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A Treatise on The reason For Separating The Letter "Lam" by Sheikh Abu Al-Mahdi Issa Al-Maliki Al-Ghardawi (d 971 AH) " Presentation And Study"

رسالة في علة انفصال اللام للشَّيخ أبي مهدي عيسى المليكي الغرداوي (ت971هـ)

" تقديم ودراسة "

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Abstract:

In this paper, we present a brief biography of one of the prominent figures in the city of Ghardaia in southern Algeria during the tenth century AH, namely Sheikh Abu Mahdi Issa bin Ismail al-Maliki al-Ghardawi (died in 971 AH). The researcher traced this figure's efforts in the field of classification, attempting to identify his legacy of manuscripts in national and international libraries and to determine his various works in prose and poetry. Then, his compositional characteristics and methodology were studied in his treatise dedicated to explaining the reason for separating the letter Lām (ل). The importance of this research scarcity of studies that have addressed his life and works.

The study concluded with a summary of the main findings. The researcher recommends further investigation into the works of Algerian researchers, most of which remain unpublished, so that they can be researched, studied, and given due attention.

Keywords: Issa al-Maliki, The reason for The Separation of the letter L.

الملخص:

نقدم في هذه الورقة ترجمة موجزة لأحد أعلام مدينة غرداية بالجنوب الجزائري خلال القرن العاشر الهجري، وهو الشيخ أبو مهدي عيسى بن إسماعيل المليكي الغرداوي (ت971هـ). ونهدف إلى تتبع جهود هذه الشخصية في التصنيف محاولا إحصاء تراثه المخطوط في المكتبات الوطنية والعالمية والوقوف على مؤلفاته المختلفة نثرا ونظما، ثم التعرف على خصائص التأليف لديه، وبيان منهجه في رسالته التي جعلها لبيان علة انفصال اللام، وتظهر أهمية البحث قلة الدراسات التي تناولت حياته وأعماله. وتوجت الدراسة بخاتمة تضمنت أهم النتائج المستخلصة. ويوصي الباحث بتتبع أعمال العلماء الجزائريين التي لا يزال أكثرها قابعا في رفوف مكتبات لتحقيقها ودراستها وخدمتها الخدمة اللائقة بها.

الكلمات المفتاحية : عيسى المليكي، علة انفصال اللام.

1. INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to God, Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the most noble of messengers, his family, and his companions.

From early times, particles of meaning in Arabic grammar received considerable attention from scholars. Owing to their importance, some grammarians devoted independent works to explaining their categories and meanings. In certain cases, individual particles were examined in separate treatises that discussed their grammatical functions, semantic values, and textual evidence drawn from the Qur'an and classical Arabic usage.

Among these particles, the letter *lām* (ل) occupied a prominent position in linguistic studies from the earliest periods. Algerian scholars also contributed to this tradition by composing works dedicated to its analysis. By God's grace, the present study examines a treatise entitled *On the Reason for the Separation of the Letter Lām,* authored by Sheikh Abu Mahdi Issa ibn Ismail al-Maliki al-Ghardawi (d. 971 AH).

The research problem emerged from the discovery of two manuscript copies of this treatise. Since serious academic research must be grounded in clearly defined questions, this study is guided by the following main issues: Does the attribution of these manuscript copies to the author stand on solid evidence? What are their physical and textual characteristics? What are the distinctive features of Sheikh Abu Mahdi's scholarly method in this type of writing?

The significance of this research lies in several factors, most notably the early historical period in which the author lived, the originality of the treatise within its field, and its considerable scholarly value, which will be discussed in detail in later sections.

This study seeks to achieve several objectives, including:

1. Providing a concise biography of Sheikh Abu Mahdi Issa al-Maliki al-Ghardawi (d. 971 AH), highlighting his teachers, students, and the intellectual influences that shaped his scholarly personality.
2. Identifying his most important works and locating their manuscript copies in Algerian and international libraries.
3. Examining the main features of his scholarly style through selected passages from his treatise on the letter *lām*.

