

**AL-BAQILLANI'S THOUGHTS ON SELECTED
THEOLOGICAL ISSUES OF THE QUR'AN**

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**ACADEMY OF ISLAMIC STUDIES
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**A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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ABSTRACT

This present research discusses al-Bāqillānī's thoughts on theological issues related to the Qur'ān. It covers three significant problems; the createdness of the Qur'ān, the anthropomorphists' approach to the Qur'ān, and the authenticity of the Uthmānī *muṣḥaf*. Al-Bāqillānī categorised these issues into three different theological groups; Mu'tazilites, anthropomorphists, and Shi'ites. With the Mu'tazilites, he rejected the problem of the createdness of the Qur'ān, which involves discussion on the divine speech of God, meaning of speech, its characteristics and divisions, and other related topics. Al-Bāqillānī also disproved some theological doctrines formulated by the anthropomorphists in dealing with the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. His criticisms included the extreme (*Gulāt*) Shi'ites as well as the *Ṣufīs*. Al-Bāqillānī also defended the authenticity of the Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'ān against the Early Twelver Shi'ites' claim. He proved the validity of the *muṣḥaf* right from its compilation until it became the perfect codex employed by the authoritative companions. He also delineated their integrity who directly learnt from the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the seven variant readings of the Qur'ān. These readings are valid and approved by the Prophet (peace be upon him). In this study, the approach that was applied is textual analysis, using descriptive and analytical methods to investigate and analyze primary sources related to the issues. It also adopted the historical method to scrutinize several events on the subject. Al-Bāqillānī attempted to discuss these issues; the createdness of the Qur'ān, the anthropomorphic doctrines, and the authenticity of the Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'ān by developing its principles in accordance with the theological position of al-Ash'arīte' views. He was one of those who initiated the intellectual initiative to deepen the level of intellectual discourse on some of the principal foundations in the theological thoughts of this school. In his intellectual undertaking in tackling those issues, he also provided a number of relevant arguments against the Orientalists' critiques regarding the above related subject.

ABSTRAK

Thesis ini membahaskan pemikiran al-Bāqillānī dalam persoalan teologi yang berhubungkait dengan al-Qur’ān. Terkandung di dalamnya tiga masalah penting iaitu; penciptaan al-Qur’ān, pendekatan *Mujassimah* terhadap al-Qur’ān, dan autentisiti *muṣḥaf* Uthmanī. Al-Bāqillānī menghadkan pembahasan kepada tiga golongan yang berbeza; Mu‘tazilah, Mujassimah, dan Shī‘ah. Bagi golongan Mu‘tazilah, dia menolak pandangan mereka berkenaan dengan penciptaan al-Qur’ān yang juga meliputi masalah *kalāmullah*, erti *kalām*, karakter dan pembahagian serta persoalan yang berhubungkait dengan hal itu. Al-Bāqillānī juga membantah beberapa persoalan teologis yang diyakini oleh penganut Mujassimah dalam pendekatan mereka kepada al-Qur’ān dan *ḥadīth*, yang mencakup juga di dalamnya kelompok Shī‘ah Ghulāt dan Sūfī. Selain itu, dia juga membuktikan autentisiti *muṣḥaf* Uthmānī terhadap kelompok Shī‘ah Duabelas sejak dikumpulkan sampai terbentuk menjadi *muṣḥaf* yang sempurna yang dilakukan oleh para sahabat Rasulullāh yang memiliki otoriti. Dia juga menjelaskan integriti mereka yang secara langsung belajar al-Qur’ān dan *qirā‘āt Sab‘ah* kepada Rasulullah *Sallahu alaihi wasallam*. Riwayat *qirā‘āt Sab‘ah* tersebut adalah valid dan dipersetujui oleh Rasul. Dalam pembahasan studi ini, penulis menggunakan metode analisa naskah, deskriptif, and metode analisis, untuk meneliti dan menganalisa beberapa sumber rujukan utama. Adapun dalam menganalisa beberapa peristiwa yang berhubungkait, penyelidik menggunakan metode historis. Al-Bāqillānī dalam membahas tiga persoalan; penciptaan al- Qur’ān, doktrin Mujassimah, dan autentisiti *muṣḥaf* Uthmānī merujuk kepada pandangan al-Ash‘arī. Dalam posisi ini, al-Bāqillānī ialah salah seorang intelektual yang berjaya mengembangkan prinsip-prinsip rumusan teologis dalam akidah ini. Pandangannya pada persoalan tersebut juga sesuai untuk menolak pandangan Sarjana Orientalis yang terbabit dalam wacana yang diperbincangkan.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Study

Imām al-Bāqillānī is one of the greatest Muslim theologians. Born in Baghdad in 338 A.H/ 950 C. E. when the Abbasid caliph was under the authority of Buwaihid dynasty, he was a leading Ash‘arite and was the one who laid down the logical premises and presented the significance of the notion of metaphysical principles in theological discourse of this school.¹ Al-Bāqillānī was also involved in many polemics defending his mainstream theological position to certain non-Muslim groups such as Christians, Jews, and Magians.² In addition, in the political arena of the Buwaihid period, he was a representative of the ruler in delegations delivering the message to certain courts, like the court of Byzantine Basil Emperor Basil II. He passed away on 23 Dzulqa‘dah 403 A.H/5 June 1013 C. E.³

In the course of his life, he has left important contributions in the intellectual discourse of Islamic theology. He discussed God and His attributes, the prophecy, the Qur‘ān, the philosophy of nature, and so on, all of which are under the topic of *kalām*. Al-Bāqillānī was engaged in debates concerning those problems against various schools. He himself, as an al-Ash‘arite, defended his theological argument and developed its formulation. He was the one who initiated the intellectual initiative to deepen the level of intellectual discourse on some of the principle foundations in theological thought of the Ash‘arite school. That is why he was regarded by Ibn

¹ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah ibn Khaldūn*, (Beirut: Muassasah al-‘alamī li al-Maṭbu‘āt, n. y.), 465; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, tran. Franz Rosenthal, (New York: Pantheon Books Inc, 1958), 50.

² Abū Bakr ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *al-Tamhīd*, ed. Imād al-Din Aḥmad Ḥaedar, (Beirut: Mu‘assasah al-Kutub al-Tsaqāfiah, 1987), 66-156.

³ J. R. McCharty, “al-Bāqillānī,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam: new edition*, ed. B. Lewis et. Al., (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 1: 959.

Taymiyyah as “the best al-Ashārīte theologian, unrivalled by any predecessor or successor.”⁴

One of the major issues in Islamic theological discourse is the problem of the Qur’ān. It is the primary source of Islamic principles in which many different groups are involved in this issue like the Mu‘tazilites, Mujassimites,⁵ and Shi‘ites. This problem has been discussed since the early history of Islamic civilization during the period of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his companions and followers. This continues throughout the periods of Umayyad and Abbasid until in this contemporary time. Through the history of Islamic civilization, the Qur’ān grew to have wider readers and audiences. It has been read, studied as well as criticized by so many people.

An early Muslim theologian, al-Bāqillānī, has tried to clarify and defend the status of the Qur’ān and its contents against those critiques. His arguments regarding these issues seem strong enough to respond to criticisms by earlier scholars as well as his contemporaries. Against the Mu‘tazilite group, he argued on the uncreatedness of the Qur’ān. This problem became one of the main topics amongst Muslim theologians. He also argued against Mujassimites on the problem of anthropomorphism. This is crucial matter in understanding the verses of the Qur’ān since it relates to the issue of the attributes of God. Moreover, he argued also against the Shi‘ites on the fundamental issue of the authenticity of the Qur’ān. Here, he criticized some significant figures who promoting their opinions in claiming the imperfectness of the Qur’ān. His arguments in those matters seem valid enough to reject the mentioned groups.

Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī’s thoughts are also relevant in contemporary criticisms presented by either Muslim or non-Muslim scholars. The question about the authenticity of the Qur’ān has also become a common subject among Western scholars of the

⁴ Ibid.; Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd. Halīm ibn ‘Abd. al-Salām, *al-Fatwā al-Hamawiyyah al-Kubrā*, ed. Aḥmad ‘Abd. Razzāk Ḥamzah, (Egypt: Matba‘ah al-Madanī, 1983), 98.

⁵ Mujassimites is one of the sects in the Hanbalite school of thought. See Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Abū Bakr Aḥmad al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n. y.), 103-105.

Qur'ān. They believe that the Qur'ān is incomplete as well as erroneous.⁶ Due to this controversy, it is necessary to come up with appropriate response to the problem of the Qur'ān. Through the study of al-Bāqillānī's theological formulation, we can go into detail what he maintained as relevant answers for the modern criticisms of the Qur'ān, specifically those demonstrated by a number of Orientalists.

1.2. Statement Of The Problem

The problem in this study discusses the issues of the Qur'ān during al-Bāqillānī's period. This Holy Book as the main source of the Islamic theological teachings has become the central issue among some Islamic theological schools which lead to serious consequences. As an Ash'arite, al-Bāqillānī defended those related matters to the Qur'ān against three different groups; al-Mu'tazilites, Mujassimites, and Shi'ites through his theological concepts which have been developed from the notion of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī.

In the dispute with Mu'tazilites, al-Bāqillānī disapproved the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān. He argued through his concepts that God has some attributes in His essence, one of which is His speech. However, such argument is denied by the Mu'tazilites. They affirmed that God, in His essence, does not have any attributes. If He has certain attributes, as a result, we have multiplied His essence which is totally wrong. Another group which al-Bāqillānī addressed in his work is the Shi'ites. They strongly believed that the Qur'ān is incomplete. From its earlier compilation, this group blamed those who involved in compiling the Qur'ān because they were not part of the people of the house (*ahl al-Bait*). There were untrustworthy people and disloyal to the Prophet (peace be upon him). In this matter, al-Bāqillānī rejected their claim by the textual

⁶ Alphonse Mingana, "The Influence of Syriac to the Koran" *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, (Manchester: 1927), 11: 77; Michael Cook, *The Qur'an: a Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 119-121; Abdullah Saeed, *The Introduction of The Qur'an*, (London: Routledge, 2008), 47.

proofs as stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a number of his *ḥadīths*. He also disapproved through the historical background of the compilation of the Qur’ān as employed by the great companions. In other place, al-Bāqillānī also addressed his arguments to the Mujassimites who tried to approach the Qur’ān anthropomorphically. They opined that God has physical attributes. He spoke through His lips and tongue. He also listened through His ears and saw with His eyes. However, this opinion was rejected by al-Bāqillānī. He argued that God has attributes which are different from His creatures. Even some of His acts and attributes have been described in some verses and *ḥadīths* anthropomorphically,⁷ yet according to him, they should not be understood literally.⁸

The Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) has reminded through his statement pertaining to the dispute of fundamental doctrines.⁹ According to this narration, the Muslim will be divided into number of groups. They are seventy three different sects. Those who will be saved is only one of which, who follow his teachings and his companions. This information signifies obvious guidelines in which that the principle of belief should be based on. These three matters promoted by those three different groups; the Mu’tazilites, Mujassimites and Shi’ites could lead to tendency opposing against the mainstream of the principle faith of Islam dealing with serious matters of doctrinal foundation. Based on this *ḥadīth* too, it implies that our salvation in this world and hereafter also depending on our attempt to follow the guidances of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions because they are the role models of later generation in terms of their beliefs and religious practices. Therefore, in dealing

⁷ A-Qur’ān al-Qaṣas: 88; Everything will perish save His eternal Self ; Tāhā: 5: That is, (Allah) Most Gracious, Who is firmly established on the Throne (of Authority).

⁸ See al-Bāqillānī’s method of argumentation which relied on the Qur’an, *ḥadīth*, consensus of scholars, analogy, and the rational arguments. *Al-Inṣāf Fīmā Yazib I’tiqāduh walā Yajūz al-Jahl bih*, ed. ‘Imād al-Dīn Aḥmad Ḥaedar, (Beirut: Ālam al-Kutub, 1986), 30.

⁹ ‘Isā Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā ibn Sūrah, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, ed. Kamal Yūsuf al-Hūt, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n. y), The Book of Imān, no. 2640, 5: 25-26; Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī, *Sunan ibn Mājāh*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Bāqī, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n. y.), Kitāb al-Fitan, no. 3991, 2: 1321.

with this crucial foundation, al-Bāqillānī attempted to defend the teachings of Islam in relation to those three different problems against their promoters.

