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ABU-L-HASAN AL-RUSTUGHFANI: REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MATURIDITE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Abstract: The article is about the scientific legacy of Abu l-Hasan al-Rustughfani, adherent of the Maturidite doctrine, who was active in Samarkand, Mawarannahr (Transoxania), in the tenth century. It also sheds light on a brief analysis of *al-As'ila va-l-Ajviba* and *al-Fava'id* by the scholar.

Key words: Mawarannahr, Samarkand, kalam, aqidah (theology), Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaah, Maturidiyyah, Mu'taziliyyah, manuscript, Hanafiyyah.

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Introduction

The scholar's full name is Abu l-Hasan Alib Sayyid ar-Rustughfani [7, p. 63-64]. The name "Rustughfani" is related to or from the village near Samarkand. The scholar was one of the leading figures of the Maturidiyyah doctrine [2, p. 20b].

Ashirbek Muminov, an orientalist, referred to the scholar as *ar-Rustufghani*, rather than *ar-Rustughfani*[5, p. 58]. Abu Salam as-Samarkandi was a predecessor to Abu l-Hasan al-Rustughfani, who studied *al-Mabsut* and *al-Jami al-Kabir* under Maturidi[5, p. 58-59]. The scholar wrote a number of books, including *Irshad al-Mukhtadi'*, *Kitab az-Zava'id 'ala-l-Fava'id* (the work was written as a commentary to his *al-Fava'id*, the manuscript copy of which is housed in at Süleymaniye Library, Turkey), *Kitab bi-l-Khilaf, Bayan Ahl as-Sunna va-l-Jama'a*[4, V. 1, p. 358], *al-As'ila va-l-Ajviba* and *al-Fava'id*.

Rustughfani's date of death is also given differently in sources. U.Rudolf, a German researcher, maintains the date as 350/961[8, p. 113], while his Turkish counterparts show it as 345/956[1, p. 47].

As his close friend, Rustughfani also studied directly from Abu Mansur al-Maturidi. Some sources read that Abu Mansur al-Maturidi passed away while

teaching Abu l-Hasan Alib Sayyid ar-Rustughfani from *al-Mabsut* by Muhammad as-Shaibani [4:87].

Below are Rustughfani's two works which have survived to this day.

Al-As'ila va-l-Ajviba[9] deals with questions like the erection of *mizan* (the divine balance or the scales that will weigh deeds on the Day of Judgement) for disbelievers, *hasanat* (whether or not people will be rewarded for their good deeds), expulsion of Adam (PBUH) from Paradise, the issues of *iman* (faith) whether it is bestowed by Allah or acquired, and whether or not angels will get rewarded or punished. The work covers only seven questions and answers.

The Arabic wording of *al-As'ila va-l-Ajviba* is as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
سئل الشيخ الإمام الأجل علي بن سعيد الرستغفاني رحمه
الله عن الكفار: هل يكون لهم ميزان وحسانات؟
فقال: لا.

وسئل عن هذه المسئلة مرة أخرى فقال: قد روي أن لهم
ميزانا لكن ليس المراد من ميزانهم ترجيح إحدى الكفتين على الأخرى.
لكن المعنى تمييزهم إذا الكفار لعنهم الله تعالى متفاوتون في العذاب. قال
الله تعالى:

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ
سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا [النساء:
140]

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وقال عز وجل:
النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ
أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ [غافر: ٤٦]

وهذا القول اصوب. وسئل عن قول بعض الناس أن آدم عليه السلام لما بدت منه تلك الزلّة إسودّ منه جميع جسده فلما اهبط إلى الأرض أمر بالصيام و الصلوة فصام وصلى إبيضّ جسده أبيضُ هذا القول؟

قال: لا يجوز في جملة القول في الأنبياء بشيء يؤدّي إلى الطعن والعيب فيهم قد أمرنا بحفظ اللسان عنهم لأن مرتبة الأنبياء أرفع وهم على أنه أكرم من سائر الخلق.
وقد قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "إذا ذكر أصحابي فامسكوا"

فلما أمرنا ألا نذكر الصحابة بشيء رجع ذلك إلى الطعن فيهم. فلأن تمسك ونكفّ عن الأنبياء أولى وأحق.
وسئل: أي شيء الحكمة أن لا يقع ظلّ النبي عليه السلام على الأرض؟

قال: لأنّ الشمس ونورها والقمر ونوره إنما خلقت من نور محمد عليه السلام ونوره أضوأ من نور النهار ونور الشمس والقمر لا يظلّ.

