ʿABD AL-WAHHĀB AL-SHAʿRĀNĪ'S SYNTHESIS OF THE *AHL AL-FIKR* AND *AHL AL-KASHF* ON *ILĀHIYYAH*

BY

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ABSTRACT

The ongoing difference of opinions on *ilāhiyyah* (divinity) has become a source of confusion among common people leading towards division in the Muslim community. Despite vast discussion on *ilāhiyyah* (divinity), little is known about the methodologies of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī on its issues. This study provides an understanding of al-Shaʿrānī's synthesis of the methodologies of *ahl al-fikr* (people of cognitive knowledge) and *ahl al-kashf* (people of unveiling knowledge) on *ilāhiyyah* (divinity). This study used two methods of assessment, namely data collection and data analysis. Through the method of documentation in the method of data collection, this study examines to two selected al-Shaʿrānī's work entitled *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir fī Bayān ʿAqāʾid al-Akābir* and *al-Qawāʿid al-Kashfiyyah al-Muwaḍḍiḥah li Maʿānī al-Ṣifat al-Ilāhiyyah.* The study concludes that Al-Shaʿrānī developed a more effective approach to understand ambiguous Qurʾānic verses (*mutashābihāt*). Al-Shaʿrānī uses both methodologies with priority given to the usage of knowledge by presence (*al-ʿilm al-ḥudūrī*).

ملخص البحث

تصدرت التهافتات بين المسلمين في القضايا التي تتعلق بالإلهيات حتى يومنا هذا. وأصبحت مصدر اضطراب بين عامة الناس مما أفضى إلى افتراق المسلمين. وعلى الرغم من المناقشات حول الإلهيات، لا يُعرف حالياً إلا القليل عن منهجيات الإمام عبد الوهاب الشعراني في هذه القضايا. فإن هذا البحث يحاول توفير الفهم عن اعتماد الإمام الشعراني على منهجي أهل الفكر، وأهل الكشف في الإلهيات. وباستخدام الطريقة النوعية، وتستند هذه الدراسة إلى أسلوبين للتقييم، هما جمع البيانات، وتحليلها من خلال منهج التوثيق في جمع البيانات. رجعت إلى عملية مختارية للإمام الشعراني وهما اليواقيت والجواهر في بيان عقائد الأكابر، والقواعد الكشفية الموضحة لمعاني الصفات الإلهية. فالدراسة تخلص إلى نتيجة: أن الإمام الشعراني قدّم اتّجاها مميّزا بالوسطية لفهم المتشابهات. يستخدم الإمام الشعراني كلا المنهجين مع إعطاء الأولوية لاستخدام العلم الحضوري.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge nd Heritage (Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion).

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Mohamad Razif bin Mohamad Fuad

Signature ……………………………. Date …………………………….

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parent almarḥūm Mohamad Fuad bin Jamil & Ropiah bt. Umar, my teachers, my wife Nur Asma Salsabila Mohd. Nor and my children Nur Intisar Hawra' & Irshad Hasanain for laying the foundation of what I turned out to be in life. Jazākumullāhu khayr al-jazā'.

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"O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for Thy favor which Thou has bestowed upon me…"   *(Sūrah al-Aḥqāf: 15)*

All glory is due to Allāh, the Almighty, whose Grace and Mercies have been with me throughout the duration of my programme. Although, it has been tasking, His Mercies and Blessings on me ease the herculean task of completing this thesis. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has rightly said: "One who has not thanked people, has not thanked Allāh". Indeed, I am deeply indebted to many individuals for their assistance and co-operations.

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Last but far from least, it has been narrated that al-Shāfiʿī - may Allāh be pleased with him - said, "Allah has refused to perfect any book except for His own ("*abā Allāh an yakūna kitāban ṣaḥīḥan ghayr kitābih*)"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TRANSLITERATION

Consonant

Arabic Term	Transliteration	Arabic Term	Transliteration	Arabic Term	Transliteration
ء	ʿ	ز	z	ق	q
ب	b	س	s	اك	k
ت	t	ش	sh	ل	l
ث	th	ص	ṣ	م	m
ج	j	ض	ḍ	ن	n
ح	ḥ	ط	ṭ	ه	h
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	و	w
د	d	ع	ʿ	ي	y
ذ	dh	غ	gh		
ر	r	ف	f		

Vowel

Arabic Term	Transliteration	Arabic Term	Transliteration
◌َ	a	◌َ +ا	ā
◌ِ	i	◌ِ + ي	ī
◌ُ	U	◌ُ + و	ū
اي	Ay	او	aw

