



THEOLOGICAL THOUGHTS OF ABŪ ISHĀQ AL-
SHĪRĀZĪ WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO *KITĀB*
AL-ISHĀRAH ILĀ MADHHAB AHL AL-ḤAQQ

BY

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

This research studies the theological thoughts of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī, a prominent scholar of the fifth century *hijrī*, with special reference to his work in this field, namely, *Kitāb al-Ishārah ilā Madhab ahl al-Ḥaqq*. In order to make a critical analysis of his thoughts, the researcher selects some key issues of *Kitāb al-Ishārah*, such as, the first obligation of the *mukallaf*, the Existence of Allah, His attributes, the relation of the attributes with the essence of Allah, and the anthropomorphic verses and traditions. The study reveals that al-Shīrāzī does not hold any odd or pioneer views in theology. All the views he expresses in *Kitāb al-Ishārah* are in conformity with the views of the early generation of the Ash‘arite theology. There is a misunderstanding between some scholars as to whether al-Shīrāzī is an adherent of the Salafism or Ash‘arism. The study gives due consideration regarding this issue and eventually arrives at a conclusion that he is an ardent follower of the Ash‘arite school based on his two works in Theology, namely *Kitāb al-Ishārah* and *‘Aqīdat al-Salaf* which clearly assert this point. The *fatwās* he issued to explain his stand on Ash‘arism also confirms his allegiance to the Ash‘arite School.

خلاصة البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة آراء الإمام أبي إسحق الشيرازي في العقيدة، مع تركيز خاص على كتابه في هذا المجال، "كتاب الإشارة إلى مذهب أهل الحق". ولأجل إجراء تحليل نقدي لآرائه اختار الباحث بعض القضايا الرئيسية من كتاب الإشارة، وهي؛ أول واجب على المكلف، وجود الله تعالى وصفاته، وتعلق الصفات بالذات الإلهية، والآيات والأحاديث المتشابهات. وتكشف الدراسة بأن الإمام الشيرازي لم يبد رأياً جديداً أو شاذاً في كتابه، بل جميع أفكاره العقيدية موافقة تماماً مع آراء علماء الأشعرية السابقين له. وفي نفس الوقت ثمة شكوك بين بعض العلماء حول ما إذا كان الإمام الشيرازي سلفياً أم أشعرياً. والدراسة تعطي أهمية بالغة لهذه المسألة، ووصلت إلى نتيجة أن الإمام الشيرازي كان من العلماء المتحمسين لمدرسة الإمام الأشعري؛ لأن كتابيه في العقيدة "كتاب الإشارة إلى مذهب أهل الحق"، و"عقيدة السلف"، و فتاويه التي أصدرها لإبداء رأيه حول الأشعرية، تؤكد هذه النقطة بكل وضوح. والدراسة تدعي بأن الذين وصلوا إلى النتيجة المخالفة لم يعتمدوا على هذين الكتابين وهذه الفتاوي.

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 thesis for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (*Uṣūl al-Dīn* and Comparative Religion).

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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation, 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.

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**THEOLOGICAL THOUGHTS OF ABŪ ISHĀQ AL-
SHĪRĀZĪ WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIS
*KITĀB AL-ISHĀRAH ILĀ MADHHAB AHL AL-ḤAQQ***

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My spiritual guardians and well wishers in Darul Huda Islamic University; my parents, Abdul Rahman and Khadeejah; my grandmothers, Ummeria and Aishah; and my brothers, Shafeeq, Yasir and Shaheer;

To them all, I dedicate this thesis.

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Finally, I state that I am alone responsible for the entire faults that remain in this thesis. May Allah accept this humble attempt and make it fruitful for this life and hereafter, *Āmīn*.

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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

ء	’		ض	ḍ
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	ẓ
ث	th		ع	‘
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		و	w
ش	sh		هـ	h
ص	ṣ		ي	y

Short Vowels

أ	a
إ	i
أ	u

Long Vowels

آ	ā
إي	ī
أو	ū

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Theological disputes among Muslims had found its place in its early generations. Starting from the question over the political authority, it passed through many issues, such as the status of the grave sinner, the human free will and predestination, the attributes of Allah, etc. In most cases the debates would end up in two extreme ends.

