

The Methodology of Content Organisation, Evidential Reasoning, and Writing Style in *Taqrīb Al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id Al-'Īmān* by Shaykh Abdul Qadir Bin Wangah

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ABSTRACT

Taqrīb al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-'Īmān is one of the scholarly works of Shaykh Abdul Qadir bin Wangah that played a significant role in disseminating the creed of Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah among Muslim communities in the Malay World, particularly in Patani. Nevertheless, studies examining the methodology employed in the composition of this work remain limited. This article therefore aims to analyse the methodology adopted by Shaykh Abdul Qadir in this work from three principal perspectives: the organisation of content, the approach to evidential reasoning, and the writing style. This study employs a qualitative library-based research approach by analysing the primary text of the treatise as its main source, while relevant works on Islamic theology (*'aqīdah*) and related scholarly studies are consulted as secondary sources. The data were analysed using descriptive and thematic content analysis. The findings reveal that the contents of the treatise are systematically organised into five major sections. In terms of evidential methodology, both textual evidence (*dalīl naqlī*) and rational evidence (*dalīl 'aqlī*) are employed in establishing the attributes of Allah and His Messengers. With regard to writing style, the use of everyday language and a wide range of illustrative comparisons facilitates the communication of theological concepts. In conclusion, the methodology adopted in this treatise demonstrates Shaykh Abdul Qadir's ability to integrate scholarly rigour with an effective and accessible approach to theological writing.

Keywords: *Taqrīb al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-'Īmān*, Shaykh Abdul Qadir bin Wangah, content organisation methodology, evidential methodology, writing methodology.

INTRODUCTION

The production of theological (*'aqīdah*) works by local Muslim scholars constituted one of the key factors contributing to the dissemination and consolidation of the creed of *Ahl al-Sunnah Wa al-Jama'ah* within the Islamic intellectual tradition of the Malay World. Through these works, authentic theological teachings were systematically transmitted, providing the Muslim community with authoritative guidance in addressing deviant theological doctrines and safeguarding orthodox belief.

Taqrīb al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-'Īmān is one of the significant theological works authored by Shaykh Abdul Qadir bin Wangah, reflecting a well-structured methodology that was carefully tailored to the level of understanding of the Patani Malay community. Although several previous studies have examined this work, its methodology of content organisation, evidential approach, and writing style have yet to be comprehensively investigated. Accordingly, this article aims to analyse the methodology employed in *Taqrīb al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-'Īmān* by focusing on these three principal aspects.

Shaykh Abdul Qadir bin Wangah: A Brief Biographical Overview

The full name of the scholar, as recorded in his own writings, is Abdul Qadir bin Wangah bin Abdul Latif bin Uthman. In some of his works, his name is accompanied by his scholarly designation and institutional affiliation as *Shaykh Ma'had al-Islāmī*, Wakaf Budi, Sekam, Mayor, Patani (Ahmad Fathy, 2013). In addition, the Patani community referred to him by various honorifics and appellations, including Haji Dir Sekam, Ayah Dir Sekam, Tok Ayah Dir, Ayah Dir, Ayah, Dir, and Abang Haji (Muhd Syamil, 2021) (Najib Soleh, 2026).

Shaykh Abdul Qadir was born in Kampung Sekam, Palas, in the Patani region of Southern Thailand in 1340 AH (1921 CE). His father was Wangah bin Abdul Latif, while his mother was affectionately known as Hajah Mek Teh (Ahmad Fathy, 2013). According to Najib Soleh (2016), neither Wangah nor Hajah Mek Teh were religious figures or individuals of notable social standing within the local community; rather, they were ordinary villagers. Among Shaykh Abdul Qadir's siblings was Haji Daud, who served as the imam of Kampung Sekam Mosque in Palas, Patani (Majalah Pengasuh, 2010).

Shaykh Abdul Qadir commenced his formal education in his birthplace of Patani, where he pursued his studies for more than a decade. His early education began in his native village of Sekam, where he learned to recite the Quran and read the Jawi script. In 1356 AH, he enrolled at Pondok Balor, where he studied under Haji Ahmad bin Muhammad Darawi, better known as Tok Balor. After four years at Pondok Balor, he continued his studies for two years at Pondok Haji Ahmad Kubang Pasir, followed by five years at Pondok Pusan, also known as Pondok Perigi, under the guidance of Haji Ahmad bin Abdul Wahab al-Fusani, a distinguished Patani scholar renowned for his expertise in Usuluddin, Qiraat and astronomy (*falak*) (Majalah Pengasuh, 2010).

