

AL-BĀQILLĀNĪ'S CRITIQUE TO MU'TAZILITES ON THE CREATEDNESS OF THE QUR'ĀN^(*)

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to delineate al-Bāqillānī's responses to the Mu'tazilites' views on the createdness of the Qur'ān. As an Ash'arite, al-Bāqillānī criticised some theological doctrines related to the topic formulated by this group; the meaning of speech, its division, several relevant verses of the Qur'ān and hadith dealing with the createdness of the Qur'ān, and how God speaks to human beings. He obviously shows his capacity and attempts to maintain the mainstream of Ash'arites' theological framework. Through this study, the author concludes that his theological principles based on the rationalistic way in understanding revelation. A combination of both methods of applying revelation and reason in a harmonious and appropriate way - makes this school more flexible and correct, and hence acceptable in the Muslim community. In this research, the approach that has been applied is textual analysis, using descriptive and analytical methods to investigate and analyze primary sources related to the issues. It also adopts the historical method to scrutinize several events on the subject.

Keywords: *Mu'tazilite, Ash'arite, the Qur'ān, theology, speech.*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

One of the pivotal problematic theological discourses is the createdness of the Qur'ān. The Mu'tazilites firmly believe in this doctrine which created reactions amongst the Ash'arite theologians, including al-Bāqillānī. He argued against the Mu'tazilites' notion through several arguments concerning issues of definition of speech, its division and characteristics, and how God's communication to human beings. In this study, the discussion highlights the theological discourse of the createdness of the Qur'ān which involves the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites, notably represented by al-Bāqillānī. The elucidation of his notions will be elaborated in the following discussion. Before we discuss further, we would like to explicate the background of the problem of the createdness of the Qur'ān in the Islamic theological discourse.

1.1 Background of the Createdness of the Qur'ān

The issue of the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān is one of the significant problems in the Islamic theological discourse. Two major schools, the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites, are completely engrossed in this polemic for it deals with one of the fundamental matters concerning the attributes of God, which is His speech. The debate here questions the understanding whether God has this attribute or not. Those who believe that God does not have this attribute would maintain that He created His speech. In other words, they hold that the Qur'ān is created in nature for it is part of His creation. Here, they try to purify God by rejecting all of His attributes in His Essence. This belief is the result of one of their five fundamental principles stated on the doctrine of *tawhid* (the unity of God) (al-Hamadānī, 1996:528). By the time of al-Ma'mūn (d. 217H/833CE.) this crucial problem was used to test the stand of the *ulama* whether they accept the notion of the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān or not. This order called by "*the Miḥna*". al-Ma'mūn made this doctrine become the standard question addressed to several different groups of people: theologians, jurists, *qālī*, and traditionists (al-Tabarī, 8:631). This was pursued by later caliphs after him like al-Mu'taṣim (d. 225 H/842 C.E.), al-Wāthiq (d. 230 H/847 C.E.), but was totally stopped at the time of al-Mutawakkil (d. 244 H/861 C.E.). A notable person in this event is Aḥmad ibn al-xanbal. He was the one who became the exemplified theologian who strongly rejected the idea of the createdness of the Qur'ān as promoted by the Mu'tazilites (al-Tabarī, 9:190). Principally, he maintained the Qur'ān is the speech of God and uncreated. As a result, he was prisoned during the period of al-Ma'mūn until al-Wāthiq, and was released by al-Mutawakkil.

Later on, in the course of the time, Abū al-ḥasan al-Ashʿarī promoted his formulation of theological principle. He attempted to support and develop ibn ḥanbal's theological foundations including the problem of the createdness of the Qurʾān. According to him, the Qurʾān is uncreated in nature because it is the speech of God. He speaks to reveal His messages to human beings. His speech (*kalām Allāh*) is an attribute just like other attributes; Powerful (*qadīr*), Knowing (*ʿalīm*), Living (*ḥayy*), Willing (*murīd*), Investing (*mujīd*), Doing (*fāʿil*), Creating (*khāliq*), Enlivening (*muḥyi*), Killing (*mumīt*), Being Eternal (*qadīm*), and Existing (*maujūd*). These have been revealed by God Himself in the Qurʾān and explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the *hadith* (al-Ashʿarī, 1981:51-68).

The public debate on the createdness of the Qurʾān continued until the time of our figure, Abū Bakr Ibn Ḥayyib al-Bāqillānī. As an Ashʿarite theologian, he was regarded as one of those who started the intellectual initiative to deepen the level of intellectual discourse on some of the principle foundations in the theological thoughts of the Ashʿarite school (Ibn Khaldun, 1992:465). His arguments on the issue of the Createdness of the Qurʾān were mainly addressed to the Muʿtazilites group, which had opposite views. In this attempt, al-Bāqillānī elaborated his arguments into discussion on the problem of God and human speech. His discussion started from the very principle of the problem of the verses of the Qurʾān, traditions and rational arguments. Before we discuss further, we would like to discuss the Muʿtazilites' views in relation to the problem of the createdness of the Qurʾān.

1.2 Muʿtazilītes' Views on the Createdness of the Qurʾān

The Muʿtazilites was one of the major groups which affirmed that the Qurʾān is created. They maintained that God does not have the attribute of speech in His essence. By such a doctrine, they believed that God creates His speech, including the Qurʾān. They believed that God is 'Knowing' by His essence, not by His 'Knowledge,' He is 'Powerful' by His essence (*bi nafsihī*), not by His 'Power,' and he is 'living' by His essence, not by His 'Life.' (al-Sharastānī, n.y:37) According to al-Ashʿarī, not only did the Muʿtazilītes hold such doctrines, but the Kharijītes, the Murjītes, many of the Rāfidītes, and some Zaydītes as well (al-Ashʿarī, 1999:1-244-245).

Denying the attributes of God consequently leads to the belief that the Qurʾān is created. Its logical connection is obvious. When someone says that God has the attribute of speech, this means that he believes in two gods because he

believes in two entities; one is God, the Eternal, another is eternal speech. Wāṣil ibn 'Atā, the founder of this school, from the very beginning asserted that the existence of two eternal gods was impossible. So, when we attach the eternal attributes to God, we are considered as saying that God is more than one, which is impossible. In other words, according to them, if we hold that the Qur'ān is uncreated, then we are mistaken. After all, we affirm two different eternal things which is against monotheism. The affirmation of oneness (*al-tawhīd*) that the Mu'tazilites maintained was more in an absolute sense (Imran, 1988:57). The Mu'tazilites affirmed the use of '*tanzih*' (purification), declaring God to be free from every imperfection and impurity as their main theory. They tried to purify God from the anthropomorphic element of humans. Their rejection of the attributes like living (*hayy*), knowledge ('*alīm*), will (*irādah*), and existing (*maujūd*) was one of the factors that was called *ahl al-tauḥīd*. (Qalshandī, 1992:5-251) Further, some Mu'tazilite *usuliyyuns*, (al-Balkhī, n.y.:391) who agreed upon the createdness of the Qur'ān, asserted that they followed the Islamic sacred law of the ṣanafīte school. However, its founder himself, Abū Hanḍāh, had contradictory principle regarding this matter. He clearly stated in his *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* and *Waṣīyyah* that the Qur'ān is the word of God, and it is uncreated in nature (Hamam, n.y.:24). Furthermore, in his *Wassīyyah* he detailed that the created things are only in its recitation, paper, and ink as he wrote in his fourth testament:

"نقر بأن القرآن كلام الله غير مخلوق وحيه و تنزيهه، والجبر والكاغد والكتابة
كلها مخلوقة لأنها أفعال العباد"

We confess that the Qur'ān is the Speech of God which is uncreated as well as its revelation and coming down...and ink, and paper, and writing are created in nature because they are products of human's work (al-Hanafi, 2009:143).

The Mu'tazilīte school used their method of metaphorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) in dealing with their principles. In the doctrine of the unity of God (*al-Tawhīd*), they divided this teachings into several main topics like the purification of God's Essence, the unification of the attributes of God and His Essence, and the createdness of the Qur'ān ('Imarah, 1988:46-58). They rejected anthropomorphic descriptions in the Qur'ān and *hadīth*. Here, they obviously applied this method for instance, in verse 38: 75:

God said: "O Iblis! What prevents you from prostrating before something which I created with my own hands? Are you too

proud, or are you one of those who think that they are one of the high and mighty ones? ('Abd Allāh Basmeih, 2007:886)

The Mu'tazilites interpreted the meaning of "hands" (*yad*) in this verse as "medium" (al-Zamakhsharī, 1998:5-283) or "grace," (*ni'mah*) and they equated this to the daily usage of the words "I'll give you a hand." (al-Ash'arī, 1981:99-106).

