

Analysis of Abul Barakat Al-Nasafi's Works on Furu' Al-Fiqh

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Abstract: Scholar Abul Barakat al-Nasafi, who came from the ancient city of Nasaf in Mawarannah, became famous for his deep knowledge in the fields of tafsir (interpretation), aqidah (creed), and fiqh (jurisprudence). The article provides information about Nasafi's works on furu' al-fiqh.

Keywords: Abul Barakat al-Nasafi, tafsir (interpretation), aqidah (creed), fiqh (jurisprudence), furu' al-fiqh, usul al-fiqh.

Abul Barakat al-Nasafi's full name is Hafizuddin Abul Barakat Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Mahmud al-Nasafi, and according to Muhammad Shafiq Ghirbal's work "Aal-Mawsua al-Arabiyya al-Muyassara", the scholar's birth was in 629/1232 AD. Brief and repetitive information about Abul Barakat al-Nasafi is given in many Arab bio-bibliographical sources.

Although he was born in Nasaf, he was educated in Bukhara, spent his youth in a religious-scientific environment, went to many countries in search of knowledge and gained great reputation. Devoted to science, he stayed away from political processes and gained great fame in scientific circles. His fame spread to many places. Around 1280, he worked as a teacher in the "al-Qutbiyya al-Sultaniyya" madrasa in the city of Kirman. Then he came to Baghdad and taught students there. Nasafi was very pious and devout. He was fluent in Arabic and Persian. Abdulhayy al-Lucknawi described him as "a perfect imam without equal in his time, a leader of fiqh and usul al-fiqh scholars, a leading scholar of hadith and its meanings."¹

In the book "Al-Fawaaid al-Bahiyya" by Abdulhayy al-Lucknawi, Ibn Kamal Pasha mentions al-Nasafi: "He is one of the muqallid and faqih scholars who can distinguish between the strong and the weak, and who do not use weak words and weak narrations in their works. With him, the era of ijtihad ended, and after him there were no mujtahids left in the madhhab to do ijtihad."²

Only three of Abul Barakat's teachers are mentioned in the sources. One of them was Shamsul-Aimma Abul Wajd Muhammad ibn Abd al-Sattar ibn Muhammad al-Imadi al-Kardari, a prominent scholar of his time, who was born in Khwarizm in 599/1202-1203. Al-Kardari was interested in science from his youth and first studied in Khwarizm itself. Later, in Samarkand and Bukhara, he studied under great teachers such as Fakhr ad-Din Qadikhan (d. 592/1195), author of "Fatawa Qadikhan", and Burhanuddin al-Marginani (512/1118-593/1197), author of "Al-Hidaya". Al-Kardari died in 642/1244 and was buried in Bukhara, in front of the tomb of al-Subazmuni.

¹ Abdulhayy al-Lucknawi. Al-Fawaaid al-Bahiyya. – P.291.

² See: Abdulhayy al-Lucknawi. Al-Fawaaid al-Bahiyya. Vol. 1. – P. 101-102.

Abul Barakat al-Nasafi, in addition to his teacher Shamsul Aimma al-Kardari, he also learned from Badr ad-Din Khohar-Zada Muhammad ibn Mahmud ibn Abdul Karim (d. 651/1253) and Hamiduddin ad-Darir Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ar-Ramishi al-Bukhari (d. 666/1267-8).

In the bio-bibliographic sources, only a few students of al-Nasafi are mentioned. For example, Muzaffar ad-Din ibn al-Saati (d. 694/1294-5), the author of the work “Majma al-Bahrain”, one of the commentators of “al-Hidaya” Hisam ad-Din al-Husain ibn Ali ibn Hajjaj al-Sighnaqi (d. 714/1314-1315), and Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Jili.

Abul Barakat al-Nasafi came to Baghdad at the end of his life and died on Friday night of Rabi’ al-Awwal 710/August, 1310. He was buried in Izaj near Isfahan³.

Abul Barakat al-Nasafi's works include the following sciences: interpretation, creed, jurisprudence, and usul al-fiqh.

It was found that there are 13 scientific works of Abul Barakat al-Nasafi and all of them have reached us. 5 of these works are related to jurisprudence (1 of them is comparative jurisprudence), 4 are related to the science of kalam, 3 are to usul al-fiqh, and 1 is to interpretation, and 6 of them have been published.

The scholar has the following 5 works on furu’ al-fiqh:

“Kanz ad-Daqaiq” is placed after “al-Hidaya” in Islamic law. In the book “Kanz al-Daqaiq”, jurisprudential issues are widely covered, and the views of mujtahid scholars such as Abu Hanifa, Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad, Imam Zufar, Imam Malik, and Imam al-Shafi’i are presented.

A total of 7 manuscript copies of “Kanz ad-Daqaiq” are available in the manuscript fund of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

“Al-Mustasfa fi Sharh an-Nafi’ fil-Furu” is a work on the science of fiqh. It is a commentary on the work “Al-Fiqh an-Nafi” by Allama Nasir ad-Din Abul Qasim Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Samarkandi (d. 656/1258). The scholar does not provide proofs for each issue, but rather he cites them among the opinions of mujtahids. The work uses the thoughts of Ali ar-Ramishi, the author of “al-Manafi” (“Benefits”), the teacher of Abul Barakat, and the work “Usul al-Bazdawi”. His teacher al-Kardari was mentioned many times in the book.

