

THE SOURCE-STUDY ASPECTS OF ABULHASAN AL-MAWARDI'S WORK.
"NASIHAT AL-MULUK" ("ADVICE TO KINGS")

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Abulhasan al-Mawardi (964–1058) lived during a period marked by acute socio-political instability. At that time, the Muslim world in the Near East, Africa, al-Andalus (present-day Spain), the Hijaz (the Arabian Peninsula), Iraq, and al-Sham (present-day Syria) experienced deep fragmentation.

Based on historical sources, it is appropriate to note that Muslims had split into more than one thousand sects; each group regarded its own intellectual framework as the only valid truth and considered itself the rightful one. There was no political leader or consolidated force capable of uniting them under a single Islamic banner.

In such a highly contradictory and perilous context, one can observe that Abulhasan al-Mawardi came to be recognized as a great figure who assumed responsibility and was able to restore morale to the Abbasid caliphs. For analytical purposes, the forces and groups of that time may be studied in two broad categories:

In political and dynastic terms: the Umayyads, the Abbasids, the Buyids, the Fatimids, the Zaydis, the Qarmatians, and others.

In doctrinal and socio-religious terms: Sunnis, Mu'tazilites, Shi'ites, the Salaf al-salih, the Ithna 'Ashariyya, and others.

Al-Mawardi emphasizes that in order to regulate social relations within a given society, it is necessary to enact just legal rulings (ahkam/laws), to understand them, respect them, apply them appropriately, and adhere to them as an obligation. A study of his statecraft doctrines in *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya*—a work that embodies the political theory and governance principles of the tenth and eleventh centuries—shows that he comparatively examined earlier sources of statehood.

Throughout human history and across different languages and eras, the construction of the state and society, as well as the organization of governance systems, has remained one of the most pressing issues. Accordingly, in *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya*, al-Mawardi advanced a number of definitions and conclusions regarding the theory of establishing a just sultanate. In his view, the imamate/sultanate/state is an institution endowed with a special authority of governance at the level of the whole country. It develops binding sovereign legal norms (in modern terms, constitutional and fundamental laws), ensures executive discipline, regulates social relations, comprehensively protects the interests of citizens (the ummah) and the state, activates and sustains the political order and system, and operates on the basis of established just rulings (i.e., universally recognized constitutional laws). [1. Juraev Ziyovuddin Muhitdinovich. 2019. 267 p.]

Considering the conditions of his time, the scholar put forward some of the most advanced doctrines of Muslim Eastern statehood. In this work, he pays attention to the formation process of economically developed states that evolved through family, communal, tribal, dynastic, and local structures, taking on a religious–secular form of administration—often as small, fragmented city-state formations.

Historically, nomadic polities based on pastoralism, sedentary societies grounded in agriculture, and city-states adapted to hunting, crafts, and trade were also approached critically in terms of their state systems and theoretical models at various stages of development.

Promoting the experiences embodied in medieval political doctrines for classifying governance remains important even today. In particular, for politicians, jurists, philosophers, sociologists, historians, linguists, and literary scholars who seek to engage consistently with contemporary public policy and governance, Abulhasan al-Mawardi’s scholarly legacy—indeed, each of his works, his expressions, and even the smallest textual details—offers profound moral guidance and counsel. Failing to understand such a scholar and his legacy means failing to appreciate its value, since this intellectual heritage is an enduring treasure left for every century and for humanity as a whole.

The political doctrines concerning the gradual development of statehood prior to al-Mawardi, including sources written in the genre of counsel and advice, can be divided into three periods:

The first period: doctrines created from ancient times up to the eighth century CE;
The second period: doctrines created from the eighth to the tenth centuries CE;
The third period: sources of doctrines created in the tenth and eleventh centuries CE.

In the first period, the principal sources of theoretical doctrines on statehood include Chinese, Indian, Turanian, Persian (Iranian), and Greek traditions. The admonitory counsel directed to rulers by Greek and Eastern philosophers includes works such as *Andarz-nama*, *Pand-nama*, Tansar’s *Letter*, Buzurgmehr’s *Risala*, the *Avesta*, Plato’s *Republic* and *Laws*, Aristotle’s *Politics* (“*Siyasat/Politics*”), Confucius’ *Analects*, and the Indian philosophical classic *Panchatantra* (“Five Sacred Books”). These are among the earliest works related to political doctrine. [2. Yoldoshev S. 1997.]

In the second period, doctrines on statehood were formed during the establishment of Islamic belief and the development of Muslim society; this includes sources related to the history of Abbasid governance. [3. Abu Rayhan al-Biruni. 1957.]