The application of *ta'wil* became one of their main methods to interpret the verses of the Qur'ān as their preference to rely on their logical understanding.

This method is precisely contradictory to Ash'arites' way of understanding verses of the Qur'ān. This group placed their position on those who rely on the verses of the Qur'ān and hadith as scriptural proof (*al-dalīl al-Naqlī*) and rational argument (*al-dalīl al-Aqlī*) (Mahmud, 2001:81). Yet, their preference was dealing with theological principles more than scriptural argument (*al-dalīl al-naqlī*), including in the metaphorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*). Al-Ghazali criticized the excessiveness of application of the metaphorical interpretation as done by the Mu'tazilites, sometimes it leading them to going astray due to its reliance on shallow guess. He himself was more careful in applying that method to the verses of the Qur'ān because it might open some possibilities of falling into mistakes (al-Ghazzalī, 2006: 28).

1.3 The Mu'tazilite's on Definition and Division of Speech

In defining the term 'speech' (*kalām*), a significant Mu'tazilite figure, 'Abd al-Jabbār, maintained a different definition from the Ash'arites. According to him, speech consists of sounds and words that happen in a particular way. He stated:

ما انتظم من حرفين فصاعدا، أو ما له نظام من الحروف مخصوص

What is arranged from two words or more, or what is arranged from certain words (Abd al-Jabbar, 1962:529).

This definition is quite similar to some grammarians' point of view, like Ibn Jinn. He also defined 'speech' (*kalām*) as 'every independent word which is meaningful'. The statement like 'Zaid is your brother' (*Zaidun akhūka*) and 'Muhammad is standing' (*Muhammad qāim*) are regarded as speech, since they are meaningfully complete sentences (Ibn Jinnī, n.y.:17). So, speech, according to them is all arranged letters which have a certain meaning. The above definition is contradictory to the Ash'arite's perspective. Following al-Kullābiya, Abū al-xasan al-'Asharī defined the term 'speech' (*kalām*) as 'meaning existing in the

soul' (*ma'na al-qāim fī al-nafs*) (al-Sahrastānī, n.y.:288). This definition supported by the Quranic verse al-Imrān: 167 ('Abd al-Jabbār, 7:17). However, 'Abd al-Jabbār interpreted this verse differently. He argued that this verse merely shows that the statement of the hypocrites is different from what they believed in their heart. They did not say honestly as they preferred to hide his stance (Ibid). Furthermore, 'Abd al-Jabbār explained that the meaning in the soul is the sound itself, (Ibid., 15) "فإنَّ الأصوات أيضًا هي معنى في النَّفس" and what appears in our heart when we plan to do something, we call it 'firm intention' or 'will' ('azm) (Ibid., 17). The relationship of the meaning in the soul is also called by 'Abd al-Jabbār as hidden speech (*kalām khafiy*) (Ibid., 7:16).

Regarding God's speech, al-Mu'tazilites also equate God's speech with human's speech. They did not differentiate them. God's speech in this world consists of two and more arranged letters, the same as the speech that belongs to human beings. It is possible for a man to speak as well as how God speaks (ibid., 5). Since speech is the genus sound, so every speech is sound. Speech may also be produced by angels and demons (*jinn*) (Ibid., 16). Therefore, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār there no special things belong to God's speech in comparison to man's speech. This concept consequently leads to the division of speech.

In terms of division of speech, the Mu'tazilites divided the speech into different aspects. Abū al-Husain Muhammad ibn 'Alī, explaining his teacher's statement regarding this division, stated that speech is divided into two: non-communicative (*muhmal*) and communicative (*musta'mal*). The communicative speech (*mufīd*) is further divided into command (*amr*), prohibition (*nahy*), and information (*khabr*) (Ibn Tayyib, 1974:21). Those speeches are regarded communicative depending on one condition which follows the convention and agreement of the people regarding the meaning of the words since it relates to the origin of language. Even though this division, as told by 'Abd al-Jabbār, is believed by the philologists' perspective, he agreed upon this notion (Abd al-Jabbār, 7:10). Therefore, he claimed that God's speech which is *qadīm*, as believed by the Ash'arites and Kullābiya, will not necessarily be communicative since its meaning involves the agreement of the people (Ibid., 102).

Thus, al-Mu'tazilites' definition of speech is focused on the arranged letters and sounds, while, the division of speech comprises non-communicative (*muhmal*) and communicative (*musta'mal*). The communicative speech (*mufīd*) divided into command (*amr*), prohibition (*nahy*), and information (*khabr*). This concept would be made clearer by the following discussion on how speech should be expressed.

1.4 Mu'tazilites' Views on God's Speech

In the following discussion, 'Abd al-Jabbār analyzed how human beings know God's speech. This is through the process of understanding eloquence (*balāghah*) and fluency (*fasāhah*). By such means, someone could grasp God's speech. This was proven by evident of the fact in history, that the Arab people could not surpass the Qur'ān, which is God's speech. Even though they were expert in both eloquence (*balāghah*) and fluency (*fasāhah*), the Qur'ān was more superior than their ability. This fact indirectly informs us that they understood the Qur'ān as God's speech even though they could not compete with it. (Ibid., 180).

'Abd al-Jabbār affirmed that God's speech must be good like the rest of His acts. This is necessarily true, since if His speech is bad then it is impossible for Him. In this case, being bad speech, His speech would lead to no relationship to His Essence and His sound, nor to terms known through the agreement of philologists and their invention (*muwālā'ah*) as well as to the non-communicative speech (*muḥmal*). That speech also does not have a link to command, prohibition, and information (Ibid., 182). Therefore, this stance could infer that God's speech is communicative which gives benefit, meaning to addresses (*mukhātab*) and the burdened people (*mukallaḥ*). By this evidence, those who believe that God's speech is pre-existent (*qadīm*), they obviously could not demonstrate the purpose of the burden (*taklīf*) of God because to know that purpose does not require one to know the essence but the attribute of will. Therefore, to know God's purpose in His command is through His speech which is originated. This should also be related to the convention of the people regarding some words stated by God (Ibid).

'Abd al-Jabbār affirmed that God's speech must be communicative. It consists of all words agreed upon human beings regarding their meanings. Therefore, His speech is relevant for command, prohibition, and information. In the process of communication, the idea that the language is the product of convention (*muwālā'ah*) would become the standard of communication either for God or human beings. The communicative speech should give benefit to all divisions of speech: command, prohibition, and information. This speech has particular meaning and purpose which indicates to one of those elements. It is not ambiguous which could be understood from different views (Ibid., 104). Furthermore, to regard speech is communicative, it could be analyzed through understanding the arrangement of letters which has logical meaning. Not all arranged letters may give meaning. The word *za*, *ya*, and *da*, could mean *zaidun* (the name of a person). However, it could be understood differently (Ibid., 105). It is also impossible for someone to utter new language, except those terms have

been agreed upon us regarding their meanings (Ibid., 183). The same thing for the Qur'ān, the speech of God. As claimed by Abd al-Jabbar, those who believed that the Qur'ān is pre-existent (*qadīm*), their belief would be invalid. Because the Qur'ān is non-communicative, therefore, it does not have benefit to those who read it (Ibid., 106) and indicates its invalidity (Ibid., 107). Furthermore, God speech would be regarded non-communicative if it is created by God, either its word or meaning (*tawqīfī*) as human beings do not understand the meaning of that statement as well as the command (Ibid., 102). Also, those who believe that God may lie, they mean His speech is non-communicative. It is invalid to be command since it is useless (Ibid., 1845).

In short, God's speech is communicative. It is known through the convention of the people regarding the meaning of it. To know God's purpose in His instruction, as in the form of command, prohibition, and information, is through His speech which is originated. On the contrary, God's speech is non-communicative if it is pre-existent (*qadīm*). Because the instruction is also in the form of *tawqīfī*, therefore, the people would not be able to grasp God's speech. By virtue of this manner and understanding, God's speech is non-communicative.