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Islām is built upon the doctrine of the oneness of Allāh (*tawḥīd*). As quoted by al-
Ṭaḥāwī, "Allāh is One, Unique, and Incomparable. He is Exalted and Almighty, above
and beyond His creations that it is impossible to associate anything with Him."[1] The
most concise definition of Allāh in Islām is given in the four verses of *Ṣūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*.
This chapter (*sūrah*) explains briefly the concept of *ilāhiyyāh*[2] in Islām in the following
manner:

> Say: He is Allāh, the One and Only; Allāh, the Eternal, Absolute; He
> begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.[3]

A great Egyptian Sufi scholar of the sixteenth century, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-
Shaʿrānī (d. 973 A.H[4]/1565 AD),[5] explains the concept of *ilāhiyyāt* clearly in his epistle,
Al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir fī Bayān ʿAqā'id al-Akābir (Gems and Jewels in Explaining

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[1] Al-Ṭaḥāwī, *The Creed of Imam al-Ṭaḥāwī*, translated from Arabic by Hamza Yusuf (California: Zaytuna College, 2007), 48.

[2] The researcher prefers to use *ilāhiyyah* to "Divinity" or "*ulūhiyyah*" because, contextually, the meaning of *ilāhiyyah* is more accurate. According to *Muʿjam al-Ghanī*, *Ilāhiyyah* (singular) or *ilāhiyyāt* (plural) refers to "everything that is related to the essence of Allāh, His Attributes and deals with what is related to divine issues and philosophy of metaphysics." < https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar/الهيات/ > viewed on 31 August 2018. On the other hand, Divinity means "the state or quality of being divine." <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/divinity> viewed on 31 August 2018. *Ulūhiyyah* is approximately suitable yet the meaning is "whatever that is related to the Attributes of the Essence of Divine." < https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar/ألوهية/ >. Thus, *ilāhiyyah* is the accurate usage in this research.

[3] Al-Qur'ān, *al-Ikhlāṣ*: 1-4. All Qur'ānic translations in this writing are based on Abdullah Yusuf Ali's *The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an*. Translations from other sources will be cited accordingly.

[4] AH = After Ḥijrah (the migration of Prophet Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD). It was the second Caliph, ʿUmar bin al-Khaṭṭāb who used this event to mark the first year (lunar year) of the Islamic calendar. The researcher have chosen to use the AH dating because it provides a sense of time that places the topic under discussion in its proper "Islamic context".

[5] Hereinafter referred to as al-Shaʿrānī.

the ʿ*Aqīdah*[6] of the Elders). Al-Shaʿrānī, whose life overlapped the end of the Mamlūk Sultanate and the beginning of the Ottoman period in Egypt, studied many fields such as Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) of the four school (*madhhab*), Tradition of the Prophet (*ḥadīth*), the Prophet's principal biographies (*sīrah*), Arabic grammar (*naḥw*), Islamic theology (*kalām*)[7], the Qur'ān and its exegesis (*tafsīr*).[8] Modern scholars know him as an important Sufi scholar and tend to regard him as the last outstanding thinker and writer par excellence before the final cultural deterioration of the Arabic-speaking world in the later Middle Age.[9]

In the field of theology, he definitely has an almost encyclopedic knowledge of *kalām*[10], especially in the Ashʿarite school of thought as he studied many credible works by Ashʿarite scholars such as al-Bayḍāwī (d. 685 AH / 1286 AD), al-Juwaynī (d. 419 AH / 1085 AD) and al-Taftāzānī (d. 792 AH / 1390 AD).[11] In addition, he was also an

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[6] ʿ*Aqīdah* is more suitable to be used in this research rather than "creed" or "Islamic creed" because, etymologically, creed refers to "a formal statement of Christian beliefs, especially the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed." <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/creed> viewed on 31 August 2018. In Islām, there is no article of belief as Christianity that has been known to be gazetted by the Council of the Christian Church. Articles of belief in Islām refers to those matters related to ʿ*aqīdah*, which have been recorded in the Al-Qur'ān and Ḥadīth and are believed with certainty and conviction in one's heart and soul. For instance, the testimony of faith (*shahādah*) is based on the revelation (*waḥy*) sent down by Allāh to the Prophet without any intervention by human beings. This is the foundation of the principles of ʿ*aqīdah* in which Allāh has commanded us to believe in, as stated in the Al-Qur'ān.