According to Muhd Syamil (2021), Shaykh Abdul Qadir's educational journey was not confined to Patani. In his pursuit of advanced religious knowledge, he travelled to both Kelantan and Makkah. In 1368 AH, he began studying in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, where he remained for nearly two years under the tutelage of several prominent scholars. Among his teachers was Haji Abdullah Tahir of Bunut Payong, one of the distinguished students of Tok Kenali (Ahmad Fathy, 2013). Haji Abdullah Tahir was a recognised authority on *Shafi'ī* jurisprudence and the founder of Madrasah Ahmadiyah Bunut Payong in Kota Bharu (Ismail, 2021). During his stay in Kelantan, Shaykh Abdul Qadir also studied with Haji Muhammad Nur Ibrahim Penambang and Haji Ali Salahuddin Pulau Pisang at Masjid Muhammadi, Kota Bharu (Ahmad Fathy, 2013).

Shaykh Abdul Qadir subsequently travelled to Makkah in 1370 AH, where he pursued his studies for five years. During this period, he devoted himself to a wide range of Islamic disciplines, including the instrumental sciences (*'ulūm al-ālat*), such as Arabic grammar (*nahw*) and morphology (*ṣarf*), as well as Usuluddin and Fiqh. Nevertheless, only two of his teachers in Makkah have been identified in the available sources: Shaykh Wan Ismail bin Wan Abdul Qadir, who taught Usuluddin and Wak Din Besut, who specialised in Fiqh. This limited record is attributable to the predominantly private nature of his studies in Makkah. Rather than attending large public study circles, he preferred to receive instruction directly in his teachers' homes in small and more specialised learning groups (Ahmad Fathy, 2013).

Upon returning to Patani in 1375 AH, Shaykh Abdul Qadir established a traditional Islamic boarding institution (*pondok*) in Kampung Wakaf Budi, Sekam, known as *al-Ma'had al-'Islāmī* (Abdul Mukti, 2019). According to Ahmad Fathy (2013), he taught three principal disciplines at the institution—Usuluddin, Fiqh and Tafsir—for nearly thirty-five years. Throughout this period, he relied primarily on Jawi and Arabic texts as the principal teaching references. His dedication to teaching produced numerous accomplished students, several of whom later assisted him in disseminating Islamic knowledge. Among them were Haji Hussin Ijok, Yusuf Kok Tal, and Mat Nipis, whom he appointed as teaching assistants.

According to Mohammad Aizuddin (2020, p. 585), Shaykh Abdul Qadir's educational activities extended beyond the *pondok* setting. He regularly conducted public classes on Usuluddin and Fiqh in mosques, *surau* (prayer halls) and community halls located near his residence. One of his principal teaching venues was the *Jāmi'* Mosque of Patani, where he delivered lessons every Friday. Although these sessions were intended for the general public, he did not limit himself to informal lectures. Instead, he consistently employed classical Jawi texts that were widely recognised and studied by the local Muslim community, including *Farīdah al-Farā'id*,

Bākūrah al-Amānī, Sirāj al-Ḥudā, Kifāyah al-Muḥtadī, Munyah al-Muṣallī, and Maṭlaʿ al-Badrayn (Ahmad Fathy, 2013).

In addition to founding a *pondok* and devoting himself to teaching, Shaykh Abdul Qadir made significant contributions to Islamic scholarship through his prolific writings. Ahmad Fathy (2013) records that he authored seventeen works. However, the present study was able to identify only fourteen, while the remaining three could not be traced. This remarkable literary output distinguished him from many of his contemporaries, including Shaykh Abdul Wahab al-Fusani and Shaykh Wan Ismail al-Fatani. His writings encompass three major branches of Islamic learning: Usuluddin, Fiqh and *Taşawwuf*. All of these works were composed in the Malay language using the Jawi script.

Introduction to *Taqrīb al-ʾIkhwān Fī Taʾallum ʾAqāʾid al-ʾĪmān*

According to Najib Soleh (2026), *Taqrīb al-ʾIkhwān Fī Taʾallum ʾAqāʾid al-ʾĪmān* was one of the two principal texts employed by Shaykh Abdul Qadir in his teaching. The other was *Wasāʾil ʾIlm al-Kalām Raʾfatan Wa Raḥmatan Li al-ʾAwām*. Both works were taught repeatedly and were regarded by the author as essential introductory texts for students seeking a more profound understanding of Islamic theology (*ʾaqīdah*). Among their notable features is the systematic introduction of technical terms commonly encountered in classical theological literature, including *ḥukm al-ʾaql* (rational judgement), *dhāt* (essence), *ṣifāt* (attributes), *jawhar* (substance), *jism* (body), and *ʾaraḍ* (accident).