1.5 Mu'tazilites' Views on How God speaks to human Beings

Having discussed the characteristics of God's speech from the Mu'tazilites' point of view, we would analyse their thoughts on how God speaks to human beings. As stated in the Quranic verse of (al-Shura: 51), according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, God makes speech on the body while the speaker is unknown. In this condition, His message is audible ('Abd al-Jabbār, n.y. 607) while the speaker is invisible. In another words, God should create substrate in which He speaks. This also becomes speaking of God.

Moreover, a later Mu'tazilite, al-Zamakhsharī, also analyzed this verse that God communicates to man through three different ways. First is that God reveals through spritual inspiration (*ilhām*), and in the heart or dream (*qadhf*), like He revealed to the mother of Moses to let her baby under supervision of the royal family, and Prophet Abraham in commanding him to slaughter his son. Second is that God communicates to man from behind a veil. It could only be heard through His sounds and messages like a king communicates to his assistants without showing his appearance for he talks behind a veil. God may create bodies in which the listener could not see who is speaking. Here, at the same time he also could not see the essence of God. Third is that God sends a messenger to delivers His messages to people. Through the mediation of the angel, he comes

to the messenger and delivered the messages from God, and continues to be passed to all his people (al-Zamakhsharī, 1998, 5:421). From the aforementioned description of the two Mu'tazilites figure, it seems their ideas delineated that God communicates to human beings by creating something, like a body, in which He speaks with it. Since God's speech needs a substrate to communicate, He will not speak to human beings without it. Speaking is making speech. This is temporary and originated in nature.

The foregoing discussion on the Mu'tazilites' principle regarding the createdness of the Qur'ān is clear. They believed that God does not have any attributes. If we agree that Allah has those attributes means we believe in two eternal existences of gods, which is impossible. They stressed that God is 'knowing' by His essence, not His 'knowledge', He is 'powerful' by His essence, not His 'power' and He is 'living' by His essence, not by His 'life'. In addition, since they maintained that speech is his action instead of God's attributes. Consequently, the Qur'ān is created as well. They defined that speech as merely sound and arranged letters. By this definition, all speeches are the same. There is no differences between the speech of God and the speech of human beings. Furthermore, the Mu'tazilites' principle in understanding theological issues was founded on rationalistic approach in dealing with any theological thoughts. Their preference in applying on rational basis placed this school parallel with other groups like Shi'ītes and Khawārij which declare that God's attributes are pure and free from something else (*tanzīh*) as shown in the history of Islamic civilization (al-Shāfi'ī, 2001:66).

1.6 Orientalists' Views on the Createdness of the Qur'ān

The problem of the createdness of the Qur'ān also became the object of discussion of several Orientalists (McDonald, 1986:146-147). They asserted that this issue has relation to the doctrine of Christianity. There is a possibility it had influenced Islamic theological doctrines. One of the earlier works states:

We can have no difficulty in recognizing that it is plainly derived from the Christian Logos and that the Greek Church, perhaps through John of Damascus, has again played a formative part. (McDonald, 146).

Mc Donald affirms that the createdness of the Qur'ān was basically influenced by the doctrine of Christian Logos. This was the word of God through which Jesus was incarnated. Another Orientalist, Wolfson, elaborates that the issue is just like the problem of attributes related to the doctrine of trinity. He regards that those who believe that the Qur'ān is uncreated like those Christians who hold that Jesus the son of Mary was not created. This was the statement of al-Ma'mūn (d. 217 H/833 CE.) in his instruction when he questioned number

of theologians in his time. Wolfson seems to disagree with the stance of the Mu'tazilite, hence, he promotes his own stance based on his own faith. In addition, it is claimed too that the doctrine of belief in the attributes of God was influenced by the Christian doctrine of the trinity. Relying on John of Damascus, Wolfson supports his ideas on how to debate with the Muslims by raising the issue of the createdness of the Qur'ān as to support this theological doctrine of trinity. The statement in the Qur'ān in al-Nisā: 171, mentioned that Jesus was a God's prophet and word (*kalimah*). This verse, as inferred by John, likens that Christ is pre-existent as the Qur'ān. These are uncreated in nature. However, according to him, a good Muslim who believes in the word of God (*kalām Allah*) in the eternity of the Qur'ān should also hold in the eternity of Christ (Wolfson, 1985:517-518).

The aforementioned discussion elucidates the problem of the createdness of the Qur'ān involving the Mu'talites as well as several Orientalists. Each group has its own interests. In response to them, hence, we would like to highlight our discussion on this topic by examining al-Baqillani's theological arguments related to the issue.

2.0 AL-BĀQILLĀNĪ'S RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES OF THE CREATEDNESS OF THE QUR'ĀN

One of significant figure of al-Ash'arite, al-Bāqillānī, was also involved in the polemical issue of the createdness of the Qur'ān. His arguments were mostly addressed to al-Mu'tazilites, the main group who supported the createdness of the Qur'ān. They maintained that God does not have any attributes. He sees, hears, and speaks with His Essence. On the contrary, al-Bāqillānī affirmed that the Qur'ān is the Speech of God, and it is uncreated. God's speech is one of his attributes like knowing, hearing, and seeing. His attributes are neither His Essence nor separated from it. Therefore, he affirmed that the Qur'ān which is the speech of God (*kalām Allāh*) is uncreated in nature (al-Bāqillānī, 1987:268). In certain arguments on this issue, al-Bāqillānī sometimes tried to develop the principle foundations and defended the theological thoughts of Abū al-xasan al-Ash'arī, the founder of the Ash'arite school.

In this part, the discussion deals with al-Bāqillānī's theological principle, especially on his response to the issue of the createdness of the Qur'ān, and exploring the elaboration of his ideas about this problem and its relationship to the concept of speech. He supported, expanded and developed the Ash'arite's principle based on the Qur'ān, *hadīth*, and rational argument which became his

basic method in the theological discourses (al-Bāqillanī, 30). In terms of the Qur'ān and hadith, he relied his arguments on those principles together with his explanation concerning the issue and its relationship. It is very significant to know al-Bāqillanī's thoughts for both elements are the main foundations of Islamic theology. The Qur'ān is the first source of the principles of Islam, while the *hadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the commentary of it. These foundations, the Qur'ān and hadith, are the main basis of the Islamic theological doctrines. Besides relying on these principles, al-Bāqillanī also based his analysis on rational arguments. In this respect, he used analogy and Arabic linguistic basis. Historically, the reliance on such way had also been practiced by companions of the Prophet, for example, Mu'adh bin Jabal when he was sent to Yemen (Abu Daud, hadith, no.3592, 5:444). By virtue of this manner of understanding his method of argumentation, hopefully this could describe al-Baqillanī's theological position in the problem of the createdness of the Qur'ān in relation to Divine attributes.

2.1 Al-Bāqillanī's Views on Verses Related to the Createdness of the Qur'ān

There are several issues related to the createdness of the Qur'ān. These are disputed by the Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites because they differed in understanding the text. One of which is the concept of creation (*al-khalq*) and command (*al-amr*). These words were understood differently by our figure al-Bāqillanī and the Mu'tazilites. Al-Bāqillanī strongly rejected the createdness of the Qur'ān by his own perspective of those terms. His interpretation of the Quranic verse in al-A'raf: 54,¹ was the elaboration on the work of his earlier theologian, Abū al-xasan al-Ash'arī (al-Ash'arī, 51). In this verse, his senior argued that the term *al-khalq* includes all creatures while the term *al-amr* is not interpreted as creation because it indicates something else. Al-Bāqillanī elaborated his concept saying both terms '*al-khalq*' (creation) and '*amr*' (command) are different terms. His command is not His creature because His Speech consisted of other aspects; prohibition (*nahy*) and information (*khabr*). If the Qur'ān is created in nature then it is a creation (*al-khalq*), therefore, the verse should be stated "...remember, His is the creation (of all things) and the command." (al-Bāqillanī, *al-Tamhid*, 271) This argument gives a clear picture that the Qur'ān which is the Speech of God is uncreated.