Hence, this study will cover several significant problems as stated above, the createdness of the Qur'ān, the anthropomorphic approach to the Qur'ān and the authenticity of the Qur'ān. The discussion will present al-Bāqillānī's theological responses to those problems and groups. In dealing with those matters, we will examine them with certain research questions below:

1. Al-Bāqillānī is one of greatest Muslim theologians involved in various polemics. How does he argue concerning the Qur'ān against opposite schools like the Mu'tazilites and the Mujassimites?
2. How does al-Bāqillānī disprove the invalid claim of the Shi'ites that the Qur'ān consists of imperfectness and error.
3. The Ash'arite theology is the most dominant theology in the Muslim Sunni world since it takes the middle position between the Mujassimites and the Mu'tazilites. By such position, why is the Ash'arite theology more acceptable to Muslim theologians than other theological thoughts?

1.3. Research Objectives

The purposes of this study are:

1. to examine al-Bāqillānī's theological arguments in discussing the issue of the createdness of the Qur'ān and his disputation and rejection of this doctrine believed by the Mu'tazilites.
2. to examine al-Bāqillānī's theological arguments regarding the authenticity and validity of the Qur'ān and his disputation and rejection of the Shi'ite claims that the Qur'ān compiled by 'Uthmān was incomplete and unauthentic.

3. to examine al-Bāqillānī's views against the claims made by the anthropomorphists about the Qur'ān and God's speech.
4. to evaluate al-Bāqillānī's theological thoughts on several relevant issues of the Qur'ān.

1.4. Scope Of The Study

The scope of this study will mainly be limited to three important works of al-Bāqillānī one of which discusses the topic as mentioned in *al-Taqrīb wa al-Irshād*. This work stated his arguments against the Mu'tazilites on the issue of the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān. Another work, *al-Intisār li al-Qur'ān*, will cover the problem of the authenticity of the Qur'ān as his response to the Shi'ites. The last is his *al-Inṣāf*. Here, several of its chapters are composed to argue against the *Mushabbiha* and *Mujassimates*. However, other than these three works would be referred to as complementary sources to give clear and comprehensive descriptions of al-Bāqillānī's theological thoughts.

1.5. Theoretical Framework Of The Study

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the Ash'arite theological theories which were developed by al-Bāqillānī. He elaborated Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī's formulation to deepen the level of intellectual discourse on some of the principal foundations in the theological thoughts of the Ash'arite school. These principles combining between revelation and the rationalistic way of understanding of the text. This way used to approach the discussion of this study in which al-Bāqillānī defended the Qur'ān against his opponents; the Mu'tazilites, *Mujassimites*, and Shi'ites. Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī himself in some theological matters was able to build his own arguments which have quite similar principles as those of the founder of this school,

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī. In certain issues, like the Qur’ān, he even stated his own notions by which he proved that he was the earliest theologian who was deeply rooted and managed to elaborate the Asharite theological framework.¹⁰

The Ash‘arite school of thought has a moderate approach to the theological principle. A number of theologians of this group relied their argumentation on revelation and reason. When they find the earlier contradicts the latter, they tend to follow the earlier. In the case of the metaphysics, they are neither anthropomorphizing (*tashbīh*) nor purifying (*tanzīh*) of God’s attributes. They are between the *jabbariyah* and the *mufawwidah*.¹¹ Hence, they affirm the attributes of God in His essence, as stated by al-Ghazālī in *Risālah al-Qudsiyyah*.¹² According to him, God’s attributes comprise ten fundamental principles; He exists (*wujūd*), He is pre-existent (*qadīm*) and everlasting (*baqā’*), He is neither substance (*jawhar*) nor body (*jism*) nor accident (*‘araḍ*), He is also neither limited by direction (*jihah*) nor seated in any place (*makān*), He can be seen, and He is One.¹³ This epistemological foundation is also asserted by al-Shahrastānī. In this matter, he elucidated that God is knowing (*alīm*) and powerful (*qadīr*). This could be understood that He is knowing through His knowledge and powerful through his power. These attributes are eternal and exist in the essence of God. They are neither He, nor other than He. Furthermore, the Ash‘arites resided between the Hashwiyya and the Mu‘tazilite. It is known through their definition of speech. The Hashwiyya said that speech is produced by eternal words and letters. This definition is different from the definition of the Mu‘tazilites who affirmed that speech is produced by arranged letters and words. The speaker is the one who makes his speech. However, al-Asharī held a different view from them. To him, speech is meaning in the soul (*ma’nā*

¹⁰ See in al-Bāqillānī ‘s work on *al-Intiṣār li al-Qur’ān*. ed. Muḥammad Iṣam al-Quḍat, (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2001), 1 and 2.

¹¹ Ḥasan Maḥmūd al-Shāfi’ī, *al-Madkhal ilā Dirāsah Ilm al-Kalām*, (Karachi: Idāra al-Qur’ān wa al-Ulūm al-Islāmiyya, 2001), 80.

¹² A. L. Tibawi, “Al-Ghazali Track’s on Dogmatic Theology”, *Islamic Quarterly*, (1965), 9: 95.

¹³ Ibid.

qā'im bi al-nafs) expressed by letters and words.¹⁴ The speaker is the one who exists in his speech. Since its existence is attached to the speaker when it is referred to speech of God, it is also eternal.

In another place, al-Juwaynī also attempted developing the Ash'arite principle. In formulating any argument of the theological doctrines, he asserted that we must rely on two pivotal tenets; the reason and revelation basis. These two things play a crucial role in our understanding of the object. If we find them contradictory, then we should precede with the latter. The reason should be able to adjust to the role of the revelation as the basis of rational argumentation. By such formulation, this does not mean, according to al-Juwaynī, that we undermine the reason but we put it the proper function when it deals with the revelation.¹⁵ Furthermore, in other aspects, he also summarized al-Bāqillānī's book, *Kitāb al-Talkhīs*.¹⁶ He obviously regarded this figure as very significant in his time. Through this work too, he explained the relation of the theological doctrines with *uṣūl al-fiqh* within the framework of the *mutakallimūn* approach.

1.6. Significance Of The Study

The significance of the study is:

1. to describe al-Bāqillānī's theological thoughts in defense of the Qur'ān against some theological schools; the Mu'tazilites and the Mujassimites.
2. to clarify false theological beliefs about the validity of the Qur'ān held by the Shi'ites.
3. to complete the previous reseach of al-Bāqillānī's theological thoughts in relation to the Qur'ān.

¹⁴ Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, 94-96.

¹⁵ Al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā Qawāti' al-Adilla Fi Usūl al-I'tiqād*, ed. M. Yūsuf Sāmī (Egypt: Maktaba al-Khanjī, 1950), 8-9.

¹⁶ Abū al-Ma'ālī 'Abd al-Malk ibn 'bd Allāh ibn Yūsuf al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Talkhīs fī Usūl al-Fiqh*, Beirut: Dār al-Bashāir al-Islamiyya, 1996), 3 volumes.

4. to enrich academic theological sources, specifically on the study of al-Bāqillānī and his theological matters in relation to the Qur'ān.

1.7. Literature Review

One of the studies on al-Bāqillānī and his contributions on Islamic political theory is examined by Yusuf Ibish. He is concerned with al-Bāqillānī's ideas while relying only on his *al-Tamhīd* in the work entitled *Political Doctrine of al- Bāqillānī*.¹⁷ Ibish concludes that al-Bāqillānī, as a Sunni Ash'arite jurist, tried to defend the Imamate concept against the attack of the Khārijites and Shī'ites, due to the fact that in his time the political background was dominated by those sects. Hence, his theory is good solely one perspective of one school, while from other points of view it is regarded as otherwise. Al-Bāqillānī's foundation for this issue lies in his conception of the *ummah*, to him. The internal and external life of the *ummah* is regulated by the *Sharī'ah*.¹⁸

The next study of al-Bāqillānī concerning his contributions to Arabic literature is carried out by von Grunebaum entitled *al Bāqillānī: Criticism of Imru' ul-Qais' Mu'allaqa*. His work focuses on literature especially in the domain of Arabic poetry. He translates al-Bāqillānī's criticism of Imru'u al-Qais' *Mu'allaqa*.¹⁹ His presentation describes that al-Bāqillānī sternly criticized a number of his poems which the author took from selections of the parts dealing with poetry in *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*. However, Grunebaum does not provide many notes and commentaries on this issue. He simply let the text speak to the readers. So, they will reflect and consider its contents according to their own understanding.

Another important study of al-Bāqillānī is his contribution to the sciences of the Qur'ān. One of which is done by Muḥammad Abū Mūsā entitled *al-I'jāz al-Balāghī*:

¹⁷ Yusuf Ibish, *The Political Doctrine of al Baqillani*, (Beirut: American University, 1966).

¹⁸ Ibid, 145.

¹⁹ Von Grunebaum, "Al Bāqillānī: Criticism of Imru' ul-Qais' Mu'allaqa," in *Introduction to Classical Arabic Literature*, ed. Ilse Lichtenstadter, (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc, 1974), 322-339.

Dirasah tahlīliyah li Turāth Aḥl al-ilm (the Inimitability of the Eloquence: Critical Study of Classical Works belong to the People of Knowledge).²⁰ This work is a comparative study on the inimitability of the Qur’ān (*i’jāz*) according to three different figures; Abū Sulaimān al-Khitābī, ‘Alī ibn ‘Isā al-Rummānī, and Abū Bakr ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī. The author touches upon al-Bāqillānī’s critiques on *Jahiliya* poetic and its poem (*qasīda*). However, this study does not discuss the important relationship between the Qur’ān and theological matters which are one of characteristics of al-Bāqillānī’s fundamental thought.

Further research on al-Baqillani’s *Ijāz al-Qur’ān* entitled *Dirāsah al-Bāqillānī li al-Nadhm al-Qur’āni fi Kitābih ‘Ijāz al-Qur’ān* (Study of al-Bāqillānī on the coherence of the Qur’ān in His book *Ijāz al-Qur’ān*).²¹ The author elucidates al-Bāqillānī’s notion regarding the coherence of the Qur’ān based on the study of poetry in Arabic language, rhymed prose (*saj’*), poetry (*shi’r*), and some aspects of inimitability of the Qur’ān. The author elaborates his discussion to al-Bāqillānī’s critique of some earlier Muslim scholars in the study of the inimitability of the Qur’ān, and his contribution with new approach for the eloquence of coherence (*balāghah al-naẓm*) which discusses words and their meanings. However, the author criticizes al-Bāqillānī’s ideas that he failed to establish a new method in the study of the coherence of the Qur’ān (*naẓm al-Qur’ān*) in both aspects; eloquence (*balāghah*) and criticism (*naqd*). Through his *I’jāz al-Qur’ān*, al-Bāqillānī did not give a new approach to this subject because it had been done by earlier scholars like al-Jāhiz, al-Khitābī, and al-Rummānī. According to the author, he solely tried to criticize those scholars and disregarded their notions.

Another important study is done by Muhammad ‘Abd al-Azīz al-‘Awājī entitled *Ijāz al-Qur’ān al-Karīm ‘Inda Shaikh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah Ma’a al-Muqāranah bi*

²⁰ Muḥammad Abū Mūsā, *Al-I’jāz al-Balāghī: Dirasah tahlīliyah li Turāthi alh-ilm*, (Egypt: Maktabah Wahbah, 1984).

²¹ ‘Abd al-Azīz Abū Sari’ Yāsīn, *Dirasah al-Bāqillānī li-al-Nadm al-Qur’ānī*, (Egypt: n. p., 1991).

*Kitāb 'Ijāz al-Qur'ān li al-Bāqillānī.*²² The author tries to compare Ibn Taymiyyah's notion regarding the inimitability of the Qur'ān from various different aspects; its names and characteristics, short and long verses, chapters, separated words, information about unseen worlds, future and past events, parables, structures, arrangements, and stories. In addition, the author briefly elucidates Ibn Taymiyyah's defense of the Qur'ān from several attacks which had been addressed by some groups of infidels and people of the book. In addition, the author also compares the inimitability of the Qur'ān according to Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Bāqillānī. Here, he mentions important notes for both figures. Each has its own method which leads to different conclusion. Al-Bāqillānī maintained, according to the author, that the inimitability of the Qur'ān does not cover all facets of the Qur'ān, while from another point of views, Ibn Taymiyyah regarded it as otherwise.

Further study is employed by 'Abd Rauf Makhlūf in the work entitled *al-Bāqillānī wa Kitābuh 'Ijāz al-Qur'ān* (al-Bāqillānī and His Book *'Ijāz al-Qur'ān*).²³ In this book, the author studies al-Bāqillānī's background and his thought particularly on the inimitability of the Qur'ān. He delineates al-Bāqillānī's process of argumentation in understanding this issue and its eloquence as well as his choice of some relevant verses and chapters of the Qur'ān in this discussion. Historically, the author puts his role in the growth of the inimitability of the Qur'ān among four important figures: al-Khitābī, al-Rummānī, 'Abd al-Jabbār, and 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī. They lived between 386-471 A.H/996-1078 C. E. The author briefly describes each characteristic of their notion concerning the issue in comparison with al-Bāqillānī's perspective.