The title *Taqrīb al-ʾIkhwān Fī Taʾallum ʾAqāʾid al-ʾĪmān* consists of six Arabic words. The first, *taqrīb*, denotes bringing something closer or making it easier to understand. The second, *al-ʾikhwān*, refers to fellow Muslims or brothers in faith. The third, *fī*, means "in," while the fourth, *taʾallum*, means "learning." The fifth, *ʾaqāʾid*, refers to matters of creed or articles of faith, and the sixth, *al-ʾīmān*, signifies faith or belief (al-Marbawi, 1998) (Faisal, 2024). Collectively, the title may be understood as Facilitating the Learning of the Doctrines of Faith for Fellow Muslims, reflecting the author's intention to present the discipline of *ʾaqīdah* in an accessible and systematic manner.

Taqrīb al-ʾIkhwān Fī Taʾallum ʾAqāʾid al-ʾĪmān was completed on 3 Dhu al-Hijjah 1378 AH (Abdul Qadir, 1991). Although the author did not explicitly state the place of composition, the present study argues that the work was most likely completed in Patani. This conclusion is based on the absence of any historical evidence indicating that Shaykh Abdul Qadir travelled outside Patani after returning from Makkah in 1375 AH. Furthermore, only two of his works—*Mabdaʾ al-Fikrah Fī al-Maqūlāt al-ʾAsharah* and *Mabhath al-Kalām Fī ʾIlm al-Kalām*—are known to have been written outside Patani, both during his period of study in Makkah (Majalah Pengasuh, 2010). According to Ahmad Fathy (2013), *Taqrīb al-ʾIkhwān Fī Taʾallum ʾAqāʾid al-ʾĪmān* received widespread acceptance and enjoyed considerable popularity, undergoing eighteen reprints by 1408 AH. For the purposes of this study, the edition published by a printing company located on Jalan Palas Rangkok, Patani, comprising thirty-two pages, has been selected for analysis.

The author does not explicitly state the objectives underlying the composition of *Taqrīb al-ʾIkhwān Fī Taʾallum ʾAqāʾid al-ʾĪmān*. Nevertheless, a comprehensive examination of its contents suggests that the work was written with three principal aims. First, it seeks to cultivate awareness among Muslims, particularly the Patani Malay community, of the obligation to know God through the study of *ʾaqīdah*. Second, it aims to expound the fundamental principles of the creed of *Ahl al-Sunnah Wa al-Jamaʿah*, which every legally accountable Muslim (*mukallaf*) is obliged to understand. Third, it addresses and clarifies several intricate theological issues, including the classification of *kalām* (divine speech), the translation and interpretation of the *ṣifāt maʾānī* (essential attributes), and the theological concept of *mustahīl qadīm*.

Content Organisation of *Taqrīb al-ʾIkhwān Fī Taʾallum ʾAqāʾid al-ʾĪmān*

From the perspective of content organisation, *Taqrīb al-ʾIkhwān Fī Taʾallum ʾAqāʾid al-ʾĪmān* is structured into five principal sections. The first section (pp. 2–7) contains a series of admonitions highlighting the importance of observing religious obligations in worldly life as preparation for the Hereafter. In this section, Shaykh Abdul Qadir (n.d.) also criticises the misconception held by certain members of the Muslim community regarding the

study of *'aqidah*. According to him, the study of Islamic theology should not be confined to memorising the divine attributes; rather, each attribute must be properly understood and affirmed with firm conviction.

The second section (pp. 7–10) discusses the obligation of knowing Allah SWT (*ma'rifat Allah*) as the foremost religious obligation incumbent upon every Muslim. In this section, Shaykh Abdul Qadir (n.d.) explains the three categories of *ḥukm al-'aql* (rational judgement), namely *wājib al-'aql* (rational necessity), *mustahīl al-'aql* (rational impossibility) and *jā'iz al-'aql* (rational possibility), which serve as the conceptual foundation for understanding the attributes of Allah SWT and His messengers. He further emphasises that a correct understanding of *ḥukm al-'aql* is essential to prevent confusion with *ḥukm al-'ādah* (customary or empirical law), which may ultimately compromise one's theological beliefs. This section also provides definitions of God (*tuhan*), the Messenger (*rasul*), and the Prophet (*nabi*).