¹ Remember, His is the creation (of all things) and the command. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.: "إِلاَّ لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ"

On the contrary, 'Abd al-Jabbār analysed this verse differently. He maintained that the word *al-amr* (command) is included in the term *al-khalq* (creation). He affirmed the word *al-amr* means 'command' which is arranged by some words which originated. This is precisely part of the term *al-khalq* (creation) of God. The differentiation of both terms does not give any speciality of its word. Like verses in al-Aḥzāb: 37¹ and al-Nahl: 90,² here 'Abd al-Jabbār equated the status of all prophets of God with the term 'indecenty' (*al-fahsha*) and wickedness (*al-munkar*) (Abd al-Jabbār, *Mutashabih*, 283-284). Al-Zamakhsharī commented that the verse al-A'raf: 54 is quite similar to 'Abd al-Jabbār's choice of the term 'al-amr' which was inferred as 'will' (*irādah*), while 'al-khalq' was 'creation of everything' (al-Zamakhshar, 3:449-450). Here, he seemed to support the notion of 'Abd al-Jabbār in interpreting that verse. Their concept of the attributes of God is that God does not have those attributes. He wills, sees, and speaks with His essence. So, the term 'will' (*irada*) is part of His creation. Furthermore, if we analyze the above verses, 'Abd al-Jabbār seemed to generalize the function of the word 'waw' in this verse simply to achieve the argument that the term *al-amr* (command) is originated. Therefore, he regarded that it is part of the term *al-khalq* (creation). However, al-Bāqillānī in this matter gave clear-cut understanding that those terms are absolutely different by evidence of the fact that is shown by the word 'waw' which differentiates both words.

The doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān is also caused by misinterpretation of the term 'ja'ala' in some verses of the Qur'ān. Caliph al-Ma'mūn brought up this issue by quoting the verse al-Zukhruf: 3³ in his instruction. This letter addressed to some scholars to test their principle regarding the problem of the createdness of the Qur'ān (al-Tabarī, 5:632-635). Since he preferred the Mu'tazalites' way of thinking, his interpretation had a tendency to be quite similar to them. Based on his comment stated in his letter, he interpreted the word 'ja'alnā,' to mean 'we created,' the same meaning as in al-Anbiyā: 30.⁴ Such interpretation was also supported by the Mu'tazilite commentator, al-Zamakhsharī. In his commentary, he commented that the term 'ja'alnāhu' (we made it) means 'khalaqnāhu' (we created it) which requires one object (al-Zamakhsharī, 5:425). However, al-Bāqillānī rejected this notion through another

¹ And Allah's command must be fulfilled.

² Allah enjoin justice, kindness and charity to one's kindred, and forbid indecenty, wickedness, and oppression.

³ 'Indeed, We have revealed the Qur'ān in Arabic, so that you may understand it (and learn wisdom through your reason).'

⁴ ...and that We made every living thing out of water?.

analysis on this term. He understood the word 'ja'ala' could have three different interpretations. The first meaning of 'ja'ala' is 'to name.' This is based on the verses in al-hijr: 91, al-Zukhruf: 19, Ibrāhīm: 30, al-Māidah: 103, and so on. Second, this term could mean 'to make.'¹ In these verses, the status of Arabic language is obviously to differentiate between the Qur'ān, the Bible (*al-Injil*), and the Old Testament (*al-Taurāt*). The last two Holy books use two different languages; Hebrew and Syriac. Third, normally in linguistic basis, the word 'ja'ala' needs two different objects in its proper sentence which means 'to name'. When it is formed only in one object the meaning could be 'to create'. However, our verse above has in fact two different objects, therefore, its meaning should be 'to name.' (al-Bāqillānī, *al-Insaf*, 123) Here, al-Bāqillānī has further developed the arguments of the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān which was not even mentioned by Abū al-hasan al-Ash'arī. The differentiation of the meaning of the term 'ja'ala' in which he examined is based on the context of the verse. Furthermore, his argument is supported too by a linguist, Ibn Manḏūr (d. 711 H/1312 C.E.). In *Lisān al-'Arab*, the word 'ja'ala' could be placed in three different perspectives; to name, to make, and to create. (Ibn Manzur, n.y. 637-638) All these meanings depend on the context of the structure as well as the verse.

Further problem on the createdness of the Qur'ān is the different interpretation on al-Isrā': 86. The verse elucidates that God, if He Wills, may remove the revealed verse from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This fact has been differently interpreted by some theologians. The Mu'tazilites, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka'bī al-Balkhī (d. 319 H/931 C.E.) and Abū al-Qāsim Jār Allāh Maḥmud ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1074 or 1075 H/ 1143 or 1144 C.E.) inferred this verse to prove that the Qur'ān is created. If it is pre-existent (*qadīm*), it is impossible to disappear from human beings (al-Qāsim, 2007:257). This verse elucidates, according to them, the thing which may lose and disappear is considered as created in nature because it is originated by God. However, al-Bāqillānī argued that the disappeared things which they meant in their doctrine are merely memory (*al-hifẓ*) and letters (*al-rasm*), while the memorized thing (*al-mahfūdz*) remained. This is the Word of God (*Kalām Allāh*). It is supported in narration stated by Ibn Mas'ud (al-Dārimī, 2013, no.3661, 762). This reply obviously shows that memory (*al-hifẓ*) and letters (*al-rasm*) could be lost, whilst the memorized and written thing (*al-mahfūz wa al-maktūb*), which is the Word of God, are impossible to disappear (al-Bāqillānī, *Insaf*, 125) for they are meanings of those aspects. In the other words, the disappearance here is a kind of removal of knowledge from the heart as well as from the Book (*mushaf*), and this does

¹ Indeed, we make our recitation by Arabic language; إنا جعلنا قرأنا عربيا

not necessarily conclude that the meaning of those sentences is originated (*muhdath*) (al-Rāzī, 1983, 11:54-56). Al-Rāzī also replied to al-Ka'bī's notion. He said that his argument is invalid, by repeating al-Bāqillānī's argument. Furthermore, he stressed that by God's mercy the Qur'ān remains in the hearts of the devoted knowledgeable people. Those mercies have been bestowed upon these reasons; the Qur'ān has been made easy to be learnt, and it remains in the memory of those people (Ibid., 21: 54-55).

To uphold the argument of the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān, it is relevant to quote the prophetic tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well regarding the comparison of both God and human's speech. Al-Bāqillānī explained this hadīth elucidates God's speech as incomparable to any other speeches. It is the supreme and ultimate speech of the Creator. He argued that the hadīth supports the Qur'ān as God's speech which is uncreated. It is due to the fact that God's existence is pre-existent (*qidam*) and eternal, whereas all of his creatures are created. This is the same thing as His Speech which is uncreated, while human speech is created and originated. In addition, al-Bāqillānī also argued by stating the other relevant hadith in defense against the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān (al-Baihaqī, hadith no.542 1:605-606). This tradition is supported by the fact in the history of Islamic civilization, that 'Alī ibn Abī Ūālib rejected the arbitration and disbelief in the Kharijites by saying "By God, I did not judge with creatures (*makhlūq*) but I judged with the Qur'ān". This narration was validly approved by Muslim scholars, since there no one of them disapproved its weaknesses (al-Bāqillanī, 117).

In conclusion, the foregoing discussion describes al-Bāqillānī's arguments against the createdness of the Qur'ān. By quoting a number of verses of the Qur'ān and hadith supported by rational analysis, he concluded that the Qur'ān is the speech of God. To clarify further the meaning of the 'speech', to his conception, the next discussion will elaborate on that matter.

2.2 His Definition of Speech (*Kalām*)

In the theological discourse, theologians have their own definition of 'speech' based on their group. Some of them differed in defining this term. Those who believe that speech is God's attributes maintain that He has six other attributes like seeing, hearing, knowing, willing, living, and being powerful. Those attributes are regarded as *al-sifāt al-ma'ānī* (al-Ghazālī, 2003:99). On the contrary, the Mu'tazilites held that God does not have any attributes. They asserted that God

speaks, knows, sees, and wills with His essence. They are people of purification (*ahl al-tanzīh*) (M. al-Shafi'i, 2001:66).

In terms of the definition of speech, al-Bāqillanī promoted his ideas following the Ash'arite school. He defined the speech as below:

الكلام هو معنى قائم في النفس يعبر عنه بهذه الأصوات المقطعة والحروف المنظومة
Speech is meaning existing in the soul expressed by those articulated sounds and arranged letters (al-Bāqillanī, *Taqrib*, 1992:474).

