



## THE ERA IN WHICH THE GREAT THEOLOGIAN AND IMAM ABU MANSUR AL-MATURIDI LIVED AND CREATED

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**Abstract.** This article examines the life and scholarly legacy of the prominent Muslim theologian Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, who played a crucial role in the development of Islamic creed (ʿaqīdah) and the science of kalām. The study analyzes the historical and intellectual context in which Imam al-Maturidi lived, his educational background, and his contributions to theological thought. Special attention is given to his major works, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* and *Taʿwīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah*, which reflect his balanced approach between reason and revelation. The article also highlights the formation of the Maturidi school of theology and emphasizes the lasting significance of Imam al-Maturidi's teachings in strengthening Sunni Islamic belief and promoting moderation and intellectual reasoning in Islamic thought.

**Keywords:** Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, Maturidism, Islamic creed (ʿaqīdah), Kalām, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah, Hanafi school, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, *Taʿwīlāt Ahl al-Sunnah*, Islamic theology, Central Asia.

**Introduction.** In the history of Islamic thought, creed (aqida) and the science of theology (kalam) hold an important place. Among the scholars who rendered great service in this field is Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi. He is known not only as a prominent theologian (mutakallim) but also as a great imam who defended the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah on a scholarly basis. The period in which Imam al-Maturidi lived and worked was a complex yet intellectually productive era in Islamic history, marked by the emergence of various sectarian currents and intensified scholarly debates. This article provides a detailed account of the era of Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, including the historical-political situation and the intellectual environment.

### The Life and Works of Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi

Imam Abu Mansur Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Maturidi is recognized in Islamic history as one of the great theologians (mutakallimun), exegetes (mufasssirun), and prominent representatives of the science of creed (aqida). He was born in the 3rd century AH, around 870 CE, in the village of Maturid near the city of Samarkand. The nisba "al-Maturidi" is directly derived from the name of this region. Imam al-Maturidi belonged to the Hanafi school of jurisprudence (madhhab), which was widespread in the region of Transoxiana (Mawarannahr), and his scholarly views and methodology were shaped in the spirit of Hanafism.

The era in which Imam al-Maturidi lived coincided with the final stages of the Abbasid Caliphate's rule. This period was, on one hand, an era of flourishing Islamic sciences, but on the other hand, it was a time of increasing political instability and doctrinal conflicts. In particular, the activities of groups such as the Mu'tazilites, Jahmites, Qadarites, and other sects intensified theological debates within Muslim society. This complex environment prompted Imam al-Maturidi to defend Islamic creed on a scholarly basis.

The city of Samarkand played a crucial role in Imam al-Maturidi's intellectual formation. Samarkand was one of the major scholarly centers of the time, where the sciences of jurisprudence (fiqh), Quranic exegesis (tafsir), hadith, and theology (kalam) were widely developed. Imam al-Maturidi acquired his early knowledge from renowned Hanafi scholars living there. He deeply studied the Holy Qur'an, hadith sciences, fiqh, and legal theory (usul), and later turned his serious attention to the science of kalam.

Imam al-Maturidi not only mastered the transmitted (naqli) sciences but also excelled in the rational (aqli) sciences. He regarded reason (aql) as a great blessing bestowed by Allah and emphasized the necessity of directing it correctly in matters of faith. In his view, the human intellect is capable of understanding the existence and oneness of Allah, but revelation (wahy) remains the primary source in determining the rulings of Shari'ah. This balanced approach became a defining characteristic of the Maturidi doctrine.

Imam al-Maturidi dedicated a large part of his life to the pursuit of knowledge. He engaged in scholarly debates and discussions with representatives of various sects, defending the Islamic creed. His style in these debates was thoughtful, evidence-based, and logical, far removed from harshness and bigotry. For this reason, he was held in great esteem both in his own time and in subsequent centuries.

Imam al-Maturidi's scholarly output was primarily devoted to the sciences of creed (aqida) and exegesis (tafsir). His most famous work is *Kitab al-Tawhid* (The Book of Monotheism), which is considered the primary source of Maturidi creed. In this work, issues such as the existence and oneness of God, His attributes, prophethood, faith (iman), and predestination (qadar) are analyzed in depth on the basis of reason (aql) and transmitted sources (naql). This work was written as a scholarly refutation of the views of the Mu'tazilites and other deviant movements.

