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## “THE ISSUE OF FAITH (IMAN) IN THE WORK TA’WILAT AL-QUR’AN”

**Abstract.** *This article is devoted to the views on the issues of faith expressed in Abu Mansur Moturidi’s work “Ta’wilot al-Qur’an”. It is known that Abu Mansur Moturidi lived and created at the time when the distortions in the belief were at their peak, and at the same time he refuted several erroneous categories such as khawarij, mu’tazilites, and karromites with both intellectual and narrative evidence. In this work of Moturidi, not only in his time, but also in today’s time, there are enough refutations of currents that try to achieve their selfish goals by throwing various conflicting issues among the civilians who are living harmoniously and by distracting them.*

**Key words:** *tafsir, aqeedah, faith, kufr, shirk, discord, khawarij, mu’tazilites, karromites, qaromatites.*

“Iman”, in the dictionary, means “affirmation”. In Islamic terminology, confirming matters such as tawhīd (the oneness of God), prophethood, resurrection, and the rewarding of good and punishment of evil is called iman.

Iqrar (verbal declaration), according to leading scholars, is considered a condition for implementing the rulings of Islam.

“Tahqiq” in the dictionary means “to examine”. In terminology, “tahqiq” refers to proving a particular issue with evidence<sup>1</sup>.

Moturidi mentions that some groups claim that faith (iman) consists only of pronouncing the testimony of faith with the tongue and has no connection to the heart. He then proves through transmitted evidence (the Qur’an and Hadith) as well as rational proof that faith must reside in the heart, while verbal declaration is required only for applying the legal ruling of being a Muslim<sup>2</sup>.

Hakim Samarqandi, however, states that iman is both the affirmation of the heart and the verbal declaration<sup>3</sup>. A group that pronounces the testimony of faith with the tongue but has no inner affirmation is considered hypocrites (munafiqs); if a person believes inwardly but does not verbally declare it, he is a disbeliever (kafir); whoever considers faith to be solely the work of the heart without including verbal declaration is a Jahmi; and whoever claims that faith consists only of verbal declaration is a Karrami<sup>4</sup>.

According to the Karramis, faith is merely verbal declaration. “The Karramis are

<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad Sharif Jurjani. *Kitab al-Ta’rifat*. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Nafa’is, 2012. – p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Maturidi, Abu Maṣṣur. “*Kitab al-Tawḥīd*”. Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1986. – pp. 373–376.

<sup>3</sup> Wafi, Ibrahim Ḥilmi. “*Salam al-Aḥkam ala al-Sawad al-A’zam*. Beirut: publisher not specified, 1896. – p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Wafi, Ibrahim Ḥilmi. “*Salam al-Aḥkam ala al-Sawad al-A’zam*. Beirut: publisher not specified, 1896. – p. 148.

the followers of Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Karram. They do not deny the attributes of Allah, but they attribute corporeality to Him and engage in anthropomorphism. This sect later divided into smaller sub-groups, reaching twelve in number. Their main groups are six: the Ubaydiyya, Tunniyya, Zariniyya, Ishāqiyya, Waḥidiyya, and Ḥasimiyya, each holding distinct beliefs”<sup>5</sup>.

Abu Ḥafṣ Najm al-Din al-Nasafi states the following in his work *Aqaid al-Nasafiyya*:

“Iman is to affirm as true what the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought from Allah and to acknowledge it. Thus, actions are acts of obedience; therefore, they can increase, while iman itself neither increases nor decreases.”

According to the Ash’aris, the essence and perfection of faith can increase and decrease. They cite the verse, “so that their faith may increase along with their (existing) faith,”<sup>6</sup> as evidence.

According to the Ḥanafis, the essence of faith does not increase or decrease; rather, its perfection can increase or decrease.

According to the Maturidi view, faith arises within individuals by their own choice. He also responds to the incorrect views of various sects of his time regarding this issue.

“The Messenger (Muḥammad) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. Each of them believes in Allah, His angels, His books, and His messengers, making no distinction between any of His messengers. And they say, We hear and obey. Our Lord, we ask for Your forgiveness. To You is the final return”<sup>7</sup>.

