

## THE ROLE OF IMAM SHAHRISTAN'S SCIENTIFIC HERITAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC SCIENCES

**Abdupattaev Mumin Mirzo Murodjon ogli\***

\*Trainee Researcher,

International Islamic Academy of UZBEKISTAN

Email id: mirzo21@umail.uz

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### ABSTRACT

*In this article, one of the main sources in the study of the history of religions is thought about the works of Imam Shahrستاني, as well as his life and work. The article also contains the evaluations and unbiased opinions of the scholars of that period on the works of Imam Shahrستاني. At the same time, some works belonging to the author's pen were also touched upon and tried to shed light on the basis of the available information.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Abul Fath Shahrستاني, "Al-Milal And-Nihal", The History Of Religions, Theology, Shahrستاني, Tolerance.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Thanks to independence, we have the opportunity to study our history objectively, to restore our national and religious values, to preserve, study and pass on to future generations the rich spiritual and cultural heritage of our ancestors. This is an important factor in the spiritual development of our nation, especially the youth.

Educating the followers of the pure Islamic faith and conveying the noble ideas of our religion to the minds of the broad masses of the people through them and fighting against various heresies has become a lofty task today.

Many centuries ago, just like today, different sects and sects emerged in Islam. At the same time, our ancestors carried out important research in order to reveal the different ideas and views of these sects and their true nature, and to refute them with pure Islamic evidence, and achieved great success in this regard and wrote valuable works. Such works of theirs are still considered important in the study of the history of sects. One such work is undoubtedly the work of Imam Shahrستاني, al-Milal wa-n-nihal. This play provides important information not only about the sects in Islam, but also about other religions and beliefs. That is why today this book is one of the most effective works in the study of the history of sects.

The article includes the date of birth and death of the author, city of residence, scientific travels, teachers, books written, the scientific status of the author, the confessions of scholars about the author, the date of writing "al-Milal wa-n-nihal", reasons, order, methods, the positive opinions of other scholars about the book, the literature used by the author, and similar topics are discussed.

## MAIN PART

The full name of Imam Shahrستاني was Muhammad ibn Abul Qasim Abdulkarim ibn Abu Bakr Ahmad, who is known for his Shahrستاني lineage. The imam's last name was Abul Fath, nicknamed Tojuddin. Muhammad ibn Abul-Qasim Abdulkarim ibn Abu Bakr Ahmad was born and raised in Shahrستان, Khorasan. The word Shahrستان is Persian and consists of two words meaning "city" meaning city [medina] and "istan" meaning side.

There are three cities named Shahrستان, which are:

1. Shahrستان city in Khorasan. It is located between the lands of Nishapur and Khorezm, and is a desert city built at the end of Khorasan and adjacent to one of the Khorezm districts. The city was famous for its development by Imam Shahrستاني and many other scholars.
2. The village of Sabur district, which is one of the Persian lands, is also called Shahrستان.
3. The name Shahrستان was also used for the city of Ji in Isfahan.

Researchers have expressed the same opinion that the place where Imam Shahrستاني was born, grew up and died was Shahrستان. But he expressed different opinions about which period. There are three different information about the date of birth of the Imam. They are:

1. 1075 (467 h.)
2. 1077 (469 h.)
3. 1086 (479 h.)

The first information was narrated by the following scholars: Abulfido, Ibn al-Bardi and al-Dhahabi narrated from Samani in the book Siyar.

The book of Ibar states, "He died in the month of Sha'ban, at the age of eighty-one." Accordingly, the date of birth was 467/1075.

The second information was given by Samani in the book "Tahbir", Hamavi in the work "Mujamul-buldon" from Muhammad Khorezmi, Isnavi in his "Tabaqat" and the owner of the book "Hadiyyatul-arifiyn". Western scholars Karadifu and Brookelmen cited this information.

Scholars who gave the third information: In the book "Zayl" by Sam'ani. Ibn Khalliqan supported this and said: "He was born in 467/1075 in Shahrستان. I found this in my draft letters. But I don't know where I got it from." Samani says, "I asked him (Ibn Khalliqan) about the birth of Shahrستاني. He said, "He was born in 479/1086" [1, p.274].

This information was also narrated by Safdi, Subki, Ibn Hajar and Yafai.

