al-Damanhūrī, in his exhaustive research on *Ta’wīlāt*, counters by saying that phrases like, *qad dhakartu lakum* (I informed you), *fī ṣadr al-kitāb qadr mā hafiznāhū* (earlier in the book as much as we recall), and *qāla al-Shaykh* (the Scholar states), all indicate that it was an oral exegesis (*tafsīr shafawī*). However, the last phrase (*qāla al-Shaykh*), is often mentioned in *Kitāb al-Tawhīd* as well, and there is no disagreement whether or not that was penned by al-Mātūrīdī himself. The other phrases can also be interpreted as being written and not dictated. Also, dictated works usually have transmissions (*riwāyāt*) and since the manuscripts do not mention any narrators (*ruwāt*), this would indicate that it was directly authored. Since the era of al-Mātūrīdī did include different methods of teaching and transmission, it could be that students wrote down his work as he read it to them. The implication of not knowing which method was used does not take away from the authentic ascription of *Ta’wīlāt* to al-Mātūrīdī. As Abū Mu’īn al-Nasafī stated, “His authored book (*kitābuhu al-muṣannaf*) regarding the interpretations of the Qur’ān, is a book that has no parallel. Furthermore, no previous book (*tasānīf*) even comes close to it in this field.”¹⁷

An argument can be made that the entire *Sharḥ* should have been included, but the task would have been difficult given the length of the work and it is tough to discern what should be included or excluded from the *Sharḥ* since it has yet to be printed. Though it is expected to come to print soon. May Allah give those editors *tawfiq* and accept their efforts. Also, these editors used a variety of other works in diverse disciplines to aid readers and provide answers to potential questions.¹⁸ In short, this publication will prove to be nonpareil for anyone interested in Mātūrīdī thought and theology.

¹⁶ Mustafizur Rahman, Muhammad, An Introduction to al-Maturidi's Ta'wilat ahl al-sunnah, (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, 1981), pg 75-76.

¹⁷ Al-Nasafī, Abū al-Mu’īn Maymūn, *Tabṣirat al-adillah fī uṣūl al-Dīn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Anwar Ḥāmid ‘Isā, (2 vol. Cairo, al-Maktabat al-Azhariyyah lil-turāth & al-Jazīrah lil-nahr wal-tawzī‘), 2011, vol 1 pg 557.

¹⁸ A list of these sources can be found in the *fahāris* volume pg 331-359.