

ANNOTATION

To the dissertation of Askar Akimkhanov on the topic

Abu Mansur al-Maturidi's position on iman (based on Kitab at-Tawilat book)

6D021500 – written for earning the academic degree of the
philosophy of doctor (Ph.D.) in Islamic Studies

The dissertation analyzes conclusions concerning the iman and related issues and position thereon claimed by Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, a prominent scholar, who laid foundation of the Hanafi School of Thought, which serves as scientific and ideological platform for the Central Asian Muslims. The scientific research is written based on Imam Maturidi's Kitab at-Tawilat book.

Topicality of the research work. After gaining independence our young country became equal with all other states on the international arena and took the path to revival of its traditions and culture, while its citizens obtained opportunity to study their centuries-long history. The *Cultural Heritage* along with *Kazakhstan-2030* and *Kazakhstan-2050* strategic programs initiated by our President Nursultan Nazarbayev include in its agenda the revival of our forgotten history, traditional religion and culture. In this regard it is of high importance for those who are in charge of Religion and Islamic studies to contemplate, analyze, publish and propagate widely the scientific heritage left by the Kazakh and Central Asian born classical scholars who made huge contribution to formation and advancement of the Hanafi-Maturidi doctrine which is considered basement of the traditional Sunni conception of the Islamic civilization and science. First of all this will pave way for the unified religious ideology based on the traditional religious creed of the Kazakh nation. The sad truth is that the fundamentalist and extremist religious ideologies and destructive religious sects cannot be tackled properly in our days in light of the religious ideological vacuum. There is only one way out to solve the situation which is to revive our own centuries-long religious ideology which developed throughout our history based on the Hanafi-Maturidi doctrine. The only instrument/source which will enable revival of the traditional religion, going back to generations, is to study heritage of the Central Asian Hanafi-Maturidi scholars which should be turned into the unified religious platform in Kazakhstan.

The Religious Activities and Religious Associations Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan highly emphasizes a historic role the Hanafi-style doctrine played in development of the Kazakh culture and spiritual life. The platform approved by the Religious Administration of Kazakhstan Muslims clearly points out status of the Hanafi School of Thought and Maturidi creed: "Religious Administration of Kazakhstan Muslims adheres to Islam and follows Abu Hanifa School of Thought.

Maturidi creed is its mainstream deology”. The Hanafi-Maturidi doctrine is a traditional religious creed for the Kazakh nation. At the same time the Kazakhs perceived the iman, being a core of the religion in the context of Hanafi-Maturidi theory of iman.

However over the period of twenty five years adepts of the non-traditional religious ideologies and destructive religious sects are alienating themselves from the society and inciting religious hatred in the country. They take advantage of the religious and psychological weaknesses, low religious literacy and spiritual interest of the nation, especially young generation who distanced themselves from the traditional religious ideology which resulted from the seventy years dominance of the atheistic idea last century in our country. The destructive sects, confronting the religious creed of the Kazakh nation, spread their teachings in our country and denounce the traditions and religious creed of the Kazakhs based on synthesis of the religion and traditions. Moreover we witnessed they demonstrate their religious intolerance and commit terror acts. The non-traditional religious ideologies and destructive religious sects spread over the country as a consequence of the *faith freedom* based loyal and open policy conducted by the government towards all faiths. One of the methods to counter them is to study thoroughly, include into the academic environment and popularize wherever it is possible the scientific heritage of the Islamic scholars from Central Asian and Kazakh steppe, Hanafi-Maturidi doctrine, propagate traditional Islam practiced by our ancestors, explain that the religion and traditions do not conflict, revive Hanafi-Maturidi teachings which would be scientific and ideological platform of the traditional religious creed for our nation.

Kazakhs had never had the sectarian division throughout their history; there are no evidences of that. The country where there is a sectarian division will never enjoy the political and social stability. That is why it is urgent to create unified religious ideology based on principles of the traditional Islam practiced by our ancestors. In this regard it is very important to analyze religious creed of founder of Hanafi doctrine Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (based on Kitab at-Tawilat book) who formed traditional religious creed of the Muslims living in the Central Asian and Kazakh steppe. Furthermore this topic has not been studied completely in the world and Kazakhstan so far.

The aims and tasks of research work. The objective of the research work is to contemplate religious ideology of Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, who laid foundation of Hanafi School of Thought and left valuable books on theology/qalam for the generations-to-come, by bringing to light thesis and theological conclusions regarding the iman theory and related issues. For this purpose we intend to tackle the following tasks in our research work:

- Determine historic factors which shaped the scientific and ideological platform of Maturidi doctrine, the traditional ideology of the Central Asian Muslims;
- Explain interrelation of theological thesis and positions of Abu Hanifa and imam al-Maturidi;