In particular, one may include sovereign legal norms and programs related to religious administration developed during the reign of Harun al-Rashid (r. 786–809), the correspondence of Amin ibn Harun al-Rashid (r. 809–813), and judicial letters (qadi correspondence). During this period, the functioning of the *barid* (the state postal and communications bureau) was organized to deliver such documents to their addressees. Correspondence aimed at improving the competence of officials, including the regular sending of books to them, became a systematic practice. [4. تاريخ اللغة العربية سنة 1213 هـ/1797 – p. 57.]

The third period refers to sources of doctrines created in the tenth and eleventh centuries; within this category one may include certain works forming part of Abulhasan al-Mawardi’s scholarly legacy.

The study of al-Mawardi's heritage may reasonably be divided into research conducted in Muslim and non-Muslim countries.

Muslim countries: Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Türkiye, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uyghur regions, Indonesia, Malaysia, Uzbekistan, and others.

Non-Muslim countries: Scotland, India, Norway, England, Russia, France, Germany, the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, and others.

Alongside his successful authorship of *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya wa al-Walayāt al-Diniyya*, al-Mawardi also produced, as a companion work, *Kitāb Naṣīhat al-Mulūk* ("The Book of Advice to Kings"). [5. al-Mawardi. 1986.]

As for the table of contents of the work "**Kitāb Naṣīhat al-Mulūk**", it can be observed that it includes the following:

Chapter One. On the level of receptivity and emotional disposition of the one who receives counsel.

Chapter Two. On the ways by which sultans attain progress and on their virtues.

Chapter Three. On the causes of the decline of kingship.

Chapter Four. On counsels concerning the futility of this world.

Chapter Five. On the discipline and governance of the soul.

Chapter Six. On special (confidential) methods of political administration.

Chapter Seven. On general state (open/public) methods of social policy.

Chapter Eight. On measures for administering finance and the economy.

Chapter Nine. On measures for turning criminals and enemies into friends.

Chapter Ten. On presenting intentions sincerely and on resolving/asking about problems.

If one pays close attention to the table of contents above, it appears to evoke the spirit of our ancestor, the Sahibqirān Amīr Temur Sultan, and his work "**Tuzuklar**". Thus, when the information recorded in *Tuzuklar* is comparatively examined alongside Abū al-Ḥasan al-Māwardī's "**Naṣīhat al-Mulūk**", one may conclude that *Tuzuklar* and *Naṣīhat al-Mulūk* were produced within the same genre. This leads to the plausible inference that *Tuzuklar* was inspired by and shaped on the basis of this very work—*Naṣīhat al-Mulūk*.

In these works that form part of the scholar's intellectual legacy, whenever he addresses matters pertaining to the construction of a polity, he begins, first and foremost, by drawing inspiration from the Book of God—the Noble Qur'an—turning to it and opening with its guidance and admonition. In this regard, one may cite as an example the following verses from **Sūrat al-Nisā'** in the Qur'an:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due, and when you judge between people, to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Seeing. (59) O you who believe! Obey Allah, obey the Messenger, and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything (in matters of religion), then refer it to Allah and the Messenger—if you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination."

On the basis of verses **58–59**, an advanced statecraft principle is articulated: it aims to institutionalize, as an obligatory norm, the citizens' obedience to the commands and decrees of the sovereign. This political–juridical doctrine is encompassed in **“al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyya wa al-Wilāyāt al-Dīniyya.”**

These two works of the scholar belong to the second category of his intellectual heritage—namely, al-Māwardī's socio-political and juristic writings. For instance, his **“Kitāb Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk”** (“Counsel to Kings”) is a political treatise that embodies advice and recommendations directed to state officials; manuscript copies of this work are known to exist today.

Al-Māwardī's works may also be listed chronologically according to the time of their composition. In particular, it is noteworthy that at the age of **34 (398/1007)** he compiled **“Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk.”**

In Abū al-Ḥasan al-Māwardī's **“Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk,”** the Divine source of Allah—the Noble Qur'an—occupies a highly esteemed position. The author makes effective use of **381 verses drawn from 79 sūrahs**, and the analysis of how these verses are cited as foundational evidence in specific places and thematic contexts is as follows:

Sūrahs revealed in Madinah (Md.)

