

Arguments of the Council (the Leaders of Mecca) and Answers of Mâtürîdî

Konseyl (Mekke Liderleri)'nin Argümanları ve Mâtürîdî'nin Cevapları

Veysel Gencil

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Bartın Üniversitesi İslami İlimler Fakültesi, Tefsir Ana Bilim Dalı
Assist. Prof., Bartın University Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Department of Tafsir

Bartın / Turkey

veysel.gencil@gmail.com

orcid.org/0000-0003-0103-1274

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KSU Sirah Researches Application and Research Center

Kahramanmaraş 46100 Turkey

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Abstract

The Prophet was exposed to various accusations from the time he started preaching Islam. These objections came especially from the elite of his community. The Quran describes their cases in fragments and gave an answer to them. Abû Manşûr al-Mâtürîdî (333/944) had examined who the Quran had refuted the elite's accusations. This paper seeks to answer the two following questions: Why did Mâtürîdî concentrate to answer the objections of the elite? And second what method did he follow when generating answers to them? The conclusions reached after the examination of the entire Ta'wîlât al-Qur'ân can be summarized as follows: The elite of Quraysh are identical to the elites of the previous community. Their objections to Islam are almost the same that had been seen before. Therefore, answering them will be a ready-made answer to possible objections to be raised from the ongoing process. Mâtürîdî courageously conveyed these objections without covering them and then gave persuasive answers based on mental data. While answering the also gave Meccans, he answers to those who attacked Islam with logical propositions.

Keywords: Sirah, Tafsir, Mâtürîdî, Ta'wîlât al-Qur'ân, Meccan Pagans.

Öz

Hız. Peygamber, insanları İslam'a davet ederken çeşitli itirazlara maruz kalmıştır. Bu itirazlar, özellikle toplumun elit kesiminden gelmiştir. Kur'ân-ı Kerîm, onların argümanlarını fragmanlar halinde anlatmış ve bunlara cevaplar vermiştir. Ebû Mansûr el-Mâtürîdî (333/944), bu cevapları ayrıntısıyla değerlendirmiş ve söz konusu elit kesimin İslam'a yönelik itirazlarını çürütmüştür. İşte bu çalışma şu iki soruya cevap aramıştır: Mâtürîdî, elit kesimin itirazları üzerinde niçin çok durmuş ve onlara cevaplar üretirken nasıl bir yöntem izlemiştir? *Te'vîlâtü'l-Kur'ân'ın* tamamının incelenmesi neticesinde varılan sonuçlar şu şekildedir: Elit kesim bir prototiptir. Onlar, İslam'a karşı hemen her devirde görülecek türden itirazlarda bulunmuşlardır. Bu nedenle onlara cevap vermek, bir nevi, ilerleyen süreçte öne sürülecek muhtemel itirazlara hazır cevap olacaktır. Mâtürîdî, söz konusu itirazları, üzerini örtmeden cesurca aktarmış ve ardından akli verilerden hareketle ikna edici cevaplar vermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyer, Tefsir, Mâtürîdî, Te'vîlâtü'l-Kur'ân, Mekke Müşrikleri.

Introduction

This paper¹ come to complete my previous article entitled "Reading Meccan Pagans with Māturīdī's Eyes".² The main aim of this paper was to clearly reveal the intellectual world of polytheists. Because the polytheists were the first opponents of Islam and the Quran conveyed their ideas as it is. However, for the most first *Mufasir-s*, Qurān's commentators conveyed their thoughts with the intention of condemnation. For this reason, it's difficult for us to understand their *tafsir-s* about this answer. Therefore, they had no answers to some important questions. For example, why the polytheists had denied the hereafter? So, what were their arguments on how they had used? Or why they worshiped idols besides Allah? For what reason they were saying "We only serve them that they may bring us nearer to Allah."³ Or why they rejected Muhammad's prophethood? Therefore, these questions were tried to be answered through Māturīdī in the aforementioned paper.