This research represents one of the earliest attempts to systematically trace the linguistic views of Sheikh Abu Mahdi Issa ibn Ismail al-Maliki (d. 971 AH). Several of his treatises and writings have been identified and examined in the course of this study.

The paper begins with a brief biographical account of the author and an overview of his major works and their manuscript locations. It then analyzes his method of composition through the treatise under study. The research concludes with a summary of the principal findings.

2. Introduction to Abu Mahdi ‘Isa ibn al-Maliki (d. 971 AH)

2.1. Name and Lineage: ‘Isa ibn Isma‘il ibn ‘Isa Abu Mahdi al-Muṣ‘abi al-Maliki; (Bouras, (2013), vol. 2, p. 97)

the nisbah al-Muṣ‘abi refers to the Banū Muṣ‘ab, the inhabitants of M’zab, whose origins trace back to the Zenata Berber tribe. (al-Hajj Said, 1992, p. 13)

Some scholars argue that the term M’zab, as it is commonly known today, is a distortion of Muṣ‘ab. According to this view, the distortion occurred because some Berbers are unable to pronounce the letter ‘ayn properly, replacing it with a glottal stop and sometimes simplifying it to an alif. Furthermore, the close articulation points of the letters ṣād, zāy, and ḍād, combined with dialectical variation and the passage of time, contributed to the word’s phonetic evolution. As a result, the word was pronounced variously as Muṣ‘ab, Muṣāb, Muḍāb, then M’Zāb, and finally Mīzāb. Supporting this view, Banū M’zab are known to have substituted ṣād with zāy in some Arabic words while emphasizing them, as in ṣalāh and ṣawm, which became tzālit and azūmī.(al-Hajj Said, 1992, p. 13)

A review of historical and jurisprudential texts shows that some works use Muṣ‘ab or Muṣāb, while M’zab or Mzab appears only in later periods, and when referenced, it is in the form of the nisbah al-Muṣ‘abi.

Thus, according to proponents of the first view, the term M’zab represents the final stage in the evolution of Muṣ‘ab. Today, the pronunciation of M’zab varies, with some elongating the first vowel and others not; many, however, pronounce it with a u-sound, indicating that its original form was Muṣāb, Muṣ‘ab. Therefore, the word M’zab is etymologically derived from Muṣ‘ab, and the term Banū M’zab retains the same reference as Banū Muṣ‘ab.(Yahya Ma‘mar, 1986, vol. 2, p. 432)

Some researchers maintain that the term M’zab derives from the Zab mountains, and that Amzab is a Zenata Berber word referring to a plateau. Such plateaus are found south of Biskra, and those who migrated from the Zab region carried the name with them to M’zab. This explanation may hold partial validity. It is also plausible that M’zab is an Arabic word of Persian origin, referring to a channel through which water is drained from a rooftop or elevated surface, essentially a rainwater spout. The term appears in Arabic lexicons, is well-known in the Arabic language, and holds significance in Islamic legal rulings.

The nisbah al-Maliki refers to the Qasr Malika, one of the oldest palaces in Ghardaïa within the M’zab Valley, located in southern Algeria, north of the Sahara, in an area called Al-Shabka, a picturesque region interspersed with valleys. Qasr Malika lies approximately 320.5 miles from Algiers.(Dibouz, 1971, vol. 1, p. 149)

2.2. Birth and Early Life: Sheikh Abu Mahdi was born in the late ninth century AH, in 876 AH, at Qasr Malika, where he also grew up . He memorized the Qur'an and received foundational instruction in various sciences alongside his peers at the kuttāb (elementary schools) of Qasr Malika. He later continued his studies under the guidance of several scholars, who will be discussed in detail later. Tracing the precise stages of his early life is challenging, a situation common to most scholars of southern Algeria during the tenth century AH.

2.3. Features of His Era: Understanding the characteristics of the period in which Sheikh al-Maliki lived helps illuminate aspects of his life and provides a clearer picture of social and political conditions in Algeria at that time.