The most powerful record of their deaths is in the month of Sha'ban, 548/1153.

The Imam spent most of his life acquiring and disseminating knowledge. From a young age, he participated in the circles of knowledge in the mosques of his city and was a student of the scholars of this city, from whom he learned various sciences. When he grew up, he went on a journey to learn from scientists in neighboring cities. The author was not limited to one field, but also engaged in other sciences and received knowledge from scientists in various fields. The first science Shahrستاني studied was the science of tafsir. The author says: "When I was young, I only heard the science of tafsir from my sheikhs". Then, at the age of fifteen, he heard a hadith from

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Abulhasan al-Madini in Nisabur. He also studied jurisprudence, in which he reached the level of mastery. He then expanded the study of science in various disciplines and fields and achieved good results in some disciplines. The author's academic degree is better known than the descriptions of later scholars and biographers of the imam. In particular, the following scholars expressed their views on the author:

Ibn Tughrberdi says: "He was the imam of his time in theology and a scholar of various sciences. Many scholars have been his disciples."

Subki: He is nicknamed "Afzal" because of his knowledge. He was adept at methodology and theology "[2, p.78].

Imam al-Dhahabi gave him the nickname "Alloma" in his book Tazkirat al-Huffaz [3, p.4].

There are many nicknames given to Shahrastani by historians and other scholars:

Al-Dhahabi used the nickname "Alloma" in reference to Shahrastani in his book Tazkira.

Al-Dhahabi, Subki, Ibn Khalliqan, Hamawi, Abulfado and others used the nickname "Mutakallim".

Muhammad Khorezmi and Ibn Tughrberdi called him a scholar.

Hamawi, Ibn Khalliqan, Safdi and Ibn Vardi gave the nickname "Faqih".

Al-Dhahabi, Yaqut Hamawi, and Ibn Vardi called it "Afzal."

Al-Dhahabi, Yaqut Hamawi, and Ibn Vardi also gave him the title of "Owner of Classifications."

The above and other scholars have again cited the following qualities in relation to Shahrastani: memorized a lot, a beautiful vocabulary, a strong understanding, a sheikh and an imam of the people of kalam and wisdom.

Imam Shahrastani was also gentle, good quality, cheerful, kind, and his words, phrases, and letters were beautiful. This is also evidenced by the books he wrote. There are no abusive words and mistreatments, abusive and ugly words in their discussions and debates.

The author has spent part of his life on the path of science, traveling to different countries and cities. But history books and biography books have not left us much information on the subject. But these are also very few. We can study the author's scientific travels in two ways: his travels to places near his homeland and his travels to distant places.

The author traveled to the cities close to where he lived, namely Khorasan and Khorezm. Samani says about him: "He lived in Khorasan and stayed there for a while" [4, p.162]. The author also bought a house in Khorezm and lived there for some time. Muhammad Khorezmi narrates: "He went to Khorezm, took a house and lived there for a while. Then he returned to Khorasan" [5, p.377]. These cities were close to where the author lived, so he visited them many times. Sometimes he went from the north to the city of Jurjan, and sometimes from the south to Nisabur [6, p.142]. Those who wrote a biography of the author agreed that the author had made scientific trips before the age of fifteen. The reason is that he heard a hadith from Abulhasan Madini in Nisabur. We know that Abulhasan died in 494/1101. The author was not more than fifteen years old at the time. He received hadith, jurisprudence, method, kalam and other sciences outside his hometown.

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With the exception of Makkah Mukarramah and Baghdad, no mention is made of his travels abroad. The Imam set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 510/1116 [5, p.377]. He was close to thirty at the time. He then went to the Nizami Madrasa in Baghdad. In Baghdad, he was a man of learning circles, where he taught and exhorted people. Those who stayed there for three years. He then returned to Shahrستان and lived there until the end of his life (548/1153).

While living in Shahrستان, the author traveled to Khorasan and neighboring cities for education, teaching, and discussion. For example, there were discussions between him and Muhammad Khorezmi. Muhammad Khorezmi says: "There were conversations and negotiations between us" [5, p.377]. There were also disputes between Shahrستانی and Bayhaqi. Bayhaqi narrates: "Abulhasan ibn Hamawi gathered me and Shahrستانی in a meeting. Imam Abu Mansur Ibadi, Muwaffiquddin Ahmad Laysi, Shahobiddin Waz Shanukani and other noble people also came to this meeting" [7, p.142].