Another important work of Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi is *Ta'wilat Ahl as-Sunnah*, which is devoted to the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an. In this work, the author explains theological verses and interprets them based on the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah. This tafsir demonstrates that Imam al-Maturidi was also a highly accomplished scholar in the sciences of the Qur'an.

The scholarly legacy of Imam al-Maturidi is not limited only to the books he wrote. The Maturidi school of theology, which he founded, spread widely in later centuries and became one of the main theological traditions in Movarounnahr, Turkestan, India, and the Ottoman Empire. This school contributed to the development of moderation, tolerance, and intellectual thought among Muslims.

Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi passed away in Samarkand in 333 AH (944 CE). He left behind a rich scholarly heritage and remained in history as a great scholar who established a strong foundation for Islamic creed. Even today, his life and works serve as important sources in the study of Islamic sciences and play a significant role in educating the younger generation in the spirit of correct belief.

### **The Scientific Significance of Imam al-Maturidi's Era**

The era in which Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi lived is considered an important stage in Islamic history from both scientific and theological perspectives. He was active during the late 3rd and early 4th centuries AH in Movarounnahr, particularly in the regions of Samarkand and

Bukhara. This period coincided with a complex phase of the Abbasid Caliphate. On one hand, the central authority had weakened somewhat, while on the other hand, science, philosophy, and religious thought were flourishing. These conditions greatly influenced Imam al-Maturidi's intellectual development and his activities in the fields of theology and creed.

During the time of Imam al-Maturidi, various theological movements were active in the Islamic world. The Mu'tazilites prioritized reason and gave secondary importance to revelation, while the Jahmites incorrectly interpreted the attributes of Allah. Likewise, the Qadariyyah excessively emphasized human free will. Such ideological differences intensified theological debates within society. Therefore, Imam al-Maturidi sought to defend the creed of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah and preserve the balance between reason and revelation.

Since Imam al-Maturidi lived in a period when science and philosophy were highly developed, his scholarly significance was reflected not only in theology (*kalam*), but also in jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), and the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an. He carried out his scholarly work systematically by harmonizing transmitted knowledge and rational thought. As a result, his writings became a strong scholarly source for later generations. In particular, his work *Kitab at-Tawhid* became the principal source of the Maturidi school and played a major role in preserving the stability of Islamic creed.

The scientific importance of Imam al-Maturidi's era also lies in the fact that he established an intellectual school that continued to influence Movarounnahr, Turkestan, and other regions in later centuries. The scholarly traditions formed during this period — including debate, evidence-based reasoning, and scientific inquiry — contributed to the wider spread of Maturidism. At the same time, tolerance and logical thinking developed among scholars.

The era of Imam al-Maturidi was therefore highly significant from a scholarly perspective. He contributed greatly to the development of Islamic thought, overcame theological conflicts through logical arguments, and established the Maturidi school. Consequently, his era entered history not only as a period when Movarounnahr became a center of learning, but also as a time of theological and intellectual advancement throughout the Muslim world.

### **Imam al-Maturidi and His Students**

Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi is remembered in history not only as one of the greatest theologians (*mutakallimun*) of his time, but also as a scholar who educated many students. An important aspect of his scholarly activity was preserving and transmitting his intellectual legacy and the creed of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah to future generations through his disciples.

Among Imam al-Maturidi's students, the most prominent were scholars active in Movarounnahr and the Samarkand region. Their main task was to study their teacher's theological and intellectual views, defend them in scholarly debates, and later spread them in their own regions. Through this process, the Maturidi doctrine expanded beyond Samarkand and Bukhara to the whole of Movarounnahr and other surrounding territories.

While teaching his students, Imam al-Maturidi focused not only on imparting knowledge, but also on developing logical thinking, evidence-based reasoning, and confidence in debate and discussion. This training transformed his students into accomplished theologians of their time. In this way, he nurtured not only intellectually capable scholars, but also spiritually mature individuals.