For instance, when the Khārijites considered action as part of belief and hence, held that the grave sinner is an unbeliever,¹ the Murji'ites held an opposing view and stressed that actions are not part of the belief, and neither the act of disobedience will harm the right belief, nor will the act of obedience will benefit an infidel.² The Mu'tazilites opposed to both these views and assumed that the grave sinner is neither a Muslim in full status, nor an infidel in full status, but is *fāsiq*, who lies between genuine belief and unbelief.³

The issues of human free will and predestination were other important matters in which the early Muslims involved in hot debates. The Qadarites headed by Ma'bad al-Juhanī (d. 80 A.H.), rejected the thesis of predestination (*qadar*) and vehemently advocated for the ability of individuals to freely carry out and design their actions, and hence, to be responsible for their own actions.⁴ Later, the Mu'tazilites adopted this view and regarded it as one of their hallmarks. Even though Ma'bad attempted through his view to repudiate the claim of some rulers of Banū Umayyad who held

¹ Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, ed. Aḥmad Fahmī Muḥammad, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1413 A.H.), 1:107

² *Ibid.*, 1:137.

³ 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥy al-Dīn 'Abd al-Majīd, (Bayrūt: al-Maktabat al-'Aṣriyyah, 1411 A.H.), 115; Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 1:42.

⁴ Majīd Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism: A Short Introduction*, (Oxford: One World, 2000 C.E.), 14.

that all their actions are predestined by Allah, and used it to get an excuse for their atrocities, he reached to the other end and denied any possibility of predestination.⁵ Opposed to the view of the Qadarites, the Jabarites (Determinists), headed by Jahm ibn Ṣafwān (d. 128 A.H.), maintained that man has no any capacity to design his actions; he neither has the will, power nor choice. Allah creates in him all the actions as He creates it in inanimate objects, and as we ascribe some actions to the inanimate metaphorically, such as, a tree bears fruit, water flows, the actions also are ascribed to man in that sense.⁶

In their approaches to the Qur'ānic verses and prophetic traditions, the community also had two diametrically opposed positions. On one side, some people adopted the extreme literalism, and accepted the verses which seemingly established human organs and actions to Allah, in their apparent meaning. They predicated Allah with body, meat, blood and other human organs, and allowed the possibility of touching God and shaking his hands, etc.⁷ However, on the other side, the Mu'tazilites vehemently censured these kinds of arguments and approached such verses rationally. They interpreted all such verses in a way which denies any kind of resemblance for Allah with His creatures. Through their response, the Mu'tazilites were rightly trying to save the community from being trapped with the anthropomorphic (*tashbīh*)⁸ beliefs. However, when they held this position they adopted extreme rationalistic view, and their stand culminated in the rejection of the attributes of Allah. Their

⁵ Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī, *preface to Tayīn Kadhib al-Muftarī fīmā Nusiba ilā al-Imām al-Ash'arī* of Ibn 'Asākir, (Dimashq: Maṭba'at al-Tawfīq, 1347 A.H.), 11.

⁶ Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq*, 211; Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 1:73.

⁷ Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 1:93, 94.

⁸ Anthropomorphism comes from the Greek *anthrōpos* (human being) and *morphē* (form) which denotes the description of non-material, spiritual, entities in physical, and specifically human, form. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, "Anthropomorphism", ed. Mircea Eliade, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987 C.E.), 1: 316, 317. *Tashbīh* is to take the position of anthropomorphism and those who take this position are *mushabbihah*, i.e., anthropomorphists. For details on *mushabbihah*, see: al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 1:118-131; 'Alī Sāmī al-Nashshār, *Nash'at al-Fikr al-Falsafī fī al-Islām*, (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1397 A.H.), 1:285-306.

rational approach led them to deny the beatific vision of Allah in the hereafter, the punishment in the grave, etc.⁹

As a result of these two opposing stance, the Islamic community were divided into two extreme positions; first, a group represented by the adherents of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 A.H.) vehemently advocated for literalism and rejected any use of *Kalām*,¹⁰ and considered the use of reason in the issues of faith as heresy and innovation; second, a group represented by the Mu‘tazilites strongly argued for the rationalistic approach. They gave high preference to reason as the sole criterion to find the truth and reality. This was the condition of the theological atmosphere of the Islamic community at the dawn of the fourth century of *Hijrah*.¹¹ Both positions were not in their right place, rather a mediate position which gives the revelation the importance as it deserves, without denying the role of reason, was inevitable.