[7] The exact definition of *kalām* is "a science which enables the affirmation of religious doctrines by presenting arguments and getting rid of misconceptions." Refer to al-Ījī, ʿAḍud al-Dīn. *Al-Mawāqif fī ʿIlm al-Kalām* (Bayrūt: ʿĀlim al-Kitāb, n.d.), 7.

[8] Winter, Michael. Society And Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writing of 'Abd Wahab al-Sha'rani (New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1982), 43.

[9] Ibid, 1.

[10] The researcher prefers to use *kalām* instead of terms such as "speculative theology", "scholastic theology", "philosophical theology", "theological dialecticals" or "theology" that are used by some Muslim and many Western scholars. This is because *kalām* has a precise meaning in Islamic intellectual tradition that is different from those referred to in English translation of the term. Refer to Ford. David F. *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 326; Gyekye, Kwame. *Arabic Logic: Ibn al-Tayyib's Commentart on Prophyryis Eisagoge* (Albany: State University of New York, 1979), 1; De Boer, T.J. *The History of Philosophy in Islam,* ed. Edward R. Janes (New York: Dover Publication, 1967), 43; Anawati, George C. (1979). Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism. In Joseph Scacht and C.E. Bosworth (eds.), *The Legacy of Islam* (359). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[11] Al-Shaʿrānī, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Laṭā'if al-Minan wa al-Akhlāq fī Bayān Wujūb al-Taḥadduth bi Niʿmat Allāh ʿalā al-Iṭlāq,* (Dimashq: Dār al-Taqwā, 2004), 87.

outstanding Sufi scholar with numerous works on Sufism. He was the genuine representative of the orthodox, moderate, Egyptian Sufism[12] as well as the follower of the teachings of Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240 AH / 1165 AD).[13][14] Interestingly, in his *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*, he synthesizes *kalām* and Sufism through the methodologies of people of cognitive knowledge (*ahl al-fikr*) and people of unveiling knowledge (*ahl al-kashf*) in explaining the concept of *ilāhiyyāt* in Islām. Al-Shaʿrānī stresses that:

> In this book, I intended to expound the synthesisation of both of them [*ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf*] to affirm the words of the people of all fields with others. I did not see anyone preceed me before in regards to this matter...[15]

Even though there were no scholars before him - as he claims - who specifically discussed ʿaqīdah based on the integrative methodologies as above, the researcher believes that these methodologies were inspired by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī as al-Shaʿrānī considered him to be one of his most important advocates. In addition, the writings of al-Shaʿrānī are considered incomplete if there are discussions on Sufism without an attempt to praise the boundless impact of Ibn al-ʿArabī.[16] Furthermore, Al-Shaʿrānī's main work on ʿaqīdah, titled *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*, is almost entirely

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[12] Winter, Michael. "Ottoman Egypt, 1525-1609" in *The Cambridge History of Egypt,* edited by M.W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 26.

[13] Ibn al-ʿArabī, or Muḥy al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-ʿArabī al-Ḥātimī al-Ṭāʾī, was also known as al-Shaykh al-Akbar (The Great Teacher). He was born on 17 Ramaḍān 560 AH or 27 July 1165 AD in Murcia, Spain. The celebrated Muslim mystic-philosopher gave the esoteric, mystical dimension of Islamic thought its first full-fledged philosophic expression. His major works are the monumental *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* (The Meccan Revelations) and *Fuṣūṣ al-Jikam* (The Bezels of Wisdom). For the most comprehensive and authoritative biography of him, see Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn ʿArabi,* translated from French by Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society, 1993). For briefer biographies, see R.W. Austin's introduction to his *Sufis of Andalusia: The Rūḥ al-Quds and al-Durrah al-Fākhirah* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1971), 21-49; also al-Ghurab, Maḥmūd Maḥmūd (ed. and presenter), *al-Shaykh al-Akbar Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī: Tarjamat Ḥayātihi min Kalāmihi* (Dimashq: n.p. 1983).

[14] Ibn al-ʿArabī with the definite article (attached to the name ʿArabī) in this study is not to be mistaken with Ibn al-ʿArabī al-Mālikī, a well-known commentator (*mufassir*) and scholar of Traditions (*muḥaddith*). The name Ibn al-ʿArabī is used by al-Shaʿrānī in his *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*.

[15] Al-Shaʿrānī, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Al-Yawāqīt ...*, 3.