Another significant study on al-Bāqillānī entitled *Qirā'ah al-Naṣ: Dirāsah fi al-Maurūth al-Naqdī* (Reading Text: Study on Inherited Criticism) written by Aḥmad

²² Muḥammad 'Abd al-Azīz al-'Awājī, *'Ijāz al-Qur'ān al-Karīm 'Inda Shaikh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah Ma'a al-Muqāranah bi Kitāb 'Ijāz al-Qur'ān li al-Bāqillānī*, (Riyad: Maktabah Dār al-Manhaj, 2006).

²³ 'Abd Rauf Makhlūf, *al-Bāqillānī wa Kitābuh 'Ijāz al-Qur'ān*, Beirut: Dar Maktabah al-Hayat, 1978).

Yūsuf ‘Alī.²⁴ The author who relied on *Ijāz al-Qur’ān*, elucidates al-Bāqillānī’s criticism against his earlier works on linguistics aspect of the Qur’ān. To him, al-Bāqillānī had a fundamental way to approach the Qur’ān based on Arabic language, its structure, and even the inimitability of the Qur’ān. He has also separated method (*manhaj al-Mufāraqah*) to study the feature the Qur’ān which is different from his earlier scholars like al-Jāhiz (d. 255 A.H/868 C.E.), Ibn Qutaibah (d. 276 A.H/885 C.E.), al-Rummānī (d. 384 A.H/994 C.E.), and Al-Khitābī (d. 386 H./996 C.E.). This is evidenced by the fact that he relied on verses of the Qur’ān, *ḥadīth*, and narration of companions, which is the same method as he did in the theological analysis.

Further studies on al-Bāqillānī’s thoughts are especially done focusing on his contributions to theological discourses. One is employed by McCarthy,²⁵ the earliest among the Orientalists to have initiated research on this theologian. In general, he discusses al-Bāqillānī as a polemist against various different groups such as Naturalists, Astrologers, Dualists, Mu‘tazilites, Magians, Christians, Jews, and Shi‘ites. This study does not focus on the particular topics. The discussion merely touches a few aspects on several topics; *Ijāz al-Qur’ān*, prophecy, *kalām*, and imāmate. Having studied him, McCarthy concludes that al-Bāqillānī was a polemist who propagated Ash‘ari’s notions, and did not have profound foundation in his thoughts. He was an industrious compiler of some ideas before him. Many elements discussed by him had already been dealt with in al-Ash‘ari’s works. However, McCarthy’s simplistic way of looking at the man and his role is based on limited and incomplete manuscripts, as he himself admitted.²⁶ Moreover, his scholarly editing of *al-Tamhīd* was obviously influenced by prejudice as is shown by the fact that he omitted one important chapter of *al-Tamhīd* on the

²⁴ Aḥmad Yūsuf ‘Alī, *Qirā’ah al-Naṣ: Dirāsah fi al-Maurūth al-Naqdī*, (Egypt: Maktabah al-Anjalu al-Misriyyah, 1988).

²⁵ R. J. McCarthy, *Al-Baqillani: The Polemist and Theologian*, (Ph. D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1952).

²⁶ Ibid.

Imāmah.²⁷ He studied in a general way regarding al-Bāqillānī's life and thoughts. His work also does not touch in detailed to the issue which the present researcher is focusing on. Here, McCarthy does not discuss al-Baqillani's rejection and refutation of Shi'ites' belief that the Qur'ān comprises invalidity and errors.

Another important research on al-Bāqillānī's contribution to the theological aspect is the work done by Muḥammad Ramaḍān 'Abd Allāh.²⁸ This work is much better than McCarthy's as he presents this theologian's thoughts systematically. His division of the work into several chapters enables us to recognize topics easily discussed by the author. The discussion on al-Bāqillānī's rejections on the createdness of the Qur'ān is divided into topics like difficulties of speech, the reality of speech, and his defense of the eternity of the Speech of God. This study is limited to two main works, *al-Tamhīd* and *al-Inṣāf*, and does not discuss the issue of the originality of the Qur'ān, as being done by the present researcher.

Another significant study is done by Jūdī Salāh al-Dīn entitled *al-Imām al-Bāqillānī wa Arāuhū al-I'tiqādiyyah fi Ḍaw'i Aqīdah al-Salaf*.²⁹ In this work he studies on al-Bāqillānī's theological thought through *Salafi*'s point of view, which specifically refers to two main figure Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah. These scholars, being starting points, have been used to justify al-Bāqillānī's notions which are contradictory to their thoughts. The author concludes that al-Bāqillānī had some similarities and differences in comparison to the Salafi's ideas. Nevertheless, his preference was to the latter. He criticizes that al-Bāqillānī's conceptual analysis on certain issues, like the oneness of God (*wihdaniyyatullāh*), faith, speech of God and its characteristics, and his negation of anthropomorphism, are incorrect. However, the

²⁷ Information about this omission is noted by Kambis Ghaneabassiri in his article "The Epistemological Foundation of Conceptions of Justice in Classical Kalām: Study of 'Abd al-Jabbār's *al-Mughni* and Ibn al-Bāqillānī's *al-Tamhīd*," *Journal of Islamic Studies*, (2008) 19: 1; al-Bāqillānī, *Kitab al-Tamhīd*, ed. Joseph Richard McCharty, (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Sharqiyya, 1957).

²⁸ Muhammad Ramaḍān 'Abd Allāh, *al-Bāqillānī wa arāuhū al-Kalāmiyyah*, (Baghdad, Maṭba'ah al-Ummah, 1986).

²⁹ Jūdī Salāh al-Dīn, *al-Imām al-Bāqillānī wa Arāuhū al-I'tiqādiyyah fi Ḍaw'i Aqīdah al-Salaf*, (Saudi Arabia: Master Thesis submitted to the University of Ummu al-Qurrā', 1989).

author does not discuss in detailed the issues of the createdness of the Qur'ān and the originality of the Qur'ān, which are the main discussions of the present researcher.

Further study of al-Bāqillānī and his contributions in the theological discourse are done by Najīb al-Shaikh 'Abd al-Ṣamad in his work entitled *al-Bāqillānī wa Arāuhū fī Sifātillāh (al-Bāqillānī and His Notion on the Attributes of God)*.³⁰ In this work the author tries to describe issues concerning the relationship between Essence and Names (*asmā'*) with the Attributes of God. The author explains how al-Bāqillānī classified and understood these concepts from the Ash'arīte's point of view. However, this study does not reveal new findings. A number of issues discussed in this thesis have been explained clearly in the earlier work *al-Imām al-Bāqillānī wa Arāuhū al-I'tiqādiyyah fī Daw'ī Aqīdah al-Salaf*. In addition, all sources in this research only rely on Arabic works which do not cover comprehensive explanations and leave out some other significant secondary sources written in other languages. Moreover, the author does not discuss al-Bāqillānī's rejections to the Shi'ites regarding the originality of the Qur'ān and his proving of the invalidities of their arguments.

A further study, which does not relate to al-Bāqillānī but is relevant to the issue in this present study, is the one done by Labīb al-Sa'īd entitled *The Recited Koran*.³¹ This work is translated from Arabic *al-Jām' al-Sawtī al-Awwal li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*.³² The author describes how the Qur'ān was written and recorded since the period of Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān. During the time of the third Caliph 'Uthmān, the Qur'ān became the standard *Muṣḥaf* which everybody had to keep and read. He instructed other *saḥīfahs*, which belonged to some Companions, to be burnt. This case is very significant because some sects and non-Muslim scholars usually claim that this incident indicates that the Qur'ān is not complete. The author tries to defend the Uthmani *muṣḥaf* through

³⁰ Najīb al-Shaikh 'Abd al-Shamad, *al-Bāqillānī wa Arāuhū fī Sifātillāh*, (Kuala Lumpur: Master Thesis submitted to the University of Malaya, 2002).

³¹ Labīb as-Sa'īd, *The Recited Koran*, trans. Bernard Weiss & M. A. Rauf, (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1975).

³² Labīb as-Sa'īd, *al-Jām' al-Sawtī al-Awwal li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1978).

his arguments addressed to the Muslim authors, the Shi'ites, and the Orientalists. He argues against those groups despite not referring to one particular figure among Muslim scholars, especially al-Bāqillānī who becomes the main figure of this research.

The foregoing exposition and literature review suggests that the issue on al-Bāqillānī's theological thoughts and his notion about the Qur'ān have been approached from different perspectives, some of which focus on theological aspects, while others highlight on his notion on the Quranic issues. The present author has also studied al-Bāqillānī's work entitled *al-Bāqillānī's Concept of Divine Speech in Relation to the Issue of the Createdness of the Qur'ān: With Special Reference to his al-Taqrīb wa al-Irshād*.³³ This study, which relying on one particular work, merely discusses al-Bāqillānī's thoughts on Divine Speech which rejects the concept of the createdness of the Qur'ān. This issue, which involves the relationship between *kalām* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*, includes other related topics such as the speech of God and human beings, characteristics of speech, the origins of languages, and foreign words in the Qur'ān. However, the present study prefers to propose a different way to present his ideas, notably on his defense of the Qur'ān. This dissertation would concentrate on his works *al-Instiṣār li al-Qur'ān*,³⁴ *al-Taqrīb wa al-Irshād*,³⁵ and *al-Inṣāf*³⁶ which have not been used by previous studies. In these works, al-Bāqillānī explained the issues around his defense of the Qur'ān from various perspectives. In *al-Instiṣār li al-Qur'ān*, he elucidated his arguments on the originality of the Qur'ān against Shi'ites, while in *al-Taqrīb wa al-Irshād*, he elaborated the discussion on the issue of Divine Speech in

³³ Much Hasan Darajat, *al-Bāqillānī's concept of Divine Speech in Relation to the Issue of the Createdness of the Qur'ān: With Special Reference to his al-Taqrīb wa al-Irshād*, Master Thesis, Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC-IIUM, 2009).

³⁴ Abū Bakr Ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *al-Intiṣār li al-Qur'ān*, ed. Muḥammad Iṣḥām al-Quḍāt, (Beirut: Dār Ibn Hazm, 2001). This work has been edited from the first volume of Fuad Sezgin's edition which is in the form of facsimile. Al-Bāqillānī himself wrote two volume of this work, yet the second of this manuscript has not been discovered. See Fuad Sezgin's introduction, *al-Intiṣār li al-Qur'ān*, (Frankfurt: Ma'had Tarikh al-'Ulūm al-'Arabiyyah, 1986).

³⁵ Abū Bakr Ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb wa al-Irshād*, ed. Abd al-Hamīd Ali Abū Zunaid, (Beirut: al Resālah, 1998).

³⁶ Abū Bakr Ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *al-Inṣāf*, ed. Imād al-Dīn Aḥmad Haidar, (Beirut: 'Alim al-Kutub, 1986).

relation to *uṣūl al-fiqh*, and its relevance to the problem concerning the attributes of God. In *al-Inṣāf*, he also explicated his notion on the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān as opposed to Mu'tazilites' and Mujassimites' principles.

Other al-Bāqillānī's works are also used in this research as supplementary references to present a full picture of his theological ideas and defense of the Qur'ān. Moreover, as our additional sources, we will utilize some secondary sources either done by Muslims or non-Muslims (Orientalists) whom we consider useful and present fair approaches. The present study tries to analyse, translate, paraphrase, comment, and summarize the ideas of al-Bāqillānī on this theme. Hopefully, this work will clarify and present a humble contribution regarding al-Bāqillānī's thoughts, especially on the problem of the defense of the Qur'ān.

1.8. Methodology Of Research

This study is expository in nature which is conducted through library research. In undertaking this study, the present researcher relies on various different materials either primary or secondary references. However, in order to maintain its objectivity some contemporary and rival theologians' works will be consulted. In discussing the topic, the research employs three different methods. First is descriptive. Following this, the data and argumentations are described within the context of the discourse. The study reviews these sources to enable the researcher to systematically place those theologians based on their background.