1. **Al-Fātiḥah** (Mk./Md.): verses 3, 4;
2. **Al-Baqarah** (Md.): verses 14, 15, 124, 152, 156, 157, 159, 168, 177, 179, 188, 191, 194, 195, 201, 216, 225, 233, 235, 247, 251, 262, 263, 264, 265, 271;
3. **Āl 'Imrān** (Md.): verses 7, 9, 14, 15, 18, 26, 92, 103, 105, 108, 119, 129, 132, 135, 136, 154, 155, 159, 160, 178, 180, 186, 187, 191;
4. **An-Nisā'** (Md.): verses 2, 5, 10, (17, 92, 104, 117, 170), 19, 25, 29, 31, 36, 37, 41, 54, 59, 78, 92, 93, 95, (96, 100, 153), 102, 122, 123, 125, 135, 147, 165, 172;
5. **Al-Mā'idah** (Md.): verses 8, 12, 20, 33, 34, 36, 38, 45, 67, 78, 79, 98, 105, 119;
6. **Al-Anfāl** (Md.): verses 65, 75;
7. **At-Tawbah** (Md.): verses 5, 6, 7, 14, 29, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 40, 42, 43, 60, 94, 105, 111, 114, 115, 119, 120, 121, 128;
8. **Yūsuf** (Md.): verses 5, 55;
9. **Ar-Ra'd** (Md.): verses 9, 11, 21, 31;
10. **Al-Ḥajj** (Md.): verses 75, 77;
11. **An-Nūr** (Md.): verses 2, 3, 4, 17, 22, 31, 55;
12. **Al-Aḥzāb** (Md.): verses 5, 50, 73, 6, 19, 33, 43, 51;
13. **Muḥammad** (Md.): verses 4, 31, 36, 38;
14. **Al-Fath** (Mk./Md.): verses 18, 26, 29;

15. **Al-Ḥujurāt** (Md.): verses 6, 7, 9, 10;
16. **Ar-Raḥmān** (Md.): verses 56, 72;
17. **Al-Ḥadīd** (Md.): verses 10, 20, 23, 25;
18. **Al-Mujādilah** (Md.): verses 7, 7;
19. **Al-Ḥashr** (Md.): verses 7, 7, 12, 20;
20. **Aṣ-Ṣaff** (Md.): verses 2, 3, 4, 9;
21. **Al-Munāfiqūn** (Md.): verse 4;
22. **At-Taghābun** (Md.): verses 16, 17;
23. **Aṭ-Ṭalāq** (Md.): verses 2, 3, 4, 5;
24. **At-Tahrīm** (Md.): verses 5, 6;
25. **Al-Insān** (Md.): verse 13;
26. **Az-Zalzalah** (Md.): verse 7.

Sūrahs revealed in Makkah (Mk.)

1. **Al-Fātiḥah** (Mk./Md.): verses 3, 4;
2. **Al-An‘ām** (Mk.): verses 32, 38, 44, 68, 70, 124, 151, 152, 152, 153, 160;
3. **Al-A‘rāf** (Mk.): verses 32, 33, 56, 144, 145, 155, 168, 170, 199;
4. **Yūnus** (Mk.): verse 24;
5. **Hūd** (Mk.): verses 105, 106, 107;
6. **Ibrāhīm** (Mk.): verses 5, 7, 33, 34;
7. **Al-Ḥijr** (Mk.): verses 47, 48;
8. **An-Naḥl** (Mk.): verses 31, 33, 77, 89, 90, 91, 93, 111, 114, 125, 128;
9. **Al-Isrā’** (Mk.): verses 16, 25, 26, 27, 29, 33, 34, 37, 70, 110;
10. **Al-Kahf** (Mk.): verses 46, 49, 51, 110;
11. **Maryam** (Mk.): verses 30, 31, 32, 55, 72;
12. **Ṭā Hā** (Mk.): verses 7, 13, 114, 131, 132, 134;
13. **Al-Anbiyā’** (Mk.): verses 20, 35, 47, 94;
14. **Al-Mu‘minūn** (Mk.): verses 51, 71, 92, 108, 115, 116;



