

## Muhammad Bin Abi Al-Surūr Al-Bakriyy Al-Şiddīqiyy and His Approach to Interpretation: Sūrat Al-Fath as an Example

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**Abstract :** Born into a Sufi family, in which his father and other relatives, as well as additional community members, were particularly rooted in scholarly and cultural inquiry, Muḥammad 'Abū al-Surūr al-Bikriyy al-Şiddīqiyy (1562-1598 CE) was a prominent scholar of his time. Despite his relative youth, he became influential in his writings, which included Quranic exegeses and works on Hadith, Arabic grammar, jurisprudence, and Sufism. He was also a practicing physician and was the first person to be named Mufti of the Sultanate in Egypt. He was active in the political arena, having been close to the Ottoman sultans, providing them his support and counsel. He strived for their empowerment and victory and often influenced their political convictions and actions. Al-Şiddīqiyy enjoyed the patronage of his contemporary Ottoman Caliphate sultans. In general, these sultans always promoted studies in the Islamic sciences and were keen to support scholars and gain their trust. This paper addresses al-Şiddīqiyy's legacy as a Quranic commentator, focusing on his exegesis (tafsīr) of Sūrat al-Fath (48), written in 1589. It appears in a manuscript found at the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, consisting of one volume of 144 pages. It is believed that no other manuscript containing the text of this exegesis is to be found in any other library or institute for Arabic manuscripts. According to al-Şabbāğ (1995), al-Şiddīqiyy had written a complete commentary of the Quran, but efforts to recover it have only unearthed the current commentary, as well as that of Sūrat al-Kahf (18), Sūrat al-'An'ām (6), and 'Āyat al-Kursī (2:255). The only critical edition published to date is that of Sūrat al-Kahf. The other two are currently being prepared for publication as well. The paucity of scholarly studies on the works of al-Şiddīqiyy renders the current study particularly significant, as it provides introduction to al-Şiddīqiyy's exegesis, a synopsis of the biographical and cultural background of its author and his family, and a critical evaluation of his scholarly contribution. It will introduce the manuscript on which this study is based and elaborate on the structure and rationale of the exegesis, on its very attribution to al-Şiddīqiyy, and subsequently evaluate its overall significance to the understanding of Sufi approaches to Quranic interpretation in 16th century Ottoman Egypt. An analysis of al-Şiddīqiyy's approach to interpreting the Quran leads to the definitive conclusion that it indeed reflects Sufi principles. For instance, when citing other Sufi commentators, including his own ancestors, he uses the epithets mawlāna 'our elder, our patron,' al-'ustād 'the master,' unique to Sufi parlance. Crucially, his interpretation, is written in a realistic, uncomplicated, fetching style, as was customary among Sufi scholars of his time, whose leaning was one of clarity, based on their perception of themselves as being closest to Muḥammad and his family, and by extension to the sunna, as reflected in the traditional narrative of the Prophet's biography and teachings.

**Keywords :** Quran' sufiism, manuscript, exegesis, surah, Al-fath, sultanate, sunna

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