وسئل: هل يجوز أن يُسلم الشيطان؟
قال: يجوز. لأنّ نبياً عليه السلام أسلم شيطان لكرامته.
وسئل: أنّ شيطان يكون في الجنة أو في النار؟
قال: في النار، لأنّه يجوز أن يكفر. أسلم مدة حياته، فلما توفي آدم ارتد شيطان. وهذا الا يكون اعظم حالاً من إبليس فإنه كان مؤمناً ثم ارتد قال بعضهم روي هذا الخبر الا أني يتقبل الله تعالى فأسلم (بزرع الميم) أي فأسلم من شره ووسواسه فلا يحوم حولي. وسئل عن الإيمان انه عطائي ام كسبي؟ قال: لا نقول على الإطلاق انه عطائي او كسبي، لكن نقول ما كان من الله تعالى الى عبده وهو الهداية فهو عطاء منه لأنه لم يسبق من العبد الى الله تعالى ما يستحق به هذه النعمة وما كان من العبد فهو كسبي. وسئل عن الملائكة هل لهم ثواب وعقاب؟ قال: نعم، لهم ثواب وعقاب الا أن عقابهم كعقاب الأدميين وثوابهم كثواب الأدميين لأن ثواب هذا التلذذ بشيء ثم إن الله تعالى جعل لذاتنا وشهواتنا في الدنيا من المأكول والمشروب والمركوب ونحوها فكذلك يجعل ثوابنا في دار الآخرة وأما الملائكة فإن الله تعالى جعل تلذذهم وشهواتهم في طاعتهم لله عز وجل.

The translation of the text:
Bismillahir Rohmanir Rohim (In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful)

The Great Imam, Sheikh Abu I-Hasan Alib Sayyid ar-Rustughfani was asked about disbelievers:

Will their (disbelievers) deeds be weighed on the mizan (the balance) and be rewarded?

The scholar answered: No.

When asked again, the scholar offered the following answer:

In accordance with narrations, they (disbelievers) will face the balance; however, the state of the balance (whether heavy or light) while weighing the deeds should not be inferred from this, but rather the point is to separate them (from one another). Since, disbelievers (may the curse of Allah be upon them) will have a different punishment.

Allah says in surah Nisa, verse 145:

(The meaning of the verse) Surely, the hypocrites are in the lowest level of the Fire, and you shall never find for them a helper.

Also, in surah Ghafir, verse 46:

(The meaning of the verse) It is the Fire before which they are presented morning and evening. And on

the day when the Hour (of final judgment) will take place, (the order will be released): Admit the family of Pharaoh into the most severe punishment.

The scholar was asked again:

How much is it true that the body of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) turned entirely black after establishing clearly that he had made a mistake (eating from the tree of immortality in Paradise) and that it turned white after performing prayers and fasting on the earth?

The scholar replied:

In a word, we are commanded to abstain ourselves from blaming, degrading and vilifying the prophets and keep our tongue fully away from speaking about their weaknesses, as they hold the highest degree and are the most revered and superior amongst the creation.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: If my companions are mentioned, stay silent (hold back your tongue from speaking evil about them). (Narrated by Tabarani) Thus, since we are required not to do anything degrading even the companions, the prophets (peace be upon them) are the most worthy people to be deeply respected.

The scholar was asked again:

What is the wisdom behind the reason that the Prophet (PBUH) had no shadow?

The scholar answered:

The brightness of the sun and the light of the moon are created from the light of Muhammad (PBUH). His light is brighter than that of the day, sun and moon. That is the reason why the Prophet (PBUH) had no shadow.

The scholar was asked again:

Is it appropriate for Satan to become a Muslim?

The scholar answered:

Yes, it is. It was a *karamat* (miracle) of the Prophet (PBUH) to have Satan become a Muslim. (Interpretation: It is quite unclear why Rustughfani uses the word "*karamat*" (miracle) in this context, since this word is basically used toward *awliya* (saints) who are granted supernatural power. It would be correct to use the word *mu'jiza* (evidentiary miracle), which is peculiar to only prophets, instead of *karamat* (miracle)).

The scholar was asked again:

(In that case) will Satan go to Paradise or Hell?

The scholar answered:

Satan will definitely go to Hell, because of the fact that Satan expressed disbelief (kufr) later. Satan used to be a Muslim while Adam was alive and became an apostate after Adam had passed away. (Interpretation: This sentence is pretty vague in the work, as the author discusses Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and surprisingly shifts on to another topic, i.e. Prophet Adam (PBUH). In this event, he is the same as Satan, for he had been a Muslim before becoming an apostate. While narrating the above-mentioned, some said: "Only Allah accepts me and I will be safe" (i.e., I will be safe from the evil and seduction of Satan and he will leave me).

The scholar was asked again:

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Is *iman* (faith) granted (by Allah) or acquired (by a human being)?

The scholar replied:

We do not say that *iman* (faith) is entirely gifted (by Allah) or fully acquired (by a human being), but rather it is granted and is a guidance provided by Allah. This is due to that fact that a human being did not present anything to Allah that could make him rightful for this blessing; and if a human being does anything, it should be considered as acquired.

The scholar was asked the last question:

Will angels be rewarded or get punished?

The scholar replied:

Yes, they will. However, both the reward and punishment will be different from that of human beings, who find pleasure in something because of something else. Allah made us take pleasure and feel passion by eating, drinking, riding and the likes, owing to which, we, human beings, will get our rewards in the hereafter. Unlike this, Allah made angels take pleasure in His worship and service.