[16] Winter, Michael. *Society And Religion...,*160.

on selections from *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* (Meccan Revelations) by Ibn al-ʿArabī. Al-Shaʿrānī says:

> Therefore, I established this book [*al-Yawāqīt*] based on his [Ibn al-ʿArabī] discourses from *al-Futūhāt* and others…[17]

Based on the list of Ṣūfī works that he had read,[18] the general idea of the methodology of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf* may have been taken from other Sufi scholars such as Abū Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), al-Qushayrī (d. 466/1074) and al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111). Al-Muḥāsibī, for instance, had been a figure in the formation of the Baghdad school of Sufism but, at the same time, a consciously orthodox advocate of *kalām*. He uses dialectical tools of *kalām* in works such as *Kitāb al-Tafakkur wa al-Iʿtibār* (Book of Contemplating and Induction) to fight Muʿtazilism.[19]

Until now, it is clear that al-Shaʿrānī was the first scholar to synthesize the methodologies of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf* on *ʿaqīdah*, as stated by him in the introduction of *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*. Thus, the aim of this research is to evaluate and affirm the synthesis of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf* methodologies on the issue of *ilāhiyyāt* based on the understanding of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī in order to solve *ʿaqīdah* issues on *ilāhiyyāt* among the Muslim community of present times.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Ahl al-fikr and *ahl al-kashf* as well as knowledge derived from them are highly criticized by some Muslim scholars today. They use the objection of the jurists (*fuqahā'*) and traditionists (*muḥaddithūn*) on *kalām* against the *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf*. Some of

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[17] Al-Shaʿrānī, *Al-Yawāqīt…*,3.
[18] Al-Shaʿrānī, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb. *Laṭā'if al-Minan…*, 89.
[19] Mayer, Toby, "Theology and Sufism" in The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Thought, edited by T.J. Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 258.

them include Mālik ibn Anās (d. 179 AH /795 AD)[20], Muḥammad bin Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī (d. 205 AH /820 AD)[21], Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH /855 AD)[22] and Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī (d. 620 AH / 1223 AD)[23]. Moreover in some cases, some of the Sufis themselves, especially the Ḥanbalites, are against the theologians such as in the case of al-Ḥarawī (d. 481 AH /1088 AD) in his book, *Dhamm al-Kalām wa Ahlihi* (Defamation on *Kalām* and Its People). This book explains the vices and implications of *kalām*, the mandatory compliance of the Sunnah and deriving judgement from it, the prohibition of debating and the founders of four major *madhhab* of *fiqh*'s condemnation of the followers of *kalām*. Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150 AH /767 AD), as quoted by al-Ḥarawī, cursed ʿAmrū bin ʿUbayd (d. 761 AH / 1360 AD) for paving the way for people to learn *kalām* whereas for him, it has no use to them.[24] However, most criticisms by present-day Muslims of *kalām* are unvalid because the objection by jurists (*fuqahāʾ*) and traditionists (*muḥaddithūn*) preceded the emergence of Ashʿarite, a philosophico-religious school of thought in Islām. This means that most of the

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[20] Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī said: "Mālik is the furthermost man from the schools of the People of *Kalām*." Refer to Abū Zahrah, Muḥammad. *Mālik Ḥayātuhu wa ʿAṣruhu wa Ārāʾuhu wa Fiqhuhu* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1964), 193.

[21] Al-Shāfiʿī said: "My judgment of the group of *Kalām* is that they be smitten with palm branches, placed upside-down on the camels, be paraded among the communities and tribes, and that it be proclaimed, "This is the punishment of he who has deserted the Book and the Sunnah, and taken up *Kalām*!". Refer to Abū Zahrah, Muḥammad. *al-Shāfiʿī Ḥayātuhu wa ʿAṣruhu wa Ārāʾuhu wa Fiqhuhu* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1978), 136.

[22] Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said that the scholars of *Kalām* are Manicheans (*zanādiqah*). Refer to Huwaidī. Yaḥyā. *Dirāsāt fī ʿIlm al-Kalām wa al-Falsafah al-Islāmiyyah,* (Cairo: Dar al-Thaqafah, n.d.), 102.

[23] Refer to his book, *Taḥrīm al-Naẓar fī Kutub Ahl al-Kalām* (Forbiddance on Learning The Books of People of *Kalām*).