He added that speech is also shown by sign, symbol, arrangement, and script. These aspects provide various parts of speech: command (*amr*), prohibition (*nahy*), information (*khabr*), and asking for information (*istikhbār*). It is neither regarded as command nor prohibition, if it has no relationship to the status of knowledge and all things which relate to the heart of the speaker.

This argument is presented by citing from the Qur'ān in chapters Óli'Imrān: 41, al-Mujādilah: 8, and al-Mulk: 13, while affirming that speech is not considered as proper speech unless it involves these activities which express hidden meaning in the soul and what appears in speech constitutes a manifestation and indication of it (al-Bāqillanī, *Taqrib*, 1998, 1:317). In addition, the definition of speech is made clear too by the Qur'ānic narrative about the hypocrites. In chapter al-Munāfiqūn: 1, they lied about the prophethood of Muḥammad (peace be upon him). In their souls, they held that Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was not a prophet and this is the opposite of their expressed statement acknowledging him as the Prophet (peace be upon him). This kind of attitude, according to al-Bāqillanī, is contradictory to the meaning indicated in the famous line in an Arabic poetry 'Indeed, speech is in the heart, and indeed, voices indicate (the meanings therein).'¹ Therefore, al-Bāqillanī concluded that speech "is meaning existing in the soul expressed by sounds and arranged letters." (Ibid.).

This definition was also stated by a theologian after him, al-Juwaynī (d. 478 H/ 1085 M). He defined 'speech' (*kalām*) as 'speaking existing in the soul, indicated by its expression and signs (*isharat*).' He elucidated the meaning in the soul as active thinking, which is sometimes indicated by expression and proper signs (*ishārāt*). This speech refers to the attribute of self (*sifāt al-nafs*) (*al-Irshad*, 1950: 30-31). Furthermore, to uphold this notion, he illustrated the statement

¹ Al-Bāqillanī, *Al-Taqrib*, 2: 317: الكلام لفي الفؤاد و إنما جعل اللسان على الكلام دليلاً

as of someone who commands something to his servant, the addressee necessarily obeys his command following with his emotion (*wijdān*). The statement depends on the speaker whether it requires him to be recommendable (*mustahab*), permissible (*mubah*), or prohibition (*nahyn*) (al-Juwaynī, 105-107). Furthermore, al-Ghazālī also defined the term 'speech' in responding to the Mu'tazilites. His definition, as stated in *al-Mustasfā*, refers to the meaning (*al-ma'nā*) and object indicated (*madlūl*) are as pre-existent (*qadīm*) while the aspect of the structure (*al-fāḍ*) is originated. In relation to God's speech, he added that God Himself is pre-existent (*qadīm*) as well as His attribute of speech (al-Ghazālī, 2003:114-115). Both al-Ash'arites theologians defined the term 'speech' (*kalām*) as comprising two main aspects; the meaning in the soul (*al-ma'nā al-qāim bi al-nafs*) and the expressions (*al-ibārāt*), which are mainly based on the structure of the words and sentences.

Both elements, however, are excluded from the Mu'tazilites' definition. They asserted different definition of speech from the Ash'arites. 'Abd al-Jabbār maintained that speech consists of sounds and words that happen in a particular way. He explained that the meaning in the soul is the sound itself ('Abd al-Jabbar, 7:15). What appears in our heart when we plan to do something, we call it 'firm intention' or 'will' (Ibid.). The relationship of the meaning in the soul is referred to will and intention. However, this definition is contradictory with the principle of the Ash'arites' definition. It is also contradictory with the verse in al-Imran: 167, which shows the statement of those people with what they believed in their hearts.

To reject this notion, al-Bāqillanī argued that the activity of God's speech is uncreated, unmade, and unproduced. It is eternal since it is one of God's attributes. God's speech does not need various organs such as tongues, lips, and throats or elements like letters and sounds (al-Bāqillanī, *Insaf*, 200). We can infer that the definition above that belongs to Ash'arite theologians is more comprehensive than the one believed by the Mu'tazilites. The speech which is only limited to the arrangement of letters and sounds, which is related to the will and intention of the speaker, does not cover the definition of speech. The meaning of speech which is one of the essential elements of speech is left simply changed by the will as well as the intention of the speaker. One may speak whatever he intends and wills to say, yet the meaning sometimes does not exist in the speech, like a mad man speaking about something consisting words and sounds, but his speech could be meaningless. If we follow 'Abd al-Jabbār's definition, consequently, we may equate between God's speech and human's speech which is unacceptable. This topic will be further discussed in the division of speech.

In conclusion, the definition of speech according to al-Bāqillānī is meaning existing in the soul which is shown by sign, symbol, arrangement, and script. These aspects signify various contents of speech like command (*amr*), prohibition (*nahy*), information (*khabr*), and asking for information (*istikhbār*). Further aspects of speech is elaborated in the division of speech.

2.3 His Divisions and Parts of Speech

The above definition of speech leads us to various parts of this attribute. In this respect, some theologians have slightly different conception of the speech. The speech, which is meaning existing in the soul, has different aspects when it becomes command (*amr*), prohibition (*nahyn*), information (*khabr*), and recommendation (*nadb*). All these elements have their functions based on their divisions.

With regard to the division and aspects of speech, al-Bāqillānī divided speech into two. The first is the speech of God (*kalām al-ḥaq*), which is uncreated and pre-existent, and the other is the speech of human beings (*kalām al-Khalq*) Al-Baqillani, *Insaf*, 200). Both speeches have their meanings, benefits, characteristics, and functions addressed either to a present addressee or an absent one. According to him, speech, which essentially is from meaning in the soul comprises of information (*khabar*), command (*amr*), and prohibition (*nahy*) within their contexts and circumstances (al-Bāqillānī, *Taqrib*, 2:5). In terms of information, God revealed about earlier people and their prophets, (Hud: 25-97; Yusuf: 3-101) past events, (Maryam, 17-32; al-Kahf: 19-25) and several parables (al-al-Nahl, 112, al-Baqarah, 261). All these aspects are meant for Muslims to reflect upon in their life to get lessons from such narratives. In addition to the aspects of speech, a theologian after al-Bāqillānī, ‘Abd al-Qāhir ibn Tāhir al-Tāmīmī al-Baghdādī, had also developed this concepts. According to him, God’s speech consists of command, prohibition, information, promise, and threat. Besides, he held that His speech is pre-existent attribute (*sifat azaliya*) and not originated (*lā muḥdathah*). It happens on substrate (*maḥall*), for accident (‘*ard*) does not exist except on the substrate as well. The substrate of speech (*maḥall al-kalām*) is referred to the one who commands, prohibits, and tells something. If God cannot command and prohibit anything, it means those acts are independent without any substrate. The speech of God eternally becomes command and prohibition if it is related to the ones who are under obligation (*mukallafin*), who perform those command and prohibition after being adult and mature in terms of their thinking. It is impossible to address the command and

prohibition to those who are absent or have not yet come into existence (al-Baghdādī, 1928:106-108).

However, this sort of division does not exist in the Mu'tazilites doctrine. 'Abd al-Jabbār himself did not differentiate between God's speech and human's speech. It is by reason of the fact that angels and *jins* can produce speech too even if we cannot hear them. This view illustrates that there is no superiority among them. Their speeches are the same because they comprise letters and sounds. This argument is obviously rejected by al-Bāqillanī. Based on his concepts as stated above, we can analyse that God's speech is incomparable to that of human's speech. They are extremely different. God's speech is the Speech of the Truth (*Kalām al-Haq*), while human's speech is the speech of creation (*Kalam al-Khalq*). The former belongs to God and the latter to creatures, as clearly stated in chapter al-Shūrā: 11.¹ The comparison of both speech of God and human is belittling the position of God as the Creator to the level of creatures, which is impossible. Hence, it is rejected.

The above division proposed by al-Bāqillanī is also supported by a contemporary scholar of the Qur'an, al-Zarqānī. He relied in defining the speech from Ash'arite's perspective. To him, there are two different speeches; God's speech and human's speech. Each speech consists of two elements; mental basis (*nafsī*) as well as structural basis (*lafzī*). The first is produced by someone who makes mental activity by the process of internal speech in himself which has not yet articulated in his mouth to others. The second is external activity, the so called articulated speech, which is expressed by sounds and letters. In this state, he speaks internally in himself which accords with his external speech. So, there is appropriateness between what he wishes to say in himself and what appears in his expressions through the words. In addition, he supported al-Bāqillanī's arguments relying the Qur'an and the *hadīth*, as stated below:

Allah, the Almighty says in chapter Yūsuf: 77:

﴿فَأَسْرَهَا يُوسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ قَالَ أَنْتُمْ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ﴾

(Hearing this humiliating remark) Yūsuf suppressed his feeling and did not reveal it to them. He said (in his heart): You are in a worse position.