- Explain significance and role of the Maturidi doctrine in reviving traditional religious ideology in a modern state;
 - Explain role of the traditional religious platform which was mainstream creed for Central Asian and Kazakh kingdoms over the centuries, by studying thoroughly imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi's conclusions regarding the iman theory;
 - Research Kitab at-Tawhid attribution based on theological analysis of the iman notion and issues in Kitab at-Tawilat by imam Maturidi;
 - With objective of discovering peculiarities of imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi teachings make comparative analysis of true meaning of the iman and theological conclusions hereon claimed by imam al-Maturidi and his contemporaries among representatives of the Samarqand school. For this purpose the books of four scholars, representing the Samarqand School, were taken as a basis:
 - al-Hakim as-Samarqandi's tractates as-Sawad al-azam and Risala fi al-iman juz'un min al-amal am la, murakkab am la
 - Abu Bakr al-Iadi's ten principles Ashr msa'il min asl ad-din/al-Masa'il al-ashr al-iadaya
 - Abu al-Hasan ar-Rusufagni's book Fawa'id ar-Rustufagni
 - Abu Salama as-Samarqandi's book Jumal usul ad-din.
 - Determine scientific conclusions imam al-Maturidi had claimed concerning the iman using the Quran interpretation and which had resulted from the specific interpretation of the iman issues, as well as their impact on shaping the traditional religious conception of Islam;
 - In-depth analysis of the conclusions regarding the iman issues in form of certain topics by defining the iman theory based on al-Maturidi's Kitab at-Tawilat.
- Scientific novelty.**
- The historic factors of the Maturidi doctrine evolution, which was scientific and ideological platform of the traditional religious conception and foundation of the Hanafi-style teachings, were determined. In particular the original historic and archaeological data were used to establish the fact that Abu Mansur al-Maturidi style ideology was revived during the Karahanids reign thanks to their state religious policy;
 - Attribution of Kitab at-Tawilat and Kitab at-Tawhid books was made through the comparative analysis of the conclusions and thesis regarding a true meaning of the iman, imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi claimed, and other related issues which had resulted from interpreting this notion. Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi was identified as an author of these two books during the attribution process;
 - With view of discovering al-Maturidi's conclusions on the iman issues and evaluating his iman theory the comparative analysis was made in relation to theological conclusions and thesis of the true meaning of the iman claimed by imam al-Maturidi and his contemporaries who were Samarqandi Hanafi-style scholars. The analysis was made based on books and theological tractates of imam

al-Maturidi and Samarqandi theologians such as al-Hakim as-Samarqandi, Abu Bakr al-Iadi, Abu al-Hasan ar-Rusutfagni and Abu Salama as-Samarqandi;

- The theological conclusions and thesis of the imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, founder of Hanafi doctrine, concerning the notion of the iman (which is considered to be the foundation of the religion) and which had resulted from interpretation of the iman issues, based on Kitab at-Tawhid book and by dividing into separate topics;

- Explain importance of the traditional religious ideology of the Muslims who lived in the Central Asian and Kazakh steppe, by studying conclusions and deductions on the iman theory in the context of imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi doctrine;

The object and focus of the research. The object of the research is Abu Mansur al-Maturidi's theory of iman and positions concerning the iman related issues. The focus of the research is theological conclusions on and thesis of the iman in al-Maturidi's Kitab at-Tawilat book.

Research methodology. The historical-comparative and sematic-etimologic, contextual assessment, hermeneutic, theologic-comparative, theologic assessment, analysis, classification, definition, generalization and other research methods were applied during the research process.

Theoretical and practical importance of the research work. The theoretical conclusions and deductions received following the research will enable contemplating and discovering Abu Mansur al-Maturidi's theory of iman and religious ideology. The key ideas and conclusions of the dissertation can be used for scientific research in the field of the society's religiosity, religious identity and religious situation.

The dissertation is currently valuable for comprehending the centuries-long religious creed the Central Asian nations adhered over their history and tackling the religion-driven radicalism and extremism which have spread over the Central Asian region and completely contradict the traditional religious ideology of the regional nations.

The research will significantly contribute to the revival of the centuries-long traditional ideology of the Central Asian nations adhered over their history, in particular in the Kazakh steppe. The dissertation is a good tool which can also be exploited efficiently for researching history, religion and mentality of the Central Asian nations.

The main conclusions and deductions made in the dissertation can be used as a material/source or textbook at the high schools and universities in disciplines such as Islamic and Religion Studies (madrassahs, Religious Administration of Kazakhstan Muslims, universities), in the research and science institutes and centers which are engaged in preventing the religious-incited radicalism and extremism.

Publication and approbation of the research work. The main conclusions and deductions of the dissertation have been published in 9 research articles. Out of them 1 article has been published in Scopus database, 1 article – in foreign

publications, 4 articles – in international conferences, 3 articles have been published in magazines included in the list approved by the Committee for Education and Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the RoK.

Structure of dissertation: The dissertation consists of introduction, main contents comprising three sections, 10 subsections (first section contains 4 subsections, second section is comprised of 3 subsections, third section consists of 3 subsections totaling 10), conclusion, references and appendixes. The dissertation is 200 pages totally.