[24] Al-Ḥarawī, ʿAbd Allāh bin Muḥammad. *Dhamm al-kalām wa Ahluh* (Madinah: Maktabah al-ʿUlūm wa al-Ḥikam, 1998), vol. 5, 221.

objections are only aimed at the *kalām* of Jahmiyyah[25], Muʿtazilah[26], Qadariyyah[27],

Jabariyyah[28] and Sufusṭāʾiyyah.[29]

In addition, there are criticisms towards *taṣawwuf* and some critical analysis by
Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328) and Ibn Qayyīm (d. 751/1350) on certain aspects of it.
For instance, Ibn Taymiyyah criticizes some of the Sufis during his era who speak of
the witness and attainment of Reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*). However, in actuality they are

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[25] They are the followers of Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān and adherents of pure determinism, a heresy that first rose in Tirmidh, and on account of which Jahm was put to death by Sālim bin Aḥwaz al-Māzini in Marw in the last days of the Umayyad Caliphate. Jahm was in agreement with Muʿtazilah in denying the eternal attributes with some additions of doctrines. It is unlawful to apply to Allāh an attribute that is also applicable to creatures; Allāh has cognitions that are not eternal and this cognitions are not in a substrate. A man does not have power over anything, nor can he be said to have capacity [to act], all motion in heaven and hell will come to an end, if a man has knowledge [of Allāh] but outwardly denies Him; this denial does not make him an unbeliever because it does not take away his knowledge. Refer to Al-Shahrastānī, ʿAbd al-Karīm. *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* (Bayrut: Muʾassasah al-Ḥalabī, n.d.), vol 1, 88.

[26] A brief introduction on Muʿtazilah will be discussed on Chapter 2.

[27] Qadarite (Qadariyyah in Arabic) is a classical Islamic theological school, seventh to ninth century, which asserted human free will in decision making and as justification for Allāh's power to blame or punish humans. Humans' capacity to make choices makes them responsible for the outcome of their actions and absolves Allāh of responsibility for evil in the world. Many of this school's doctrines were adopted by Mutazilis. The position was rejected by the dominant Ashʿarite theology. The founder of the Qadarite is Maʿbad ibn Khālid al-Juhānī (d. 80 AH / 699 AD) who allegedly was influenced by and Iraqi Christian, a convert to Islām who subsequently reverted back to Christianity. The doctrine was further developed by Ghaylān ibn Muslim al-Dimashqī (d. 105 AH / 723 AD). Al-Sharastānī summed up Ghaylān's theological philosophy in three words: assertion of human absolute freedom (al-qadr), postponement of ultimate judgment about the grave sinner (al-irjāʾ) and promoting revoltagainst unjust rulers (al-khurūj). Refer to Ibid, vol. 1, 142-143, 146; ʿAbd al-Qādir. *Al-Farq Bayna al-Firāq* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīdah, 1977), 194.

[28] Its founder was Jahm ibn Safwan. Jabarite is also known by the name of its founder as Jahmiyyah. It propounded the following doctrines; (i) man is determined by Allāh in all his actions, including the acts of faith, faithlessness, good and evil, (ii) paradise is not eternal (iii) the vision of Allāh on the day of Judgement is possible. This school of thought is distinguished by two groups, some being more rigid and extreme in their opinion, who are thence called pure Jabariyahs (*al-jabariyyah al-khāliṣah*); and others, more moderate, who are therefore called middle Jabiriyahs (*al-jabariyyah al-mutawaṣṣiṭah*). Refer to al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal…*, vol. 1, 85.

[29] Sufusṭāʾiyyah or Sophists can be divided into three main groups: (i) the Agnostics (*al-lā adriyyah*), (ii) the Subjectivists (*al-ʿīndiyyah*), and (iii) the Obstinate (*al-ʿinādiyyah*).The first refers to people who claim that they do not know or doubt whether something really exist or not. They are in doubt about the real existence of things and are in doubt even of their own doubt! They deny that knowledge of anything is possible. The second group does not deny the possibility of knowledge and truth. They nevertheless deny their objective nature, i.e. they hold that there is no objective truth in knowledge. To them all knowledge is subjective, and the truth about anything is only one's opinion of it. As to the third appellation, they are people who deny the realities of things, and regard that what we call "things" are mere fancies and figments of imagination. All the three schools have one quality in common: the denial of objective knowledge. To put it differently, all sophists turned skeptical about the possibility, universality and objectivity of truth. Refer to Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. *Commentary on the Hujjat al-Siddiq of Nur al-Din al-Raniri* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture, 1986), 206-207.

