



## IMAM SHAKHRISTĀNĪ AND HIS WORK "NIHĀYAT AL-IQDĀM FĪ 'ILM AL-KALĀM"

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Article history:	Abstract:
<b>Received:</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2022 <b>Accepted:</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 <b>Published:</b> 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	This article describes the work of Imam Abū al-Faḥḥ Shakhristānī, who worked in Khorāsān in the XII century, on the science of theology, and the doctrinal issues raised in it.
<b>Keywords:</b> Imam Shakhristānī, knowledge of the word, "Nikhayatul Iqdom", monotheism, prophecy	

Imam Shakhristānī, whose original name was Abū al-Faḥḥ Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Aḥmad, was born in 476/1076 in the city of Shakhristān, Khorāsān. Although there is a difference in the date of birth of Imam Shakhristānī, many authors of "Tarajim" and "Manaqib" agree that he was born in 476 AH. In particular, Imam al-Zakhabi in his work "Siyar A'lam al-Nubala", Samani says: "I recorded a hadith from him in Marv. He told me that he was born in 467 AH," was said<sup>1</sup>.

The scientist spent most of his life in acquiring knowledge and spreading knowledge. Since his youth, he attended the circles of knowledge in the mosques of his city. He became a student of the scholars of this city, and learned various sciences from them. When he grew up, he went on a trip to learn from the scientists of the neighboring cities. Scholar did not limit himself to only one direction of science, but was engaged in various fields of it. Shakhristānī's first field of study was the science of interpretation. He says about this: "When I was young, I only heard the knowledge of interpretation from my sheikhs"<sup>2</sup>. At the age of fifteen, he listened to hadith from Abū al-Ḥasan al-Madīnī in Nishāpūr. He also studied jurisprudence and attained the rank of a jurist. A number of scholars have expressed their opinions about the scientific potential of the scientist.

For example, Tajuddin Al-Subkiy in his work "Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'yyah al-kubrā" says: "He was nicknamed 'Afzal' because of the knowledge he acquired. Shakhristānī was a prominent imam, a leader in the science of speech and discussion, and an expert in the sciences of jurisprudence and method," he said<sup>3</sup>.

Ibn Khallikān narrates that "He was an imam, a jurist and a scholar"<sup>4</sup>.

Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī mentions that "Shakhristānī was a mature scholar of the Ash'ari school, an imam, a sage, an expert in mutakallim and jurisprudence, unique in the science of words, a sharp mind, sweet-spoken and a preacher"<sup>5</sup>.

Samani says: "Shakhristānī was an imam, a virtuous person, a scholar of method, a scholar of manners and rare sciences"<sup>6</sup>.

Shamsiddin al-Zakhabi wrote in the book "Siyar" that "He was 'Afzal', a sheikh of the people of words and wisdom, the owner of many books. He was an expert in jurisprudence, intelligent, strong in understanding and eloquent"<sup>7</sup>, he mentions.

Abul Fido says: "Shakhristānī is a mature scholar of the Ash'ari madkhab, an imam of the science of speech and jurisprudence. He has many books"<sup>8</sup>.

Ibn Vardi says: "He was a mature scholar and jurist of the Ash'ari madkhab"<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See: Al-Zakhabi, Shmsuddin Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Uthmān. Siyar A'lam al-Nubala. V. 20 – Beirut: Muassasah Ar-Risalah, 1996. – P. 286.

<sup>2</sup> See: Suhaybani, Muhammad ibn Nasir ibn Salih. Manhaj Al-Shahrastani Fi Kitabihī Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal. – Al-Riyād: Dar Al-Watan, year not specified. – P. 3

<sup>3</sup> See: Al-Subkiy, Tajuddin ibn Taqī al-Dīn. Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'yyah al-kubrā. V. 4. – Beirut. Dar Al Maaref. 2015. –P. 78

<sup>4</sup> See: Ibn Khallikān, Shmsuddin Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abū Bakr. "al-Vafayat a'yan. V. 4. –Beirut: Dar Sader, 2007. –P.274.

<sup>5</sup> See: al-Ḥamawī, Abū 'Abd Allāh Yāqūt. Mu'jam ul-Buldān. V. 3. – Beirut: Dar Sader, 2006. – P. 377.

