

# Critical Assessment of the Text Akida by Abu Jafar Takhav

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**Abstract:** This article delves into the content and analysis of manuscripts of the treatise "Akida" by Abu Jafar Takhavi, a renowned 9th-10th-century Egyptian scientist known for his contributions to hadith, the Quran, and dogmatic theology. Focused on Takhavi's widely known work "al-Akidatu-t-Takhaviya," the article conducts a codicological analysis of treatise manuscripts from global collections. It explores dogmatic theology themes, offering insights through comparative analyses of manuscripts. The treatise, influential in Hanafi-dominated regions and beyond, aligns with the madhhab "akhlu-s-sunna va'-l-jama'a." The study utilizes manuscripts from Egypt, Takhavi's home, and Turkish collections renowned for diverse Islamic works. By assessing the reasons behind the consistent use of specific terms, the article contributes to a nuanced understanding of dogmatic theology, shedding light on the treatise's enduring significance across various regions and scholarly traditions.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The first works dedicated to the foundations of faith and issues of Islamic dogmatics date back to the period of the formation of basic schools and teachings (8th-11th centuries). It was during this time that "al-Fikhu-l-akbar" and "Wasiya Abi Khanifa," (Abu Khanifa, n.d.) attributed to the founder of the Hanafi madhhab, appeared, along with several works authored by Mu'tazilites. In the mid-9th century, a series of works by representatives of the traditional school of Baghdad emerged, with six notable works by Ahmad ibn Hanbal exploring issues of Islamic dogmatics. In the 10th-11th centuries, "Risala ibn Abi Zayd Kayravani" (Abu Kayravani, 2005) of the Maliki school, as well as books on the teachings of the Ash'arites, were written (Islam, 1991).

Earl Elder (1882-1968), a Western orientalist, in a collection dedicated to the 70th anniversary of Duncan Mac Donald, published an article entitled "Takhavi's work 'Bayanu-s-sunna wa-l-jama'a,'" providing the following information: Abu Jafar Takhavi (853-933) was a contemporary of Abu l-Khasan Ash'ari (873-936), who held a very high status in the Muslim world. Abu Mansur Maturidi (853-944), the founder of a unique school of dogmatics in Transoxiana, also lived during this period. With the beginning of the use of "mantik" (the

science of logic), a turning point can be observed in the works of these scholars. Before that, reliance on "mantik" was not practiced in defense of Islam.

However, Abu Hanifa, the founder of the Sunni school of conventional wisdom, introduced the idea of interpreting the Quran and hadith. In his time, the study of religion was not yet formed as an independent branch of science, and the term "science of fiqh" was used only when necessary. Although Ash'ari developed a certain system of religious principles, and his views were accepted by many Muslims as the final verdict, some theologians did not accept his sharp conclusions in line with Sunni Islam, viewing them as a threat to the correct understanding of the will of Allah. The views of Abu Hanifa served as the basis for the establishment of a school in Transoxiana by his follower Maturidi. The differences between the Ash'ari and Maturidi schools are classified in the commentaries of Abu 'Uzba "ar-Ravda al-bakhiya fima bayna-l-Ash'aira va-l-Maturidiyya" and Sayyid Murtado's "Ikhyia."

One of the earliest examples of Muslim dogma was Takhavi's work "Bayanu-s-sunna va-l-jama'a" (also known as the treatise Usulu-d-din). Interestingly, if for no other reason, it only chronicles events from the 4th century of Islam, when dialectics began to be used in the creation of belief systems. Takhavi's popularity and fame are attributed to the fact that he was the great faqih of Egypt of the Hanafi

madhhab. The majority of his books are devoted to Muslim jurisprudence.

The contradiction between the descriptions given by Takhavi, Sanusi, Fadali, and even Ghazali in the expression of "aqida," a symbol of faith, is striking. In connection with the development of the science of scholastic theology and its influence, they pay great attention to the description of the attributes of Allah. As a representative of his time and a generally recognized authoritative lawyer, Takhavi paid great attention to "sam'iyat" (narrative argumentation) (Elder, 1933).