referring to the reality of cosmic creation (*al-ḥaqīqah al-kawniyyah*) that is acknowledged and witnessed by believers, non-believers, devotees, the wicked, Satan and also the People of Hell.[30] Meanwhile, Ibn al-ʿArabī's teachings also has roused intense criticism on him for many centuries after his death by a number of scholars,[31] including a few Sufis such as ʿAlā al-Dawlah al-Simnānī (d. 736 AH / 1336 AD) and Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Gisūdirāz (d. 825 AH / 1422 AD), due to certain philosophical concepts that are believed to be associated to the Unity of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*).[32] As a response, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH / 1505 AD) in *Tanbīh al-Ghābī fī Tabri'at Ibn ʿArabī* (Warning to the Ignoramus Concerning Ibn 'Arabi's Vindication), Sirāj al-Dīn al-Makhzūmī (d. 885 AH / 1480 AD) in *Kashf al-Ghiṭā' ʿan Asrār Kalām al-Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn* (Unveiling the Cover on The Secrets of the Words of al-Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn) and al-Shaʿrānī in *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir* responded to criticisms in defense of Ibn al-ʿArabī in their works.

This conflict on *ilāḥiyyāt* occurs until today among the Muslim scholars and it has become a source of confusion among common people, inciting division in the Muslim community.[33] Undeniably, there are positive and negative effects of delving into such issues but the negative outweigh the positive as the issues are related to the ʿaqīdah of the Muslim community. Meanwhile, this integration of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl*

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[30] Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā* (Riyāḍ: Majmaʿ al-Malik Fahd, 1995), vol. 10, 156.

[31] Among the scholars are ʿIzz Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, al-Jazārī, Sharaf al-Dīn ībn al-Muqri, Abu Ḥayyān al-Andalūsī, Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Nūr al-Dīn, Siāj al-Dīn al-Bulqinī, Ibn Khaldūn, Ibn Taymiyyah and the last *Shaykh al-Islām* of Ottoman Caliphate, Muṣṭāfā Ṣabrī.

[32] In order to have a comprehensive understanding on the notion of "being", it is suggested to refer to the proponents of the idea of primacy of being (*aṣalat al-wujūd*) such as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmi in *Riṣalat al-Wujūd* and Mullā Ṣadrā in *al-Ḥikmah al-Mutaʿāliyah fī Asfār al-Aqliyyah al-Arbaʿah*. There are several contemporary Muslim scholars who have written on this topic such as Muhammad Naquib al-Attas in *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* (particularly the chapter entitled *Essence and Existence*), Toshihiko Izutsu in *The Concept of Reality of Existence*.

[33] Al-Ghazzālī, Muḥammad. *Turāthunā al-Fikrī fī Mizān al-Sharʿ wa al-ʿAql* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2003), 6.

al-kashf methodologies is unique even though both groups have their own methodology to deal with issues on *ilāhiyyāt*. Hence, this study attempts to show that the usage of both methodologies—as synthesized by al-Shaʿrānī in his works in explaining the concept of *ilāḥiyyah*, mainly the existence of Allāh (*wujūd Allāh*) and His Attributes (*al-ṣifat al-khabariyyah*)—is the ideal way to understand the issues in order to solve the *ʿaqīdah* issues on *ilāhiyyāt* among Muslims.

1.3   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

i.   Who are the *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf*?

ii.   What are the methodologies of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf* on the aspect of *ilāhiyyāt*?

iii.   How does ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī synthesize the methodologies of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf* on the aspect of *ilāhiyyāt*?

iv.   How relevant is this methodology today in solving the *ʿaqīdah* issues on *ilāhiyyāt* among Muslims?

1.4   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research will attempt to achieve the following important objectives:

i.   To identify *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf*.

ii.   To analyse the methodologies of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf* on *ilāhiyyāt*.

iii.   To investigate ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī's methodology in integrating the methodologies of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf* in the discourse of *ilāhiyyāt*.

iv. To show the relevance of his methodology in solving the ʿaqīdah issues on

ilāhiyyāt among Muslims in the contemporary world.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As far as this study is concerned, no other study has analyzed ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī's methodology in integrating the methodologies of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf* on *ilāhiyyāt*. In doing so, this research will concentrate on ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī's synthesis of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf*'s methodologies on issues concerning *ilāhiyyāt* by referring to his works, *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir fī Bayān ʿAqāʾid al-Akābir* and *Al-Qawāʿid al-Kashfiyyah al-Muwaḍḍiḥah lī Maʿānī al-Ṣifāt al-Ilāhiyyāt*. This study will also explore the relevance of his methodology in dealing with issues of *ilāhiyyāt*, particularly the existence of Allāh (*wujūd Allāh*) and His Attributes (*al-ṣifāt al-khabariyyah*).