For us, the revelation of the thoughts of the polytheists given by Māturīdī is the most elaborated one. He reported that the Mecca was divided into two groups: powerful rulers and the obeyer people. Mecca was governed the first group, a body of men who were called mala'. They also were called the "Supreme Council" or "Chiefs on high". Moreover, he interpreted this statement in Sād 38/69 (المَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى) as an expression not for the angels but for the Makkah notables.⁴ According to him, the members of the Supreme Council are not in a total agreement at all. But the Council did not show their problems, some of them were crucial ones because they wanted their power to continue. Māturīdī explained what some of the arguments that some of the Council members put forward in order to reject the hereafter. This also is being applied to the arguments put forward by the Council in rejecting belief in monotheism and the assignment of the prophetic mission to Mohammed. However, the paper, above-mentioned, focused only on arguments which the Council had put forward.⁵ And in this study, the basic arguments of the Meccans were tried to be read, but the answers of Māturīdī were not included. Therefore, in this article, we will consider the responses of Māturīdī against the arguments of the polytheists. In order to do that, we will briefly remind the claims of the polytheists on the problem, and then we will talk about how Māturīdī tried to refute these claims.

1. Argument of The Council That There is No Hereafter and Rejection of Māturīdī

In Islamic History sources, some people as Ammar, Sumeyye, and Bilal have been subjected to various persecutions because they were poor and weak Muslims. However, the people who hold the power in Mecca, the Supreme Council, didn't only use the torture to prevent the people to

¹ I would like to thank Tarek Hussein, Yusuf Seller, Nihat Durmaz, Ali Inan, and Zeynep Yazıcı for their contribution.

² See. Veysel Gengil, "Mekke Müşriklerini Mâtürîdî'nin Gözüyle Okumak", *Journal of Sakarya University Faculty of Theology* 20/38 (December 2018), 201-222.

³ *The Noble Quran* (Accessed 14 April 2020), az-Zumar 39/3.

⁴ Abū Manşūr Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ahmet Vanlıoğlu et al. (Istanbul: Mizan Pub., 2005-2011), 12/278.

⁵ People use rhetoric almost every time of their lives to convince each other. Some convincing methods are used in rhetoric to convince the interlocutor. For the methods of convincing in rhetoric and rhetoric, see. Coşkun Baba, *Retoriğin İkna Gücü* (Konya: Çizgi Pub., 2018).

convert to the Islâm but also made rational justification to override the evidence put forward by Mohammed. The first of these is that a phenomenon called the hereafter will not be experienced. So they said:

1.1. Why do we die if we will be resurrected?

The Quraysh did not believe in the Resurrection and the Hereafter. According to Māturīdī, the Council rejects Resurrection and the Hereafter with the argument that: God is wise, this wisdom doesn't do useless work. Then there should be no hereafter. Because resurrecting people after they die is just like demolish a structure to rebuild it. Why does God take their souls if he intends to resurrect those people? Since Allah will not do useless work, there should be no resurrection and hereafter.⁶

The Council's Justification in question aims to actually manipulate lower class people. Māturīdī also points to this fact and says that the problem above-mentioned has no value. However, he does not hesitate to respond to the Council's claim. According to him, God's resurrection of people is primarily a matter of faith. Namely, the hereafter is a place where punishment or reward will happen. If there was no hereafter, a person should have been immortal, and upon that there should have been an immediate response to his work. Because faith is an action that must be carried out based on free will and mental data, not because one has to. Māturīdī continues to explain his thoughts and says: For example, if a person sees that he will go to Hell and burn forever, he will never sin again. The same is valid for Heaven. If a person saw heaven with his eyes, he would never act contrary to orders. In such a situation, the exam closes out and the person believes that he has to. In this case, the result is the following: Allah or reward to another time due to the examination.⁷

Although Māturīdī answered the postponement of the hereafter, in particular, he gives other answers in the context of the problem. He continues to evaluate the following claim in different parts of his work: "It is pointless to build a house to demolish". Namely, if an individual's sole purpose was to build a house to demolish, such an action would be really useless. However, if the goal changes, the mentioned act/action will not be meaningless. Human re-creation is similar to this. The purpose of man's first creation is a trial and test to reveal his true personality. But the resurrection of man is for him to receive the reward or punishment of his works in the world. If human beings were resurrected without reward or punishment, then the assumption that God was doing useless work could be valid.⁸ So after building the house, it's not pointless to demolish it for another purpose and replace it with a new one.⁹ On the other hand, the creation and destruction of the world without any purpose is useless and meaningless. Such a situation means: The existence of this world entails the existence of another world as necessary. Māturīdī finds it senseless both to exist without any purpose of the world and to no return to the Creator. In this context, Māturīdī refers to the following verse: *"Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would*

⁶ Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 14/89, 16/162-163, 253-254, 284.