The *hadīth* of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) states:

¹ There is nothing whatever like unto Him: ليس كمثلته شيء وهو السميع العليم

عن أم سلمة أنها سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم و قد سأل رجل فقال: "إني لأحدث نفسي بالشيء لو تكلمت به لأحببت أجرى" فقال عليه السلام: لا يلقى ذلك الكلام إلا مؤمن.

Narrated by Umī Salamah that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, has been asked by a man saying: "Indeed, I talk to myself with a thing if I mention it my reward will be lost". The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "That speech would not be delivered except by a believer (Abu al-Aāsīm, 1983, 1:129).

The above texts from the verses of the Qur'ān and hadīith clearly elucidate how the mental speech (*al-kalām al-nafsi*) and the articulated speech (*al-kalām al-lafḍī*) are interrelated with each other. The Qur'ān is included in this category. However, this notion is unaccepted by *Usuliyyūn* who maintained that the Qur'ān is merely the articulated speech (*al-kalām al-lafḍī*). It is due to the fact that they inferred the verses of the Qur'ān to produce regulations (*aḥkām*) which only rely on the articulated letters (al-Zarqānī, 1988, 1:15-16).

Al-Baqillānī further elaborated his discussion on the parts of speech. Speech, which is essentially in the soul, comprises command, prohibition, and information. He defined command as 'speech which requires action from an addressee obediently. (al-Bāqillanī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2:5) This definition is slightly different from other definitions proposed by some theologians after him. In this concept he seemed to stress on the addressee who has to fulfil the required action because this aspect is very significant in expressing the command. In addition, the command also consists of obedience (*al-ta'ah*) and willingness (*al-inqiyād*) in performing the action. Through these conditions, it could be differentiated from question (*su'āl*) and wish (*raghbah*), for both statements do not need the obedience of the addressee (al-Bāqillanī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2:6). In other places, al-Bāqillanī also defined prohibition (*nahyn*) as 'speech which requires someone to avoid from doing something.' (al-Bāqillanī, 317) In this respect, he asserted that prohibition is also meaning existing in the soul. It requires leaving the action of something but that does not mean the addressee should negate all acts which are not included in the context of speaking. Those command and prohibition must be related to something praiseworthy (*madh*) and blameworthy (*dzamm*), promise (*wa'd*) and threat (*wa'id*), reward (*thawāb*) and punishment (*iqāb*) (al-Bāqillanī, 2:16). All that should reflect some consequences of action. Al-Bāqillānī seemed to stress on the aspect that the addressee should perform instruction as consequences of the command and prohibition of the speaker.

The foregoing discussion, thus, clearly elucidates certain aspects of speech. It could be command, prohibition, information, and even recommendation depending on its indication. The relationship of its component also describes their different functions in performing those instruction. This will be clarified further by illustrating the following aspect on expressive speech.

2.4 His Division of Expressive Speech

Having discussed parts of speech, al-Bāqillanī presented his notion on expressive speech (*ibārah*). Here, he elucidated its division as well as its aspects, and his analysis on contradictory speech. In discussing his concept, it also stated the grammarian's perspective in comparing the issue. By virtue of this explication, the discussion of the topic will be more comprehensible.

Another characteristic of speech is that it has different ways of expressing differences in meaning. In this issue, al-Bāqillanī divided two different expressive speeches; communicative (*mufīd*) and non-communicative speech (*ghairu mufīd*). The former is informative speech which has particular meaning (*ma'nā*) while the latter is divided into two kinds; 1) reversed letters (*al-hurūf al-maqlūbah*), like the word "*lijrun*" for "*rijlun*" (foot) and 2) arranged letters (*al-hurūf al-manḌūmah*) used by a speaker who gives out sounds which do not give meanings or which are not of any benefit, like a crazy man who speaks without any meaning. This is still regarded as communicative speech provided the speaker is helped to speak all the words correctly until they have meanings (al-Bāqillanī, *Taqrib*, 1:337).

In addition to this discussion, al-Bāqillanī, detailed it by dividing communicative speech into three sections. First, the sentence is fully independent to reveal its contents. Second, it is partly independent to provide its meaning. Third, it is not independent to give out its meaning from any aspect. He subdivided the first section into two parts; first, it is independent to elucidate its meanings by its words, like the verses in al-Fatḥ: 29, al-Isra': 32, and al-Nisa': 29.¹ These verses are regarded as clear sentences that on their own explain their meanings without metaphorical expressions (al-Bāqillanī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1:342). This position has been agreed upon by philologists. The second part is that the sentence is independent to explain its meaning (*mathūmihi*); like the verses in chapter al-Isrā': 23, al-Zalzalah:7, and al-Nisa':77.

¹ Oh, ye, who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities, but let there be amongst you traffic and trade by mutual good-will.

However, several uŷŷuliyyuns have different positions in relation to this aspect of the discussion. Some claimed that the sentences are understood by analogy (*bi al-qiyas*). The objectives of these verses could be identified through comparative analysis of words used to compare with other words of similar meaning, since the context is not written in the text. But others held the position of the validity of understanding the sentences in the literal sense only. They asserted that if the meanings of the verses are not stated in the text, then they do not make sense (al-Bāqillanī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1:346). These ideas are rejected by al-Bāqillanī because such literal understanding will miss the understanding of the context of such sentences. He answered the first group that everybody knows the rules of speech, and does not need their contextual approach by analogical reasoning and comparing in analysis with other words. However, the meaning might be known through indirect understanding of the text (al-Bāqillanī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1:346). To the second group, the adherents of the Tahirite school, he affirmed that they are undoubtedly contradicting the mainstream position of Muslims and philologists. Al-Bāqillanī was in line with mainstream position in saying that these verses have certain hidden meanings which are the main objectives of these verses. This sort of attempt is much closer to the context, since the meanings most likely to be identified are beyond the literal statement of the text (Ibid). It is exemplified in some verses in chapter Yusuf: 82¹ and al-Maidah: 1 (Ibid.).

The second division of communicative speech, as al-Bāqillanī affirmed, is that the sentence is independent from one point of view but not independent from another point of view in exposing its meanings. This occurs since many general statements need to be explained in detailed because they do not indicate whether they are general or particular in meanings, as mentioned in chapter al-Taubah: 5 and al-Taubah: 29. The former verse states the word '*al-Mushrikān*' which is obvious in one aspect, yet the article '*al*' here is understood yet still ambiguous whether it is general or particular in meaning. The same thing can be said of the latter verse, the requirement for non-Muslims to pay protection tax (*jizyah*) is clear, yet the obligatory amount to be paid is not clearly mentioned (al-Bāqillanī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1:349).

The third division of communicative speech is that the sentence is not independent to clarify its contents from any aspect. This refers to the usage of metaphor (*majāz*) which is not used in the proper linguistic structure, and also not in the part of the usage of certain parts of the sentence. It is also known through customary and accepted linguistic usage and the objective of speech.

¹ Ask the town where we have been.

This objective of speech should be taken from the proper section and practice in linguistic aspect. Such manner of understanding can be found as examples in chapters al-Nisā': 43, and al-Hajj: 40. The first verse explains that the word 'prayer' (*ṣolāh*) and 'travelling on the road' (*ubūr*) are meant 'places for prayer,' not the prayer itself, similarly to the word '*salawāt*' (prayers) in the second verse. This is to show the respect and dignity of those places and their people. In short, those are the divisions of communicative speech which al-Bāqillanī elaborated from the main concept of speech.