Moreover, it is hoped that this study serves as a point of reference for further discourses on the issues of *ilāhiyyāt* in Islām. Optimistically, it also hopes to contribute to enhancing the sphere and further deepen the understanding of related contemporary issues. Furthermore, this study will also provide a useful guidance on resolving Muslim controversies over *ilāhiyyāt* in the contemporary world.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study will critically analyze ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī's methodology in integrating the methodologies of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf* in the discourse of *ilāhiyyāt*. In order to obtain a thorough analysis and achieve the actual idea of the central concept, this study will take into account his views based on his works, *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir fī Bayān ʿAqāʾid al-Akābir* and *Al-Qawāʿid al-Kashfiyyah al-Muwaḍḍiḥah*

lī Maʿānī al-Ṣifāt al-Ilāhiyyāt. The researcher only selects two issues on *ilāhiyyāt* to be scrutinized through al-Shaʿrānī's methodology.

1.7   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative methodology, specifically textual analysis method. It is a combination of descriptive and analytical methods. An analysis will be made on the primary source that is *Al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir fī Bayān ʿAqāʾid al-Akābir* by ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī. This study also relies on secondary sources from various other forms of literature such as books, journals, theses and dissertations, conference and seminar papers, newspaper and magazine articles, relevant works on *kalām* and *taṣawwuf* as well as reliable websites within the discourse on ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī and the selected issues on *ilāhiyyāt*.

1.8   LITERATURE REVIEW

A considerable amount of literature has been published on ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī and the theme discussed. Most of the literature on al-Shaʿrānī focus on the historical aspects of his life and his ideas on Sufism. On the theme, there are several reliable sources discussing the integration of *ahl al-fikr* and *ahl al-kashf*'s methodologies. As far as it can be ascertained, the works related to the study on al-Shaʿrānī's viewpoint on *ʿaqīdah* are scarce. The lack of such a methodology applied raises questions about the methodology in dealing with the issues of *ilāhiyyāt*, as postulated by al-Shaʿrāni.

Al-Shaʿrānī has been the subject of study by at least eight modern Arab writers. By far the most important work is found in Tawfīq Ṭawīl's *al-Taṣawwuf fī Misr Ibbān*

al-ʿAṣr al-ʿUthmānī.[34] His works are written with understanding and insight but are, at times, insufficiently and uncertainly documented with superficial discussions and impulsive conclusions. While he provides a sharp description of the general milieu in al-Shaʿrānī's time, Ṭawīl fails to discuss specific and central questions, such as al-Shaʿrānī's attitude and methodology of *ʿaqīdah* issues.

Yūsuf Riḍwān al-Kūd has edited (*taḥqīq*) a book on the principles of *fiqh* by al-Shaʿrānī entitled *Minhāj al-Wuṣūl ilā Maqāṣid ʿIlm al-Usūl*[35]. On explaining al-Shaʿrānī's intellectual biography and his viewpoint on controversial issues related to *ʿaqīdah*, he includes al-Shaʿrānī's viewpoints on some aspects of the existence of Allāh, ambiguous verses of the Qur'ān (*al-mutashābihāt*) as well as on incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and union (*ittiḥād*). According to Yūsuf, al-Shaʿrānī prefers to practise relegation of matters to Allāh (*tafwīḍ*) but, if it is necessary, allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) is acceptable. His elucidation of the issues is very descriptive, brief and mostly focused on a book by al-Shaʿrānī, namely *Al-Qawāʿid al-kashfiyyah*.

Another important work on al-Shaʿrānī is written by Michael Winter entitled *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writing of 'Abd Wahab al-Sha'rani*.[36] He states the salient aspects of Egypt's social, intellectual and religious life in the sixteenth century, as described by al-Shaʿrāni. This book is considered as one of the most complete studies on the biography of al-Shaʿrānī in English in the modern world. Winter argues that scholars tend to regard al-Shaʿrānī as the last great thinker and writer before the final cultural decline of the Arab World in the later Middle East.

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[34] Ṭawīl, Tawfīq, *Ṭawīl's al-Taṣawwuf fī Miṣr Ibbān al-ʿAṣr al-ʿUthmānī*, (Cairo: al-Hayʾah al-Miṣrīyah al-ʿĀmmah lil-Kitāb, 1988), 95-133.

[35] Al-Shaʿrānī, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Minhāj al-Wuṣūl ilā Maqāṣid ʿIlm al-Usūl,* ed. Yūsuf Riḍwān al-Kūd (ʿAmmān: Dār al-Fatḥ, 2013), 219.

[36] Winter, 1.