The third section (pp. 10–30) examines the attributes of Allah, comprising fifteen obligatory attributes (*ṣifāt wājibah*), thirteen impossible attributes (*ṣifāt mustahīlah*), and one permissible attribute (*ṣifah jā'izah*). The fifteen obligatory attributes are classified into the categories of *naṣbiyyah*, *salbiyyah*, *ma'ānī*, and *ma'nawiyyah*. In addition, the work includes a discussion of the attribute of *takwīn*, a subject of theological debate between the Ash'arī and Māturīdī schools (al-Bayjūrī, 2019) (Shaykh Abdul Qadir, n.d.). Besides explaining the meaning of each attribute, the author separates every discussion using the heading 'bahasan' (discussion), while the evidential explanations are introduced under the heading 'percaman' (evidence), except in the discussions of *takwīn* and the *ma'nawiyyah* attributes. Each obligatory attribute is also followed by its corresponding impossible attribute.

Unlike many classical works on Islamic theology, Shaykh Abdul Qadir (n.d.) does not discuss the *ma'nawiyyah* attributes in detail. Instead, he refers to them only briefly and concludes with a concise summary of the differing opinions among scholars of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* regarding this issue. Similarly, his discussion of *istighnā'* (self-sufficiency) and *iftiqār* (dependence), which represent the essential meaning of the first part of the *shahādah*, is presented before the discussion of Allah's permissible attribute. This arrangement differs from that of most classical theological texts, in which these topics are usually discussed only after the exposition of all the divine attributes.

The fourth section (pp. 30–32) discusses the attributes of the messengers, consisting of four obligatory attributes, four impossible attributes, and one permissible attribute. In contrast to the preceding section, Shaykh Abdul Qadir does not introduce each discussion with the heading 'bahasan'. Likewise, the evidential explanations are no longer identified by the heading 'percaman', but instead are introduced simply under the heading 'dalil' (evidence). Furthermore, unlike earlier theological works such as *Farīdah al-Farā'id* and *Bākūrah al-Amānī*, this section does not explicitly relate these attributes to the second part of the *shahādah*.

The fifth and final section (p. 32) concludes the work with a series of exhortations addressed to the Muslim community. Shaykh Abdul Qadir emphasises two principal points. First, he urges Muslims to study Islamic theology under qualified scholars so as to avoid remaining *muqallid* (one who follows religious beliefs without evidence) and to safeguard themselves from theological confusion. Second, he stresses the importance of mastering fundamental theological terminology, including *dhāt* (essence), *ṣifah* (attribute), *jism* (body), *jawhar* (substance), *jirm* (corporeal entity), *jawhar fard* (indivisible atom), and *'araḍ* (accident), as these concepts constitute the foundation for understanding the more intricate discussions of Islamic theology.

Methodology of the Evidential Approach in *Taqrīb al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-Īmān*

Textual evidence (*dalīl naqlī*) and rational evidence (*dalīl 'aqlī*) constitute the two fundamental sources of theological reasoning in the methodology of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*. *Dalīl naqlī* encompasses the Qur'an, the Prophetic Sunnah and scholarly consensus (*ijmā'*), whereas *dalīl 'aqlī* comprises logically structured arguments that produce certainty in the human intellect (Muhammad Rashidi, 2013). In *Taqrīb al-Ikhwān fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-Īmān*, Shaykh Abdul Qadir employs both forms of evidence, particularly in his discussion of the attributes of Allah and those of the messengers. Nevertheless, his use of *dalīl naqlī* is confined to Quranic verses and *mutawātir* reports, while his rational arguments are primarily presented through the framework of *al-qiyās al-manṭiqī* (logical syllogism).

Al-qiyās al-manṭiqī is one of the methods of indirect reasoning (*al-istidlāl ghayr al-mubāshir*). It produces a conclusion (*al-natījah*) through a series of logically ordered propositions (*al-qadāyā*) that are accepted by both parties engaged in argumentation (al-Maydānī, 2015). According to al-Fadānī (2015, pp. 64, 81), *al-qiyās al-manṭiqī* may be analysed from two perspectives. The first is the perspective of *al-ṣūrah*, which concerns the structural arrangement of the premises. From this perspective, *al-qiyās al-manṭiqī* comprises two forms: *al-qiyās al-iqtirānī* (categorical syllogism) and *al-qiyās al-istithnā'ī* (conditional syllogism). The second is the perspective of *al-māddah*, which concerns the nature of the premises employed in the syllogism. From this perspective, five categories are recognised: *al-qiyās al-burhānī*, *al-qiyās al-jadalī*, *al-qiyās al-iqnā'ī*, *al-qiyās al-shi'rī*, and *al-qiyās al-sufasṭā'ī*.