Abu Mahdi al-Maliki lived from the late ninth century AH into the mid-tenth century AH (corresponding to the sixteenth century CE). During this period, the Hafsid and Zayyanid dynasties divided influence over Algeria. A significant portion of eastern Algeria—including Constantine, Béjaïa, Biskra, and Touggourt—was under Hafsid authority, while western Algeria was under Zayyanid control, with Tlemcen as its capital. Central Algeria functioned as a buffer zone between the two powers, frequently becoming a site of ongoing conflict.(Sa'dallah, 2007, vol. 1, p. 39) This situation weakened both dynasties, leaving them unable to raise armies capable of subjugating tribes that resisted taxation.(Al-Mili, 2007, vol. 2, p. 413) Consequently, political fragmentation ensued, small rival units proliferated, wars increased, lawlessness prevailed, theft became widespread, and security deteriorated (Sa'dallah, 2007, vol. 1, p. 41).

This political transformation was undoubtedly accompanied by certain developments; however, these remained obscure due to the limited information available. The sources at our disposal, or those that can be accessed, consist at best of scattered fragments, passing references, and brief allusions, which provide little insight into the historical past of the region.(Saidouni, 1984, p. 223)

The scientific and intellectual life was affected by the prevailing political instability. The tenth century AH witnessed a significant decline in the number of scholars and scholarly works, with only a few centers managing to retain some of their previous prominence, largely due to the presence of dedicated teachers and students. Among these centers were Tlemcen, Constantine, Béjaïa, Mazouna, Oran, and Algiers.(Sa'dallah, 2007, vol. 1, p. 44).

Most scholars focused on religious sciences, including Qur'anic exegesis, Hadith studies, jurisprudence, and theology. Jurists often occupied the forefront of the intellectual elite, serving as spiritual leaders within their communities.(Sa'iduni & Bouabdelli, 1984, p. 137)

The M'zab Valley was no exception to the broader conditions of the era. Nevertheless, it experienced a relative flourishing of scholarship compared to the general situation in southeastern Algeria during the Ottoman period. This is evidenced by the large number of manuscripts in various fields, many of which are still preserved in libraries distributed throughout the M'zab Valley. These works align with the general scholarly trends of the period, with religious sciences and Arabic linguistic studies occupying a central place in the intellectual pursuits of the people of Ghardaïa.

2.4. Teachers and Students:

2.4.1.Teachers: Sources indicate that Sheikh Abu Mahdi had two principal teachers. The first was Sheikh Sa'id ibn 'Ali ibn Yahya al-Jurbi, known as 'Ammi Sa'id (d. 927 AH), who conducted regular study circles attended by many students, with Sheikh Abu Mahdi among the most distinguished and renowned of his pupils. It is also reported that Sheikh Abu Mahdi studied under Sheikh Abu Yahya Zakariyya ibn Aflah al-Sadaqiyani, who was alive in 816 AH.(Al-Maliki, 2020, p. 32)

2.4.2. Students: Sheikh Abu Mahdi gained wide recognition for his knowledge, understanding, and scholarly diligence, attracting students from the M'zab Valley and beyond. Pupils traveled from as far as the island of Djerba and the Nafusa Mountains to study under him. Among his most notable students were:

-Dawud ibn Ibrahim al-Talati al-Jurbi, who traveled from his native Djerba, Tunisia, to the M'zab Valley to study with Sheikh Abu Mahdi. He records: "…I arrived in the year 961 AH at Jabal Banū Muṣ'ab and remained with Sheikh Abu Mahdi, may God forgive him and be pleased with him, benefiting greatly from his knowledge". Sheikh al-Talati passed away in early Jumada al-Awwal 967 AH, leaving behind works on theology and a commentary on Al-Ajurrumiyya.