Furthermore, the study also employs analytical method to critically analyze the result of the above descriptions which refer to its own context of the subject. This attempt is to examine the questions of the study and answer some complicated problems in this discussion. The analysis would be also employed to the content of the texts which focus on certain arguments. Another method required in this research is the

application of historical method. This is to trace how Muslim intellectuals have responded to the issue which we are discussing, and how they have contributed to the Islamic intellectual heritage. In this matter, the researcher also raises several crucial questions addressing the author of the book (his life, status and position in his people, other writings and ideas). It also scrutinizes the context of his ideas, objectives of his writings, to whom his works were addressed to, and how he argued his notions.³⁷

Besides that, in employing this study, the researcher also relies on primary and secondary sources. The earlier references are referred to the original works belonging to several figures involved in the discourse. The above methods, descriptive, analytical, and historical, are applied to approach these sources. As for the original materials, the texts will talk by themselves. Hence, these methods play their roles. To make the research relevant, the discussions also refer to the secondary sources. A Number of studies concerning related issues are also consulted to complement the deep analysis. These works are interpretations, evaluations, and syntheses of the primary recounts by which the researcher could analyze and compare the subject matter of his study. Therefore, hopefully, through various technical approaches, this research will achieve the ideal and perfect findings.

³⁷ Fikret Karcic, "Textual Analysis in the Study of Islamic Reveal Knowledge," in *Towards Developing an Integrated Research Method In Human Sciences*, ed. Mohd Yusof Hussain, (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Research Center, 2006), 278-279.

CHAPTER II: THE CREATEDNESS OF THE QUR'ĀN ACCORDING TO THE MU'TAZILITES AND AL-BĀQILLĀNĪ'S RESPONSE

2.1. 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 chapter, 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.

2.2. 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 is about the relationship between the attributes of God and the essence of God. The Ash'arites believed that God speaks through His speech while the Mu'tazilites believed that God speaks through His essence. Those who believe that God speaks through His essence 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).¹ By the time of al-Ma'mūn (d. 217 A.H./833 C.E.) this crucial problem was used to test the stand of the *'ulāmā* 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 the standard question addressed to several different groups of people: theologians, jurists, *qaḍi*, and traditionists.² This was pursued by later caliphs after him like al-Mu'taṣim (d. 225 A.H./842 C.E.), al-Wāthiq (d. 230 A.H./847 C.E.), but was totally stopped at the time of al-Mutawakkil (d. 244 A.H./861 C.E.). A notable person in this event is Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥanbal. 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.³ 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.⁴

Later on, in the course of the time, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Asha'arī 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 Qur'ān. According to him, the Qur'ān 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 (*'alīm*), Living (*ḥayy*), Willing (*murīd*), Investing (*mujīd*), Doer (*fā'il*), Creator (*khāliq*), Enlivening (*muḥyi*), Killing (*mumīt*), Being Eternal (*qadīm*), and Existing (*maujūd*). These have been revealed by

¹ Abd. Jabbār al-Hamadānī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Khamsah*, ed. 'Abd. Al-Karīm 'Uthmān, (Egypt: Maktabah Wahbah, 1996), 528.

² Ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Tarīkh al-Tabarī*, Ed. Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, n. y.), 8: 631-637; Martin Hinds, "Miḥna", in *The Encyclopedia of Islam: new edition*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 7: 3-6.

³ Ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Tarīkh al-Tabarī*, 9: 190.

⁴ Ibid.

God Himself in the Qur'ān and explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the *ḥadīth*.⁵

The public debate on the createdness of the Qur'ān continued until the time of our figure, Abū Bakr Ibn Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī. As an Ash'arite theologian, he was regarded as one of those who started the intellectual initiative to deepen the level of intellectual discourse on some of the fundamental principles in the theological thoughts of the Ash'arite school.⁶ His arguments on the issue of the createdness of the Qur'ān were mainly addressed to the Mu'tazilites. In this attempt, al-Bāqillānī elaborated his arguments into discussion on the problem of God and human speech. His discussion of this problem is based on the Quranic verses, the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the rational arguments. Before we discuss further, we would like to discuss the Mu'tazilites' views in relation to the problem of the createdness of the Qur'ān.

2.3. The Mu'tazilite's Perspective

The Mu'tazilites was one of the major groups which affirmed that the Qur'ān is created.⁷ According to 'Abd al-Jabbār, the Qur'ān is the speech of God and His revelation which is created in nature. This was revealed to prove the prophethood of Muḥammad, peace be upon him.⁸ In terms of God's attribute, the Mu'tazilites maintained that God's attribute of speech is in His essence. By such a doctrine, they believed that God creates His speech, including the Qur'ān. They believed that God is 'Knowing' by His essence, not by His 'Knowledge,' He is 'Powerful' by His essence (*bi nafsihi*), not by His 'Power,' and he is 'living' by His essence, not by His 'Life.'⁹ According to al-

⁵ Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī Ibn Ismā'il al-Ashārī, *Al-Ibānah an Usūl al-Diyānah*, (Damascus: Maktabah Dār al-Bayān, 1981), 51-68.

⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1992), 465.

⁷ Another group who also maintained that the Qur'an is created was the Jahmites. See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, ed. Muhammad Yūsuf al-Daqqāq, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1987), 121.

⁸ 'Abd. Jabbār al-Hamadānī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Khamsah*, 528.

⁹ Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Abū Bakr Aḥmad al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.y.), 46; A. Kazi, J. G. Flynn, Shahrastani, "The Mu'tazilites," *Abr Nahrain*, 6 (1968-1969): 37.

Ash‘arī, he reported that not only did the Mu‘tazilites hold such doctrines, but the Kharijites, the Murjites, many of the Rāfidites, and some Zaydites as well.¹⁰

Believing that the the attributes of God are in His essence consequently leads to the belief that the Qur‘ān 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 separated from Him; one is God, the Eternal, another is eternal speech which is His attribute. 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.¹¹ The Mu‘tazilites affirmed the use of ‘*tanẓīh*’ (purification), declaring God to be free from every imperfection and impurity as their main theory. They tried to purify God from the anthropomorphic elements of humans. Their different views on the attributes like living (*hayy*), knowledge (‘*alīm*), will (*irādah*), and existing (*maujūd*) was one of the factors that was called *ahl al-tauhīd*.¹² Further, some Mu‘tazilite *usuliyyuns*,¹³ who agreed upon the createdness of the Qur‘ān, asserted that they followed the Islamic sacred law of the Ḥanafīte school. However, its founder himself, Abū Ḥanīfah, had contradictory principle regarding this matter. He clearly stated in his *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* and *Waṣīyah*

¹⁰ Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālat Islamiyyīn*, 244-245.

¹¹ Muḥammad ‘Imārah, *al-Mu‘tazilah wa Mushkilah al-Hurriyah al-Insāniyyah*, (Egypt: Dār al-Shurūq, 1988), 57.

¹² Abū Abbās Aḥmad al-Qalshandī, *Subh al-A‘sha*, (Egypt: Dar al-Kutūb al-Misriyyah, 1922), 5: 251; Aḥmad Amīn, *Fajr al-Islām*, (Egypt: Maktabah al-Nahḍah al-Misriyyah, 1975), 296.

¹³ Like Ahmad Ibn Alī al-Rāzī al-Jassās. He wrote *al-Fusul fī al-Usūl*, ed. Ajīl Jasīm al-Nashamī, (Kuwait: Wizārah al-Awqāf wa al-Shu‘ūn al-Islāmiyyah, 1994). See also his theological school in ‘Abd al-Jabbār & Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī, *Fadl al-I‘tizāl wa Tabaqāt al-Mu‘tazilah*, ed. Fuād Sayyid, (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tunisiyyah, n. y), 391.

that the Qur’ān is the word of God, and it is uncreated in nature.¹⁴ Furthermore, in his *Wasiyyah* 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 و وحيه و تنزيله... و الحبر و الكاغد و الكتابة كلها
مخلوقة لأنها أفعال العباد¹⁵

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.

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 teaching 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.¹⁶ 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?”¹⁷

The Mu’tazilītes interpreted the meaning of “hands” (*yad*) in this verse as “medium” (*wāsiṭah*)¹⁸ or “grace,” (*ni’mah*) and they equated this to the daily usage of the words

¹⁴ Imām al-Hamam, *Sharh Fiḥ al-Akbar li Imām al-A’dham Abī Hanīfah al Nu’mānī*, (Egypt: Dār al-Kutub al-Arabiyyah al-Kubrā and Egypt: Mustafā al-Bāb al-Halabī wa Akhawaihi Bakrī wa Īsā, n. y), 24.

¹⁵ Akmaluddin al-Babartī al-Hanafī, *Sharh Wasiyyah al-Imām Abū Hanīfah*, (Yordania: Dar al-Fath, 2009), 143; A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 189. This issue is differently understood by some modern scholars as they relied on works by Abū Hanīfah’s disciples or some historians, however, this notion is contradictory to what has been clearly stated by Abū Hanīfah himself in his own works. His statement was also disputed by some Muslim scholars. See in Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibnTsābit al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīna al-Salām*, (Beirut: Dār al-Garb al-Islāmī, 2001), 15: 516-527; Abū Hilāl al-Askarī, *Kitāb al-Awāil*, (Riyādh: Dār al-Ulūm li al-Tibā ‘ah wa al-Nashr, 1981), 2: 112.

¹⁶ Muḥammad ‘Imārah, *al-Mu’tazilah wa Mushkilah al-Hurriyah al-Insāniyyah*, (Egypt: Dār al-Shurūq, 1988), 46-58.

¹⁷ Sheikh ‘Abd Allāh Basmeih, *Tafsir al-Rahman: Interpretation of the Meaning of the Qur’an*, (Kuala Lumpur: Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, 2007), 886.

¹⁸ Jār Allāh Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhshārī, *al-Kashhāf An Haqāiq Gawamidh al-Tanzīl wa ‘Uyūn al-Aqāwil fi Wujūh al-Ta’wīl*, ed. ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Maujūd, (Riyāq: Maktabah al-Abyakan, 1998), 5: 283.

“I’ll give you a hand.”¹⁹ The application of *ta’wīl* 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. The Ash‘arites placed their position on those who rely on the verses of the Qur’ān and hadīth as scriptural proof (*al-dalīl al-naqlī*) and rational argument (*al-dalīl al-aqlī*).²⁰ 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 leads 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.²¹

There are some disputes in the Mu‘tazilīte school regarding the createdness of the Qur’ān. Al-Ash‘arī, in his *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyin*, reported that they disagreed upon whether the Qur’ān is body (*jism*) or not. In this issue they were divided into six different groups. The first group said that the Word of God is a body, and that it is created. It is nothing other than a body. The second group asserted that the word of human beings is an accident (*‘araḍ*), which is a motion, and the word of God is a created body that is an audible sound. Man only performs the reading of the Qur’ān. This is the stance of al-Nazzām and his followers.²²

The third group of the Mu‘tazilites regarded the Qur’ān as the creation of God, and it is an accident not a body. They believed that, in this sense it is an accident, it is in

¹⁹ Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Ismāīl al-Ash‘arī, *al-Ibānah an Usūl al-Diyānah*, ed. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Arn’aud, (Beirut: Maktabah Dār al-Bayān, 1981), 99-106.

²⁰ Ḥasan Mahmūd al-Shafī‘ī, *al-Madkhal Ilā Dirasah Ilm al-Kalām*, (Pakistan: Idārah al-Qur’ān wa al-Ulūm al-Islāmiyyah, 2001), 81.

²¹ Abū Ḥamid Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, *Qanūn al-Ta’wīl* in his *Majmū‘ah Rasā’il*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2006), 28.

²² Abū Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Ismā‘īl, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyin*, 268.

many places at the same time, and it is preserved through reading, writing, and memorizing, so that it is not transferable and removable. This view belongs to Abū al-Hudhayl. The fourth group said that the word of God is an accident, and it is created. It is impossible that it can be in many places at the same time. They held that the place where the Qur’ān is created is neither transferable, nor removable²³ from the Preserved Tablet in the heaven where it was originally created.²⁴ This is the stance of Ja‘far ibn Ḥarb. The fifth group, which belongs to Mu‘ammar and his followers, asserted that the Qur’ān is an accident, and it is neither the work of God nor is it part of His attribute. It is “the product of place where the sound comes from” (*fi‘lun li al-makān al-ladhi yusma‘u minhu*).²⁵ In other words, the Qur’ān is the product of nature. The last group refers to al-Iskāfī and his followers. They asserted that the word of God is created accident, and at the same time it exists in many places.²⁶ A significant Mu‘tazilite figure, ‘Abd al-Jabbār, also discussed this matter, whereby he believed that the speech is accident.²⁷ In conclusion, these divergences basically lie on the dispute whether the Qur’ān is a body or an accident. The present researcher himself disagrees with this notion, for the Qur’ān is the word of God, which is neither accident nor body. The formed words mentioned on the *muṣḥaf* are merely the expressive medium of the meanings of His speech.