⁷ Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 14/89.

⁸ Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 1/67-68, 11/159-160.

⁹ Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/284.

*not be returned?*¹⁰ According to him, this verse says: If there is no return to the Creator, the creation of the creatures is meaningless.¹¹

In addition, Māturīdī points out that the claim that it is pointless to build a house to demolish can be used against the Council. Therefore, he draws attention to the fact of death and tells the Council: You accept that Allah created you first and that he will take your life. Whereas, killing after creation is also non-wise. Because this is like building a house in order to demolish. Since demolishing a house to rebuild is suitable for wisdom, killing a person to resurrect means wisdom.¹²

As can be seen, Māturīdī tried to refute the arguments which put forward by the Council in order to manipulate the people, by the approach of differentiation of free will, test and purpose. However, the Council offers other arguments, while claiming that there is no hereafter:

1.2. Our ancestors still did not resurrect

In order to convince the public that the hereafter will not exist, the Council said: Our ancestors who died thousands of years ago have still not been resurrected, so what is the guarantee of their resurrection later?¹³

Māturīdī finds the claim in question without support. Because the Meccans were born after their ancestors. However, this did not prevent them from coming to the realm of existence. In this case, the fact that the ancestors of the Council have not yet been resurrected does not mean that they will not be resurrected later.¹⁴

1.3. A Muslim person and a non-Muslim person also die

The Council sees that believers and nonbelievers benefit from these world blessings. However, those who do not accept Islam do not suffer trouble or punishment at the time of death.¹⁵ So the threats that those who do not believe will face bad results are false. The news given by a liar is not true either. So, there is no hereafter.

Māturīdī also invalidated this claim put forward by the Council based on their evidence. Indeed, in this world, Allah gives blessings to good people and bad people. Likewise, those who do not believe are not punished immediately in the world they live in. However, the mind requires who believes and who denies that they should be separated. Because those who follow Allah's commandments and avoid His prohibitions must be rewarded. Again, He must punish those who do evil to people. If the separation does not occur in this world, another world is needed for this. This is the hereafter.¹⁶

¹⁰ al-Mu'minun, 23/113.

¹¹ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 8/247.

¹² Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 8/291.

¹³ al-Naml 27/67; ad-Dukhan 44/34-36; al-Ahqaf 46/17.

¹⁴ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 8/291.

¹⁵ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 11/95.

¹⁶ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 8/109, 10/72-73, 11/229, 15/316, 17/23.

"Similarly," says Mātūrīdī, "the world is the world of test." But if wealth, power, and reign are given to good people in the world and the enemy is left in trouble, hunger, and poverty, everyone will necessarily become a good person. In addition, if the penalty for opposing the bans is imposed immediately, everyone will necessarily end their evil actions. In such a situation, the test is meaningless. For this reason, there is no discrimination between friends and enemies in the world which is a test place. As a result, the believer and the denier will realize their thoughts with free will.¹⁷

2. Council's Arguments about the Politeism and the Rejections of Mātūrīdī

The arguments that the majority of the council members put forward that there is no hereafter necessarily lead to the conclusion that the reward or punishment of the actions committed by the people will be seen in this world.¹⁸ When we turn attention to "obedient people", the following situation draws attention: The people do not obey the Council only because they are rich and powerful. This perception stemmed from an idea that the Council tried to justify.¹⁹ In this context, the Council proposes the following arguments to convince the public that reward and punishment will be seen in this world:

2.1. If a person is rich and strong, this means that he is loved by God

Although this argument put forward by the Council is against revelation, prophets, and believers, it also functions as an answer to its own people.²⁰ As a matter of fact, it is not wise to do one's favor to someone who is an enemy in daily life. Likewise, no one leaves his close friend face down and does not put him in various troubles. If he would do something like this, he would have done a completely meaningless job. On the other hand, God is a wise, since the wise will not engage in an absurd business: The fact that Allah makes one rich and equips them with financially diverse qualities is an indication that He loves him.²¹