Furthermore, al-Bāqillanī also elaborated on contradictory speech that is also relevant to this discussion. He maintained that contradictory speech could occur in meaning and expression. The former usually happens in a complete sentence in which its content contradicts one another, such as 'Zaid is alive and dead' (*Zaidun ḥayyun mayyitun*). This sentence logically has contradictory meaning of the word 'alive' and 'dead.' Another contradictory speech is in the expression which takes place in the sentence which does not correspond to each word, for instance, in this statement 'Zaid is standing and not standing.' (al-Bāqillanī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1:338) This obviously shows disagreement between the first and the second part which explains the subject of this sentence. The communicative speech will be regarded as eloquent (*balīgh*) if it comprises three important aspects: eloquent word, eloquent discourse, and eloquent communicator, all of which must manifest clarity and unambiguity (H. Abd Raof, 2006, 77).

Al-Bāqillanī maintained that the expressive communicative speech should follow the division of speech, which has been established by Arab grammarians. There are three divisions of speech: word (*lafḌ*), verb (*fi'il*), and particle (*ḥarf*). The word (*lafḌ*) describes name of things such as man and horse. The verb functions to tell the period of time whether the action is in the past or future. The particle is to illustrate condition of action like it is already finished, in, from, when and so on. The application of these three divisions must follow the proper usage, as has been agreed by philologists, in that they consist of two interdependent words (al-Bāqillanī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1:338). In other words, the sentence should have a subject (*musnad*) and an object (*musnad ilaihi*). For example, the usage of noun and verb in explaining subject like "Zaid hit" and "Amr stood up". Those sentences will not be accepted unless they fulfil all conditions as mentioned above (*ibid.*).

These three divisions of speech, according to Goldziher, are concepts which had been influenced by Greek philosophy. He affirmed that this division was not from Caliph 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib who instructed Abū al-Aswad al-Du'ālī

regarding the establishment of Arabic grammar, but “this differentiation is given by Sibawayhi who starts his book with this division.” (Ignaz, G., 1994, 3) Furthermore, Goldziher thought that the separation of vowels, like *fathāḥ* for *nasab*, *kasrah* for *ḥafd*, and *ḍammah* for *rafʿ* are derived from the Syriac diacritical forms (Ibid.).

His opinion seemed to be mistaken. This division was mentioned long before Sibawayh, whose thoughts were much influenced by Greek philosophy as stated in his book. Many Arabic sources report that Abū al-Aswad al-Duālī (d. 69 H/688 C.E.) was the first person who initiated the systematization of the study of the Arabic language through its grammatical structure, under the instruction of Caliph ‘Alī ibn Abī Ūalib (Ibn Ishāq, 1970, 88). Furthermore, Arabic is a major language amongst Semitic languages like Assyrian (Syriac), Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Arabic, Mahri-Socotri, and Ethiopic, and its grammatical and linguistic structures are authentically kept (T. Noldeke, 1926, 617-619). Goldziher’s prejudice against Islam regarding the origins of Arabic language seems to be motivated by the objective to indicate that Islam and its civilization was simply influenced by and borrowed from other civilizations, as it has become a common view amongst the Orientalists. His attitude to Islam was obviously contradictory to his own statement in his diary. He wrote that he himself was interested in Islam. However, since he was a Jewish scholar he simply neglected his interests and held his faith to uphold Judaism. This is clearly mentioned in his notes:

I truly entered into the spirit of Islam to such an extent that ultimately I became inwardly convinced that I myself was a Muslim, and judiciously discovered that this was the only religion which, even in its doctrinal and official formulation, can satisfy philosophical minds. My ideal was to elevate Judaism to a similar rational level (Raphael P., 1987, 20).

In conclusion, our foregoing discussion delineates us the division of expressive speech related to their aspects. It also justifies valid argument concerning the division of speech according to the grammarians. This concept also has relationship with God’s communication to human beings. God has communicated to human beings in certain ways and this will be elaborated below.

2.5 His Views on How God Speaks to Human Beings

Our prior discussion on speech and its characteristics illustrates some requirements of proper speech. Following this description, we need to clarify on how God delivers His messages to human beings. The next elucidation is trying to explain this topic followed by an explanation of how revelations to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had been done by the angel of Jibril, and later these messages were delivered to his people and generations after them until our time. This topic relies on chapter al-Shūra: 51.

In discussing how God's speech reaches human beings, al-Bāqillanī elaborated his ideas based on that particular verse. He affirmed that God sent His speech through two different avenues: without mediation, and with mediation. God states in the Qur'ān that His revelation reaches to prophets through three different possibilities, as mentioned in the Qur'ān chapter al-Shūra: 51:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِنَشْرِ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بَأْذَنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ
إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾

It is not fitting for man that God should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with God's permission, what God's wills: for He is most High, most Wise.

Al-Bāqillanī elucidated that God used the first way, which is without mediation to speak to His prophets Mūsā and Muḥammad (peace be upon them). They recognized God's speech which is different from all kinds of human speech through their listening. The Prophets necessarily knew through their soul that this speech belonged to Him. They also recognized God's purposes by this speech since He is powerful in communicating His knowledge to His creatures. When the Prophets knew Him, then the burden of knowing Him was lifted, even though they were obligated with the duties of obedience, including the preaching and dissemination of the truth and other acts like spiritual devotion. Moreover, it is also valid that God does not inform them that this speech belongs to Him, but God led them to this through attending to elements in the signs revealed.¹

Al-Bāqillanī's affirmation about this argument is that the knowledge of the listener necessarily grasps the speech of God since it is different from any speech of human beings and its meanings have been agreed upon by philologists. However, the listener may not know the reason behind this speech. For instance,

¹ Like information about revelation comes to the Prophet in the form of a ringing of a bell. See Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, *Ṭahīh a l-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fuād 'Abd al-Bāqī, (Egypt: Dār Ibn hazm, 2010), Chapter on The Book of Revelation, no. 2, 8.

God decrees a rite for specific man in particular time (al-Bāqillanī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1:429-430).

The second avenue is that God speaks to human beings through His prophets, His leaders, and angels who are sent to them at His will. The way they know God is through His messengers who have been supported by having extraordinary abilities called miracles (*mu'jizāt*). Those abilities together with the guidance of angels show the truth of their prophethood. The angel of revelation spoke to the prophets with the language of the prophets with meanings that have been known to them previously. Al-Bāqillanī stated:

The angel does not convey [revelation] to the prophet who is a human except through the language of the prophet the meanings of which have been known and uttered through linguistic conventions, and the angel details them into giving expression of God's eternal speech (*kalāmuhu al-qadīm*), and the revelation, which is not the Qur'ān. Therefore, it is generally the way of human beings to know the speech of God, His expression, and His revelation which is not the Qur'ān through prophets and leaders (*aimmah*). This is what we presented through analysis and inference (*al-naḌr wa al-istidlāl*) (al-Bāqillanī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1:431).

A prominent Ash'arite commentator of the Qur'ān, Al-Rāzī, also clarified the verse in his commentary on the matter of how God communicates to human beings. He rejected the Mu'tazilites' claim. Based on the Mu'tazilites' notion, he clarified extra point for the ways on how God speaks to human beings. The first three points have been stated above, while the fourth, according to them, is that if a man sees God, it would be valid too that He speaks and the listener could see Him as well. However, God negates this way by saying "*wamÉ kÉna libasharin an yukallima*" and followed by explaining the three ways of God's communication method with human beings. On this matter, al-Rāzī argued that the limitation of humans ability to see God is not in all conditions. It is only in this world. This verse should not be fathomed partly, as stated by al-Mu'tazilites, yet it should be related to other verses which explain the possibility of human beings seeing God is in the hereafter (al-Rāzī, 1981, 27:188). In another verse al-Qiyamah: 23,¹ human beings could see God. Al-Rāzī commented that the Mu'tazilites tried to interpret the term '*al-naḌr*' (view) as '*al-intiḌār*' (waiting) which is far from the context (al-Rāzī, 30:229). Before him, al-Ash'arī also rejected this notion saying that the word '*al-naḌr*' could not mean 'thinking.' When the word '*al-naḌr*' is placed together with the word '*al-wajh*' (face), the

¹ Looking at their Lord.

meaning should be vision in physical sense, not in imagination (al-Ash'arī, *al-ibanah*, 32). Besides, the ability of man to see God is also informed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his saying that a man could see God in the hereafter as if he sees the moon: (al-Bukhārī, *Sahih*, no.7434, 884) نكم سترون ربكم

كما ترون هذا القمر لا تضامون في رؤيته

So verily, you shall see your Lord as you see the moon on the night of a full moon, you shall not crowd one another to see Him.