The belief in the createdness of the word of God implies that the Qur’ān is also created in nature. God has created and originated it. If it is regarded as His Speech, then He creates an accident or a body in His Essence as a sound. His Essence becomes a place of new things, which is impossible. Hence, the Mu‘tazilītes held that God’s Speech is employed by its creation and origination whenever He speaks. This speech is

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Kalam*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), 271.

²⁵ Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt Islamiyyīn*, 269.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tauhīd wa adl: Khalq al-Qur’ān*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, (Egypt: Wizāra al-Thaqāfa wa-al-Irshād al-Qawmī wa al-Idāra al-Amma li-Tsaqāfah, 1960), 4-5.

not in His Essence, rather it is an accident in which the sound is heard. The reality of speech is not from the speaker rather it is from the speech uttered by him. So accordingly, they interpreted the Quranic verse in al-Nisā: 164 “*wa kallama Allāhu Mūsā taklīmā*” (and God spoke to Mūsā) as to mean that God created the speech on the bush as if it spoke to Prophet Mūsā.²⁸

This doctrine is close to the principle held by Jahm ibn Shafwān. He maintained that the Qur’ān is created in nature according to his teacher, Ja’d ibn Dirhām. According to Ibn Athīr, Ja’d was the one who initially declared the createdness of the Qur’ān.²⁹ He also disbelieved that Allah made Prophet Abraham as His friend, and had spoken to Prophet Moses. Because of such doctrine, he was consequently put to death in Iraq during the celebration of id al-Adhā (*yaum al-naḥr*).³⁰ These doctrines had been declared during the reign of Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Mālīk (d. 125 A.H./743 C.E.), and were further developed by Jahm Ibn Shafwān.³¹ He also held that the Qur’ān is a created thing inasmuch as speaking (*kalām*) in its original and literal sense cannot be attributed to Him. He disagreed if God has attributes that may be co-existent with and apart from Him. His rejection to all other anthropomorphic components is an attempt to avoid the

²⁸ Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, *al-Ibānah ‘an Usūl al-Diyānah*, 95; Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 12: 244.

²⁹ Originally this idea was declared by a Jewish, Lubaid ibn‘Aṣam who stated that the Old Testament (*Taurat*) was created. See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, ed. Muhammad Yūsuf al-Daqqāq, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1987), 121.

³⁰ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Zahābī, *Mizān al-‘itidāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad Muwwaḍ & ‘Ādil Aḥmad al-‘Abd al-Mawjūd, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1995), 125; al-Malātī, *al-Tanbīh wa al-Radd ahl al-Ahwa’ wa al-Bida’*, ed. S. Dederling, (Istanbul: Matba‘ah al-Dawla, 1936), 86.

³¹ Jahm ibn Shafwan was a devoted disciple of Ja’d ibn Dirham. He learned from his teacher about the concept of God, predestination, Paradise and Hell. He developed all those ideas into his system of thought based on the principle of “*innahū ta‘ālā laysa kamithlihī shay’un la fī ḍatihī wale fī sifatihī wala fī aḥwālīhī*” (there is nothing similar to God, the Almighty, either in his essence or in His attributes or in His acts). Furthermore, he rejected some attributes of God such as Existing (*maujūd*), Knowing (*‘ālim*), Living (*hayy*), Willing (*murīd*), and some others which are only relevant to creatures, and believed that the other seven attributes, which are non-anthropomorphic, are appropriate to God; Investing (*mujiḍ*), Doing (*fāil*), Creating (*khāliq*), Enlivening (*muhyi*), Killing (*mumīt*), being Eternal (*qadīm*), and all-Powerful (*qadīr*). See ‘Abd Qāhir ibn Tāhir Muḥammad al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq Baina al-Firāq*, (Beirut: Maktabah al-Asriyyah, 1995), 211-212; Abdus Subhan, “al Jahm bin Safwan and His Philosophy,” *Islamic Culture*, (1937), 11: 222.

plurality of God's attributes and give an idea about His unity against any form of anthropomorphic perception.³²

2.3.1. 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 مخصوص³³

What is formed from two words or more, or what is formed from certain words.

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.³⁴ So, speech, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār 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-Ḥasan al-'Asharī defined the term 'speech' (*kalām*) as 'meaning existing in the soul' (*ma'na al-qāim fī al-nafs*).³⁵ This definition supported by the Quranic verse al-Imrān: 167.³⁶ However, 'Abd al-Jabbār interpreted this verse differently. He argued that this verse merely shows that the statement of the hypocrites

³²Abdus Subhan, "al Jahm bin Safwan and His Philosophy," *Islamic Culture*, (1937), 11: 222.; al-Malātī, *al-Radd wa al-Tanbīh*, pp. 75-100; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, 86-88; A.K. Kazi & J.G. Flynn, "The Jabarites and The Sifatiya," *Abr Nahraini*, 9 (1969-1970), 82-85; Abū Ḥasan'Alī ibn Ismā'il, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyin*, 338.

³³'Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharh Usūl al-Khamsah*, 529; *al-Majmū' al-Muhīd bi al-Taklīf*, 317; *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tauhīd wa al-'Adl: Khalq al-Qur'ān*, 7; J.R.T Peters, *God's created Speech*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985) 297.

³⁴ Abū al-Fath Uthmān ibn Jinnī, *al-Khasāis*, ed. Muḥammad Alī al-Najjār, (Egypt: al-Maktabah al-Ilmiyyah, n. y.), 17.

³⁵ 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyah al-Iqdām Fī 'Ilm al-Kalām*, ed. Alfred Guillaume, (n. c., Maktaba al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyyah, n. y.), 288.

³⁶ 'They said with their mouths what was not in their hearts': يقولون بأفواههم ما ليس في قلوبهم.

is different from what they believed in their heart. They did not say honestly as they preferred to hide their stance.³⁷ Furthermore, ‘Abd al-Jabbār explained that the meaning in the soul is the sound itself,³⁸ and what appears in our heart when we plan to do something, we call it ‘firm intention’ or ‘will’ (*‘azm*).³⁹ The relationship of the meaning in the soul is also called by ‘Abd al-Jabbār as hidden speech (*kalām khafīy*).⁴⁰

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.⁴¹ However, this sort of belief contradict their purification (*tanzīh*) of God’s attributes. Since speech is the genus sound, so every speech is sound. Speech may also be produced by angels and demons (*jinn*).⁴² 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-Ḥusain Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī, explaining his teacher’s statement regarding this division, stated that speech is divided into two: non-communicative (*muḥmal*) and communicative (*musta‘mal*). The communicative speech (*mufīd*) is further divided into command (*amr*), prohibition (*nahy*), and information (*khabr*).⁴³ Those speeches are regarded communicative depending on one condition which is following 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 from the philologists’ perspective, he agreed upon this

³⁷ ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-Mughnī*, 7: 17.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 15; فإن الأصوات أيضا هي معنى في النفس.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 17; *al-Majmu’*, 318.

⁴⁰ ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-Mughnī*, 7: 16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴³ Abū al-Ḥusain Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Tayyib, *Kitāb al-Mu’tamad Fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1974), 21; ‘Abd. Al-Jabbār, *al-Majmū’*, 320; J.R. T. M. Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, 304.

notion.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵

Thus, al-Mu'tazilites' definition of speech is focused on the arranged letters and sounds, while, the division of speech comprises non-communicative (*muḥmal*) 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.

2.3.2. God's Speech is Communicative (*Mufīd*)

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 because they could not compete with it.⁴⁶

'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 (*muwaḍa'ah*) as well as to the non-communicative speech (*muḥmal*). That speech also does not have a link to command, prohibition, and information.⁴⁷ Therefore, this stance

⁴⁴ 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-Mughnī*, 7: 10.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 182.

could infer that God's speech is communicative which gives benefit, meaning to addressees (*mukhātab*) and the burdened people (*mukallaf*). 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.⁴⁸

'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 (*muwaḍa'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.⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ It is also impossible for someone to utter new language, except those terms have been agreed upon us regarding their meanings.⁵¹ 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

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 104.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 105.

⁵¹ Ibid., 183.

does not have benefit to those who read it⁵² and indicates its invalidity.⁵³ Furthermore, God speech would be regarded non-communicative if it is not 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.⁵⁴ Also, those who believe that God may lie, they mean His speech is non-communicative. It is invalid to be a command since it is useless.⁵⁵

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.

2.3.3. How God speaks to human Beings

Having discussed the characteristics of God's speech in 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: 51,⁵⁶ according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, God makes speech on the body while the speaker is unknown. In this condition, His message is audible⁵⁷ 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-Zamakhsyarī, also analyzed this verse that God communicates to man through three different ways. First is that God reveals through

⁵² Ibid., 106.

⁵³ Ibid., 107.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 102.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 184.

⁵⁶ "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."

⁵⁷ 'Abd Al-Jabbār, *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān*, 607.

spiritual inspiration (*ilhām*), and in the heart or dream (*qadhf*), like He revealed to the mother of Moses to throw him into the river 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 deliver His messages to people. Through the mediation of the angel Gabriel, he comes to the messenger and delivered the messages from God, and continues to be passed to all his people.⁵⁸ From the aforementioned description of the two Mu'tazilite 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'talizites' principle regarding the createdness of the Qur'ān is clear. They believed that God has attributes such as omniscient and omnipotent. His omniscience and omnipotence by His essence as expressed in arabic term by *wa allāh qādirun bi dhātih and wa allāh 'ālim bi dhātih*. 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

⁵⁸ Muḥammad ibn 'Umar Al-Zamaksharī, *Al-Kasshāf*, ed. 'Adil Aḥmad 'Abd al-Majīd & 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwad, (Riyad: Maktabah al-Abikan, 1998), 5: 421.

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'ites and Khawārij.⁵⁹

The problem of the createdness of the Qur'ān also became the object of discussion of several Orientalists.⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹

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 A.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: 171⁶² mentioned that Jesus was a God's

⁵⁹ Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, *Maqālat Islamiyyīn*, 244-245; Ḥasan Mahmūd al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Madkhal ilā Dirāsah ilm al-Kalām*, (Pakistan: Idārah al-Qur'ān wa al-Ulūm al-Islāmiyyah, 2001), 66.

⁶⁰ Mc Donald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence, and Constitutional Theory*, (London: Darf Publishers Limited, 1985), 146-147; Harry Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Kalam*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 63; Wilferd Madelung, "The Origin of the Controversy Concerning the Creation of the Koran," (Britain: Ashgate Variorum, 1985), 517-518.

⁶¹ Mc Donald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence, and Constitutional Theory*, 146.

⁶² Al-Nisa: 171: Truly al-Masih, 'Isa the son of Maryam, was no more than a Messenger of Allah and His word which conveyed to Maryam and also (he is the breathing of) a spirit from Him.

prophet and word (*kalimah*).⁶³ 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.⁶⁴

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.

2.4. Al-Bāqillānī's Response to the Issue of the Createdness of the Qur'ān

One of significant figures 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 the purification (*tanzīh*) of God's essence. He sees, hears, and speaks with His Essence. On the contrary, al-Baqillānī 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.⁶⁵ In certain arguments on this issue, al-Bāqillānī tried to elaborate the theological thoughts of Abū al-Ḥasan 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

⁶³ Kalimah Allah is special reference to the Prophet 'Isa who was created by Allah with His word "Be" without a father. See Sheikh Abdullah Basmeih, *Tafsir al-Rahman: Interpretation of the Meaning of the Qur'an*, (Putrajaya: Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, 2007), 177.

⁶⁴ Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Kalam*, 241-242; Wilferd Madelung, "The Origin of Controversy of the Createdness of the Koran," in *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam*, (Britain: Ashgate Variorum, 1985), 517-518.

⁶⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Tamhīd*, 268; *al-Insāf*, 56-58.

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.⁶⁶ In terms of the Qur’ān and *hadīth*, he relied his arguments on these two sources together with his explanation concerning the issue and its relationship. It is very significant to know al-Bāqillānī’s thoughts for both sources 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 *hadīth*, are the main basis of the Islamic theological doctrines. Besides relying on these principles, al-Bāqillānī 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.⁶⁷ By virtue of this manner of understanding al-Bāqillānī’s method of argumentation, hopefully this could describe his theological position in the problem of the createdness of the Qur’ān in relation to the Divine attributes.

2.4.1. Al-Bāqillānī’s Rejections on the Createdness of the Qur’ān

The concept of creation (*al-khalq*) and command (*al-amr*) has a close relationship to the issue of the createdness of the Qur’ān. These words were understood differently by al-Bāqillānī and the Mu‘tazilites. Al-Bāqillānī strongly rejected the createdness of the Qur’ān by his own perspectives. His interpretation of the Quranic verse in al-A‘raf:

⁶⁶Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Insāf*, 30.