According to Mātūrīdī, these statements are arguments that the hereafter will not be experienced. However, he also points out that poverty or wealth is part of the test. Because the fact that a person is rich does not mean that Allah will love him necessarily and vice versa. Just because a person lives a poor life does not mean that he is punished by God. Because there are also poor people like the rich ones among believers. While this situation of wealthy believers does not stem from their superiority in the sight of Allah, the poor believers are not poor because they have committed a crime against Allah. On the contrary, wealth or poverty is a requirement of the test.²² These two are situations in which Allah confronts His servants for the purpose of testing.²³ Because the real perpetrator is Allah in the fact that a person has wealth or lives a poor life. The person can sometimes be rich without clinging to the causes.²⁴ Otherwise,

¹⁷ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/29-30

¹⁸ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 17/16.

¹⁹ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/141.

²⁰ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/142.

²¹ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 11/435.

²² Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 2/282; 11/435-436.

²³ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 11/437.

²⁴ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 11/142.

many smart people who should have been rich would not live a poor life. On the other hand, many people who should be poor would not be rich. But reality shows otherwise.²⁵

2.2. God is pleased with what we do

This is a claim of the Council, and the Council sought to legitimize worshipping idols on the one hand, and on the other hand, it aimed to prove that their behavior was not wrong. They tried to explain these claims as follows:

We are followers of our fathers. They are the reason for our existence, and we do the same whatever they do. If the works of our fathers were illegitimate, Allah would not allow it and would destroy those who did it immediately. In this case, we would not exist. Our existence shows that our fathers are not destroyed. This means that their work is not wrong, but rather correct.²⁶

Māturīdī refutes this allegation based on mental data. The first one is this: Among your ancestors were those who accepted the prophets and those who denied what they brought, as well. So why do you go after those who disbelieve while your believers stand among your ancestors?²⁷

Māturīdī also supports his query with other data. That is to say, in the time of the ancestors of the polytheists, there were Jews, Christians and Mecuses, who were from different religions. They had different beliefs than the ancestors of the polytheists. Yet, Allah had not destroyed them altogether. Similarly, among the ancestors of the polytheists, there were also people who did not worship idols. According to the belief of the Council, they should have been destroyed because they did not listen to Allah's command to worship the idol.

"Then," says Māturīdī, we should ask the Council:

If God did not destroy them, does that mean that God is pleased with them? If this question is answered "yes", it means that God endorses two completely opposite things. It is not possible for God to endorse two things that are completely opposite. In contrast, if the above question is answered as "no", this means: The claim that "Allah does not punish them for being pleased with pagans" is invalid.²⁸

In this context, Māturīdī refers to the verse al-An'am 6/148: "...Say, "Do you have any knowledge that you can produce for us? You follow not except assumption, and you are not but falsifying."²⁹ According to him, this verse says that there is no evidence to prove the claims of the Council members.³⁰

2.3. It must be the partners of God, who created all this universe. These partners should also have their own characteristics

²⁵ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 13/243.

²⁶ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 5/246, 7/31.

²⁷ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 12/86-87.

²⁸ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 5/323-324.

²⁹ al-An'am 6/148; Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 6/148-158.

³⁰ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 5/246-247.

To prove his claim, the Council says: In everyday life, not everyone can enter the king. Likewise, no ordinary person can serve the king. To appear before the king or serving him is only for those who deserve these duties. If circumstances are like this in normal life, it should be the same for Allah. Because Allah created the whole universe. Not everyone can serve a King / God whose power is infinite. So servanthood should be done to those who are close to Allah, that is, idols. Only in this way can we approach God.³¹ Indeed, this is the reason for star worship.

As it is known, there were also people who worship the star among the members of the Council. According to these, there should be some features on the intermediaries to be worshiped to think that this is the mediator. According to the Arab belief, Sirius is the brightest star in the sky because of his reputation next to God.³² People worshiped Sirius because it is the brightest star in the sky.³³ It is the result of such logic that any of the four stones found by the Arab picked the most beautiful and bright one and started worshiping it.³⁴

Mātūrīdī refutes this allegation based on mental data. Namely, one person must have some features to mediate another. The first is that the intermediary has a special value next to the Sultan. If the intermediary is to worship Allah with all his might, he can gain value. Anyone acting in this way may have the right to act as an intermediary. On the other hand, it is not possible for those who are not likely to be servants to be intermediaries. Idols cannot be servants because they are not human. They cannot intercede because they do not have the opportunity to benefit or harm.³⁵