Some of Imam al-Maturidi's students later became well-known scholars of Islamic theology. Among them were Abu Bakr al-Samarqandi, Abu Sa'id al-Kashgari, and other scholars

of Movarounnahr. Through these students, the Maturidi school gained not only a strong scholarly foundation but also the ability to spread the creed of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah across various regions.

In addition to preserving their teacher's intellectual heritage, the students also carried out their own independent scholarly research. They expanded upon Maturidi teachings, interpreted his works, and in some cases initiated new scholarly discussions and debates. As a result, the Maturidi creed was not only preserved through these students, but also further developed.

The education transmitted through these students strengthened the scholarly tradition of Movarounnahr. This eventually led to the recognition of the Maturidi school as one of the principal theological traditions in Turkestan, India, and the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, Imam al-Maturidi's students became one of the most important factors in preserving and spreading his scholarly and theological legacy.

The students of Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi played an incomparable role in continuing his intellectual and theological heritage. Through them, the Maturidi school was established, the creed of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah was preserved and developed, and the scholarly center of Movarounnahr became even stronger. In this way, the students kept Imam al-Maturidi's legacy alive for centuries to come.

**Xulosa.** Imom Abu Mansur al-Moturidiy islom tafakkuri tarixida buyuk mutakallim, aqida ustozlari va ilmiy maktab asoschisi sifatida alohida o'rin egallaydi. Uning yashagan davri ilmiy, siyosiy va e'tiqodiy jihatdan murakkab bo'lib, turli aqidaviy oqimlar faoliyat yuritgan. Shu sharoitda Imom Moturidiy aql va vahiy o'rtasidagi muvozanatga asoslangan yondashuvi bilan ahlu sunna val jamoa aqidasi himoya qilgan va islom kalomini tizimli shakllantirgan.

Imom Moturidiyning ilmiy ahamiyati uning nafaqat kalom, balki tafsir, fiqh va Qur'oni karim ilmlaridagi faoliyatida ham namoyon bo'ladi. U *Kitob at-Tavhid* va *Ta'vilot Ahl al-Sunnah* kabi asarlari orqali musulmon olamida mo'tadillik, dalillarga asoslangan tafakkur va bag'rikenglikni targ'ib qilgan. Shu bilan birga, uning shogirdlari ilmiy va aqidaviy merosni davom ettirib, Movarounnahr ilmiy maktabini mustahkamlashga xizmat qilgan.

Natijada, Imom Moturidiy va uning shogirdlari orqali Moturidiylik maktabi shakllanib, butun musulmon olamida ahlu sunna val jamoa aqidasi rivojlanishiga katta hissa qo'shgan. Ularning ilmiy faoliyati Movarounnahr va boshqa hududlarda islom tafakkurining barqarorligi va rivojlanishiga xizmat qilgan. Shu tariqa, Imom Moturidiy nafaqat o'z davrining, balki keyingi asrlarning ham yirik olimlaridan biri sifatida tarixda qolgan.

### Conclusion

Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi holds a distinguished place in the history of Islamic thought as a great theologian, master of Islamic creed, and founder of an influential scholarly school. The period in which he lived was intellectually, politically, and theologically complex, with various theological movements actively spreading their ideas. In such circumstances, Imam al-Maturidi defended the creed of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah through an approach based on the balance between reason and revelation, and he systematized Islamic theology (*kalam*).

The scholarly significance of Imam al-Maturidi is reflected not only in theology, but also in his contributions to Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and the sciences of the Holy Qur'an. Through works such as *Kitab at-Tawhid* and *Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah*, he

promoted moderation, evidence-based thinking, and tolerance throughout the Muslim world. At the same time, his students continued his scholarly and theological legacy and contributed to strengthening the intellectual tradition of Movarounnahr.

As a result, through Imam al-Maturidi and his students, the Maturidi school was established and made a major contribution to the development of the creed of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah across the Muslim world. Their scholarly activities supported the stability and advancement of Islamic thought in Movarounnahr and other regions. Thus, Imam al-Maturidi remains in history not only as one of the greatest scholars of his own era, but also as one of the most influential scholars of later centuries.

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