The book contains many jurisprudential issues such as prayer and treatment. Scholars accept it as one of Nasafi’s beneficial and authoritative books. It begins with “Kitab al-Purification” (“Book of Ablution”) and ends with “Kitab al-Faraid” (“Book of Inheritance”).

One copy of this book, consisting of 209 pages, is kept in the manuscript fund of the Russian Academy of Sciences under the number 3215. It was copied on the 15th of Sha’ban, 726 (August 14, 1326). This work has not yet been published.

“Al-Musaffa fi Sharh al-Manzumat an-Nasafiyya fil-Khilaf” is related to the science of jurisprudence. This book was written and completed on 20th of Sha’ban, 670 Hijri/March 22, 1272. It is a commentary on the work of Najmad-Din Umar al-Nasafi. This work of Umar al-Nasafi has a total of 2669 verses and 10 chapters. It reflects the conflicting views of the mujtahid scholars on jurisprudential issues through verses and odes. Two copies of its manuscripts numbered 2834 (copied in 1110/1699) and 4669/II (no pages at the beginning and end) are kept in the manuscript fund of the Oriental Studies Institute in Tashkent. This work has not yet been published.

“Al-Wafi”. In the work “Kashf az-Zunun” by Haji Khalifa, it is said that it belongs to the series of books equal to “Al-Hidaya”. It is stated that Abul Barakat wanted to write a book containing the issues and fatwas contained in the authoritative jurisprudential works. He wrote such a book

³ Tashkuprizada. Tabaqat al-Fuqaha. – P. 113; Abdulhayy al-Lucknawi. Al-Fawaaid al-Bahiyya. – P. 291; Ibn Qutlubuga. Taj at-Tarajim. – Nendeln, Liechtenstein 1996. – P. 22.

and called it “Al-Wafi”. Abul Baqa Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Makki (d. 854/1450-51) wrote two commentaries on “Al-Wafi”, one long and one short.

In “Kashf az-Zunun”, you can read the following information: “When Abul Barakat wanted to write a commentary on “Al-Hidaya”, Taj al-Sharia, one of the great scholars of that time, dissuaded him from this idea. Then, Abul Barakat wrote “Al-Wafi” on jurisprudence and his commentary “Al-Kafi Sharh al-Wafi”. This work, along with other famous books, has gained a great reputation.” It has not yet been published.

The work “Al-Wafi” contains various issues from “Al-Jami’ as-Saghir”, “Al-Jami’ al-Kabir”, “Al-Ziyadat”, “Mukhtasar al-Quduri”, “Manzumat al-Khilafiyyat”, and fatwa books. Like all fiqh books, it begins with the book of purification⁴. However, unlike works such as “Al-Hidaya” and “Mukhtasar al-Wiqaya”, after finishing the chapter of “Al-Hunasa”, he ends the book with the chapter of “Al-Faraid”, i.e. the science of inheritance. In terms of structure, the work is similar to Muhammad ibn al-Hasan’s book “Al-Jami’ as-Saghir”⁵. In it, as mentioned in “Kanz ad-Daqaiq”, there are references to the opinions of the mujtahids of the madhhab. For example, the letter “ha” refers to Abu Hanifa, “sin” to Abu Yusuf, “mim” to Imam Muhammad, “za” to Imam Zufar, “fa” to Imam al-Shafii, “kaf” to Malik ibn Anas, and the letter “waw” refers to followers of the madhhab.

As mentioned above, “Al-Wafi” is a valuable work because it summarizes the issues that exist in authoritative fiqh books. Tashkuprizada considers it among the books that are authoritative, Haji Khalifa acceptable, and Lucknawi good.

The scholar finished writing his “Al-Kafi” on the 24th day of Ramadan 684/November, 1285. In our opinion, this book may have been written in 684/1285 when Abul Barakat was teaching “Al-Wafi” in the madrasa in Kirman. This information is written at the end of some manuscripts. Because students needed to understand “Al-Wafi” easier and faster. Abul Barakat wrote a commentary to meet this need of students.

Various fiqh issues such as prayer, fasting, zakat, hajj, marriage, and trade are explained in detail in the work. Several manuscripts of the book are kept at the fund of Institute of Oriental Studies in Tashkent.

Today, the main part of the manuscript heritage is kept at the Institute of Oriental Studies named after Abu Rayhan Biruni of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan. For example, it is noteworthy that in 2000, as one of the rare scientific and cultural objects, the fund consisting of 26,000 volumes of manuscripts, 39,000 volumes of lithographic books and about 10,000 historical documents written in Arabic, Persian, old Uzbek, and other Eastern languages was included in the list of UNESCO’s World Cultural Heritage.

The decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev dated May 24, 2017 “On measures to further improve the system of preservation, research, and promotion of ancient written sources” was important in raising efforts in this regard to a new level.

Now the main task of the researchers is to research and investigate these manuscripts, to publish them, and to prepare their scientific and explanatory translations.

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⁴ Abul Barakat al-Nasafi. Al-Kafi Sharh al-Wafi. Fund of Institute of Oriental Studies in Tashkent. № 3110/I. – P. 1^b.

⁵ See: Al-Mazahib al-Hanafiyya. Vol. II. – P. 480.

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