This is not the only argument put forward to justify worshiping. The Council presents the second argument in this context: One must serve the servants of the King. In this way, the King will be aware of these servants. Because the King's close servants will introduce those who serve them to the King. If there is a problem, the King's close men will be the intermediary/intercessor for them. Therefore, the same should be true for idols. Thanks to these idols, one will be able to approach Allah.³⁶

Mātūrīdī refutes this allegation based on mental data. Namely, it is natural to serve His servants primarily to contact the sultan. "Moreover," says Mātūrīdī, "Contrary to them is not forbidden, and on the contrary, this is the result of an imperative. It is also usual to serve the servants of the sultan. It is not forbidden to serve them either. But there is a difference between these two issues: While there is no prohibition on applying to intermediaries to reach the sultan; It is forbidden to apply to intermediaries to worship Allah. Allah ordered the servant to be made

³¹ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 6/42.

³² For a different narration of al-Tha'labī, see: al-Tha'labī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, *al-Kashf wa'l-bayān* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-ilmiyah, 2003), 6/28.

³³ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 14/217-218. For information about the Yemenis who worship the star of Shira, see: Razi, Fakhr al-Din Muḥammad ibn 'Umar, *Mafatih al-ghayb* (Egypt: al-Tawfikia Bookshop, 2003), 29/23; Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-ilmiyah, 2003), 3/294.

³⁴ Jawād 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī Ta'rīkh al-'Arab qabl al-Islām* (Baghdad: Camia Baghdad, 1413/1993), 6/67.

³⁵ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 7/32.

³⁶ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 7/31.

only to Him and forbade anyone to worship. Therefore, it is not acceptable to put other intermediaries and worship them after the order and prohibition.³⁷

3. Arguments Of The Council On The Rejection Of Apostleship And Māturīdī's Refutation

3.1. The Prophet Mohammed must be mad, lunatic, or magician (!)

The Council wanted to prevent the people it ruled from believing in the Prophet Muhammad, and therefore accused him of being mad, lunatic/jinxed, or magician.³⁸ It was trying to justify these claims as follows: There were people in Mecca who were appreciated by the society for their intelligence, wealth, and gentleness, and they worshiped idols. Indeed, if there were any problems in idol worship, first of all, these elite people would have opposed this action. Therefore, the fact that people in this group are not opposed to idol worship, but on the contrary they worshiped idols, means that this is true. In this case, everyone (especially those who are distinguished in terms of mind and intelligence) regards this action as correct, but someone else says it wrong, it means to ignore the public opinion. Therefore, the claimant must have been either mad or a lunatic.³⁹

Māturīdī opposes the Council's justification with the verse al-Araf 7/184: *"Then do they not give thought? There is in their companion [Muhammad] no madness. He is not but a clear warner."* According to Māturīdī, this verse is condemnation for the Council because they do not think. If they had thought about the Prophet, they would have known that he had not made up the news he had given, but on the contrary, that he had taken it from Allah himself, and that he was not mad. Māturīdī says "Because" the prophet notified to them the orders and prohibitions in the Torah and the Bible. Furthermore, the Council was well aware that he did not know how to read and write and the languages in which these Books were written. In the same way, they were aware that the Prophet did not get the information in question by translation from any rabbi, monk, or pastor.⁴⁰ Despite all these facts, he was called mad because it was not thought objectively about him. Maturidi says "actually", the expression "did they not think" in the verse? is like saying "did not you do like this?" This statement to the addressee means "You actually did this." So, saying that about the Prophet is mad by them means they know that there is no such thing in reality. Therefore, the Council preferred to deny it because of its stubbornness even though they knew the truth.⁴¹

The other argument put forward by the Council while labeling Muhammad especially as a mad was that he sweated during the revelation and changing of the color of his face.⁴² The Council wanted to turn this situation in its favor and wanted to show him, if he is not mad, as someone who actually received support from the jinn. Indeed, there were people in the same community

³⁷ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 14/217-218.

³⁸ Yunus 10/2; adh-Dhariyat 51/39, 52; al-Qalam 68/51.

³⁹ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 11/ 446; 13/297.

⁴⁰ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 1/150, 2/137, 6/80, 7/9, 223, 11/131-132, 15/150.