⁶⁷ See in *Sunan of Abū Dāud*, narrated that some companions of Mu‘adh ibn Jabal said: When the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) intended to send Mu‘adh ibn Jabal to Yemen, the Prophet asked: “How will you judge when the occasion of deciding a case arises?.” He replied: “I shall judge in accordance with Allah’s Book. He asked: “(What will you do) if you do not find any guidance in Allah’s Book?” He replied: “(I shall act) in accordance with the *sunnah* of the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him).” He asked: “(What will you do) if you do not find any guidance in the *sunnah* of the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) and in Allah’s Book?” He replied: “I shall do my best to form an opinion and I shall spare no effort.” The Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) then patted him on the chest and said: “Praise be to Allah Who has helped the messenger of the Apostle of Allah to find something which pleases the Apostle of Allah.” See in Abū Dāud Sulaymān ibn al-Ash al-Azdy al-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Dāud*, ed. Syu‘aib al-Arnaut & Muḥammad Kāmil), chapter on How to employ the Judging, no. 3592, 5: 444.

54,⁶⁸ was the elaboration on the work of his earlier theologian, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī.⁶⁹ In this verse of the Qur’ān, al-Ash‘arī 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-Bāqillānī elaborated al-Ash‘arī 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 creation.”⁷⁰ This argument gives a clear picture that the Qur’ān which is the Speech of God is uncreated. 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 their meanings. Like verses in al-Aḥzāb: 37⁷¹ and al-Naḥl: 90,⁷² here ‘Abd al-Jabbār did not differentiate two terms separated by the word “*wa*” since he interpreted that *amr* (command) is created (*makhlūq*).⁷³ 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’.⁷⁴ Here, he seemed to support the notion of ‘Abd al-Jabbār in interpreting that verse. Their concept of the attributes of God has close relationship with His essence. 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,

⁶⁸ Al-A‘raf: 54:...Remember, His is the creation (of all things) and the command. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.’: "الآ له الخلق و الأمر"

⁶⁹ Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, *al-Ibanah an Usūl al-Diyānah*, 51.

⁷⁰ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Tamhīd*, 271.

⁷¹ Al-Aḥzāb: 37: And Allah’s command must be fulfilled.

⁷² Al-Naḥl: 90: Allah enjoin justice, kindness and charity to one’s kindred, and forbid indecency, wickedness, and oppression.

⁷³ ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mutashābih al-Qur’ān*, 283-284; *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Khamsah*, 544.

⁷⁴ Al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsir al-Kashāf*, 3: 449-450.

‘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.

Besides that, the debate on the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur’ān also involves the problem of the process of the creation. This could be viewed from the Quranic verse in al-Naḥl: 40.⁷⁵ Here, al-Bāqillānī analysed that if God’s Speech is created, it is necessary for Him to say ‘be’ (*kun*) in every time He speaks which is impossible. This proves that His Speech is uncreated in nature and pre-existent.⁷⁶ This idea was also stated by al-Ash‘arī in his *al-Ibānah*, saying that the above statement clarifies that the word “*kun*” is evident that the Qur’ān is uncreated, otherwise, God should continuously say “*kun*” in every part of His speech.⁷⁷ To affirm this argument, al-Bāqillānī also developed his ideas in commenting this verse. He stated that the term ‘*kunfayakun*’ does not necessarily explain as sequence (*tartīb*). It does not indicate too as the reply to the previous sentence. In other verses al-Māidah: 95, Taha: 61, and al-Māidah: 6, and some Arab sayings,⁷⁸ the word ‘*fa*,’ according to al-Bāqillānī, indicates informing something in relation to the context. It does ask the subject to do something right after the command and does not require to be fulfilled right after the instruction. It might also be done after a week, a month and even a year.⁷⁹ A later theologian, al-Rāzī, also cemented al-Bāqillānī’s argument in commenting the verse in Yasin: 82.⁸⁰ He

⁷⁵ Al-Naḥl: 40: When We decree a thing, We need only say: Be! and it is: إنما أمره إذا أراد شيئا أن يقول له كن فيكون

⁷⁶ Al-Baqillānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 116.

⁷⁷ Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, *Al-Ibānah*, 65.

⁷⁸ ‘if you do something bad to me, I will do the same thing to you.’: “لا تسوءني فأسوءك”; ‘if you enter Makkah buy for me a servant, camel, and dress’: “إذا دخلت مكة فاشتر لي عبدا وبعيرا و ثوبا”

⁷⁹ Al-Baqillānī, *Al-Tamhīd*, 276

⁸⁰ Yasin: 82: But His command, when He decrees a thing He need only say: “Be!” to the reality of the matter, and it is.

maintained that God's speech is His attributes. The spoken letters which are expressed in the words 'kaf' and 'nun' are regarded as the new things to the addressees.⁸¹

However, 'Abd al-Jabbār interpreted above verse in Yasin: 82 differently. He affirmed that it comprises the word 'an'. When this is connected with the present tense (*al-fi'l al-muḍāri*'), it means a future event which requires new things. The word 'kun' is also an indication that this needs a new sequence of events too. This word is also followed by the word 'to be created' (*al-mukawwan*). A thing which is followed by another new thing is not pre-existent (*qadīm*) since the pre-existent is not preceded by anything for it is timeless. Another word which was examined by him is the word "if" (*idhā*). This word means a future thing if it is connected with the past tense (*al-fi'l al-māḍī*). 'Abd al-Jabbār also rejected the opinion of Ash'arites, saying that the word 'kun' requires to be said by God every time He speaks. According to him, this is invalid. To originate thing, God does not need to say such word every time because He has many ways to do it. The situation is like the Arab saying,⁸² which portrays that he will give those amount of money based on the necessities (*ala al-Qadr*) as well as his respect.⁸³ In this principle, 'Abd al-Jabbār tried to interpret the verse by focusing more on the formal linguistic aspect. He held that the structure and function of the sentence should be in accordance with the rule of the grammatical construction. On the contrary, al-Bāqillānī's argumentation was based on his tendency to scrutinize the linguistic feature in a way that he focused on the exceptional function. This idea is his attempt to develop the arguments of the rejection on the doctrine of the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān.

Moreover, the discourse on the createdness of the Qur'ān also has relation with the different views on the understanding of the term 'dhikr.' This term mentioned in the Qur'ān several times and understood differently depending on the context. Al-Bāqillānī

⁸¹ Muḥammad Al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1983), 26: 112.

⁸² 'one dirham for those who visit me': عطيته لمن زارني درهم ; 'my respect to those who come is standing: "تعظيمي لمن دخل علي القيام"

⁸³ 'Abd Al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ Usūl al-Khamsa*, 561.

examined the word ‘*al-dhikr*’ in al-Anbiyā: 2⁸⁴ which means ‘the Qur’ān’. His argument is supported by evidence of the fact that God did not say in his Book, “*never comes to them except it is a renewed message and reminder from their Lord.*”⁸⁵ Therefore, the term *al-dhikr* here is pre-existent (*qadīm*), which is absolutely different from creatures. In addition, al-Bāqillānī held the word ‘*al-dhikr*’ could mean ‘advice of the prophet’ for human beings. It is clearly stated in al-Ghāshiyah: 21,⁸⁶ and some Arabic sentences.⁸⁷ This argument is also supported by the fact that people of the Quraish listened to the Qur’ān very seriously.⁸⁸ In other words, this illustrates that those people seriously reacted to the message of the Qur’ān and its structures during the phases of revelation. Conversely, ‘Abd al-Jabbār affirmed different views on understanding the term ‘*al-dhikr*’. He affirmed that it means ‘the Qur’ān’, which is originated. This is due to the fact that it was revealed (*munazzal*) to human beings. Another significant fact is the verse al-Hijr: 6,⁸⁹ which states that the Qur’ān is preserved by Allah the Almighty. Here, ‘Abd al-Jabbār believed since the Qur’ān requires the One who maintains it, it is necessary as a new thing (*muḥdath*). The pre-existent thing (*qadīm*) would absolutely be free from any keepers. The argument of ‘Abd al-Jabbār was without doubt inclined by his doctrine that the Qur’ān is created in nature. This consequently leads to a generalization that most of the terms ‘*dhikr*’ could mean ‘the Qur’ān’ which is originated. Meanwhile, al-Bāqillānī viewed that his conception on the meaning of the term ‘*dhikr*’ is more valid because the way he interpreted the text is based on the context. This principle was also done by some commentators of the Qur’ān and

⁸⁴ ‘Never comes to a renewed message and reminder from their Lord...’

⁸⁵ The additional word ‘except’ in al-Bāqillānī’s argument is aimed to refute against his oppositions.

⁸⁶ فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ‘Therefore, give warning (O Muhammad to mankind and do not feel sad If your call is rejected) because your duty is only to warn them’.

⁸⁷ “someone is attending in a spiritual forum of remembrance of Allah (*majlis al-dhikr*).”

⁸⁸ Having listened to the Qur’ān, they considered that it as rhythm (*shi’r*) consisting of both valuable meaning and beautiful arrangement. See Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 121.

⁸⁹ Al-Hijr: 6: Indeed, it was We who revealed the Reminder, and We will certainly preserve it.

theologians before and after him.⁹⁰ Al-Rāzī, in commenting the verse al-Anbiyā: 2, inferred that not all usage of the word ‘*dhikr*’ indicate originated things. Some are originated and some others are unoriginated. The same thing can be applied to the statement that the Qur’ān which is also *al-dhikr* does not necessarily mean it is originated.⁹¹ Here, al-Rāzī defended Ash‘arites’ view on interpretation of that verse which relates to the matter of the createdness of the Qur’ān.

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: 3⁹² in his instruction. This letter addressed to some scholars to test their principle regarding the problem of the createdness of the Qur’ān.⁹³ 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: 30.⁹⁴ 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 ‘*khalāqnāhu*’ (we created it) which requires one object.⁹⁵ However, al-Bāqillānī rejected this notion through another 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-Ḥijr: 91,⁹⁶ al-Zukhruf: 19,⁹⁷ Ibrāhīm: 30,⁹⁸ al-

⁹⁰ Abū Ṭāhir ibn Ya‘kūb al-Fīruz Zabādī, *Tanwīr al-Miqbās Min Tafṣīr ibn Abbās*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n. y.), 268-269; Al-Tabarī, in his commentary to the verse al-Anbiyā: 2, affirmed the meaning of ‘*dhikr*’ is ‘reminder and advice’. So, the context of this verse is that the Qur’ān as ‘reminder’ and ‘advice’ for human beings. This has been followed by al-Bāqillānī in his argument. See Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Jāmi al-Bayān an Ta’wīl Ay al-Qur’ān*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, (Egypt: Hijr, 2001), 16: 222.

⁹¹ Al-Rāzī, *al-Tafṣīr al-Kabīr wa Mafātīh al-Gayb*, 22: 140-141.

⁹² Yūsuf: 2: ‘Indeed, We have revealed the Qur’ān in Arabic, so that you may understand it (and learn wisdom through your reason).’

⁹³ Ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Tarīkh Tabarī*, ed. Muhammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, (Egypt: Dār al-Ma‘ārif), 5: 632-635.

⁹⁴ Al-Anbiyā: 30:...and that We made every living thing out of water?.

⁹⁵ Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5: 425.

⁹⁶ Al-Ḥijr: 91: That is those who make up the Qur’ān into shreds (believing in some and denying others)?.

Māidah: 103⁹⁹ and so on. Second, this term could mean ‘to make.’¹⁰⁰ In these verses, the status of Arabic language is obviously to differentiate between the Qur’ān, the Bible (*al-Injīl*), 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.’¹⁰¹ Here, al-Bāqillānī has further developed the arguments of the uncreatedness of the Qur’ān which was not even mentioned by Abū al-Ḥasan 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 Manẓūr (d. 711 A.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.¹⁰² 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’: 86.¹⁰³ 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 A.H./931 C.E.) and Abū al-Qāsim Jār Allāh Maḥmūd ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1074 or 1075 A.H./ 1143 or 1144 C.E.) inferred this verse to prove that the Qur’ān is

⁹⁷ Al-Zukhruf: 19:...and they regard the angels –who themselves are servant of Allah, Most Gracious- as females. Did they witness the creation of angels? Their claim (which are false) shall be recorded, they shall be questioned (shall be punished).

⁹⁸ Ibrāhīm: 30:...and they set up equals with Allah...’

⁹⁹ Al-Māidah: 103: It is absolutely not for Allah’s ordaining that there is such a thing as a bahirah, or sa’bah, or a wasilah, or a ham. But those who disbelieve attribute their lying invention to Allah, and most of them never use their reason.