## 2 MAIN PART

The work by Abu Jafar Takhavi, "Bayanu-s-sunna wal-jama'a" (Takhavi Abu Djafar, 1995; Sezgin, 1967), also known as al-Aqidatu t-Takhaviya, has been studied by researchers more than any other book by Takhavi. The work is written in the Arabic language. Regarding the date of its writing, it can be inferred that it was during the period of the author's transition from the Shafi'i madhhab to the Hanafi one, i.e., after 261 AH (875 AD). This is evident as the author, at the beginning of the work, expresses his intention to explain and justify Sunni faith through the views of Abu Hanifa (699-767) and his two students, Abu Yusuf (731-798) and Imam Muhammad (749-805), (Brockelmann, 1937).

Although this work is concise, it holds significant meaning as one of the treatises on creed. In the preface, the author states that he compiled the work in accordance with the creed of "Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'a" and with the views of four great Sunni imams. The first among them is Imam Abu Hanifa Nu'man ibn Thabit al-Kufi, who had the privilege of interacting with companions in his youth, engaging with Tabi'in, and narrating hadiths from their words. The subsequent two imams are his students: Abu Yusuf and Muhammad Shaybani. [8:7]

Upon analyzing the sentences in the text, it is observed that some topics begin with words in the first person, in the plural - نقول (we narrate, we speak), نؤمن (we believe), نسمى (we denote), as well as the negative form of these sentences, such as: لا نخالف (we do not disagree, we are not against), لا نكفر (we do not consider it wrong), لا نرى (we do not support). Additionally, some topics are titled with nouns, such as الإيمان (iman), القبر (grave), الجنة (paradise), النار (hell).

In the work, the author [8:7] substantiates his views by referring to the Sacred Quran, specifically citing verses from various surahs. After the introductory word, the author provides information

about the uniqueness of Allah in divinity (ulukhiyya), dominion (rububiyyah), and uniqueness (tawhid) in names and attributes. [8:8-11] The prophecy is then characterized, stating that Muhammad was the last Prophet and that subsequent claims to messengership were false. [8:12] Takhavi lays out his dogmatic views about the Quran and applies sentences that purify rejecting attributes that can be applied to Allah. [8:12-13] Throughout the work, he argues that believers will see Allah on the Day of Judgment, confirming these words with verses from the Quran and asserting that authentic hadiths transmitted from the Prophet should be believed without interpretation. [8:13-14]

The author continues his discussion of the names and attributes of Allah, substantiating methods for distinguishing beliefs about non-recognition of what is not an attribute of Allah. [8:14-15] The work also touches on the belief in "mer'aj" (ascension to heaven) and "isra'" (transfer in one night from Mecca to Beytu-l-mukaddas - Jerusalem and back). [8:15] Takhavi briefly addresses the issues of "Kawthar" (reservoir) and "shafaat" - intercession, stating that they should be believed. [8:16]

Moving on to the most complex topic, the question of predestination, the author starts with the covenant that Allah received from the first man, Adam, and emphasizes the need to believe in the "Lauhul-Mahfuz" (Preserved Tablet) and the "Kalam" (Pen) that is written on it. [8:16-19] Even in brief lines, he emphasizes that the "Arsh" (Throne) and "Kursi" (Footstool of the Throne) are true. [8:19] The author affirms that Ibrahim was a friend of Allah (Khalilullah), that Allah spoke with Musa (Kalimullah), and stresses the necessity of faith in the books and scrolls revealed to angels and prophets. [8:20]

The work addresses the identification of the "people of the qibla" (those who pray towards the qibla) as Muslims, emphasizing that they should not be accused of disbelief, even if they commit sins, provided certain conditions are not violated. [8:20-21] Additionally, one of the crucial issues of creed, namely the requirements and pillars of faith (iman), is described, along with discussions on this topic. [8:21-24] The work briefly and comprehensively describes the necessary relationships with the Muslim community and their leaders (chiefs). [8:24-25]