⁴¹ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 6/126-127.

⁴² Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 1999), "Revelation", 1.

who received help from jinn⁴³ and according to the Council, the Prophet Muhammad must have been one of them.

Mātūrīdī says that the 46th verse of Saba is the answer to the Council's claim. In other words, when the revelation is received, the face of the Prophet's sweat or the color change cannot be connected with the madness of him. Because he gave such wisdom and advice immediately after receiving the revelation that neither philosophers of humans nor of jinn can say and bring. The things that he brought are not the signs of the mad. Moreover, the wisdom and advice in question are not things that can be learned in a state of madness. Because a mad person says such things after getting rapturousness that nobody cares about his words.⁴⁴

The fact also lies behind the Council labeling the Prophet as mad (!) is that: They consisted of the rich, strong, and influential rulers of society. It was not possible to oppose them or to oppose their provisions. The killing of the person who took a different stance was an ordinary case. Therefore, moreover, there are no other strong people to support him, the person who would oppose a group of such managers had to be mad.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, Mātūrīdī says that the 46th verse of Surah al-Saba is the answer to the alleged claim. That is, the Prophet endangered his life in order to fulfill his duty of notification. Because he has undertaken the duty of warning people against a severe punishment. In order to fulfill this duty, he did not submit to the threats of the pharaohs he had dealt with, and at the risk of his life, fulfilled his duty of notification and warnings, which he was ordered. So, he did not object to Pharaohs because he was mad, but in fact, he opposed the Pharaohs to fulfill his duty. After these statements, Maturidi says that Allah has protected the Prophet, made the Prophet superior to his opponents, and frustrated all their tricks. Mātūrīdī says "as a result", the point that the Council relies on the insanity of the Prophet is the proof of the Prophet's prophecy, and Maturidi concludes his statement in the context of the subject.⁴⁶

Another claim made by the Council in order to prevent the Prophet from serving his duty is that he is a magician. As a matter of fact, Velid b. Mugira had put forward the claim that the Prophet was a magician because of the thought that only a magician can separate the relation between father and son.⁴⁷

Mātūrīdī handles the claim in order to refute it. According to him, even if the Prophet's words were magic, even that would mean that he was a messenger. Because what is called magic is not something that can be achieved as a result of using one's own mind. Magic, on the contrary, is a science that one must learn from a master. However, the Council knew that the Prophet did not

⁴³ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/246; Jawād 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī Ta'rīkh al-'Arab qabl al-Islām*, 6/257-258; Şemseddin Günaltay, *İslam Öncesi Araplar ve Dinleri* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Pub., 1997), 126-127.

⁴⁴ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/10.

⁴⁵ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 6/126, 8/11, 13/297, 17/243.

⁴⁶ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/10. And see Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 11/409, 17/244.

⁴⁷ See. Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/245-246; Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wil āy al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dar İbn Hazim, 2002), 29/187-191.

take any lessons from any magician. Māturīdī says "then", the Council knew clearly that the words he said were not magic and that what he said was from God himself.⁴⁸

Māturīdī continues to deal with the claim that the Prophet was a magician. Accordingly, the magician or sorcerer cast a spell to separate people. But this spell and its consequence happen in a way that no one can notice. However, the Prophet's making disjoint among people is no secret, but it is clear. He did this by bringing evidence to people. Those who did not think about the evidence refused them, while those who think about the evidence in question accept them. Thereby, the separation between father and son was a result of whether they thought about the evidence. In this case, the separation process is not secret but overt, and it is caused by the persons themselves. As a result, if those who rejected the evidence were thinking about them, the evidence would lead to their coming together, not their separation.⁴⁹

Finally, Māturīdī focuses on the wizard's purpose of casting a spell. Accordingly, the purpose of such a person is to gain a reputation among the leaders of the society and thus to gain wealth. However, the Prophet had no expectation from anyone, but he was opposed to the notables of society. He commanded people not to be arrogant towards each other, but to be ascetic to the blessings of the world. According to this, Māturīdī says, "how accurate it would be to label the Prophet as a magician."⁵⁰

Māturīdī, also emphasizes the statements of the Council's magician and lunatic which contrasts with each other. Because they also called the Prophet lunatic as well as a magician. But lunatic and magicians are in opposition to each other. To be a magician, it is necessary to be extremely knowledgeable, skilled, and superior in science. So, to say that a person is both ignorant and very scholar is to use expressions that contrast with each other.⁵¹ Therefore, the Council's all discourses are nothing more than manipulating.