<sup>6</sup> See: al-Sam'ānī, Abū Sa'd 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad. al-Taḥbīr fi 'l-Mu'jam al-kabīr // exploration of Munira Najiy Salim. V. 2. Baghdād Matba'at al-Irshad, 1395 h. – P. 160.

<sup>7</sup> See: al-Zakhabi, Shamsiddin Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Uthmān. Siyar A'lam al-Nubala. V. 20. – Beirut: Muassasah Ar-Risalah, 1996. – P. 286-287.

<sup>8</sup> See: Abū al-Fidā', 'Imād ud-Dīn Ismā'il. Al-Mukhtasar Fi Akhbar Al-Bashar. V. 3. – Egypt: al-Husayniya, 1995. – P. 27.

<sup>9</sup> See: Ibn al-Wardī, Zayn al-Dīn 'Umar. The History of Ibn al-Wardī. V. 2. – Al-Haydaria Press, 1389 h. – P. 86



Ibn Tugkhrī Berdī says: "He was the best among the scholars of Kalam and a scholar of various sciences of his age. Many scientists became his students"<sup>10</sup>.

Such words about Abū al-Faṭḥ Shahrīstānī were said not only by his contemporaries, but also by those who followed him. In particular:

The book "Doirat al-ma'arif al-Islamiya" says: "He was a prominent person among the historians who studied the various religions and beliefs of the East in the Middle Ages"<sup>11</sup>.

Khairuddin Zirikli in his work "A'lam": "He was one of the philosophers of Islam, and he was skilled in the sciences of the word, different religions and schools of philosophers. The nickname "Afzal" was used in relation to him"<sup>12</sup>.

Muḥammad Shafiq Ghurbol in his work "al-Mawsu'a al-arabiya al-muayassira" says: "He is a Persian scholar, a scholar who researches fiqh, kalam science and various religions. "He was a beautiful man with a beautiful speech and language,"<sup>13</sup> he said, evaluating Shakhristānī's knowledge.

Zukhdī Jorullah says: "He was the most calm, gentle, open-hearted and far-seeing among the historians"<sup>14</sup>.

In addition, Abū al-Faṭḥ Shahrīstānī was polite, his words, expressions and letters were beautiful. This is evidenced by the books he wrote. There will be no foul language, bad behavior, indecency and ugly words in discussions.

Scholar spent a part of his life traveling in the pursuit of knowledge. The scientist's scientific journeys can be studied in two parts. Information about the cities of the Khorāsān region and his trips to distant places is abundant in the sources.

Abū al-Faṭḥ Shahrīstānī traveled to the cities of Khorāsān and Khorezm, which were close to where he lived. al-Sam'ānī says about him: "He lived in Khorāsān and stayed there for some time"<sup>15</sup>. Scholar also bought a house in Khorezm and lived there for a while, according to sources. Muḥammad Khorezmi says about

this: "He went to Khorezm and bought a house there and lived there for a while. Then he returned to Khorāsān"<sup>16</sup>. Since these cities are close to Shakhristān, he came to those places many times. Sometimes he went from the north to the city of Jūrjān and sometimes he went from the south to Nīshāpūr. In Tarojim works, there is information that the scientist went on scientific trips before he was fifteen years old. Shakhristānī studied the science of hadith from Abū al-Ḥasan al-Madīnī in Nīshāpūr. According to the sources, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Madīnī died in 494 (1101) AH<sup>17</sup>. Shakhristānī was not more than fifteen years old when he learned from Abū al-Ḥasan al-Madīnī.

When it comes to the scholar's trips outside his country, none other than the cities of Mecca and Baghdād are mentioned. Shakhristānī went to Mecca in 510 (1116) to perform the Hajj pilgrimage<sup>18</sup>. At this time, he was almost thirty years old. Then he went to the The Nizamiyya Madrasa in Baghdād and taught hadith, fiqh and kalam. After living there for three years, he returned to Shakhristān and lived in his city until the end of his life.