In this context, the orthodox scholars raised and formulated a mediate position between these diametrically opposing views. This endeavour was headed by ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sa‘īd ibn Kullāb (d. 241 A.H.), Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ḥārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibī (d. 241 A.H.), and Abū al-‘Abbās al-Qalānisī.¹² The attempts of the above mentioned scholars got a fresh impetus at the hands of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī (d. 324 A.H.) and were developed in to a systematic school when the latter deserted the Mu‘tazilite guild and adhered to their group.

⁹ Taqiyy al-Dīn Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā‘iḍ wa al-I‘tibār bi Dhikr al-Khuṭaṭ wa al-Āthār*, ed. Khalīl al-Manṣūr, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1418 A.H.), 4:190.

¹⁰ *‘Ilm al-Kalām*, which is usually translated as Theology, Speculative Theology or Scholastic Theology, is the science which involves arguing with intellectual or rational proofs in defense of the articles of faith and refuting the innovators who deviate in their beliefs from the ways of the early pious generation (*salaf*) and the People of the tradition (*ahl al-sunnah*). Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, ed. ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Wāḥid, (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Naḥḍat al-Miṣriyyah, n.d.), 3:1069.

¹¹ Muḥammad ‘Imārah, *Tayyārāt al-Fikr al-Islāmī*, (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Shurūq, 2007 C.E.), 167-170.

¹² Maziah Mustapha, *the Sunni Position on Selected Issues in Kalam: A Comparison Between the Views of al-Ash'ari and al-Bazdawi*, (Ph.D. Thesis, International Islamic University Malaysia, 2005 C.E.), 2.

Al-Ash‘arī adopted a middle course between the views of the schools existed during his time. This middle position is pervasive in his methodology as well as in all his doctrinal views. He formed a symbiosis between the revelation and reason, which were resting in two remote areas at the hands of the extreme rationalistic position of the Mu‘tazilites and the extreme literalistic position of the Ḥanbalites. As opposed to these views, al-Ash‘arī chose a middle path and taken both of them into consideration. However, he gave priority to revelation than reason, and maintained that the use of reason is permissible, but it must be abandoned if it is found against the revelation.¹³ Through this approach he laid the foundation for a firm criterion to solve the theological problems.

Through his theological doctrines al-Ash‘arī, did not innovate any views and did not go against the Qur’ān, Sunnah, Consensus of the community, and the views of the pious early generation, rather all his views were in conformity with them. All the tenets he explained were already there, but it had become obscure or was hidden amid the tide of the heretical views. The only thing he did was that he formulated a methodology in the line of the pious ancestors, which did not exist before. The scholars of *Ahl al-Sunnah* before him were keeping themselves away from the hair splitting discussions of theology, and preferred to follow revelation and teachings of the Companions of the Prophet and their followers in issues of faith, and refrained from going deeper into such issues.¹⁴ Through his efforts al-Ash‘arī cleaned the theological atmosphere and separated the grains from the chaff. The high validity of the methodology of al-Ash‘arī was that it was an amalgamation of various branches of Islamic tradition, which, unfortunately, did not bind together in any theological

¹³ Ibid., 3, 4.

¹⁴ Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *Tamhid li tarikh al-falsafah al-Islāmiyyah*, (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Thaqāfat al-Dīniyyah, 1944 C.E.), 293; Zāhid al-Kawtharī, Preface to *Tabyīn*, 13.

schools before him. Through his long association with the Mu'tazilite school, he had reached the peak of the rational methods. Upon coming out of the Mu'tazilism, he brought along that spirit with him. Together with this, he acquired the methodology of al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204 A.H.) in *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, the founder of the school of jurisprudence to which he subscribed, and the theological thoughts of Ibn Kullāb. With this he had the spirit of the traditionalist scholars headed by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Hence, the methodology of al-Ash'arī was developed out of the wonderful symbiosis of reason, tradition, jurisprudence and theology.¹⁵ Therefore, it could manifest the right path of Islam.