In summary, before getting acquainted with the work, we held the view that *Al-As'ila va-l-Ajviba* was a great work. However, having studied the work, we came to conclusion that it is a small work containing some questions and answers. The reason we decided to include the text and interpretation of the work in our research is to show that the work encompasses uncertain phrases and it remains unclear why the work was authored and who addressed the questions to the scholar. Accordingly, there is no valid reason to take the work as scholarly in terms of the Maturidite doctrine.

Yet, another work *al-Fava'id* by Abu l-Hasan Alib Sayyid ar-Rustughfani has been preserved to this day. The manuscript copy of the work is stored in Majma' al-Khavadis va-n-Navazil by Akhmad b. Musa Keshshi (d.550/1155) under number 547, Yangi Jami' Department, Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul[3, p. 285b-317b]. The work basically covers a number of topics of fiqh, such as fasting, prayer, faith, family and good manners.

Ahmet Ak, a researcher from Turkey, maintains that this work is the first to be written on the Maturidite doctrine[1, p.14]. Having looked through the book, one can have no doubt about the researcher's findings, since the author makes reference to six clear evidences from Maturidi, four of which are directly related to Maturidi[10, p. 302a, 308a, 315a, 317a], while the rest cites the scholar's views[10 p. 313b, 317b].

This work, which sheds light on the issues of both fiqh and faith, is highly acknowledged as the source on fiqh by researchers. The work is written in a traditional style (i.e. questions and answers) typical of that period; and the issues of creed are approached from the perspective of social relations. Some of the questions raised in the work are given below.

The author provides unique elucidations on the issues like entering the mosque first, praying in the first row and leaving the mosque last. The work reads that

Rustughfani puts forth a hadith from the Prophet (PBUH) "The best rows for men are the first, and the worst are the last, and the best rows for women are the last and the worst are the first" as an example. When asked about this, he said that entering the mosque first, in fact, is a good virtue; but, whoever enters the mosque first without displaying arrogance and ostentation to please Allah, and performs the prayer either in the first row or the last, will be rewarded abundantly by Allah.

Allah says in surah al-Waqi'ah, verses 10-12:

And the Foremost are the foremost. Those are the ones blessed with nearness (to Allah) in gardens of bliss.

The following narration merits attentions in bringing this issue to light in *al-Fava'id*:

Abu-l-Kasim al-Khakim as-Samarkandi and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi were praying in congregation in a mosque. Upon completing the prayer, al-Khakim as-Samarkandi leaves the mosque earlier than Abu Mansur al-Maturidi; and then asked his pardon and said: "The reason I left the mosque earlier than you is not placing myself above you, but rather I wanted to put you over me, as the most of good virtue is granted to those who leave the mosque last. So, it was my intention to make you worthy for this moral excellence. I would act the same if it were said with regard to entering the mosque"[10, p. 310b].

Rutughfani arrives at this conclusion reading this narration: "It is much clear from this narration that a true virtue is not occupying the first row in a prayer, but rather entering the mosque first and leaving it last".

Some questions in the work prove that Rustughfani argued or even expressed his anger against the Mu'tazilites. Rustughfani is asked a question, the work reads, whether it is permissible to establish a marriage between Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaah and the Mu'tazilites?

The scholar replies: It is impossible, as we hold the view that the Mu'tazilites are disbelievers. (Interpretation: We may deduce from this that Rustughfani himself might have suffered from a Mu'tazili. According to Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaah, one cannot attribute disbelief to a person of *Ahl al-Qibla* (people of the Qibla) even if they practice a false creed. Although great scholars like Imam Abu Hanifa and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi confess the Mu'tazilites as a false sect, they never attributed disbelief to them.) This is because of the fact that they consider people as apostates as long as they do not follow them.

Also, Rustughfani writes about eating the meat of the animal slaughtered by Christians and Jews, and rejecting the one slaughtered by a Muslim, simply because of his apostasy. The scholar says that a Mu'tazili considers a Muslim inferior to Christians or Jews unless he practices the Mu'tazili creed. The scholar fiercely criticizes the Mu'tazilites by providing a hadith from the Prophet (PBUH) "The Qadaris (those who deny al-qadar) are the Magians of this ummah." (Interpretation: Because the Mu'tazilites, with regard to divine destiny,

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follow the practice of the Qadaris, they are compared with the Magians in the hadith above.)

Even though one can feel an extreme and denouncing approach of the author in *al-Fava'id*, the author does not step out of the Maturidite doctrine. Based on the above-mentioned considerations, it can be concluded that Rustughfani's *al-Fava'id* is an initial work reflecting the issues of creed of Maturidi and discussing the teachings of the Maturidiyyah.

In conclusion, Abu l-Hasan Alib Sayyid ar-Rustughfani was one of ardent disciples and constant companions of his master Abu Mansur al-Maturidi. *Al-Fava'id* was regarded as one of the most important works on the Hanafiyyah fiqh and the teachings of the Maturidiyyah.

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