

Description of the Religious Movements Mentioned in Māturīdī's Writings

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Abstract:

It is known that Abū Mansūr Māturīdī was a great mutakallim, that is, a scholar of theology, as well as a prominent figure in the science of tafsīr. The article comparatively studies the different religions and doctrines mentioned in the books “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd” and “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” related to the science of kalam that has come down to us. The similarities and differences in the information on this topic in them are presented on the basis of evidence.

Keywords: Māturīdī, “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah”, “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd”, Shī‘ah, Mu‘tazilah, Khārijīyah, doctrine, sect, faith.

Introduction

In both of Māturīdī's surviving works, there are many debates about different faiths. Therefore, a comparative study of the information about the different religions and beliefs mentioned in them serves to fully cover the subject of research. This comparative analysis may also shed light on a number of puzzling issues related to these works, in particular, the degree of coherence of the information presented in them and the question of which work was previously written. This is because the “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd”, like the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah”, was compiled into a book by Māturīdī's disciples [1, p. 144-145]. This, no doubt, raises the question of the extent to which they belong to Māturīdī. There is also no convincing evidence in the research as to which of these works was previously written.

Material And Methods

The comparative classification of the faiths of the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” and “Kitāb al-Tawhīd” has been studied by dividing them into two groups: non-islamic religions and sects that deviate from traditional islamic principles.

In the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” referred to the following non-islamic religions and beliefs:

1) Aṣḥāb at-tabai’, 2)ahl al-tanasux, 3)brahmanism, 4) Dahrīyah (materialism), 5) zanādiqa, 6)shamanism (Aṣḥāb al-kuhana), 7) Majūsiya (zoroastrianism), 8) mulhida (atheism), 9)munajjima, 10)arab polytheists, 11)rahbaniya, 12)christianity, 13) Thanawīya (dualism), 14)sabi’iya, 15) ḥanīfism, 16)judaism.

The tafsīr also contains information from various sects and creeds in islam:

1) Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth, 2) Bāṭiniyyah, 3) jahmīya, 4) zāhiryya, 5) imāmiyyah, 6)karrāmiyyah, 7)qadariya, 8)qarmatiyāh, 9)mu‘aṭṭila, 10)murjiya, 11)mutaqashshifa, 12)mushabbiha, 13)mu‘tazilah, 14)rāfiḍah, 15)islamic philosophers, 16) khārijīyah, 17)hashawiya, 18) shī‘ism [2, p. 231-241].

This means that the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” contains information on a total of 34, including 16 religions and faiths, as well as 18 islamic sects.

The non-islamic religions and faiths mentioned in the “Kitāb al-Tawhīd” are as follows:

1) Aṣḥāb at-tabai’, 2) Aṣḥāb al-huyula, 3)daysaniya, 4) dahrīyah (materialism), 5) zanādiqa, 6) Majūsiya (zoroastrianism), 7)marqiyuniya, 8)moneteism, 9) mulhida (atheism), 10)munajjima, 11)christianity, 12)samniya, 13) Thanawīya (dualism), 14)sabi’iya, 15) sufistaiya, 16)judaism.

The play also mentions the following islamic sects and creeds:

1)bargusia, 2) bāṭiniyyah, 3)jabariya, 4) jahmīya, 5) karrāmiyyah, 6)qadariya, 7) qarmatiyāh, 8)murjiya, 9)mushabbiha, 10)mu‘tazilah, 11)islamic philosophers, 12) khārijīyah, 13)hashawiya, 14) husayniyya [3, p. 524-525].

Thus, the “Kitāb al-Tawhīd” contains information about a total of 16 non-islamic religions and faiths, as well as 14 islamic sects. They make up a total of 30.

Results

It can be seen from the above classification that, in general, the number and names of the different faiths and islamic sects mentioned in these two works are close to each other. In particular, both plays contain information about 16 religions and beliefs other than islam. 10 of them are beliefs of the same name:

1) Aṣḥāb at-tabai’, 2) dahrīyah (materialism), 3)zanadiqa, 4) Majūsiya, 5)mulhida (atheism), 6)munajjima, 7)christianity, 8) Thanawīya (dualism), 9)sabi’iya, 10)judaism.

The differences in this regard are as follows:

Six of the beliefs named in the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” are not mentioned in the “Kitāb al-Tawhīd”: ahl al-tanosux, brahmanism, shamanism (Aṣḥāb al-kuhana), arab polytheists, rahbaniya, ḥanīfism.

In turn, there is no information in the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” about the beliefs of the Aṣḥāb al-huyula, daysaniya, marqiyuniya, moneteism, samniya, sufistaiya.

Nevertheless, the beliefs that are the main focus in both plays are the same. In particular, with the exception of the arab polytheists, all of the six beliefs that are not found in the “Kitāb al-Tawhīd” in the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” are mentioned in one or two places.

The similarities and differences between the islamic sects mentioned in the works are as follows:

This means that there are 18 islamic sects in the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” and 14 in the “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd”. 11 of them are the same:

1) Bāṭiniyyah, 2) jahmīya, 3)karrāmiyyah, 4)qadariya, 5)qarmatīyāh, 6)murjīya, 7)mushabbiha, 8)mu‘tazilah, 9)islamic philosophers, 10) khārījīyah, 11)hashawiya.