Later, the mediate position of al-Ash'arī received the intellectual support of many great scholars, such as, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī (d. 402 A.H.), Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Fūrak (d. 406 AH.), Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn 'Alī al-Shīrāzī (d. 476 AH.), Imām al-Ḥaramayn 'Abd al-Malik al-Juwaynī (d. 478 AH.), Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505 A.H.), Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 548 A.H.), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606 A.H.), etc; who authored books, and debated according to his views,¹⁶ through which the school of al-Ash'arī spread in Iraq, Morocco, Egypt, and other parts of the Muslim world. Eventually, it consolidated its position as the dominant school of Islamic Theology.

As al-Ash'arī engaged in his theological discussions in Iraq, Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333 A.H.), started conducting similar discussions in Samarqand. Like al-Ash'arī, al-Māturīdī also developed a school in the line of *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, however his dependence on reason was more than that of al-Ash'arī. He took a more mediate position between reason and revelation, and occupied a place

¹⁵ 'Imārah, *Tayyārāt al-Fikr*, 170-171.

¹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khutaf*, 4:192.

between Ash‘arism and Mu‘tazilism.¹⁷ He developed his doctrines based on the views of Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150 A.H.), and therefore became established as the theological school of the Ḥanafites.¹⁸ Even though both schools were fighting for the same goal from the same point of view, the relationship between them was not harmonious in the beginning. Each group tried to invalidate the doctrines of the other. However, as time passed, this alienation was replaced with reconciliation.¹⁹ Both schools held differences of opinions in some issues; however, according to the scholars who made comparative analysis between both schools most of the differences between them were literal.²⁰

A period almost a century later to the historical attempt of al-Ash‘arī is the main focus of the current research. The research concentrates on the fifth century *hijrī* when the Ash‘arite School received high intellectual support from many great scholars, who stamped their names in the history with grand contributions. This was the time when ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429 A.H.), Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465 A.H.), Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī, Imām al-Ḥaramayn, Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 458 A.H.), al-Ghazālī, etc. lived. By this time, the school had developed into a systematic school in terms of theory, methodology and public support. The research specifically focuses on the theological contributions of a prominent scholar of this time, Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī.

Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī occupied a major position among the Ash‘arite scholars. He lived in a time when the Ash‘arite school and its adherents faced fierce challenges from Ḥanbalites as well as from early ruling officials of the Seljuqid empire. In

¹⁷ Zāhid al-Kawtharī, Preface to *Tabyin*, 19; Maziah Mustapha, *The Sunni Position*, 4, 5.

¹⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khuṭaṭ*, 4:193; Muḥammad Abu Zahrah, *Tārīkh al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah*, (n.p: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, n.d.), 173-175.

¹⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Khuṭaṭ*, 4:193.

²⁰ Zāhid al-Kawtharī, Preface to *Tabyin*, 19.

Baghdad, where al-Shīrāzī selected for his intellectual career, the Ḥanbalites severely criticized the Ash‘arite School and considered them as heretics, and at times the conflicts led to bloodsheds. The Ḥanbalites often denied the Ash‘arites entry into the mosques. Almost at the same period Tughrelbeg, the Seljuqid emperor, officially proclaimed to curse al-Ash‘arī during the Friday sermons, and compelled many Ash‘arite scholars to leave their homelands. At this juncture al-Shīrāzī stood firm and gave his mental, physical as well as intellectual support to the Ash‘arite theology and its scholars. The antipathy of both groups against the Ash‘arites was mainly raised out of misconceptions about the school. Therefore, to clarify the true doctrines of the school and to refute the allegations, al-Shīrāzī issued *fatwās*, sent letters to rulers and wrote books. His works, *Kitāb al-Ishārah ilā Madhhab Ahl al-Ḥaqq* and *‘Aqīdat al-Salaf*, were written with this purpose. The current research is a critical evaluation of his theological thoughts based on his *Kitāb al-Ishārah*, which is considered among the important sources on Ash‘arism, written in its early period.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many researches and studies are available on the theological thoughts of the prominent scholars of Ash‘arism, like al-Bāqillānī, al-Juwainī, and al-Ghazālī who lived before and in the time of al-Shīrāzī. However, there is no adequate study on the views of al-Shīrāzī with respect to *kalām* based on his works in this field. As a notable scholar in the Shāfi‘ite Jurisprudence and the Ash‘arite Theology, he deserves greater significance. This research is expected to fill this gap.