This is the information that has come down to us about Shahrستانی's scientific travels.

The above information shows us how high the scientific status of the author is. Below we also review the warm thoughts expressed about the author.

Samani, a contemporary scholar, says to the author: "Shahrستانی was an imam, a fazil, a mutakallim, a methodologist, a man of etiquette and rare (forgotten, obsolete, obsolete) sciences" [4, p.160].

Subki says: "The prominent Imam of Shahrستانی was a leader in the science of kalam and debate, and a master of jurisprudence and methodology" [2, p.78].

Al-Dhahabi says in his book Siyar: He was the preferred sheikh of the people of words and wisdom, and the owner of many books. In jurisprudence, he was a man of skill, intelligence, and eloquence" [8, pp.286-287].

Yaqut Hamawi says: "The philosopher is the author of several books" [5, p.377].

Ibn Khalliqan says: "Shahrستانی was a mature scholar of the Ash'ari school, an imam, a sage, a scholar and a master of jurisprudence, the only one in theology, sharp-witted, sweet-spoken and a preacher" [1, p.274].

Abul Fado says: "Shahrستانی is a mature scholar of the Ash'ari school and an imam of kalam and jurisprudence. He has many books" [9, p.27].

Ibn al-Wardi says, "He was a mature scholar and jurist of the Ash'ari school" [10, p.86].

Ibn Tughri Berdi says: "He was one of the best scholars of theology and a scholar of his time and various sciences. He was a student of many scholars" [11, p. 305].

Such warm words about the author were uttered not only by leading scholars, but also by leading scholars. Including:

The book Doiratul Ma'arif al-Islamiya states: "He was a prominent historian in the Middle Ages who studied various religions and beliefs in the East" [12, p.424].

The author of the book Al-Alam says: "He was an Islamic philosopher and an imam in the sciences of kalam, various religions and philosophical schools. He was nicknamed "Afzal" [13, p.215].

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Al-Mawsu'a al-Arabiya al-Muyassira states: He was a Persian scholar who studied fiqh, theology, and various religions. He was a handsome man in word and deed "[14, p.1098].

Zuhdi Jarullah says: "He was the most sincere, kind, open-hearted and far-sighted historian" [15, p.186].

Although the author has had many scientific trips, little is known about his mentors, and their number is only a handful. These include the following scientists:

1. Abulhasan Madiniy. His full name is Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Ahram Nisaburi. He was a pious man. Abu Zakariyya used to record the meetings of Mazki, Abu Abdurahman Sulami and Abu Bakr Jabari. Imam Shahrastani listened to a hadith from him in Nisabur. He died in the month of Muharram in 494/1101 [5, p.377].

2. Abulmuzaffar Khawafi. His full name is Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Muzaffar Khawafi. Danger is the name of a village in Nishapur. Imam Subki praised him as a mature imam. He learned jurisprudence from two Haram imams. Imam al-Haramayn praised him for speaking with beautiful eloquence and for having a good discussion.

Abulhasan Farsi Hawafi writes: "He was a prominent scholar of jurisprudence of his time" [2, p.55].

He died in the city of Tus in 510/1116.

3. Abu Nasr Qushayri. His full name is Abdurrahim ibn Abulqasim ibn Abdulkarim ibn Hawazin Qushayri Nisaburi. He was a mature faqih, a scholar of grammar and a scholar in the Shafi'i school.

Imam Subki wrote about him: "He was a mature imam, a sheikh of the Sufis, a man of intelligence" [2, p.55].

He died on the 28th day of Jumu'ah, 514/1120.

4. Abulqasim Ansari. His full name is Sulayman ibn Nasir ibn Imran ibn Muhammad ibn Ismail Ansari Nisaburi. He was a Sufi. Regarding him, Subki said: "The Imam of the Mutakallimun was a sharp-minded, jurist, Sufi and ascetic imam who was prominent among the scholars of method and in the science of tafsir. Imam al-Haramain and Abul-Qasim learned from the Qushayris. He was a leader in mysticism and sect. Died in 511/1117. According to some sources, he died in 512/1118" [8, p.412].