When the scientist lived in Shakhristān, he also traveled to Khorāsān and neighboring cities for education, teaching and discussions. For example, Muḥammad Khorezmi, one of Shakhristānī's famous scholars, held discussions with Bayhaqī. Muḥammad Khorezmi says about this: "There were conversations and negotiations between us"<sup>19</sup>. Bayhaqī writes: "I and Shakhristānī were gathered together by Abū al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥamawī in a meeting. Imam Abū Manṣūr Ibādī, Muwaffiquddin Aḥmad al-Laythi, Shakhhabuddin Waiz Shanukani and other virtuous people also came to this meeting"<sup>20</sup>.

The above information shows that Abū al-Faṭḥ Shakhristānī's status in science is high.

The period of the scientist's work corresponds to the period of Sultan Aḥmad Sanjar, the last ruler of the Seljuk empire. Imam Shakhristānī was engaged in philosophy, tafsir, kalam and history of religions.

10 See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, Jamal al-Din Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf. The Shining Stars. V. 3. – Egypt: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah. 2003. – P. 305.

11 See: Group of orientalist scholars. Daira al-Ma'arif al-Islamiyyah. V. 13. – Beirut: Dār al-Ta'aruf li-l-Maṭbū'āt, 2002. – P. 424.

12 See: Khayruddin Zirikli. Al-a'lam. V. 6. – Beirut: Dar El Ilm Lilmalayin, 1984. – P. 215.

13 See: Muḥammad Shafiq Ghurbāl. Facilitated Arabic Encyclopedia. V. 2. – Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, 1965. – P. 1098.

14 See: Zuhri, Hasan Jarullah. Mu'tazila. – Egypt: Matba'at Misr, 1366 h. – P. 186

15 See: al-Sam'ānī, Abū Sa'd 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad. al-Taḥbīr fī 'l-Mu'jān al-kabīr. V. 2. – Baghdād: Matba'at al-Irshad, 1395. – P. 162.

16 See: al-Ḥamawī, Abū 'Abd Allāh Yāqūt. Mu'jam ul-Buldān. V. 3. – Beirut: Dar Sader, 2006. – P. 377.

17 See: Shakhristānī Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Aḥmad Abū al-Faṭḥ. Keys To Secrets And Lamps Of Righteousness. – Tehrān: Merosi Maktub. 2008. – P. 19.

18 See: al-Ḥamawī, Abū 'Abd Allāh Yāqūt. Mu'jam ul-Buldān. V. 3. – Beirut: Dar Sader, 2006. – P. 377.

19 See: al-Ḥamawī, Abū 'Abd Allāh Yāqūt. Mu'jam ul-Buldān. V. 3. – Beirut: Dar Sader, 2006. – P. 377.

20 See: Bayhaqī, Zahīr ud-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Abū al-Qāsim. History Of The Wise Men Of Islam. – Damascus: Al-Taraqqi, 1365 h. – P. 142



Imam's most famous work is "al-milal wa-al-niḥal" (الملل والنحل), dedicated to the history of religions and sects. This work is devoted to the history of sects that arose at the root of different religions. The author became famous after writing this work. Even when the books published in this field are mentioned, it has reached the point where it is mentioned in the first place. In the study of the history of world religions in the Muslim world, the work is considered to be one of the main, important sources.

Another work is related to philosophy, which he named "Musara'at al-falasifa" (مصرفة الفلاسفة). Muḥammad ash-Shīrāzī says about this work: "This book was written by Majiddin Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī ibn Ja'far Mūsawī around 540 (1145) AH<sup>21</sup>.

Imam Shakhristānī also wrote a work on the science of interpretation. The interpretation "Mafatih al-asrar wa masobikh al-abror" has reached us. In this book, Surah Al-Fatihah, Al-Baqarah and Ali 'Imran are interpreted. This commentary is considered by many scholars to be "written based on the Ismā'īlī faith". But these words have not been proven. Because Imam Shakhristānī was Shafī'i in jurisprudence and Ash'ari in belief.

Along with all Islamic sciences, Imam Shakhristānī was also involved in the science of the word. The scientist's work "Nihāyat al-iqdām fī 'ilm al-kalām" is considered the second largest and most famous work after "al-milal wa-al-niḥal". Izzuddin ibn Asir named this book "Nihāyat al-iqdām fil-usul" in his work "Al-Kamil fī al-Tarikh"<sup>22</sup>. This work is written in a philosophical way. The first modern edition of the work was made in 1934 by the English orientalist Alfred Guillaume.

