

Abu Mansur Maturidi's Views On The Belief Of The Saba'iya

Sodikov Jurabek Sobirboyevich.

International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan,
PhD, acting associate professor of the
Islamic Studies and Study of Islamic Civilization ICESCO chair.

Email: jurabeksodiq@gmail.com.

Abstract: A comparison of information found in sources from different periods regarding the belief system of the Saba'ia (الصائبون) shows that there are often conflicting views about them. For this reason, contemporary scholars of religion and Islamic studies also have varying understandings of the Sabaeans. In the two surviving works of Imam Maturidi related to tafsir and Islamic creed, information about this belief system is available. A comparative analysis of these references helps to clarify the complex concepts surrounding the Saba'ia doctrine.

Keywords: Saba'ia, Maturidi, belief, Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunna, Kitab al-Tawhid, dualists, Manichaeism.

Introduction

In Abu Mansur Maturidi's tafsir Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunna, the belief system of the Saba'ia is mentioned in two places: in the commentary on Surah Al-Baqarah verse 62 [2:147], and Surah Al-Hijr verse 44 [3:36]. In one of these instances, a brief explanation about the Sabaeans is given, while in the other, they are merely mentioned as one of the groups destined for Hell [4:1065]. In the commentary on verse 62 of Surah Al-Baqarah, there is a concise account of the Sabaeans, as follows:

"Indeed, those who believe, and those who are Jews, Christians, and Sabaeans—whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does righteous deeds – will have their reward with their Lord. There will be no fear for them, nor will they grieve" [1:10].

In his commentary on this verse, Maturidi states the following about the Sabaeans:

"There is disagreement concerning the Sabaeans. Some say they worship angels and recite the Psalms; others say they worship celestial bodies. Additionally, there are views that describe them as: 'a group between the Magians and the Christians,' or 'a group between the Jews and the Magians,' or that 'they follow the sect of heretics and believe in two gods.' No scripture from the Sabaeans has reached us, and we do not have sufficient knowledge about them." [2:147]

Thus, five different views about the Sabaeans are mentioned in this commentary:

1. Those who worship angels and recite the Psalms.
2. Those who worship celestial bodies.
3. A group between the Magians and the Christians.
4. A group between the Jews and the Magians.
5. Followers of the sect of heretics who believe in two gods.

However, Maturidi does not endorse or confirm any of these views. He explains his neutral stance by noting that no definitive information about them has reached us. In the second verse where the Sabaeans are mentioned, they are simply listed among the followers of deviant beliefs.

Main Part

Although the Sabians are mentioned only once in Kitab al-Tawhid, quite detailed information is given about them:

“The beliefs of the Sabians are similar to those of the Manichaeans. According to Ibn Shabib, there is very little difference between them. In Manichaeism, light meets darkness as it moves from the North to the South, while darkness encounters light as it moves from the South to the North. When they meet, darkness merges with light on one side, but in other directions, both continue on their own paths. Ibn Shabib also provides information about their beliefs that resemble the doctrines of the Dualists (Sanawiyya).

Moreover, according to their creed, the affairs of the world are managed as a result of the intermingling between light and darkness. However, if management (of the world) exists, then the belief in the necessity of the mixture of light and darkness becomes invalid. (In other words, the scholar is saying that the world does not need the mixture of light and darkness to be governed.) What kind of connection can there be between light and darkness? Darkness is inherently inferior, while light is supreme; there exists a force that separates and blocks them. It is precisely this force that unites and mixes them. If all evil originates from their intermingling, then one of the two (light or darkness) would eventually find a way to completely dominate the other. Otherwise, it would imply that there is a single force that governs both good and evil...” [5:241].

Thus, Imam Maturidi first presents the available information about the beliefs of the Sabians, and then he provides his own reflections and arguments against them. This discussion takes on a deeply philosophical and logical character. The scholar compares these beliefs with Islam and, setting the justification of Ahl al-Sunnah creed as his main objective, provides firm evidence for every theological issue within the Sunni doctrine [8:524].

Results

From the above, it can be seen that Maturidi interpreted the verses about the beliefs of the Sabians in his tafsir before acquiring the information presented in Kitab al-Tawhid. This indicates that Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah was written before Kitab al-Tawhid.