-Muhammad ibn Zakariyya ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Musa al-Baruni al-Qala'awi al-Nafusi, who also traveled from Djerba to study under Sheikh Abu Mahdi in the M'zab Valley, remaining with him for ten years. Following the death of his teacher, he returned to his homeland and died in 997 AH.(Salem Bin Ya'qub, 2006, p. 163)

2.5. Death: Sheikh Abu Mahdi al-Maliki, may Allah have mercy on him, passed away on the 4th of Dhu al-Qi'dah in the year 971 AH, after a long life, reaching the age of ninety-five. He was buried in the Malika Cemetery, which bears his name, in the center of Ghardaia. This cemetery is also known as the Cemetery of Sheikh (Sidi 'Isa), and his grave remains well-known to this day. Sheikh Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Baruni al-Nafusi (997 AH) eulogized him in a poem in which he mentioned several of his teacher's virtues and commendable qualities .(Al-Maliki. 2020. p. 79)

3. Introduction to His Major Works and Contributions:

Sheikh al-Maliki left a scholarly legacy that includes treatises and responses in jurisprudence, theology, monotheism, sermons, language, poetry, and other fields. He contributed to the revival of scholarly activity in M'zab, and much of his legacy remains in manuscript form. Ongoing efforts to catalogue these manuscripts continue to reveal the depth of his scholarship. Among his works, the following can be highlighted:

3.1. Syntax of the Word "Shahada":

This is a concise treatise in which he analyzed the syntax of the declaration of faith, "There is no god but Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

3. 2. Response on Language:

In this work, the Sheikh explains the meaning of al-shas the attachment of understanding, and the weight of speech. A manuscript copy is preserved in the Istiqama Library in Beni Isguen, within the same collection mentioned above. It spans a single folio, with an average of eleven lines per folio. Its opening reads: 'Isa ibn Isma'il, may Allah grant him grace, said: I heard some of the noble and virtuous brothers, on the day I presented to them the questions and answers I had undertaken, ask about the meaning of al-shas, the attachment of understanding, and the weight of speech…"

3.3. Treatise to the People of Warjilan:

This is a letter of admonition regarding negligence in religious matters, including mosque construction, attending khatmat sessions, congregational prayer, Quranic recitation, and interruption of children's education. A manuscript copy exists in the Istiqama Library in Beni Isguen, within the same collection. It is the seventeenth treatise in the collection, spanning two folios, with an average of twenty-nine lines per folio. The opening reads: "After the basmala and blessings, this is the text of a letter sent by our virtuous uncle, 'Isa ibn Isma'il, to the brothers in Warjlan, may Allah prolong their lives. Praise be to Allah for His abundant grace…"

3.4. Response on the Meaning of Tawhid:

This work explains the interpretation of the word of testimony (Shahada), matters that people cannot remain ignorant of, and includes discussion on the divine names and attributes. Within the collection, it spans six folios, with an average of twenty-nine lines per folio. Its opening reads:

"'Isa ibn Isma'il, may Allah grant him grace and forgiveness, said: Some of my brothers asked me about the meaning of monotheism and the concept of oneness…"

3.5. Response to the Questions of al-Bahluli: This treatise contains answers to the questions of Abu al-Hasan al-Bahluli. It was critically edited by Muhammad ibn Yahya Ba'amer and published in 2020 by the Al-Massouria Library in Ghardaia, Algeria.

4. Treatise on the Reason for the Separation of the Lam – Presentation and Study:

4.1. Description of Manuscript Copies of the Treatise:

I made a diligent effort to examine Sheikh al-Maliki's works and reviewed manuscript catalogues in libraries in Ghardaia and elsewhere. The outcome of this research yielded two copies of this treatise, which are briefly described below:

4.1.1. First Copy: Preserved in the Istiqama Library in Beni Isguen, Wilaya of Ghardaia (Algeria), within a collection of forty-six folios, catalogued as (D.G. 60), and listed in the library index as number 325. It is the fourteenth treatise in this collection, spanning two folios (folios 10 verso to 11 verso), with an average of twenty-nine lines per folio. It was copied in Maghrebi script at the end of the tenth century AH by Isma'il ibn 'Isa ibn al-Hajj 'Abd Allah al-Mas'abi in the year 974 AH, i.e., three years after the author's death.

