



Works Of Rukn Al-Din Ubaydullah As-Samarqandi on Fiqh and Usul Al-Fiqh

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Abstract: This article examines the scholarly legacy of Rukn al-Din Ubayd Allah as-Samarqandi, a prominent scholar who lived and worked in the intellectual milieu of Transoxiana in the 7th/13th century. Special attention is given to his major work *Jāmi' al-uṣūl fī bayān al-qawā'id al-ḥanafīyya wa ash-shāfi'iyya fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, which systematically compares and organizes the methodological principles of the Hanafi and Shafi'i schools. The study also considers his other works, including *Talkhīṣ Jāmi' al-uṣūl*, *Risāla fī ḥurūf al-ma'ānī*, *Mulakhkhaṣ min Sharḥ ma'ānī al-āthār*, *Risāla fī al-qawā'id al-fiqhiyya*, *Tafsīr gharā'ib ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, and *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*. The analysis highlights their intellectual foundations, referencing influential scholars such as al-Pazdawī, as-Sarakhṣī, al-Māturīdī, al-Jaṣṣāṣ, ad-Dabūsī, and al-Ghazālī, and notes the current locations of the manuscripts (Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul and Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya in Cairo). The research underscores the concise, didactic, and comparative nature of Samarqandi's works and their significance within the Māturīdī intellectual tradition.

Keywords: Rukn al-Din as-Samarqandi, uṣūl al-fiqh, Hanafi-Shafi'i Comparison, Kalām, Tafsīr, Manuscripts, Süleymaniye, Dār al-Kutub.

Introduction

The intellectual and scholarly heritage of Central Asia occupies a prominent place in the development of Islamic sciences, particularly in the fields of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *usul al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence). Among the distinguished scholars who contributed significantly to these disciplines is Rukn al-Din Ubaydullah as-Samarqandi, a prominent figure of the medieval Islamic intellectual tradition. His works not only reflect the depth of legal reasoning and methodological precision of his time but also illustrate the synthesis of jurisprudential thought with the socio-cultural realities of the region.

The study of as-Samarqandi's writings provides valuable insights into the evolution of Islamic legal theory, the role of scholarly discourse in shaping religious practice, and the transmission of knowledge within the broader Islamic world. By analyzing his contributions, one can better understand the ways in which juristic debates were framed, the methodological principles employed, and the enduring relevance of his thought in contemporary discussions of Islamic law.

Methodology

Scholars of Transoxiana played a pivotal role in the development of Islamic legal thought. They not only enriched jurisprudential discourse (*fiqh*), but also contributed directly to the formation of *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), *kalām* (Islamic theology), *tafsīr* (Qur'ānic exegesis), and other religious-intellectual disciplines. One of the distinguished figures of this scholarly milieu was Rukn al-Dīn 'Ubayd Allāh as-Samarqandī, an eminent scholar of the 7th/13th century.

His scholarly legacy is multifaceted. In particular, his work *Jāmi' al-uṣūl fī bayān al-qawā'id al-ḥanafīyya wa ash-shāfi'iyya fī uṣūl al-fiqh* is especially valued for its systematic presentation of the methodological differences between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī schools. In formulating his legal-theoretical views, as-Samarqandī drew extensively on the intellectual heritage of such prominent scholars as al-Pazdawī, as-Sarakhsī, al-Māturīdī, al-Jaṣṣāṣ, ad-Dabūsī, and al-Ghazālī.

Distinguished by its clarity and accessibility for students, this work—along with his other treatises and commentaries—secured as-Samarqandī recognition as one of the leading scholars of the Māturīdī tradition in his time.

a. *Jami' al-usul fi bayan al-qawa'id al-hanafiyya wa ash-shafi'iyya fi usul al-fiqh.*

This work, devoted to the discipline of *khilāf* (comparative jurisprudence), was written for madrasa students and examines the doctrinal differences between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī schools. In the introduction, the author himself states:

“Some of my friends requested that I compile the legal maxims related to the jurisprudential issues between the madhhabs of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (may Allah have mercy on him) and Imām al-Shāfi'ī (may Allah have mercy on him) so that students could more easily master the sources and principles of both schools. Hoping that Allah al-Wahhāb will bless the end of my life through this effort, I began writing this book” (Rukn al-Din Ubaydullah, 2020: 61).

This work brings together the methods of theologians and jurists, comprehensively encompassing the approaches of both the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī schools, which further enhances its scholarly value. It is considered one of the important works in *usul al-fiqh*. However, its significance and scholarly rank have not been fully recognized. In this regard, Mulla Ali Qari (930–1014/1523–1605) mentions in his biographical entry:

“Rukn al-Din as-Samarqandiy has a valuable work on the science of legal theory” (Mulla Ali Qari, 2017: 121).