15. **Al-Furqān** (Mk.): verses 37, 38, 67;
16. **Ash-Shu‘arā’** (Mk.): verses 84, 85, 214, 215, 227;
17. **An-Naml** (Mk.): verses 21, 23;
18. **Al-Qaşaş** (Mk.): verses 26, 41, 42, 76, 77, 78, 81, 83;
19. **Al-‘Ankabūt** (Mk.): verse 62;
20. **Ar-Rūm** (Mk.): verses 6, 8, 9;
21. **Luqmān** (Mk.): verses 6, 17, 18;
22. **As-Sajdah** (Mk.): verses 6, 24;
23. **Saba’** (Mk.): verses 16, 17;
24. **Fāṭir** (Mk.): verses 5, 6, 18, 35, 36, 37, 45;
25. **Yā Sīn** (Mk.): verse 52;
26. **Aş-Şāffāt** (Mk.): verses 156, 157;
27. **Şād** (Mk.): verses 26, 28, 29;
28. **Az-Zumar** (Mk.): verses 9, 17, 18, 53, 54;
29. **Ghāfir** (Mk.): verses 7, 16, 19, 82;
30. **Fuṣṣilat** (Mk.): verses 34, 46;
31. **Ash-Shūrā** (Mk.): verses 25, 38;
32. **Az-Zukhruf** (Mk.): verses 32, 55, 68, 71;
33. **Al-Jāthiyah** (Mk.): verses 13, 21;
34. **Al-Fath** (Mk./Md.): verses 18, 26, 29;
35. **Qāf** (Mk.): verses 17, 18, 35;
36. **Adh-Dhāriyāt** (Mk.): verse 55;
37. **Aṭ-Ṭūr** (Mk.): verse 24;
38. **Al-Qamar** (Mk.): verses 44, 45;
39. **Al-Wāqī‘ah** (Mk.): verses 22, 23, 24, 35, 36, 37;
40. **Al-Mulk** (Mk.): verse 2;
41. **Al-Qalam** (Mk.): verses 4, 35, 36;

42. **Al-Ma‘ārij** (Mk.): verses 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15;
43. **Al-Jinn** (Mk.): verses 26, 27;
44. **Al-Qiyāmah** (Mk.): verses 14, 15;
45. **An-Nāzi‘āt** (Mk.): verses 37, 38, 39, 40;
46. **‘Abasa** (Mk.): verses 15, 16;
47. **At-Takwīr** (Mk.): verses 19, 20, 21;
48. **Al-Infiṭār** (Mk.): verses 12, 13;
49. **Al-Ghāshiyah** (Mk.): verses 17, 18, 19, 20;
50. **Al-Fajr** (Mk.): verses 6–14;
51. **Aḍ-Ḍuḥā** (Mk.): verse 11;
52. **Ash-Sharḥ** (Mk.): verse 4;
53. **Al-‘Ādiyāt** (Mk.): verse 8;
54. **At-Takāthur** (Mk.): verse 8;
55. **Al-Humazah** (Mk.): verses 2–4.

In the work *Nasīhat al-Mulūk* (“Advice to Kings”), Abū al-Ḥasan al-Māwardī employs a method in which, first of all, the sūrahs and verses cited from the Holy Qur’an are presented in such a way that, upon careful reading, one can understand that these are divine admonitions granted by Allah to humanity that has lived in the past, to the prophets and messengers, and also to humanity that is coming and striving to live. The work embraces counsels addressed to the communities and social groups that have existed since the creation of humankind, as well as admonitions to those who exercised authority throughout the continuity of historical development—leaders such as amirs, shahs, kings, caliphs, sultans, and other office-holders who attained positions of governance.

In this work, which became known to the world through Arab and Persian researchers, valuable information is provided regarding the processes of study and examination of the text. In particular, it contains the following sections:

- **Part 1:** An index of the Qur’anic sūrahs and verses examined in the book, with page references;
- **Part 2:** A list of the Prophetic ḥadīths discussed;
- **Part 3:** A section devoted to poetic rhymes;
- **Part 4:** A list of well-known persons;
- **Part 5:** A list of important sources relevant for research;

- **Part 6:** The content and essence of the book. [نصيحة الملوك إسكندرية 6]. – p. 481.]

In conclusion, obtaining precise information about the Middle Ages—especially about the period and the scholar examined in this article—belongs among the most difficult tasks. One reason is that such materials may remain outside the view of some researchers; another is that they are often encountered in Arabic and in manuscript form. Moreover, many such works, so to speak, remain “untouched” and still exist in manuscript libraries around the world.

Preserving these works and, where possible, translating and popularizing them for the benefit of all humankind should be regarded as a duty of specialists. In particular, scholars of literature and language, translators, politicians, jurist-philosophers and other experts should assume responsibility for bringing such texts to light and for appreciating both rare sources and the specialists who are capable of working with them—especially at a time when these materials are becoming increasingly scarce. This is the demand of our era and the verdict of history: it is necessary to benefit from ancient works and from rare specialists. Indeed, there will be no new al-Fārābīs, Ibn Sīnās, al-Māturīdīs, al-Māwardīs, or Amīr Temūr; therefore, we must not lose today’s specialists either.

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