4.1.2. Second Copy: Preserved in the Barounia Library on the island of Djerba, Republic of Tunisia, with a photographic copy available at the Abi Ishaq Atfayesh Association (Ghardaia). It belongs to collection number 281, and is the fifth treatise within this collection, spanning two folios (folios 56 recto to 57 recto), with 21 lines per folio, written in Maghrebi script. This copy is complete. The scribe was 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'id al-Jadwi, who copied it at the end of Jumada I, 1135 AH. The scribe's name and the date of copying were taken from the colophon of the preceding treatise.

4.2. Documentation of the Treatise's Attribution to Its Author:

Sufficient evidence is available to establish beyond any doubt that the treatise "On the Reason for the Separation of the Lam" is indeed authored by Sheikh Abu Mahdi 'Isa ibn Isma'il ibn 'Isa al-Mas'abi. This is demonstrated as follows:

The Sheikh's name appears in both manuscript copies of the treatise:

At the beginning of the Barounia copy in Djerba, it matches the Istiqama Library copy. It states:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. May Allah bless our master Muhammad and his family and companions. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and prayers upon our Prophet Muhammad and all his family. After this, the humble servant who hopes for the abundant grace of his Lord says: 'Isa ibn Isma'il ibn 'Isa al-Mas'abi, may Allah bestow His grace upon him…'".(Al-Maliki, [Manuscript]. no. 281, folio 1)

The scribe of the Istiqama Library copy is Isma'il ibn 'Isa ibn al-Hajj 'Abd Allah al-Mas'abi, a contemporary of the Sheikh, who copied it in 974 AH. It is not unlikely that he was one of the Sheikh's students, as the openings of the treatises include praise of the Sheikh in terms indicating respect and veneration. This serves as additional evidence supporting the attribution of the treatise to Sheikh al-Maliki.

4.3. Text of the Treatise:

«In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. May Allah bless our master Muhammad and his family and companions. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and prayers upon our Prophet Muhammad and all his family. After this: the humble servant, hoping for the abundant grace of his Lord, 'Isa ibn Isma'il ibn 'Isa al-Mas'abi, may Allah bestow His grace upon him and grant him the reward He grants His saints, says:

I heard, while I was in the city of Warjlan—may Allah prolong its life—the beloved people of guidance and Sunnah from our

uncle ‘Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn Mas‘ud say: Sa‘id ibn al-Hajj Sulayman al-Righi al-Fasla al-Jurbi originally asked me: “Inform me about the reason for the separation of the lam in the verse of Surat al-Kahf:

﴿وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا﴾[al-Kahf: 49]

I asked him: “What is your question regarding? Is it about the script, the syntax, or something else?” He said: “I do not know.” I replied: “The purpose is that you come yourself and clarify your intention.” He said: “He will come to you.”

I searched by asking all the Maliki jurists I met during my pilgrimage, but I did not find anyone who could answer. I waited as long as Allah willed for the question to be explained to me, but it did not arrive. It remained in my mind, and I resolved not to consider this a failure or shortcoming; so, seeking Allah’s help and guidance, I proceeded to sound investigation.

Know that the ummah agreed that the subject of orthography (al-rasm) is a convention established by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Consequently, analogy does not apply to what they established, because the script of the Mushaf and orthography cannot be subjected to analogy. Nevertheless, some scholars of script addressed it. Al-Kisā’ī said regarding the mentioned letter and similar cases: the separation of this lam occurs in four places in the Qur’an: In Surat an-Nisa:

﴿فَمَالِ هَـٰؤُلاء الْقَوْمِ﴾ [an-Nisa: 77]

In Surat al-Kahf:

﴿مَالِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ﴾ [al-Kahf: 49]

In Surat al-Furqan:

﴿وَقَالُوا مَالِ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ﴾ [al-Furqan: 7]

In Surat al-Ma‘arij:

﴿ فَمَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قِبَلَكَ مُهْطِعِينَ﴾ [al-Ma‘arij: 36]

You mentioned only one. Al-Kisā’ī added: the case is similar to shān and bāl, as they share both form and meaning, e.g.؟ ما مال زيد ؟ and، ما شأن زيد؟ بال زيد all convey the same sense.