This scholar has made a great contribution to the education of Imam Shahrastani. Shahrastani learned many sciences from him. The author said that Abul-Qasim Ansari was his own mentor and guide, and in his books he praised him. Words like this are not found about other teachers.

Imam Shahrastani followed in his faith and philosophy because he learned the science of kalam and method from Abul Qasim Ansari.

In conclusion, it can be concluded that most of the author's teachers were from the Shafi'i school and the Ash'ari school.

The author has also been around for centuries with many scholars. They participated in various scientific meetings, circles, and had discussions with each other and exchanged experiences with each other. It is also a way of learning and disseminating knowledge.

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Well-known scholars who are contemporaries of the author include:

1. Zahiriddin Muhammad ibn Muhammad Khorezmi. He was Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Abbas Zahiriddin Abu Muhammad Khorezmi Abbas. He was born in Khorezm on the 15th of Ramadan, 492 h. He died in the month of Ramadan in 568 h. This scientist lived at the same time as the author and participated in his various scientific meetings, during which there were discussions and exchanges of views. Muhammad Khorezmi himself says about this: "There were conversations and negotiations between us" [5, p.377]. Again, "I attended several of his sermons" [5, p.377].

2. Abulhasan Ali ibn Abulqasim Zayd al-Bayhaqi. He is Ali ibn Zayn ibn Muhammad ibn Husayn ibn Sulayman Khuzaymi Bayhaqi. He was born on the 27th of Sha'ban, 499 h. Died 565 h years. This scholar has been with the author in scientific meetings and debates. According to the scholar's biography, he was a mentor to Shahrastani. Because Shahrastani read some of his books to him and Bayhaqi Shahrastani argued with him about some of the issues he wrote in his books. *Асъад ал-Миханий*.

3. He is As'ad ibn Muhammad ibn Abunahr Abulfath Mihani. He died in the year 527 h. According to one legend, he died in Hamadan in 523 h. The scientist met and talked with Shahrastani in Khorezm. A friendship developed between them. These meetings took place before Mihani went to teach at the Nizami Madrasa in Baghdad. Then in 507/1113 he went to Baghdad. After Shahrastani's visit to Baghdad, their relationship will be even stronger. Muhammad Khorezmi says: "Shahrastani went on a pilgrimage in 510/1116. He then lived in Baghdad for three years. He had meetings where he preached in the Constitution. He was popular. In those days, As'ad Mihani was also a teacher at the Nizami Madrasa. A conversation had taken place between them in Khorezm before. As'ad was therefore close to him" [5, p.377].

Shahrastani also met with other scholars. Among them: Abu Sa'd Abdulkarim Sam'ani, Abulhasan ibn Hamawi, Abumansur Ibadi, Muwaffiquddin Ahmad Laysi, Shahobiddin Waiz Shanurkani and others.

Imam Shahrastani is a versatile scholar who has written many books on various subjects such as tafsir, fiqh, theology, philosophy, history of sects and religions. He has more than twenty books, including:

1. *"Al-Milal wa-n-nihal"* (الملل والنحل).

This work is dedicated to the history of sects that originated in different religions. The author became very popular after writing this work. Even when the books written in this field are remembered, it has reached a level where it is mentioned in the first place.

2. *"Nihoyatul-iqdom fi ilmil kalom"* (نهاية الإقدام في علم الكلام).

This book is also one of Shahrastani's famous books. The book was published in English in 1931 in London under the study of Alfred Jim. In the preface of the book, Alfred also covered the life of Shahrastani and wrote that there were other copies of the book. There are more than a dozen manuscripts of the book [16, p.92].

3. “*Musoraatul-falosifa*” (مصارعة الفلاسفة).

Muhammad Shirazi says: "This book was written by Majiddin Abul-Qasim Ali ibn Ja'far Mousavi around 540/1145" [16, p.92]. This work was published under the research of Dr. Suhayr Muhammad Mukhtar.

4. “*The order of the people of the Majlis*” (مجلس في الخلق و الامر)

The book is written in Persian. It contains information from one of the author's scientific meetings in Khorezm. It has been published several times in Persian, containing information about the "creation of man" and "the command of angels to worship."