Al-Rāzī, in his commentary of this verse, supported the Ash'arite's position stating that speech of God is a pre-existent (*qadīm*) attribute expressed by letters and sentences. During the process of revelation, the Prophets and the angel of Jibril both heard Absolute Speech which were neither letters nor sounds from behind the veil. They recognized that by the necessary knowledge (*al-ilm bi al-īlārūra*) which is extraordinary speech from God, and does not require further proof. Those who believed that they solely heard the letter as well as sound, they regarded this not an extraordinary process. This is nothing else than common speaking done by human beings (al-Rāzī, 27:190).

Al-Bāqillanī further elucidated that the process of delivery of messages from the angel to the prophets and from the prophets to their people was done through words, demonstrations, symbols, and commands. Through elements the prophets necessarily grasped the messages of the angel just as in the same way the people understood the messages of the prophets. This is evidence of the angel being witness to the prophets as well as the prophets being witnesses to their people (al-Bāqillanī, 1:432).¹ In this respect, al-Ghazālī added that the prophets could hear messages from the angel in the form of originated letters and sounds describing the messages from God while the people recognized the prophets' speech in the same process as the prophets understood the angel's speech (al-Ghazālī, *al-musaffā*, 2:22).

Moreover, Al-Bāqillanī observed that to know God's messages, human beings should recognize the speech of Prophet Muḥammad (peace upon him). He asserted that there are two ways to grasp the meaning of the prophet's speech. First is through the non-equivocal meanings of his speech (*naṣ ghairu muḥtamil*). It is comprehensible to all Arabic speakers that its meanings have been agreed upon conventionally, while the second way is through general and equivocal meanings of speech (*naṣ muḥtamil*). This kind of speech has metaphorical expressions which are not easily understood except by indications (*dalīl*). Sometimes, this speech requires rational arguments in order to grasp its contents,

¹ This is in accordance with (al-Hajj: 78).

but sometimes it does not need such rational arguments. To solve this problem, al-Bāqillānī affirmed two important conditions. First is to analyze the general speech of the prophet by implicit meanings of words used. For example, the Quranic verse in chapter al-An'am: 141,¹ which requires Muslims to give poor tax (*ṣadaqah*) after harvest. Also, in the *ḥadīth* of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) there is a statement which requires believers to strive and struggle among mankind or wage war until they say that there is no god but Allah (al-Muslim, *Sahih*, no.22, 1:35). The phrase '*illā bi ḥaqqiha*' is about performing prayer, giving *zakāt* and so on (al-Bāqillānī, *Taqrib*, 1:435).

Another way to fathom the equivocal meanings of the prophet's speech is by using words, commands (*ammārāt*), affirmations, and demonstrations which necessitate the listener to figure out the purpose of the prophet's speech. These elements are used as means to understand his speech because the contents are not definite as mentioned in the Qur'ān, "then fight and slay the pagans" (al-Taubah: 5). The term '*al-mushrikīn*' (the pagans) denotes all those who come under the category covered by the term in a total way (al-Bāqillānī, *Taqrib*, 1:435; al-Ghazālī, *Usul*, 2:23). In addition, in some events the prophet also elucidated his speech through the method of making signs by his fingers, as he indicated his closeness to a breadwinner of orphaned children.

Moreover, al-Bāqillānī, as he elaborated in his arguments, also affirmed that those who know the equivocal words of the prophet are from two important generations. The first is Muslim people who lived together with the prophet, followed his command and narrated traditions from him. They were called companions (*al-ṣahābah*). Another generation is the people who lived in the second generation who received information about the messages and meanings of the equivocal words. They necessarily figured out those messages and their objectives. This continually went on from generation to generation (al-Bāqillānī, *Taqrib*, 1:436). In addition to this process, Al-Ghazālī developed al-Bāqillānī's notion that if there some messages and meanings of the equivocal words are unknown by linguists, those would be grasped through their context (*qarā'in*) (al-Ghazālī, *Usul*, 2:23).

On God's speech, al-Bāqillānī further elaborated that a person will never know that God is speaking through his Essence, God as a Commander (*āmir*) and Preventer (*nāhin*) if he holds the principle that God's Speech is created. This is clear when we observe that the principle of the Mu'tazilite sectarian group which maintained that God's speech is the same as human

¹ ...but render the dues that the harvest is gathered...

speech. In addition, this person will not arrive at the true information from God which has been communicated through His promise and threat (*wa'd wa al wa'id*) unless he believes that truthfulness (*ṣidq*) is part of His attributes, and falsehood (*kidhb*) is an impossibility on His part. This is by reason of the fact that in some aspects the Mu'tazilites believe that God may lie through His information, has untruthful quality in His attributes, and probably commits injustice upon mankind (al-Bāqillānī, *Taqrib*, 1:437).

Nevertheless, according to al-Bāqillānī, all these assumptions believed by the Mu'tazilites are impossible (al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhid*, 48-49). He affirmed that God has the attribute of Seeing, Willing, Hearing, Living, and Knowing. If God does not have all these attributes, then He has the opposite attributes in His pre-existence which is impossible. He is absolutely dumb, blind, unwilling, forgetful, ignorant, and weak till our times. This is however contradictory to mainstream theological position of Muslim scholarship (Ibid.). In other words, this response implies the impossibility of God's attributes, like blindness, weakness, dumbness, death, ignorance, and lying which are not in accordance with God's infinite Majesty. All of these claims, according to him, are invalidated (Ibid.).

Al-Bāqillānī's theological principles are also relevant to disprove the argument of contemporary Orientalists notably their study on the issue of the createdness of the Qur'ān. They stated that the matter is also associated with the doctrine of Christianity relating to the Christian Logos. This was the word of God through which He incarnated into the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Hence, the divine Logos became the human flesh. This incarnation was aimed to save the human beings in their lives in this world (Manabu, 2005, 4417). To this claim we can trace al-Bāqillānī's arguments rejecting them. In his *al-Tamhid*, he strongly criticized the principle doctrine of Christianity. Al-Bāqillānī explained that God is pre-existent (*qadīm*), while Jesus is either originated or corporeal (*muḥdath*). He questioned how could the eternal incarnates with the originated one? If that God could incarnate into His creation, He could also contradict to it. All these activities are contradictory to the nature of His attribute of eternity. The eternal is neither touchable nor mixture. The word of God (Logos), which is eternal, is better than the flesh of Jesus, which is originated. In the other words, they belittled the status of God by lowering His eternity of speech, which was incarnated into the body of Jesus. Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī also disagreed that through God's personification to human beings, it causes that the flesh of Jesus was able to turn into different status; half human and half divine, which is impossible for him. He further elaborated by questioning why were the flesh and blood always originated (*muḥdath*) even when they were embodied by the word

of God (Logos) which is eternal? The same thing applies to the His word, why was it still eternal even if it was personified in the body of Jesus?. To him, these arguments are baseless. Hence, this notion should be rejected (al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhid*, 109-111). Furthermore, in another place, al-Bāqillānī also elucidated his concept of God's speech and human's speech in contrast to the concept of the Christian word (Logos). These speeches are different in nature. The former is pre-existent while the latter is originated. Their roles are also distinct. According to his view, the speech of God is meaningful (*mufīd*) which is addressed to the present addressee and the absent one. It is delivered to his prophets and become the main guidances for human beings to reflect upon. This word is eternal in its nature in contrast to the speech of human beings, as previously discussed. In short, al-Bāqillānī's stance seem clearly disprove the arguments of orientalist in the topic of the createdness of the Qur'an.

3.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, our foregoing discussion in this study concerns several issues on the concept of speech related to the createdness of the Qur'an. This shows al-Bāqillānī's response to the Mu'tazilites' arguments as well as to the Orientalists. On this pivotal issue he affirmed that the Qur'an is God's Speech, which is uncreated in nature. The Mu'tazilites' and several Orientalists' views on this topic show their own interest in promoting to their audiences. The Mu'tazilites attempted to defend their own stance based on the purification of God from any attributes by raising such an issue. The Orientalists, on commenting that matter, tried to justify the doctrine of Christian Logos which embodied human flesh. Al-Bāqillānī's critiques seem to be able to show the framework of the Ash'arite school of thought which is more acceptable to the Muslim community. His combination of both methods - of applying revelation and reason in a harmonious and appropriate way - makes this school flexible and appropriate.

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