There are many scholars who opine that al-Shīrāzī belonged to the Salafite school, not the Ash‘arites. There is a handful of statements in his books in *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, which give an impression that he was not an Ash‘arite. Those scholars use these

statements to support their view. At the same time, his *Kitāb al-Ishārah ilā Madhhab Ahl al-Ḥaqq*, clearly states that he was an adherent of Ash‘arism.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Who is Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī?
2. What are the major contributions of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī?
3. Is Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī an Ash‘arite or a Salafite?
4. What is the theme of *Kitāb al-Ishārah ilā Madhhab Ahl al-Ḥaqq*?
5. What are the similarities and differences between this book and other similar books in the Sunnī *Kalām*?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

1. To carry out a study on life and contributions of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī.
2. To study the thoughts of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī in *Kalām*.
3. To carry out an in depth study on al-Shīrāzī’s *Kitāb al-Ishārah ilā Madhhab Ahl al-Ḥaqq*.
4. To find out the similarities and differences of opinions between Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī and other scholars of the Sunnī *Kalām*.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

This is a critical study on the thoughts of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī in *Kalām*, with special reference to his *Kitāb al-Ishārah ilā Madhhab Ahl al-Ḥaqq*.

Al-Shīrāzī was a prominent scholar who proved his scholarship in many disciplines such as *Fiqh*, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, *Kalām* and History. It is difficult, in such a study, to cover all aspects of his thoughts and contributions. Therefore, this research will focus on his views in *Kalām*. It will specifically refer to *Kitāb al-Ishārah ilā Madhhab Ahl al-Ḥaqq*, which is the major work that explains his views in this field.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This is an attempt to conduct a thorough study on the thoughts of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī in *Kalām*. In spite of being a prominent figure in the Ash‘arite school of thought, there is no extensive study of his thoughts in *Kalām*, by returning to his works in this field. As one of the early scholars of the Ash‘arite School, he is an inevitable one for the students of Islamic theological schools. Moreover, his *Kitāb al-Ishārah* is a concise version of the Ash‘arite School which attempts to elaborate the real tenets of the School without going into too much complexity.

At the same time, there are still misconceptions about the Ash‘arite school on one hand and the stance of al-Shīrāzī towards it, on the other. While the majority of Muslims and most of the prominent scholars who came after al-Ash‘arī adhere to this school, many others considered it not to be a part of *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah*. So, it is significant to revisit the tenets of Ash‘arite school, and to find out as to whether they held any views in contrary to the statutes of the Qur’ān, the Sunnah, and the views of the pious ancestors. Therefore, the researcher hopes, this research will be significant, useful and relevant.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is mainly divided into two parts. The first is to carry out a thorough study on the life and the thoughts of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī. The biography of al-Shīrāzī had been mentioned by almost all Islamic encyclopedias on biographies of the Muslim scholars. They present many details of his life. Despite these attempts, two books on his life, as far as the researcher is concerned, were published in Arabic. The first one is *al-Imām al-Shīrāzī: Hayātuhu wa Ārā'uhu al-Uṣūliyyah* by Dr. Muḥammed Ḥasan Hītū. This book provides adequate information about his life. This book is helpful to understand his life and views, and it also gives detailed description on his position and influence during that time. Nevertheless, this book is insufficient to understand his views in *Kalām* because it concentrates on his views in *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*. Even the name of *Kitāb al-Ishārah ilā Madhhab Ahl al-Ḥaqq* is not mentioned among his works.