The main feature of the work that distinguishes it from other works on the word is that Imam Shakhristānī included in this book only the topics that he encountered and discussed the most in his life. After citing the beliefs of philosophers, Mutazilites and other schools of thought, he explained the views of the people of Sunnah. He gave refutations to the religious concepts of sects with philosophical arguments. The work consists of twenty chapters. In the first chapter, while thinking about the creation of the universe ("hudus"), he proves the existence of God with intellectual

arguments. It is also thought that things are not without beginning and infinity in terms of time and space<sup>23</sup>.

The second chapter of the work talks about the creation of the entire universe by Allah the Exalted. "There is a refutation of the Mutazilites, the philosophers and the sages. In the sect of Ahl al-Haq and Ahl al-Islam, the entire existing universe was created by Allah. "Something does not exist without Him"<sup>24</sup>, Imam Shakhristānī said.

Also, in this chapter, he quotes some of the philosophers who disagreed about the unity of Allah.

The third chapter of the work is called "Tawhid". In this chapter, there is a refutation of the sanawis. Imam Shakhristānī says about monotheism: "Our Companions say. Tawhid is something that cannot be divided into parts. Allah, the Exalted, is the only one in His generation. And it is not divided into parts. Allah is the only one. There is no one like it. God Almighty is unique in His actions. He doesn't have a partner"<sup>25</sup>.

The fourth chapter is called "Refuting allusion". In this chapter, there are refutations of jahmiyyah and al-Karomiyah. "In the Ahl al-Haq maḏhab, Allah, the Exalted, is not like any of the creatures. None of your creatures is like Him. Because, "There is nothing whatever like unto Him and He is the One that hears and sees (all things)."<sup>26</sup>. God Almighty is a body, not a sign. He is not in any space or time<sup>27</sup>. Also, Imamul Haramain Juvaini's refutations to the carromiyas were cited.

The fifth chapter of the work is "Falsehood of the Ta'til School", the sixth chapter criticizes and rejects the "ahwal" theory put forward by Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī, which aims to avoid extreme thoughts such as ta'til<sup>28</sup>.

The seventh chapter deals with the "first substance of the universe" proposed by philosophers such as Aristotle, and accepted by some Mutazilites, "Is there any thing that perishes?" called, and the views of people of Sunnah, Mutazilites and philosophers were comparatively studied<sup>29</sup>.

The eighth and ninth chapters discuss the "Proof of Science".

The tenth chapter of the work is about "the eternity of the knowledge of Allah Almighty" and refutations are given against the claims of Jahm ibn Ṣafwān and Hisham ibn al-Hakam that "Allah Almighty does not know the events". "Allah the Most High is

<sup>21</sup> See: Suhair Muhammad Mukhtar . Shakhristānī and his views on kalam science. Ain Shams University, 1395 h. – P. 92.

<sup>22</sup> See: Ibn al-Athīr. Al-Kamil fī al-Tarikh. V. 1. – Beirut: Dar Al Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 1987. – P. 332.

<sup>23</sup> See: Shakhristānī. Nihāyat al-iqdām fī 'ilm al-kalām. Exploration of Alfred Guillaume. – Cairo: Religious Culture House, 2009. – P. 3-39. (next stages Nihāyat al-iqdām.)

<sup>24</sup> See: Nihāyat al-iqdām. – P. 49.

<sup>25</sup> See: Nihāyat al-iqdām. – P. 85

<sup>26</sup> See: Surah Ash-Shu'arā', 11-verse. (Translation of meanings verses by Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf from book "Tafsir al-hilala")

<sup>27</sup> See: Nihāyat al-iqdām. – P. 97

<sup>28</sup> See: Nihāyat al-iqdām. – P. 97-127.

<sup>29</sup> See: Nihāyat al-iqdām. – P. 147-166.



eternally one. He knows all the aspects of all things, up to the total and partial aspects"<sup>30</sup>, - says Imam Shakhristānī.