Overall, the information about the Sabians presented in the scholar's two works is not contradictory. On the contrary, Kitab al-Tawhid clarifies and elaborates on the information already mentioned in Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah.

Hasan ibn Musa says:

“They are a people who held differing views about the universe. Their earliest representatives claimed that both the primordial matter (materia) and the Creator are eternal. Others, however, believed that the universe came into being later and that the One who created it is eternal. They describe the Creator as being unlike anything in the world, as a wise being who is not ignorant, powerful to the extent of never being overcome, and generous to the extent of never being miserly.

According to them: 'The Creator built the celestial sphere (falak) as a living, speaking, hearing, and seeing entity. Therefore, the heavens govern everything that exists in this world.' They refer to the planets in the celestial sphere as angels and worship them..." [6:679].

This information reveals the reasons why the Sabians worshipped celestial bodies and angels. It also shows that there were elements of monotheism within the Sabaeen belief system. In this respect, it shares similarities with the Hanif creed.

For this reason, when al-Shahrastani discusses the Sabians, he compares them with the teachings of Hanifism, identifying both the similarities and the differences between the two [7:11-41].

Conclusion

Thus, based on the above, it can be concluded that Sabaeism was a manifestation of the tendency toward monotheism that existed just before the advent of Islam. Therefore, it had been influenced by elements from both Christianity and Judaism. The deification of celestial bodies, however, connected them with Magian (Zoroastrian) beliefs. As a result, as mentioned by al-Maturidi in his tafsir, various perspectives emerged regarding their creed.

REFERENCES:

1. The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary of Its Meanings / Translator and Commentator: Shaykh Abdulaziz Mansur. – Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University, 2018. – 624 p.
2. al-Maturidi. Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah / Edited by Bakr Topal Oğlu. – Istanbul: Dar al-Mizan, 2005. – Vol. I. – 464 p.
3. al-Maturidi. Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah / Edited by Bakr Topal Oğlu. – Istanbul: Dar al-Mizan, 2006. – Vol. VIII. – 431 p.
4. Sobirboyevich S. J. Comparative analysis of the religious movements mentioned in moturidi's works" ta'wilat ahl as-sunnah'and" kitab at-tawhid" //ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal. – 2021. – T. 11. – №. 12. – C. 878-882.
5. al-Maturidi. Kitab al-Tawhid / Edited by Bakr Topal Oğlu and Muhammad Aruci. – Beirut: Dar al-Sadr, – Istanbul: Irshad, 2011. – 538 p.
6. Sami' Dughaym. Encyclopedia of Terms in Islamic Theology ('Ilm al-Kalam). – Beirut: Maktabat Lubnan Nashirun, 1998. – Vol. II. – 772 p.
7. al-Shahrastani. al-Milal wa al-Nihal. – Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Asriyya, 2000. – Vol. II. – 255 p.
8. Sobirboyevich S. J. WORK OF ABUL YUSR PAZDAVI "USULU-D-DIN" AND ITS PLACE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING OF MOTURIDISM //Modern American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities. – 2025. – T. 1. – №. 2. – C. 57-71.
9. Sobirboyevich S. J. АБУ МАНСУР МОТУРИДИЙ ТАФСИРИДА ҚАЙД ЭТИЛГАН ИСЛОМГА ОИД ФИРҚАЛАР ВА МУФАССИРНИНГ УЛАРГА МУНОСАБАТИ //Eurasian Journal of Academic Research. – 2024. – T. 4. – №. 5-2. – C. 87-92.
10. Sodikov J. S. FACTORS OF APPLICATION OF INTELLECTUAL EVIDENCE IN THE TAFSIR OF ABU MANSUR MOTURIDI "TAWILAT AHL AS-SUNNAH" //THEORETICAL & APPLIED SCIENCE Учредители: Теоретическая и прикладная наука. – 2022. – №. 4. – C. 524-527.
11. Sodikov J. Analysis of religions and beliefs in Imam Moturidi's "Ta'wilat Ahli-s-Sunnah" //ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science, 12 (116). – 2022. – C. 1064-1067.