Al-Wahidi commented in his Tafsir regarding Surat Yusuf:

﴿ مَا بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ ﴾[Yusuf: 50]

Meaning : “What is the matter with the women?” He supported this with the verse of Dhi al-Rumma:

ما بالُ عينك منها الماء ينسكب...

Since [مال] occurs in both senses, it follows both rules of separation to indicate the shared aspect between them, aligning with the Arabs’ method of combining matters in judgment while equalizing them. They are similar in some meanings and share some causes. End of explanation.

Some scholars added: the evidence for separating the lam from what follows is that it is not part of the noun it precedes; its separation provides clarification not present in its attachment. They agreed that the lam is a preposition governing its state, and Allah knows best.

The return to the original principle, as we mentioned earlier, that the scholars agreed upon the orthography, is most appropriate.

Al-Shatibi’s verse on the matter:

وَمَالِ هَذَا فَقل مَالِ الَّذِينَ فَـمَا لِ هَـؤُلاء بقَطعِ اللامِ مُذَّكِرا

Consider what the discerning scholar mentioned in explaining this verse, if your focus was on the script.

If, however, you were inattentive to this and did not reach its full benefit, but only intended to examine the preposition and its object, the grammatical markers, and their implied meaning: the preposition and its object in the predicate of the subject carry an interrogative sense—so observe where its answer lies, in its connected elements without dispute. The major premise of the sentence is expressed in the main clause in the nominative, and the minor premise relates to an elided element, which you may estimate correctly if you are among the knowledgeable.

If you comprehend this compilation and benefit from its guidance, then it is well for both you and me. If not, reflect on the words of Allah:

﴿وَمَن يُرِدِ اللهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَن تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنَ اللهِ شَيْئًا﴾ [al-Mā’idah: 41]

Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the best disposer of affairs. Whoever Allah guides is rightly guided, and whoever He leads astray, you will find no guardian or

guide for him. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, the best protector and helper».

4.4. The Sheikh's Method in Addressing the Issue of Lam Separation:

Sheikh Abu Mahdi, in this treatise, sought to provide the inquirer with an explanation of the reason for the separation of the lam, This lam is referred to as the lam of the preposition or lam of annexation.(Al-Harawi, 1980, p. 32)

As for the method adopted by the Sheikh in his treatise, it is characterized by several notable features:

- Statement of the purpose of the treatise: The author began with the basmala and prayers upon the Prophet Muhammad, then stated the purpose of writing. He wrote:

"…I heard, while I was in the city of Warjlan—may Allah prolong its life—the beloved people of guidance and Sunnah from our uncle 'Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn Mas'ud, say: Sa'id ibn al-Hajj Sulayman al-Righi al-Fasla al-Jurbi originally asked me: Inform me about the reason for the separation of the lam in the verse of Surat al-Kahf:

﴿وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا﴾

[al-Kahf: 49].

I asked him: 'What is your question? Is it about the script, syntax, or something else?' He said: 'I do not know.' I replied: 'The purpose is that you come yourself and clarify your intention…'

I waited as Allah willed for the question to be fully explained, but it did not arrive. It remained in my mind, and I resolved not to consider this a failure or shortcoming; so, seeking Allah's help and guidance, I proceeded to sound investigation…"

A note on the location: the text says "مدينة وارجلان" or ورجلان with the first letter open (fatha), the second silent (sukun), and the jim kasra (Yaqut al-Hamawi. 1977. vol. 5, p. 371). This refers to the present-day city of Ouargla, a well-known city in southern Algeria.

The Sheikh uses the style of instruction, beginning with "Know" [اعلم] which is a didactic style common in most educational works. Before starting his answer, he noted that the script of the Qur'an is conventional and cannot be judged by analogy:

"Know that the ummah agreed on the matter of orthography (al-rasm), which was a convention established by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them… because the script of the Mushaf and prosody cannot be analogized."

Since the purpose of the treatise is primarily educational, he paid careful attention to the grammatical position of the Qur'anic verse:

﴿وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ﴾

He explained: "…the preposition and its object in the predicate of the subject carry an interrogative sense… the major premise of the sentence is expressed in the main clause in the nominative [referring to the grammatical position of the predicate clause], and the minor premise relates to an elided element, which you may estimate correctly if you are among the knowledgeable."