The second book on him is *Al-Imām Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī Bayna al-'Ilm wa al-'Amal wa al-Mu'taqad*, by Zakariyyah 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Maṣrī. The author gives much space to elucidate the *Kalāmī* views of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī. He explains the different views by the scholars regarding the stand of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī with respect to *Kalām*, as to whether he belongs to Ash'arism or Salafism. Finally he arrives at the conclusion that al-Shīrāzī was a Salafite scholar. Here the researcher feels that, as it is clear from 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Miṣrī's notes on *Kitāb al-Ishārah ilā Madhhab Ahl al-Ḥaqq* while mentioning it among the works of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī, he did not see the book. For *Kitāb al-Ishārah* gives strong and solid evidence on his attachment to the Ash'arism. Consequently, this study seems to be a speculative analysis on al-Shīrāzī's views in *Kalām*. Therefore, it is inadequate to understand his views.

‘Abd al-Majīd Turkī, in his forwards to *Sharḥ al-Luma’* and *Kitāb al-Ma‘ūnah fī al-Jadal*, two books written by al-Shīrāzī, gives a study on the life of the author. He also makes a brief account of his doctrinal position. In his study of the life of al-Shīrāzī, ‘Abd al-Majīd Turkī, mainly depends, among others, on George Makdisi’s, *Ibn ‘Aqil et la resurgence de l’Islam traditionaliste au XIe siècle (Va siècle de l’hègire)*, which is written in French. Despite these attempts, as the first head of the Nizāmiyyah Institute of Baghdad, al-Shīrāzī’s name repeatedly is found in many books, while mentioning this institute.

The second part of the research is to make an analytical and critical analysis on the thoughts of al-Shīrāzī in *Kalām*, with special reference to *Kitāb al-Ishārah*. This book has been translated into French, decades ago, namely, *La Profession de foi d’Abū Ishāq al-Sīrāzī*. It was edited and introduced by Marie Bernand. Muḥammad al-Sayyid al-Jalaynād has edited the original version of *Kitāb al-Ishārah*, in Arabic. In his introduction to the work, al-Jalaynād gives a background study on the methods of the early scholars (*Salaf*) with respect to *Kalām*. However, his introduction cannot be considered as a study on the book as it is a defense from the Salafite point of view.

With regards to the discipline of *Kalām*, a wide range of collections are available, both in Arabic and English, written by early and contemporary scholars. Those collections will be useful and are referable for making an extensive and meaningful study and critical evaluation on the book.

1.7 METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

Principally, this research relies upon qualitative method. The methodology is based on library research. In order to accomplish the objectives of this research, the

researcher utilizes principal approaches, namely, historical, analytical, textual and comparative.

The first part of this research analyzes the life of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī. This part discusses his educational life, professional career, major contributions and social and intellectual back ground of his time.

The second part is a study on the thoughts of al-Shīrāzī in *Kalām* with special reference to *Kitāb al-Ishārah*. In this section, the researcher makes a study on the views of al-Shīrāzī, and highlights those issues, which are controversial among various schools in *Kalām*. In order to make the research relevant, data is collected from the early and contemporary Muslim and non-Muslim writings.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

The research is divided into five chapters. The First Chapter provides a general background of research and includes the statement of the problem, research questions and objectives, scope and significance of the research and a brief literature review.

The Second Chapter is a thorough analysis on the life and scholarship of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī. The research explores his Educational life, his position in the society and his works. Thereupon the research attempts to understand the political, social, economic, religious and intellectual conditions of his time.

The Third Chapter focuses on the theological position of al-Shīrāzī by focusing on his *Kitāb al-Ishārah*. In the venture, the research first looks at the theological position of al-Shīrāzī, as to whether he was a Salafite or an Ash‘arite. In order to reach a meaningful conclusion to this long debated issue, the research explores his stand in various instances related to this issue as well as his *fatwās* and theological works. After this, the research gives a detailed description on the issues which led to