In his work on "Aqida," the author explains issues related to "Barzakh" (afterlife) and the subsequent resurrection of the dead, the display of deeds, interrogation, self-reading of deeds by the servant of God, reward, torture, "Sirat" (Bridge), and criteria (Scales). [8:25-28] Throughout his work, Takhavi elucidates the Muslim's belief in the companions of the Prophet Muhammad from the perspective of "Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'a." [8:28-30] He then

provides information about the proper attitude towards saints and fortune-tellers, and also discusses some significant signs of the end of the world. [8:30-31]

The author concludes his work in a generalized form, emphasizing that the true religion is Islam. According to the author, Islam is a religion of justice and moderation. He declares the transparency of Islamic religion to those who oppose its teachings, follow lust, and traverse crooked paths. [8:31-32]

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In general, the work presents thoughts that align not only with the beliefs of Abu Hanifa and his two disciples but also with other imams of "Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'a" (Malik ibn Anas, Muhammad ibn Idris Shafi'i, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal). It includes objections to those who follow them and adhere to their madhhab but act contrary to their creed.

However, this does not imply that the book encompasses all the issues of the belief of "Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'a". Additionally, the work goes beyond mentioning issues of faith and touches on well-known topics in fiqh - Islamic law such as "masah" (wiping leather shoes (khuff or makh) with wet hands that cover the foot up to the ankle), hajj, and jihad. [8:25] The author's intention to include legal topics in the work on dogma (aqida) may be attributed to the evident differences in these matters among members of different schools and currents who considered themselves representatives of the ummah (community) of Prophet Muhammad in his time.

As Abu Jafar Takhavi is one of the scholars of hadith and tafsir, in this doctrinal work, he attempted to use expressions from the Quran and Hadith to prove fundamental religious issues such as the qualities and attributes of Allah, belief in angels, scriptures revealed to the prophets, belief in prophets, and the Day of Judgment. However, when addressing the names and attributes of Allah, instead of using the words "avval" (first) and "akhir" (last) mentioned in the Quran (Surah Al-Hadid, 3rd verse), [7:712] which are typically used by representatives of "Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'a", he utilized the expressions "qadim" (ancient) and "daim" (eternal) with explanatory sentences used by the mutakallimun. [8:8]

One of the shortcomings of this work is its lack of organization and division into topics and chapters. Certain themes are noticeably repeated in some places, but this repetition may be attributed to the author's desire to refocus attention on these issues and emphasize them once again.

Moreover, a significant aspect of this work is the commentary on faith (iman). It is evident from it that Abu Jafar Takhavi followed the path of the school of Abu Hanifa and included recognition with the tongue and affirmation with the heart as conditions of faith. In the explanation of "iman," other representatives of "Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'a," such as Malikis, Shafi'ites, and Hanbalites, also add a third condition, that is, an act. This is why some Islamic scholars of that time criticized Takhavi for his views on the issue of faith, accusing him of following the views of the Murji'ites. [1:228; 5:561]

In the comments on "Aqidatu-t-Takhaviya," discussions among representatives of "Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'a" specifically on issues of faith (iman) can also be noticed.

### 4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, based on the above analysis, it can be stated that the work "Aqida" by Abu Jafar Takhavi, chosen as the subject of this article, is considered one of the most important sources for studying Hanafi dogmatic teaching. This school was founded by the great Abu Hanifa and significantly developed by his students - eminent scholars such as Abu Yusuf and Muhammad ibn Shaybani. "Aqida" became a renowned treatise and a potent weapon in combating radical movements within Islam, maintaining its significance to this day.

The popularity of Takhavi's work "Aqida" has reached such heights that representatives of different movements, groups, and madhhabs in Islam began writing commentaries on it. Initially, Khanafi scholars were the primary interpreters of this work, and later, representatives of other Ahlus-Sunnah madhhabs also contributed to subsequent commentaries. It has been established that the bridge between these two eras was the commentaries of Sadriddin Abu-l-Izza Khanafi.

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