In this work, Rukn al-Din Ubaydullah as-Samarqandiy refers to Imām al-Pazdawiy by name 18 times and to Imām as-Sarakhsi 14 times. He also cites the works of Imām al-Maturidiy (*Ta'wilat al-Qur'an*), Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Ali al-Jassos (*al-Fusul fi al-usul*), Abu Zubayd ad-Dabusiy (*Taqwim al-adilla*), and Abu Hamid al-Ghazzaliy (*al-Mustasfa fi usul al-fiqh*) (Rukn al-Din Ubaydullah, 2020: 61).

b. *Talkhisu Jami' al-usul*

This is an abridged version of the above-mentioned *Jami' al-usul*. After completing the main work, as-Samarqandiy was requested by some of his colleagues to shorten it. In response, he produced *Talkhisu Jami' al-usul*, which summarizes the main topics of the

original text. The purpose of its concise presentation was to make it easier for students to memorize the text quickly and master its key points. Manuscripts of this work are preserved in the Süleymaniye Library (Istanbul, Qasim Fatih collection no. 1695, fols. 111b–133a) and the Dār al-Kutub al-Misriyya (Cairo, Timurid section, no. 1000).

c. Risala fi huruf al-ma'ani wa ma yalhaqu biha min al-adawat

This valuable treatise focuses on Arabic grammar, covering conditional particles, locative expressions, particles of exception, subjunctive mood markers, and conjunctions. Rukn al-Din Ubaydullah provides detailed explanations of these particles with examples drawn from legal contexts.

d. Mulakhkhas min Sharh ma'ani al-asar

This is an abridgement of Imām al-Tahawiy's (238–321/852–933) *Sharh ma'ani al-asar*. The original work presents hadiths used to derive legal rulings and discusses issues of disagreement among jurists, organized by legal chapters. In it, as-Samarqandiy distinguishes abrogated from abrogating narrations, and absolute from restricted hadiths, clarifying which ones are obligatory to act upon and which are not. A manuscript is preserved in the Süleymaniye Library (Fayzullah Efendi collection, no. 931).

e. Risalatu fi al-qawa'id al-fiqhiyya

In this treatise, Rukn al-Din Ubaydullah as-Samarqandiy sets out the fundamental legal maxims and principles of jurisprudence. According to the author, its main aim was to help students master these legal maxims thoroughly and easily. Three manuscript copies are known: Süleymaniye Library (Haji Bashir Agha collection no. 192, fols. 206b–210a), Asad Efendi collection (no. 3896, fols. 76a–79a), and Murad Mulla collection (no. 641, fols. 134b–137a).

Result and Discussion

Works on Tafsir and Qur'anic Sciences

- **Tafsiru ghara'ib ma'ani al-Qur'an**

In this work, Rukn al-Din Ubaydullah explains how the words and expressions used in every verse of the Qur'an contain profound and inimitable meanings, presenting each verse as a miracle full of wisdom and wonder.

- **I'jaz al-Qur'an al-karim**

This concise treatise provides rhetorical and stylistic commentary on the surahs of the 30th juz' (*'Ammā*). As-Samarqandiy states that his aim was to highlight the rhetorical aspects, semantic subtleties, and hidden benefits of these surahs.

Works on 'Aqidah, Kalam and Sufism.

- **al-'Aqidatu ar-Rukniyya fi sharh La ilaha illa Allah Muhammadun rasul Allah**

This is a later work in the Maturidi theological tradition. It is distinctive in addressing topics not found in earlier kalam works. The treatise consists of an introduction and three chapters.

Rukn al-Din Ubaydullah as-Samarqandiy, recognized as one of the leading scholars of the Ḥanafī school in his time, mastered the sciences of *kalām*, *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and *taṣawwuf*, and authored numerous works in these fields. He composed his writings in a systematic and structured style, taking into account their accessibility and comprehensibility for students.

In his theological works, he referred to Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī with the honorific title “*Imām al-Hudā*” (“the Imam of Guidance”) and cited several of his doctrinal views. He also engaged with the ideas of other prominent representatives of the Māturīdī tradition, such as Abū Layth as-Samarqandī, Abū al-Yusr al-Pazdawī, and Abū al-Mu‘īn an-Nasafī, often adding his own critical observations.

Furthermore, as part of the scholarly front defending the Māturīdī doctrine, he critiqued certain theological positions of the Ash‘arī school and opposed heterodox currents. Based on this, it is reasonable to conclude that Rukn al-Din Ubaydullah as-Samarqandiy was regarded as one of the most prominent representatives of the Māturīdī school in his era.

Conclusion

The scholarly legacy of Rukn al-Din Ubaydullah as-Samarqandi represents an important milestone in the intellectual history of Islamic jurisprudence. His contributions to *fiqh* and *usul al-fiqh* not only reflect the rich legal traditions of his era but also demonstrate the methodological rigor and depth of analysis characteristic of the Central Asian scholarly milieu. By addressing complex legal issues and offering systematic approaches to jurisprudential principles, as-Samarqandi helped shape the discourse of Islamic law and provided a foundation for subsequent generations of scholars.

The study of his works allows modern researchers to appreciate the continuity and dynamism of Islamic legal thought, highlighting the ways in which classical scholarship can inform contemporary understandings of justice, ethics, and governance. Ultimately, as-Samarqandi’s intellectual heritage stands as a testament to the enduring significance of Central Asian scholars in the development of Islamic civilization and the universal principles of law and morality.

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