Based on the studies of Ahmad Hafiz (2012) and Nur Syazwani (2024), Shaykh Abdul Qadir incorporates both dimensions of *al-qiyās al-manṭiqī* in *Taqrīb al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-'Īmān*. With respect to *al-ṣūrah*, he employs both *al-qiyās al-iqtirānī* and *al-qiyās al-istithnā'ī*. The inferential pattern (*al-'intāj*) adopted in his categorical syllogisms follows *al-shakl al-awwal* (the first figure), whereas his conditional syllogisms employ the mode of denying the consequent (*nafyu al-tālī*), which necessarily entails the denial of the antecedent (*nafī al-muqaddam*).

From the perspective of *al-māddah*, however, his reasoning is confined exclusively to *al-qiyās al-burhānī* (demonstrative syllogism). This approach is consistent with the epistemological framework of Islamic theology, in which doctrinal beliefs must be established solely upon premises that yield certainty (*yaqīn*) (Muhammad Rashidi, 2018).

In contrast to his extensive use of rational evidence, Shaykh Abdul Qadir employs textual evidence only in a limited number of discussions concerning the attributes of Allah and the messengers. With regard to the divine attributes, *dalīl naqlī* is cited only in the discussions of *Qidam* (pre-eternity), *Baqā'* (everlastingness), and *Mukhālafatuhu li al-Ḥawādith* (absolute dissimilarity to created beings).

The arguments for *Qidam* and *Baqā'* are both supported by the same Quranic evidence, namely verse 3 of *Sūrat al-Ḥadīd*, whereas the discussion of *Mukhālafatuhu li al-Ḥawādith* is supported by verse 11 of *Sūrat al-Shūrā*. In the discussion of the attributes of the messengers, textual evidence appears only in relation to the attribute of *Tablīgh* (conveying the divine message) and the permissible attribute (*ṣifah jā'izah*). The former is substantiated by verse 7 of *Sūrat al-Ḥashr*, while the latter is established through *mutawātir* reports.

Writing Style Methodology in *Taqrīb al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-'Īmān*

According to Muhd Syamil (2021), the writings of Muslim scholars constitute an important source of guidance for the lives of Muslims. Consequently, writing style plays a crucial role in encouraging readers to engage with and benefit from the intellectual heritage transmitted by the '*ulamā'*' (Islamic scholars).

In this regard, Shaykh Abdul Qadir demonstrates a distinctive writing style in *Taqrīb al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-'Īmān*, reflecting his unique approach to communicating theological knowledge (*'aqīdah*) to audiences from diverse educational and social backgrounds. His writing methodology in this work may be summarised into two principal characteristics: the use of everyday conversational language and the extensive use of illustrative analogies.

The consistent use of everyday conversational language throughout *Taqrīb al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-'Īmān* facilitates the presentation of theological discussions, which are often regarded as complex and inaccessible to the general public. This approach not only enhances readers' and students' comprehension but also reflects Shaykh Abdul Qadir's commitment to encouraging the local Muslim community to pursue the study of the religious sciences, particularly '*aqīdah*'. By making theological concepts more accessible, this method enables readers to develop a deeper appreciation of Islamic theology and to translate their understanding into everyday religious practice.

Another distinctive feature of Shaykh Abdul Qadir's writing is his extensive use of illustrative analogies, both in *Taqrīb al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-'Īmān* in particular and in his presentation of Islamic theology more

generally. He even characterises those who are reluctant to employ abundant examples in explaining theological concepts as being ignorant and arrogant. To support this pedagogical approach, he cites Qur'anic passages that employ parables and analogies to illustrate the characteristics of particular groups or situations. These Qur'anic parables are referred to as *amthāl al-Qur'ān*. One example is Allah's statement in *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2:17), which likens the hypocrites to people who kindle a fire, thereby illustrating their condition after having received guidance (Abdul Qadir, n.d.).

CONCLUSION

The methodology employed in *Taqrīb al-'Ikhwān Fī Ta'allum 'Aqā'id al-'Īmān* reflects Shaykh Abdul Qadir bin Wangah's scholarly expertise in systematically organising its contents, adopting a coherent evidential approach, and employing an engaging yet accessible writing style. The integration of these three key methodological features establishes the work not only as an effective instructional text but also as an important reference within the tradition of Islamic theological (*'aqidah*) studies in the Malay World, particularly among the Muslim community of Patani. Accordingly, the methodology of this work deserves greater scholarly attention as a model of theological writing that demonstrates both significant academic value and enduring pedagogical effectiveness.

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