Dr. Zabihullah says, "When Shahrastani became aware of the words of various creeds, religions, philosophers, judges and commentators, he began to use short phrases and rhymes in these scientific meetings in order to have a beautiful effect on the minds of the people and the ears of the listeners" [16, p.82].

5. “*Bahsu fil-javharil fard*” (بحث في الجوهر الفرد).

This book was published by Alfred Jim and added to the book *Nihayatul-iqdam*. Researchers have differed on whether this debate is a separate book or part of a book. But they were of the same opinion that he belonged to the Shahrastani pen.

Scholars Dr. Muhammad Badron and Muhammad Taqi Donish shared the view that it was a separate book.

There are scholars who say that this work is one of the issues in the book *Nihayatu avhamil-hukamo al-ilahiyyin*. For example, Dr. Suhayr Mukhtar says: "According to this, the issue of *Jawhar al-Fard*, which Alfred Jim added to *Niyat al-Iqdam*, is one of the twenty issues included in the book *Nihayatu avhamil-hukamo al-ilahiyyin*" [16, p.99].

6. “*Mafatihul asror va masobihul abror*” (مفاتيح الاسرار و مصابيح الابرار).

Scholars who have studied the author's biography [17, p.763] have concluded that this work is one of his books. The book is devoted to the science of tafsir, and Shahrastani began writing it in 538/1143.

7. “*Qissatu sayyina Yusuf alayhissalom*” (قصة سيدنا يوسف عليه السلام).

This book is also known as the Commentary on Surah Yusuf.

8. “*Qissatu Mosa va Hizr*” (قصة موسى و حضر).

Bayhaqi says: "Shahrastani has many books, including the story of Musa and Hizr" [7, p.142]. Shahrastani and other researchers also said that the book belonged to Shahrastani.

9. “*al-Irshod ila aqidil ibod*” (الارشاد إلى عقائد العباد).

The author himself referred to this book in his book *Nihayat al-Iqdam* [18, p.55]. Some scholars have also attributed the book to Shahrastani [5, p.377].

10. “*al-Uyun val-anhor*” (العيون والأنهار).

It can be seen that the author also mentions this book in his work *Mafatihul asrar and masobihul abror*.

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11. “*Risola fil-mabdai val-maad*” (رسالة في المبدأ و المعاد).

The author mentions about this book in his book *Nihayat al-Iqdam* and mentions some issues in the book of the same name.

12. “*al-Manahij fi ilmil-kalam*” (المنهج في علم الكلام).

Most scholars have agreed that this book belongs to Shahristani’s pen. But different opinions have been expressed about the name of the book. In particular, the following names are given: “*Al-manahij val-ayat*”, “*Al-manahij val-bayan*”, “*Al-manahij*”, “*Al-manahij fil-ayat*” and “*Al-bayinat*”.

13. “*G’oyatul marom*” (غاية المرام).

Several scholars who have written biographies about the author have cited this book.

We have limited ourselves below to mentioning only the names of the rest of the author’s works:

14. “*Talxisul aqsom li mazahibil anam*” (تلخيص الأقسام لمذاهب الأنام).

15. “*Nihayatu avhamil-hukamo al-ilahiyyin*” (نهاية أو هام الحكماء الإلهيين).

16. “*Daqoiqul-avhom*” (دقائق الأوهام).

17. *The author's objections to Ibn Sina's words.*

18. *The author's treatise sent to Tajiddin Muhammad Sahloni.*

19. *The author's treatise sent to Sharafuzzaman Muhammad Ilaqi*

20. “*Tarihul hukamo*” (تاريخ الحكماء).

21. “*al-Aqtor*” (الأقطار).

22. “*Asrorul-ibod*” (أسرار العباد).

23. “*ash-Shajaratul-ilohiyya*” (الشجرة الإلهية).

24. “*Majlis fi usulil-hikma*” (مجلس في أصول الحكمة).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that Shahristani was a mature and versatile scholar, possessing beautiful character and qualities. He wrote many works in various sciences. Because of the effectiveness of the author's works, scientists of that time and researchers of today use them extensively. Shahristani was in the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence and in the Ash'ari doctrine of faith. This is evidenced by the fact that his teachers were of the same sect and the information he provided in his books.

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