¹⁰⁰ Al-Zukhruf: 3: Indeed, we make our recitation by Arabic language; إنا جعلنا قرآنا عربيا

¹⁰¹ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Insāf*, 123.

¹⁰² Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 637-638.

¹⁰³ ...and Indeed if We will, We could take away that which we have revealed to you...; ولن نشتتنا لنذميين بالذى أوحينا إليك...

created. If it is pre-existent (*qadīm*), it is impossible to disappear from human beings.¹⁰⁴ 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-ḥifz*) and letters (*al-rasm*), while the memorized thing (*al-maḥfūdz*) remained. This is the Word of God (*Kalām Allāh*). It is supported in narration stated by Ibn Mas'ud.¹⁰⁵ This reply obviously shows that memory (*al-ḥifz*) and letters (*al-rasm*) could be lost, whilst the memorized and written thing (*al-maḥfūz wa al-maktūb*), which is the Word of God, are impossible to disappear¹⁰⁶ 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 not necessarily conclude that the meaning of those sentences is originated (*muḥdath*).¹⁰⁷ 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.¹⁰⁸

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

¹⁰⁴ See Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka'bī al-Balkhī, *Tafsīr Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka'bī al-Balkhī*, ed. Khadr Muḥammad Nabhān, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2007), 257; Abū al-Qāsim Jār Allāh Mahmūd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kasshāf an Haqāiq al-Tanzīl wa Uyūn al-Aqāwil fī Wujūh al-Ta'wīl*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣadīk al-Qamhawī, (Shirkah Maktbah wa Matba'ah Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī wa Awlādih, 1972), 2: 464-465.

¹⁰⁵ 'multiply in your reading the Qur'an before it is removed.' Someone replied to him: How it is removed, while we have memorized it by heart and written in our books (*maṣāḥif*). Ibn Mas'ud responded: the memorization is easily to lose from the heart, as well as the letters from our books. See 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd Raḥmān al-Faḍl al-Dārimī, *al-Musnad al-Jāmi'*, ed. Nabīl ibn Hāshim ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ghamrī, (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāir al-Islāmiyyah, 2013), in *The Book of the merit of the Qur'ān*, no. 3661, 762.

¹⁰⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 125.

¹⁰⁷ Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr wa Maḥāṭih al-Gaib*, 11: 54-56.

¹⁰⁸ Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr wa Maḥāṭih al-Gaib*, 21: 54-55.

comparasion of both God and human's speech.¹⁰⁹ 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.¹¹⁰ This tradition is supported by the fact in the history of Islamic civilization, that 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib 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 is no one of them disapproved its weaknesses.¹¹¹

Further problem related to the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān is the different views on interpreting the term '*shay*.' This term is stated in the Qur'ān in different contexts and has been understood differently by some theologians. The generalization of the meaning '*shay*' as 'all things,' has caused different perceptions on the context of the verse. This matter could be traced back to the *Miḥna* event in which it was decreed by al-Ma'mūn to test some scholars by questioning whether the Qur'ān is created or uncreated, and whether the Qur'ān is a thing (*shay'*) or not.¹¹² The trial led to the examinees to confirm the question which stated that the Qur'ān is a created thing.

¹⁰⁹ The Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, said 'the superiority of God's speech in compare to other speeches is like God's superiority to all of His creatures.' This was narrated by Abū Īsā Muḥammad Ibn Īsā bin Sūra, *Sunan al-Tirmidzī*, ed. Ibrāhīm Udwah Auḍ, (Egypt: Shirkah Maktabah wa Matba'ah al-Mustafā al-Bab al-Halabī, 1977), Chapter on The Book of the Merit of the Qur'ān, no. 2926, 5: 184.

¹¹⁰ Narrated by Abū Darda, he asked the prophet about the Qur'ān, and he replied 'God's speech is uncreated'. See Alī ibn Mūsā al-Baihaqī, *Sunan al-Baihaqī*, ed. 'Abd. Qādir al-'Ata, Beirut: 'Abd Allāh bin Muḥammad Al-Hashidī, Maktabah As-Suwadī, Chapter on Names and Attributes, no. 542, 1: 605-606.

¹¹¹ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 117. See further information about this event in the Ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Tarīkh Tabarī*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Fadl Ibrāhīm, (Egypt: Dar al-Maarif, n. y.), 5: 66.

¹¹² Ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Tarīkh Tabarī*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Fadl Ibrāhīm, (Egypt: Dar al-Maarif, n. y.), 8: 367-368.

Nevertheless, al-Bāqillānī viewed a similar term in al-Ra‘ad: 16.¹¹³ He rejected the term ‘*shay*’ to be understood as ‘the thing’ which existed from nothing. He affirmed this term signifies permanent existence (*mawjūd thābit*) and it does not indicate originated creature. God is eternal and continuously existent. In addition, the term ‘*shay*’ (a thing) here shows the particular (*khusūs*) word, not the general (*umūm*) one. This term includes all of God’s creatures which are created and originated while His attributes are pre-existent (*qadīm*) and eternal. Further argument was also stated by al-Rāzī in rejecting the createdness of the Qur’ān. He interpreted the word ‘*shay*’ (thing) in another place from the verses quoted by al-Bāqillānī which; al-An’am: 101,¹¹⁴ and al-An’am: 102.¹¹⁵ He asserted these verses should be analyzed based on the context. The term ‘*shay*’ could mean ‘everything,’ yet the context does not describe this understanding. This word is a general term to indicate all creatures, which requires certain exception known by their indications (*dalā’il*). Through this statement the specific (*khusūs*) will be known from the general (*umūm*). The meaning of ‘the creator of everything’ to the Mu‘tazilites also negate all attributes (*sifāt*) of God, which leads to problem of the creation of the Qur’ān since God does not have attribute of speech.¹¹⁶

However, the Mu‘tazilites interpreted the verses al-An’am: 101 and 102¹¹⁷ differently from the Ash‘arites. ‘Abd al-Jabbār inferred the term ‘thing’ as somewhat similar to al-Bāqillānī’s interpretation above. He explained that the term ‘thing’ should not be generalized since its meaning should be based on the context of the verse. The meaning of ‘...created all things’ is that God does not create everything. He does not create the truth and falsehood, the justice and injustice, the tyranny and ignorance. This sort of interpretation implies that God creates something negative which is impossible

¹¹³ Al-Ra‘ad: 16: God is creator of all things: الله خالق كل شيء

¹¹⁴ Al-An’am: 101: He created of all things: خلق كل شيء

¹¹⁵ Al-An’am: 102: ...the Creator of all things: خالق كل شيء...

¹¹⁶ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr wa Maḥāṭib al-Gaib*, 19: 35.

¹¹⁷ Al-An’am: 102: He created of all things: خلق كل شيء ; al-An’am: 102: ...the Creator of all things: خالق كل شيء...

and contradictory to His nature. He is awe and His creation is not to insult Him as well as to lower His Greatness. The meaning of those verses should be related to the context that the verses explicate the matter of praising to God's supremacy.¹¹⁸ This merely contains all positive things. Meanwhile, in *al-Mughnī*, 'Abd al-Jabbār viewed the Qur'ān and other speech of God as a thing (*al-shay'*) which is originated by intention and will. This sort of thing should be regarded as creature which is similar thing to other creatures like the earth and the heavens.¹¹⁹ This principle clearly illustrates his inconsistency in interpreting the object of thing. In *al-Mughnī*, he seemed to generalize the meaning of the term 'a thing' (*shay'*) which is contradictory to his principle in interpreting the verses above.

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 arguments, 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.

2.4.2. Definition of Speech (*Kalām*)

In the theological discourse, number of theologians differed in defining the term 'speech'. 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*.¹²⁰ On the contrary, the Mu'tazilites also held that God has attributes, yet He speaks, knows, sees, and wills with His essence

¹¹⁸: Abd al-Jabbār, *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān*, 251-254.

¹¹⁹: Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-Mughnī*, 7: 208-209.

¹²⁰ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Iqtisād fī al-'Itiqād*, ed. Inṣāf Ramaḍān, (Beirūt: Dār Qutaiba, 2003), 99.

not with His attributes. It is to avoid His multiplicity in essence. Hence, they are called by people of purification (*ahl al-tanzīh*).¹²¹

In terms of the definition of speech, al-Bāqillānī 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 و الحروف المنظومة

Speech is meaning existing in the soul expressed by those articulated sounds and arranged letters.¹²²

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 Āli‘Imrān: 41,¹²³ al-Mujādilah: 8,¹²⁴ and al-Mulk: 13,¹²⁵ 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.¹²⁶ In addition, the definition of speech is made clear too by the Qur’ānic narrative about the hypocrites. In chapter al-Munāfiqūn: 1,¹²⁷ 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

¹²¹ Ḥasan Mahmūd al-Shāfi’ī, *al-Madkhal ilā Dirāsah ilm al-Kalām*, (Pakistan: Idārah al-Qur’ān wa al-Ulūm al-Islāmiyyah, 2001), 66.

¹²² Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 317; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah ibn Khaldūn*, (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1992), 474.

¹²³ The sign, Shall be that thou shalt speak to no man for three days but with signals.

¹²⁴ And they say to themselves ‘Why does not God punish us for our word.’

¹²⁵ And whether ye hide your word or publish it, He certainly has (full) knowledge, of the secrets of (all) hearts.

¹²⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Taqrīb wa al-Irshād*, (Beirut: al-Risālah Publisher, (1998), 1: 317. This work is here after cited as *Taqrīb*.

¹²⁷ When the hypocrites come to thee, they say, “we bear witness that thou art indeed the Apostle of God,” yea, God knoweth that thou art indeed His apostle, and God beareth witness that the hypocrites are indeed liars.

expressed statement acknowledging him as the Prophet (peace be upon him). This kind of attitude, according to al-Bāqillānī, 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).’¹²⁸ Therefore, al-Bāqillānī concluded that speech “is meaning existing in the soul expressed by sounds and arranged letters.”¹²⁹

This definition was also stated by a theologian after him, al-Juwaynī. 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 (*ṣifat al-nafs*).¹³⁰ Furthermore, to uphold this notion, he illustrated the statement 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 (*mustaḥab*), permissible (*mubaḥ*), or prohibition (*nahyn*).¹³¹ 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 (*alfāz*) is originated. In relation to God’s speech, he added that God Himself is pre-existent (*qadīm*) as well as His attribute of speech.¹³² 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.

¹²⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Taqrīb*, 2: 317: إن الكلام لفي الفؤاد و إنما جعل اللسان على الكلام دليلاً

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Al-Juwaynī divided attributes into two: Attribute of self (*ṣifah al-nafs*) and attribute of meaning (*ṣifah al-ma‘nā*). The first is every attribute referred to essence, which is not additional to it. While, the second is all attributes of the essence which are also additional to that essence, like knower (*ālim*), and powerful (*qādir*). See *al-Irshād ilā Qawāti‘ al-Adilla Fi Usūl al-I‘tiqād*, (Egypt: Maktba al-Kanjī: 1950), 30-31; *al-Shāmil*, 308.

¹³¹ Al-Juwaynī, *al-Irshād ila Qawāti‘ al-Adilla Fi Usūl al-I‘tiqād*, 105-107.

¹³² Muḥammad Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, *Al-Iqtisād fi al-I‘tiqād*, ed. Insaf Ramadhan, (Beirut: Dar al-Qutaiba, 2003), 114-115; *al-Mustasfā Fi ilm al-Usūl*, ed. Muḥammad Sulaymān al-Ashqar, (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risalah, 1997), 190-192.

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 is ‘what is formed from two words or more, or what is arranged from certain words’.¹³³ He explained that the meaning in the soul is the sound itself.¹³⁴ What appears in our heart when we plan to do something, we call it ‘firm intention’ or ‘will’.¹³⁵ The relationship of the meaning in the soul is referred to will and intention. He also mentioned other aspects of the speech. It is ‘intuitively known’ (*ma‘qūl*) by everybody experience.¹³⁶ However, this definition is contradictory with the principle of the Ash‘arites’ definition.

To reject this notion, al-Bāqillānī 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.¹³⁷ 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, and intuitively known 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

¹³³ ‘Abd al-Jabbār defined the speech as "ما انتظم من حرفين فصاعدا، أو ما له نظام من الحروف مخصص" See ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharh Usūl al-Khamsah*, 529; *al-Majmū’ al-Muhīd bi al-Taklīf*, 317; *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tauhīd wa al-Adl: Khalq al-Qur’ān*, 7; J.R.T Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, 297.

¹³⁴ ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-Mughnī*, 7: 15.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹³⁶ J.R.T Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, 300.