He then cited the scholarly reasoning for the separation of the lam, presenting two opinions:

First opinion: Imam al-Kisā'ī, This view of al-Kisā'ī is recorded by Abu al-Hasan al-Harawi in Kitab al-Lamāt..(Al-Harawi, 1980, p. 33)

Second opinion: Attributed to Imam al-Tilmanki, cited by Al-Labib:

"Some said: the reason for separating the lam from what follows is that it is not part of the noun it precedes; its separation provides clarification, though they agreed it is a prepositional lam." (Al-Labib, 2011, p. 567)

Al-Tilmanki, Abu 'Amr Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi 'Isa al-Ma'afari al-Andalusi, a notable Qur'anic reciter and scholar, settled in Cordoba and was the first to introduce the science of Qur'anic readings to al-Andalus. He died in 429 AH.(Al-Dhahabi, 1997, p. 587)

-He also cites the views of mufassirun, including Al-Wahidi.(Al-Wahidi, 2010, vol. 12, p. 144)

-He also cites the views of mufassirun, including Al-Wahidi (Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn

Ahmad ibn Muhammad, d. 468 AH), a famous exegete. He explained [Yusuf: 50] as "What is the matter with the women?" meaning: what is their state or condition, since bal refers to status and condition. .(Al-Wahidi, 2010, vol. 12, p. 144)

-The Sheikh even used a poetic example to clarify a linguistic point regarding the meaning of bal, citing the verse by Dhul-Rumma:(Ghilan, 1982, p. 9)

ما بالُ عينِك منها الماءُ ينسكبُ كأنّه من كلى مَفرية سَرِبُ

-The Sheikh also cited a verse by Al-Qasim ibn Firu' al-Shatibi from his poem 'Uqaylat Atrab al-Qasa'id fi Asna al-Maqasid:

وَمَالِ هَذَا فَقل مَالِ الَّذِينَ فَـمَا لِ هَـؤُلاء بقَطعِ اللامِ مُذَّكِرا

He referred to Al-Labib's commentary on this verse. Al-Labib (Abu Bakr ibn Abi Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghani al-Tunisi), known as Al-Labib, authored al-Durra al-Saqila fi Sharh Abyat al-'Uqayla and died after 708 AH.(Al-Labib, 2011, p. 73)

-These elements highlight the methodological features of the Sheikh's treatise, reflecting the personality of a meticulous scholar. His answers demonstrate humility, refinement, and proper attribution of statements to their original authors.

5. Conclusion:

We do not claim to have fully rendered justice to Sheikh al-Maliki in this study; rather, we sought to introduce him and his manuscript linguistic works, which contain numerous insights, knowledge, and valuable topics. The following conclusions can be drawn:

-Sheikh Abu Mahdi al-Maliki was born in Ghardaïa in the late 9th century AH and lived into the mid-10th century AH, studying under the scholars of his era, both local and from other regions.

-He participated actively in authorship and left a legacy of treatises and responses on jurisprudence, theology, linguistics, and other fields, most of which remain in manuscript form.

-The treatise under study was a response to a question received from the city of Warjlan, addressing the reason for the separation of the lam.

-He cited the major explanations offered by earlier scholars, demonstrating his extensive reading and deep engagement with the works of predecessors.

-At the outset of his response, he clarified that the orthography of the Qur'an follows conventions established by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

-Sheikh Abu Mahdi referred to works of mufassirun and Qur'anic reciters to present various opinions, including Al-Wahidi's Tafsir and Al-Labib's al-Durra al-Saqila on the verses of Al-'Uqayla.

-He analyzed the grammatical position of the Qur'anic verse: (مَالِ هَذَا).

Finally, it is hoped that this study opens avenues for further research into one of the distinguished scholars of southern Algeria, whose works have yet to receive comprehensive study. Most of his linguistic manuscripts remain on library shelves, waiting for scholars to remove the dust of the centuries.

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