3.2. God is wise

Although it is completely true The Council wanted to say that for a purpose: He does everything as it should be, so he needs to know everything. Allah, who knows everything, does not send a messenger to the place that cannot be accepted. Because rulers also send ambassadors somewhere, but they send them to the places where rulers know they will be accepted. It is an unwise job to send an apostle to a place where he won't be accepted. Since Allah will not do anything unwise, he/Muhammad cannot be a messenger. (!) Because the Council does not accept his apostleship.⁵² Maturidi evaluates this claim as following: Indeed, the apostle is sent to the place known to be accepted. One who sends his messenger only because of his own interests or something he needs, otherwise, he does not. However, Allah does not need anything. On the contrary, He sends his messenger because of the interests and needs of those whom he sends to. If

⁴⁸ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/249.

⁴⁹ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/249-250

⁵⁰ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/250.

⁵¹ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 8/11. The claim made by Māturīdī was also mentioned by Al-Zajjāj. See. Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sarī al-Zajjāj, *Kitāb ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, ed. Abd al-Calil Abd Şelbî (Beirut: Âlem al-Kotob, 1988), 5/42.

⁵² Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 9/407-408, 13/221-222.

they obey the news, they will gain the happiness of the world and the hereafter. However, if the messenger is rejected, such a situation will not cause any harm to the sultan. Therefore, Allah can send messengers even if He knows that they will not be accepted.⁵³

Mātūrīdī supports this expression with the verse of az-Zukhruf 43/5: *"Then should We turn the message/Prophet Muhammad away, disregarding you, because you are a transgressing people?"*⁵⁴ Mātūrīdī says: "Because he, as an ambassador, could have come to you. However, you are not his only address. You may not have believed in him, but other interlocutors other than you can accept the evidence brought by him, as a matter of fact, they have accepted it. "Similarly," says Mātūrīdī, "you can accuse him of being a liar. But those out of you will see that he is the righteous man."⁵⁵ With these expressions, Mātūrīdī tells the Council that they should not see themselves lordly in their own eyes.

Some of the members of the council made a claim as following:

3.3. Messenger must be an angel

Let's say we accepted that he (the Prophet) was a messenger. But the entity that represents God must be divine. Why does not Allah choose an angel as a messenger but a human? Besides, a messenger comes from one place to another. But even though he (the Prophet) claimed to be a messenger, he did not come to Mecca from any other place. On the contrary, he always lived in Mecca.⁵⁶ So Mohammed should/can not be a messenger.

Mātūrīdī finds this claim unfounded. According to him, a messenger who comes for humanity must possess the qualities a human be. The main reason for such a situation is that the human being who claims to be a prophet will demonstrate his claim miraculously. In this way, people will be able to understand that the messenger's words and case are right. As a matter of fact, a miracle is something that another human being can not do. If a messenger was an angel or a jinni, it would not be clear whether it was a miracle. Because the species have changed, and if the species change, the strength also changes. Man does not know the limits of the power of jinn or angels. The angels or the jinn can do things that people cannot do. So, what the angel or jinn do maybe something that cannot be considered a miracle. Since this is the case, a messenger must be of the human type. In this way, he will show miracles by doing things that no one can do. This will base the claim that a messenger is a person sent by Allah.⁵⁷

According to Mātūrīdī, the claim that a messenger must come from another place is not consistent, either. If a messenger came from another place, it would not be known whether he was a prophet or not. Therefore, the messenger should be sent from the community in which he lives. Because society should recognize that person and know that he has never lied before. It should also be known that the person who claims to be a prophet has never betrayed any trust before. In this way, society will conclude that a person who does not lie for his own good will not lie in the

⁵³ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 9/408.

⁵⁴ az-Zukhruf 43/5.

⁵⁵ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 13/223-224.

⁵⁶ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 14/87-88.