The eleventh chapter of "Nihāyat al-iqdām" focuses on the controversial issue between the Islamic sects. In this chapter, the issues of "will" and "word" are discussed. The twelfth chapter "Eternity of the quality of the word", the thirteenth chapter "The Word of Allah Almighty", the fourteenth chapter "The truth of human words and speech" are discussed.

In the fifteenth chapter of the work, there are refutations to the words put forward by the Mutazilites that "Allah's attributes "Basiyr" and "Sami'" are part of His attribute "Aliym". " Abū al-Ḥasan Ash'ari Ka'bi and his team, "Allah the Most High is the Sami'. Allah's attributes "Basiyr" and "Sami'" are the attributes of his species, and are separate from His "Alim" quality"<sup>31</sup>, says Shakhristānī.

The sixteenth chapter of the work is about "the ability to see Allah Almighty on the basis of reason and speech". In this chapter, the possibility of seeing God according to the belief of the people of the Sunnah is proved with mental and narrative evidence. With these arguments, Imam Shakhristānī refuted the Mutazilites.

In the seventeenth chapter, the issues of takhsin and taqbiḥ, the obligation not to be assigned to any servant before the advent of Sharia, and the fact that merits and sins are not recorded, are discussed in the eighteenth chapter, stating that "there is no reason in the actions/deeds of Allah the Exalted", and the Mutazilites are refuted.

The last two chapters of "Nihāyat al-iqdām" are devoted to "Prophethood" and "Proof of the Messengers of Muḥammad (pbuh)". The last two chapters of "Nihāyat al-iqdām" are devoted to "Prophethood" and "Proof of the Messengers of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH)". The first part criticizes the views of the Brāhmaṇs and the Ṣābiāns who denied the Prophethood. False beliefs about prophethood have been refuted by the Mu'tazilism and some sects of Shiism.

The last chapter of the book begins with providing evidence for the prophethood of Muḥammad (PBUH), and it is emphasized that the greatest proof of this is the Qur'an. Then the grave, resurrection, criterion, basin, intercession, the definition of faith, the difference between faith and action, and the judgment of a person who commits a great sin are covered. Also, in this chapter special attention is paid to the issue of Imamate. It has been explained with evidence that the views of the Shias on the issue of Imamate are wrong. In the twentieth chapter, there are also issues such as the blessing of the saints, the cancellation of the judgment of other religions with Islam<sup>32</sup>.

In the concluding part of the work, Shakhristānī expressed his opinion about why the science of the word is necessary. He called them "fantasists" because they influenced the knowledge of the word of philosophers.

There are several manuscript copies of "Nihāyat al-iqdām" today. In particular, it is stored in Turkey's Bayazid State Library №2154, №666 and №964 in the Khaji Salim Aga Library, №1169 in the Khoja Ragib Pasha Library, №14698 and №35168 in the Süleymaniye Library, №5225 and №5224 in the Central Library of Istanbul University. Also, №1246 (580 pages) in the National Library of Paris, №356 (590 pages) in the Oxford Library, № 579 (607 pages) in the Berlin-Prussian Library are stored in order number

In conclusion, it can be said that "Nihāyat al-iqdām" contains all the topics of classical Sunni kalam science. This book, written by Imam Shakhristānī after al-milal wa-al-nihal, was written mainly within the framework of Ash'arism, comparing the topics. The "Akhl al-Haq madhab" mentioned by the imam in the book are Abū al-Ḥasan Ash'ari, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, Abū Ishāq Isfarai and Imamul Kharamain Juwaini. Those who oppose the "People of the Right" in the work are Brakhmins, Sabiis, Mutazilites, philosophers, Jahmi and Karromis.

Since the work was written in the period when the science of the word was influenced by philosophy, the themes in it were mainly approached from a philosophical point of view. Instead of refuting erroneous categories, both intellectual and metaphorical arguments were used. Imam Shakhristānī's work "Nihāyat al-iqdām fi ilm al-kalam" is considered one of the prestigious works that has a special place in the science of the Middle Asian language.

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<sup>30</sup> See: Nihāyat al-iqdām. – P. 206.

<sup>31</sup> See: Nihāyat al-iqdām. – P. 330

<sup>32</sup> See: Nihāyat al-iqdām. – P. 410-504.





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