Nevertheless, Winter only focuses on the historical aspect and not al-Shaʿrānī's viewpoint on *ilāhiyyāt*.

Likewise, ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Faraghlī ʿAlī al-Qaranī, in his work *ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī Imām al-Qarn al-ʿĀshir*,[37] discusses al-Shaʿrānī's background explicitly from the surroundings of his time, his studies, his morals (*akhlāq*), his standpoints on some issues, his ideas on Sufism and summaries on some of his treatises. Al-Qaranī also includes al-Shaʿrāni's work on *ʿaqīdah* that is *al-Yawāqit wa al-Jawāhir*. He explains that each of the main topics in the book consists of Divinity (*ilāhiyyāt*), Prophethood (*nubuwwāt*) and the Unseen (*samʿiyyāt*). A serious weakness of this argument, however, is that al-Qaranī did not write in detail about the discussion on *ilāhiyyāt* according to al-Shaʿrānī.

Endo Haruka examined al-Shaʿrānī's defence of Ibn ʿArabī and the intellectual atmosphere of that time in his article, *A Preliminary Outlook on al-Shaʿrānī's Defence of Ibn 'Arabī and the Intellectual Milieu during Early Ottoman Egypt*[38]. According to Haruka's scrutiny of Ibn 'Arabī's argument on the issue of Allāh's incomparability and similarity, it is fair to conclude that al-Shaʿrānī's thought is not as deep and sophisticated as that of Ibn ʿArabī. Al-Shaʿrānī does not explore the function of imagination nor provide a detailed analysis of Ibn al-ʿArabī's statement on the Divine aspect "He/not He" (*huwa/lā huwa*). It is also true that al-Shaʿrānī's central theme somewhat overlaps that of Ibn 'Arabī'. Al-Shaʿrānī aims to justify Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of divine self-manifestation by situating it in the field of *ʿaqīdah*, thus also establishing

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[37] Al-Qaranī, ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Faraghlī ʿAlī, *ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī Imām al-Qarn al-ʿĀshir*. (Cairo: Al-Hay'ah al-ʿĀmah li al-Kitab, 1985), pp. 9-10.
[38] Endo Haruka, "A Preliminary Outlook on al-Shaʿrānī's Defence of Ibn 'Arabī and the Intellectual Milieu during Early Ottoman Egypt", *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies,* vol. 8 (2015): 4-25

a sort of bridge between ʿaqīdah and mysticism. In view of these considerations, it is obvious that al-Shaʿrānī's lack of originality designates him as a poor epigone of the Great Sufi. His analysis is comprehensive but he does not refer to the main source for al-Shaʿrānī's thought on ʿaqīdah namely, *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir* that attempts to interpret the writings of Ibn al-ʿArabī for religious and legal scholars.

Samuela Pagani studied al-Shaʿrānī's thoughts on the differences of opinion among the schools of law (*ikhtilāf al-madhāhib*) in al-Shaʿrānī's book, *al-Mīzān al-Kubrā*. This work advocates a return to the Qurʾān and Sunnah as the roots of religious sciences. In her paper entitled *The Meaning of Ikhtilāf al-Madhāhib in Abd al-Wahhab al-Shaʿrānī's Al-Mīzān al-Kubrā* [39], she criticizes the way al-Shaʿrānī wrote the book because it opens a wide range of interpretations due to its unsystematic and occasionally self-contradictory style of exposition. Some scholars use the text to oppose independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) while others use it for independent reasoning. Pagani's argument relies too heavily on *fiqh* of al-Shaʿrānī and there is not even a single analysis of his methodology to *ilāhiyyāt*.

Leila Hudson, in her paper entitled *Reading al-Shaʿrānī: The Sufi Genealogy of Islamic Modernism in Late Ottoman Damascus*,[40] examines a number of works by al-Shaʿrānī to prove that his scholarly works play an important role in the intellectual life of the second half of the nineteenth century in Damascus. She has done a beneficial research in that area but her focus on the genealogical study and its related issues is more on politics and the intellectual movements of Ṣufism as well as Salafism. She only

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[39] Pagani, Samuela, "The Meaning of Ikhtilāf al-Madhāhib in Abd al-Wahhab al-Shaʿrānī's Al-Mīzān al-Kubrā*", Jurnal of Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2004): 178.
[40] Liela Hudson, "Reading al-Shaʿrānī: The Sufi Genealogy of Islamic Modernism In Late Ottoman Damascus", *Journal of Islamic Studies,* vol. 15, no. 1 (2004): 51.