⁵⁷ Mātūrīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 5/337, 8/359-360, 14/88-89.

name of Allah. On the other hand, if a messenger had come from another place, it can be claimed that he had learned the miracles which he showed to prove that he was a prophet from others. So, evidence could be put forward against him. In contrast, when a messenger emerges from the society in which they live, they will be able to understand that he is the messenger of God because they know he has not done such things before.⁵⁸

3.4. He can not be a prophet because he is poor

As mentioned above, according to the Council, it means that if there is no Hereafter, then there ought to be punishment and reward in this World in advance. If a person is poor, he cannot be a servant who God likes him. As a matter of fact, if a person is treated/served by other people in daily life, it means that this person is loved or at least not regarded as an enemy by them. But if a person loses everything, even all his family members, it means that God punishes him. Under these circumstances, it is a slander that a poor person claims to be the messenger of God. Therefore, prophecy, which is a very important task, should only be given to someone who God loves. For this reason, they said;⁵⁹ "Why was this Qur'an not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities?."⁶⁰ According to Māturīdī, the Council, while putting forward this claim, essentially thinks like Iblis.⁶¹

However, he thinks that the Divine cannot be judged based on human criteria. Indeed, a person does no good things to his enemy and no bad things to his friend. Basically, a person does not do a favor for his enemy and harm to his friend. However, this situation depends on the secular perception. The fact that a person has been chosen as a prophet even if he is poor shows us things occur based on the rules of God. Because Allah does not have to make a person rich in the world because he loves, and he does not have to make a slave poor in the world because he hates it. On the other hand, God does not have to love anyone he made rich, and he does not hate anyone he makes poor.⁶²

Māturīdī says that Pharaoh defended the same claim before the Council. Similarly, the situation has also manifested itself in the denial of other prophets. Because of their denial, Māturīdī says, they were destroyed and the news about their destroy reached the Council. However, it is truly astounding that the Council denied on the same pretext.⁶³

Māturīdī says that that the prophet has been chosen among the middle-class, not among the elites is more convincing proof. Because people are created to tend to obey their leaders or elders. If the prophetic mission was given to the leaders or elders of the people (the authors, the evidence that they were prophets could not be understood. This is because people are already obeying their elders or leaders. Unlike this, if the mission is designated for someone from among the middle class, it would lucidly state his prophecy. Because, due to their disposition, people do not obey the

⁵⁸ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 2/463-464, 5/336-337.

⁵⁹ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 5/207-208, 13/242, 15/304, 16/89, 17/193.

⁶⁰ al-Zukhruf 43/31.

⁶¹ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 16/90.

⁶² Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 13/242.

⁶³ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 15/305.

ones who are in the same class or level with them. So, people will look at the evidence brought by anyone who claims to be a prophet. In other words, he will be accepted as a prophet not because he is rich, but because the evidence he brings is mental.⁶⁴ In sum, acceptance for evidence of the prophecy depends on free will, not a social imposition.

Conclusion

The Quran used a general formula when talking about those who criticize the Prophet and Islam. The expression “those who disbelieve says”, which the Quran uses as a pattern, refers to a different objection each time. These different criticisms came from different people, but they're all members of the Council (الملا).

Islam is the common enemy of members of the council. Therefore, it could be concluded that the council's opposition to Muhammad was based on these points: The belief in One God, Allah, Muhammad's prophethood, and the rejection of the resurrection. However, they not only refused these points but also, tried to make rational criticism. It's interesting to see how they benefited from the dialectic art or “disputation.” In other words, the Council did not only used every means of persecution towards the Muslims, especially those who had no protection from their own tribes, but the Council used their knowledge to get them back the old religion. Again, Qur'an never used defamation when transmitting the Council's arguments. Thus, he also taught that etiquette should be followed in a discussion.

It seems that Māturīdī took care of these arguments. Moreover, he explained what the aims of the arguments put forward are. Then, in the first place, he refuted the Council's arguments that seemed quite solid by using the same method, namely dialectic art or disputation.

Obviously, it can be said that many of the commentators did not touch the issues that Māturīdī dealt with in detail. It is possible to say that such a situation is due to the commentator himself. The personality's aspects of the commentators are playing an active role in the tafsir process.

In our view, the most important reason that Māturīdī had been attracted by the Council's arguments that those Council's arguments are able to survive in the following period. Especially that the members of the Council were from different intellectual persuasions, materialists, atheists, polytheists, etc. Māturīdī understood the responding to them means to answer, in advance, the possible objections in the future.

⁶⁴ Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, 5/207-208.

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