Seven of the sects mentioned in the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” are not mentioned in the “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd”:

1) Aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth, 2) Zāhiriyya, 3) imāmiyyah, 4) mu‘aṭṭila, 5)mutaqashshifa, 6) rāfiḍah, 7) shī‘ism.

There is no information in the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” about the bargusiya, jabariya and husayniyya sects mentioned in the “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd”.

The comparative classification of sects in islam shows that the main focus sects in both works are almost the same. In particular, in both plays, the debates with the Mu‘tazilites occupy a special place.

Discussion

This means that Imam Māturīdī's works mention a total of 22 religions and beliefs other than Islam. Turkish scholar Rajab Onal Māturīdī discusses 10 beliefs in his works in his study of non-Islamic religions. It is clear from this that he ignored 12 beliefs [4, p. 55-394].

The above shows that Māturīdī's two works refer to a total of 21 Islamic sects. In his research, Kiyasiddin Koçoğlu gives information about 14 of the Islamic sects mentioned in these works, but does not say anything about the sects of bargusiya, zāhiriyya, imāmiyyah, mu‘aṭṭila, mutaqashshifa, islamic philosophers and hashawiyah [5, p. 32-75].

Differences in the scientific field of work can be seen in the following:

While “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd” contains more information about non-islamic religions and faiths, “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” contains more information about different sects and creeds in islam. This can be explained by the fact that the “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd” is devoted to the science of ‘aqīdah, and the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” to the science of tafsīr.

“Kitāb al-Tawḥīd” focuses on one religion or sect in one place. In the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah”, usually the views of one faith are mentioned in many places in the work. For example, dahrīyah (materialism) and related topics are mentioned 12 times in the “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd” [3, p. 180-243], while in the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah” this number is 17 [2, p. 237]. Also, in “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd” bāṭiniyyah is mentioned in only one place [3, p. 161], while in “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah”, information about this sect is given in about 28 places [2, p. 237].

In his tafsīr, Māturīdī cites information about various beliefs in relation to the verses and compares them with islamic teachings, more precisely with the teachings of the sunnīs. Because the work is devoted to the interpretation of the Qur’ān, of course, the author was required not to deviate from the subject of the verse being interpreted.

It should also be noted that the repetition of the same verses in the Qur’ān has also led to the mention of a single religion or sect in several places in the “Ta’wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah”.

In “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd”, beliefs are usually discussed in the context of various doctrinal topics. For example, in the chapter “Theological issues” (مسائل الإلهيات) of the “Kitāb al-Tawḥīd”, the author discusses in detail the main issues on this subject, and then enters into a discussion with the representatives of different faiths who disagree with Muslims on the subject of theology. Among

them are the Thanawīya (dualism), Aṣḥāb at-tabai', dahrīyah (materialism), samniya, sufistaiya, moneteism, marqiyuniya, Majūsiya (zoroastrianism) [3, p. 523].

At this point, if the information about the sabi'īya in the two plays is compared, the differences between them become clear:

The sabi'īya is mentioned in only one place in the "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd":

"The belief of the sabi'īya is similar to those of the moneteism, and Ibn Shabīb says that there is very little difference between them. According to moneteism, light meets darkness as it moves from North to South. Darkness, on the other hand, collides with light as it marches from South to North. When they meet, the darkness is absorbed by the light on the one hand, while on the other, they both continue in their own direction. Ibn Shabīb also gives information about their beliefs similar to the teachings of the thanawīya.

They also believe that the universe is governed by a mixture of light and darkness. If there is control, the belief in interference (light and darkness) will be void. What can be the connection between light and darkness. Darkness is actually low, and light is high, and there is a barrier between them. That's what brings them together and mixes them up. If the root cause of all evil was their interference, one of the two (of light or darkness) would find a way to be completely superior to the other. Otherwise, there is only one force (Allah) that controls good and evil ..." [3, p. 241].

In this way, Imam Māturīdī first gives a brief account of the beliefs of the sabi'īya, and then gives his views on the subject and his arguments against them. This debate takes on a deep philosophical-logical perspective.

Representatives of this faith are mentioned in two places in the the "Ta'wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah". One of them gives a brief account of the sabi'īya, while the other mentions them simply as a category that belongs to hell. The commentary on verse 62 of surat "al-Baqara", as mentioned, contains a brief account of the sabi'īya:

"There is disagreement about the sabi'īya. Some: They said they worshiped angels and recited psalms. Others called them worshipers of heavenly bodies. There are also those who say, "The people between the pagans and the Christians, or the people between the Jews and the pagans, or who follow the sect of the Zindīqs and know God as two". No books have come from the sabi'īya and we do not know enough about them" [6, p. 147].

Conclusion

It can be seen from this that Māturīdī in his commentary makes various assumptions about the beliefs of the sabi'īya. Hence, he interpreted this verse before he had the information given in the "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd". This indicates that the "Ta'wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah" was written before the "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd".

In general, the information presented in the two works of the scientist is not contradictory. On the contrary, the "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd" clarifies the information given in the "Ta'wīlāt ahl al-Sunnah".

From the above, it can be seen that the texts and comments about different faiths in these two works of the scholar do not completely repeat each other, but do not contradict each other. They'll complement each other with new information. Their methods of argument and rebuttal are also compatible.

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