When Maturidi comments on this verse, he emphasizes the nature of faith and that actions are not included in its definition. He states: “This verse is proof against those who doubt their own faith. For Allah has attributed faith to those who believe in Him and His Messenger. In this verse there is also a refutation of the Mu’tazilites, because Allah affirmed the faith of those who believe in the matters mentioned above, whereas the Mu’tazilites removed the name “believer” from them. Even if a person commits a major sin, as long as he believes in what is mentioned in the verse, Allah calls him a believer and bears witness to it”<sup>8</sup>.

Based on this commentary, Maturidi stresses that the word iman is applied to those who truly believe, and that actions are not part of its definition. Therefore, it is not permissible to label those who have faith as disbelievers.

Actions are not considered part of iman, because in many cases actions are mentioned as being associated with faith. That which is connected to something else is clearly distinct from it. Likewise, for actions to be valid, faith is a necessary condition, as in the verse: “Whoever does righteous deeds while being a believer...”<sup>9</sup> A condition

<sup>5</sup> Abd al-Karim Shahrastani. *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*. Vol. 1. Egypt: Maktabat al-Tawfiqiyya. – p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> Surat al-Faṭḥ, verse 4.

<sup>7</sup> al-Baqarah, 284

<sup>8</sup> Maturidi, Abu Manṣur. “Ta’wilat al-Qur’an”. Istanbul, 2005. Vol. 2. – p. 290.

<sup>9</sup> Surat Toḥa, verse 112.

is always something different from that which it conditions.

In his work “Ta’wilat al-Qur’an,” Abu Maṣṣur al-Maturidi cites several hadiths related to faith. Among them:

أتدرون ما الإيمان بالله؟ أن تشهدوا أن لا إله إلا الله وأني رسول الله

“Do you know what faith in Allah is? Faith is that you bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that I am the Messenger of Allah”<sup>10</sup>.

According to some scholars, iman (faith) and islam (submission) are the same. Other scholars regard them as distinct concepts. As evidence for this distinction, they cite the following verse: “The Bedouins say, “We believe”. Say: “You have not believed; rather say, We have submitted”<sup>11</sup>.

Faith is a required condition for the validity of islam. Therefore, every Muslim is a believer, but the reverse is not necessarily true. Some scholars, however, have said: every believer is a Muslim, but not every Muslim is a believer.

Some scholars have stated that the most accurate explanation on this matter is the statement of Abu Maṣṣur al-Maturidi:

“Islam is to recognize Allah Most High without attributing to Him any condition or likeness. The place of islam is the chest. Iman is to know Him as God; its place is the heart, and the heart is within the chest. Ma’rifah (gnosis) is to know Allah Most High through His attributes; its place is the inner self (the conscience), which lies within the heart. Tawḥid is to recognize the oneness of Allah Most High; its place is the innermost secret (sirr), which lies within the inner self. This is indicated by Allah’s statement: “The parable of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp...”<sup>12</sup>.

Maturidi states that faith (iman) is “created” (makhlūq). As proof, he cites verses indicating that everything besides Allah is created (6:102; 40:62; 37:97; 67:13; 25:59)<sup>13</sup>. Since iman is something other than Allah, he concludes that it is created.

Ḥakim Samarqandi, however, maintains that iman is both “created” and “uncreated.” This is because anything that belongs to the human being and his actions is created, while everything attributed to Allah is uncreated. To explain this, he uses the following example:

When a servant says “La ilaha illa Allah,” the movement of his tongue is his action, and the quality of this action is created. But the meaning of what he says—“La ilaha illa Allah”—is an attribute of Allah, and therefore uncreated. There is a significant difference between the two. This is similar to the case of the Qur’an: its recitation is created, while the Qur’an itself is uncreated<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Maturidi, Abu Maṣṣur. “Ta’wilat al-Qur’an”. Istanbul, 2005. Vol. 6. – p. 341.

<sup>11</sup> Surat Hujurot, verse 14.

<sup>12</sup> Surat Nur, verse 35.

<sup>13</sup> Maturidi, Abu Maṣṣur. “Kitab al-Tawḥid”. Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1986. – pp. 385–388.

<sup>14</sup> Wafi, Ibrahim Ḥilmi. “Salam al-Aḥkam ala al-Sawad al-A’zam. Beirut: publisher not specified, 1896. – p. 60.

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