¹³⁷ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Insāf*, 200. See also Richard Joseph McCarthy, *Al-Baqillani as: Polemicist and Theologian*, Ph. D. dissertation, Oxford University: 1951, 207.

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 are elaborated in the division of speech.

2.4.3. 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 as shown before in its definition. According to al-Bāqillānī, the speech, which is meaning existing in the soul, has different aspects when it becomes command (*amr*), prohibition (*nahyn*), information (*khabr*), and recommendation (*nadb*), depending on the context and condition.¹³⁸ All these elements also 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*).¹³⁹ 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 (*khobar*), command (*amr*), and prohibition (*nahy*) within their contexts and circumstances.¹⁴⁰ In terms of information, God revealed about earlier people and their prophets,¹⁴¹ past events,¹⁴² and several

¹³⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 5.

¹³⁹ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Insāf*, 200.

¹⁴⁰ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 5.

¹⁴¹ Hūd: 25-97; Yusuf: 3-101.

¹⁴² Maryam 17-32; al-Kahf: 19-25.

parables.¹⁴³ All these aspects are meant for Muslims to reflect upon in their life to get getting 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 concept. According to him, God’s speech consists of command, prohibition, information, promise, and threat.¹⁴⁴ Besides, he held that His speech is pre-existent attribute (*ṣifat 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 (*mukallaḥin*), 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.¹⁴⁵

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 His speech contains formed sounds words. In this form, the angels and *jins* can produce speech too even if we cannot hear them.¹⁴⁶ 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-Bāqillānī. 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

¹⁴³ Al-Nahl: 112, al-Baqārah: 261.

¹⁴⁴ Al-Rāzī asserted that the essence of speech comprises information, command, and prohibition. See his *Muhaṣṣal Afkār al-Mutaqaddimīn wa al-Mutaakhirīn min al-Ulamā wa al-Hukamā wa al-Mutakallimīn*, ed. Taha ‘Abd al-Raūf Sa‘īd, (Egypt: Maktabah al-Kulliyah al-Azhariyyah, n. y.), 185.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Abd al-Qāhir ibn Tāhir al-Tāmīmī al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, (Istanbul: Matba‘ah al-Daula, 1928), 106-108.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Abd. Al-Jabbār, al-Mughnī: 7, 16. See previous discussion on the definition and division of speech according to Mu‘tazilite’s perspective.

(*Kalam al-Khalq*). The former belongs to God and the latter to creatures, as clearly stated in chapter al-Shūrā: 11.¹⁴⁷ The comparison of both speech of God and human is basically due to different concept and definition promoted by both Mu'tazilites and Ash'arites.

The above division proposed by al-Bāqillānī is also supported by a contemporary scholar of the Qur'ān, 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 (*naḥsī*) 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-Bāqillānī's arguments relying the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*, as stated below:

Allah, the Almighty says in chapter Yūsuf: 77:

فأسرها يوسف في نفسه و لم يبدها لهم قال أنتم شر مكانا

(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:

عن أم سلمة أنها سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم و قد سأل رجل فقال : "إني لأحدث نفسي بالشئ 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

¹⁴⁷ Al-Shūrā: 11: There is nothing whatever like unto Him: ليس كمثلته شئ وهو السميع العليم

him) replied: “That speech would not be delivered except by a believer.¹⁴⁸

The above texts from the verses of the Qur’ān and hadīth clearly elucidate how the mental speech (*al-kalām al-nafsī*) and the articulated speech (*al-kalām al-lafzī*) are interrelated with each other. The Internal aspect of the speaker and the expression of his speech in the form of the words and sounds. 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-lafzī*).¹⁴⁹ 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.¹⁵⁰ It seems that this notion does not mean that the Ash‘arites equates the structure of God’s mind with that of human beings. They asserted that even His speech is the meaning in the soul of the Book expressed in its words, yet it is eternal and uncreated.

Al-Bāqillānī 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.’¹⁵¹ This definition is slightly different from other definitions proposed by some theologians after him.¹⁵² 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-ṭa‘ah*) and willingness (*al-inqiyād*) in performing the action. Through these conditions, it could be differentiated

¹⁴⁸ Abū al-Qāsim al-Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad ibn Ayyūb al-Ṭabrānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-Saghīr*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1983), on The Chapter of alphabet Ḥa: From the Name of Ḥasan, 1: 129.

¹⁴⁹ Rofi‘ al-‘Ajm, *Mausū‘ah Mustalaḥāt Uṣūl al-Fiqh Inda al-Muslimīn*, (Beirut: Maktaba Lubnan Nāshirūn, 1998), vol. 2: 1135.

¹⁵⁰ Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-‘Irfān fi Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), vol. 1: 15-16.

¹⁵¹ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 5; القول المقتضى به الفعل من المأمور على وجه الطاعة

¹⁵² See definition of command (*amr*) according to al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī in their works *al-Burhān fi Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, ed. Ṣalāḥ ibn Muḥammad ibn Uwayḍah, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1997), 1: 63; al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā min Ilm al-Uṣūl*, ed. Muḥammad Sulaymān al-Aṣqar, (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risālah, 1997), 2: 61: القول المقتضى (بنفسه) طاعة المأمور بفعل المأمور به

from question (*su'āl*) and wish (*raghbah*), for both statements do not need the obedience of the addressee.¹⁵³ In other places, al-Bāqillānī also defined prohibition (*nahyn*) as ‘speech which requires someone to avoid from doing something.’¹⁵⁴ 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*).¹⁵⁵ 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.

In further discussion on the parts of speech, al-Bāqillānī also elucidated about information (*khabr*). He defined it as ‘thing which has two possibilities either true or false.’¹⁵⁶ This definition requires two different possibilities because if there is only one, this fact could not be regarded as information (*khabr*). Furthermore, when information (*khabr*) is related to the Prophet (peace be upon him) which comprises command and prohibition, all their essence are actually from God. He solely delivered His messages to people. That is why this sort of process is called information (*khabr*).¹⁵⁷ In this matter, al-Juwaynī merely underlined al-Bāqillānī’s conception, since he was more likely to agree with al-Bāqillānī’s definition of information (*khabr*) as well as the aspects in it.¹⁵⁸

Al-Bāqillānī subdivided command into two; obligation (*ijab*) and recommendation (*nadb*). The first is defined as ‘requirement of action willingly and obediently which forbid either to leave all compulsory contents, or parts of them, or acts

¹⁵³ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 6.

¹⁵⁴ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 317: القول المقتضى في ترك الفعل , compare this definition to al-Juwaynī’s notion in his *al-Burhān fi Usūl al-Fiqh*, 2: 96: اقتضاء الكفاف عن المنهى عنه بمثابة الأمر في اقتضاء المأمور به

¹⁵⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 16.

¹⁵⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Tamhīd*, 434: ما يصح أن يدخله الصدق و الكذب

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Al-Juwaynī, *al-Burhan fi Usūl al-Fiqh*, 1: 215.

which have consequences with sins.¹⁵⁹ The second is ‘requirement of action willingly and obediently without any sin and blame to neglect it.’¹⁶⁰ To him, every command refers to certain categories of obligation or recommendation. The command which indicates those purposes known by its statement requires the compulsory action (*al-fi’l al-lāzim*) as well as the recommended action (*al-fi’l al-mandūb*). The former shows its obligation and the latter is recommendation. It is necessary, for instance, in performing atonement of oath (*kaffārah al-yamīn*) which becomes obligation to those who violate God’s regulation regarding this matter. The same thing with recommendation, for instance, the decree to someone to perform prayer either on time or within the limited period of time.¹⁶¹ This instruction also possibly could be meant to order something is to prohibit its opposite as well.

In the concept of command, al-Bāqillānī asserted that ‘to order something is to prohibit its opposite.’¹⁶² In this statement he maintained that this command should not be compulsory acts and choices. He explained that to order something in which it is not optional is to prohibit its opposite as well. Instances of these are the decree of God regarding the atonement of oath in chapter al-Maidah: 89¹⁶³ and performance of prayer (*ṣolāt*), which could be performed in different times; in the early time, or within the same period. These orders comprise choices that a man can choose alternatives of acts

¹⁵⁹ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 28: اقتضاء الطاعة والإنقياد بالفعل على وجه يحرم ترك موجب و متضمنه ، أو تركه و تركه ما
البدل منه ، أو تركه على وجه ما أو يلحق المأثم على ترك متضمنه على وجه ما
al-Mustasfā, 1: 70: ‘that those who ignore it will be punished: بأنه يعاقب على تركه

¹⁶⁰ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 28: اقتضاء الطاعة و الإنقياد بالفعل مع سقوط اللوم و المأثم بتركه ، compare to al-Ghazālī’s definition in his *al-Mustasfā*, 1: 70: ‘that no punishment to those who ignore it: بأنه لا عقاب على تركه

¹⁶¹ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 29-30.

¹⁶² Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 6: الأمر بالشئ نهى عن ضده . This problem was also discussed by other Mu‘tazilites theologians which raised several differences amongst them. See Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Ismā‘īl al-Ash‘ārī, *Maqālat Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Musallīn*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥy al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, (Egypt: Maktabah al-Nahḍah al-Misriyyah, 1969), 2: 65 and 85.

¹⁶³ Allah will not take you to account for that which is was unintentional in your oath (when you do not intend them as oaths), but He will take you to task for the oaths which you solemnly swear. The penalty for an oath broken is the feeding of ten needy men with such food as you normally feed your own families; or the cloathing of them; or the freeing of a slave. He who cannot afford any of these (as penalties) must fast three days...’ see in *Tafsir al-Rahman: Interpretation and the Meaning of the Qur’ān*, Department of Islamic Development Malaysia.

(*li al-takhyīr*).¹⁶⁴ This idea is also supported by later theologians, al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍāwī. Al-Rāzī asserted different conditions for this command.¹⁶⁵ It should not be in contradictory to the prohibition in a way that it does not indicate the impossibility of its opposition. Besides that, the order to someone should be reasonable and appropriate to his capability. It is clear that the one who commands is aware of what he says and understands the meaning and its opposites. He should not be neglectful (*ghāfil*) with his statement.¹⁶⁶ In addition, al-Bayḍāwī also defended this type of command in different statements. He mentioned ‘the obligatory action requires its prohibited opposition, because it is part of it.’¹⁶⁷ This is indicated by its partial connotation (*dilālah al-taḍāmun*). He explained that the statement in commanding something is also prohibiting its opposition because it is included in that statement.¹⁶⁸ Like the one who has been decreed to sit, he at the same time is forbidden to stand or lay down.

Conversely to the above standpoint, al-Juwaynī, al-Ghazālī, and al-Āmidī held the opposite position.¹⁶⁹ They asserted God’s command about something is not as His prohibition of its opposite, the same position held by the Qadarites.¹⁷⁰ Al-Juwaynī argued that this problem takes some consequences. When somebody decrees someone

¹⁶⁴ Al-Mu‘tazilite in this matter has different point of view. According to Abū al-Ḥusain, to order something with optional action (في الأمر بالشئ على طريق التخيير) is done by sequence (*tartīb*) and substitution (*al-badl*). The requirement to employ this act is to follow the will (*irādah*) of the commander, which is God, the Almighty. If the command is aimed to perform all actions stated in the command, means he has to do all contents by following the sequence (*al-tartīb*); like *tayammum* instead of ablution, eating the unslaughtered animals due to the absence of food, etc. It also has other possibilities to choose one of them with exception (*rukhsah*). The other thing is to do one of the required commands as substitution for other actions, like covering the body (*satr al-‘awra*) with a piece of cloth which is acceptable (*mubāh*), yet two pieces is better. See Abū al-Ḥusain ibn ‘Alī ibn Ṭayyib, *Kitāb al-Mu‘tamad fī Usūl al-Fiqh*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1964), 98-99.

¹⁶⁵ Muḥammad ‘Umar ibn al-Ḥusein al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Maḥṣūl fī ‘Ilm Usūl al-Fiqh*, ed. Ṭaha Jābir Fayyāḍ al-Alwānī, (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risalah, n. y.) 2: 199-201.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ وجوب الشئ يستلزم حرمة نقيضه، لأنها جزؤه

¹⁶⁸ ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-Kāfi al-Subkī & Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn ‘Alī al-Subkī, *Al-Ibhāj fī Sharh al-Manhaj: Sharh ‘alā Minhaj al-Wusūl ilā ‘Ilm al-Usūl li al-Qādī al-Bayḍawī*, ed. Aḥmad Jamal al-Zamzamī & Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Jabbār Saghiri, (Dubai: Dār al-Buḥūth li al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah wa Iḥya’ al-Turāth, n. y.), 2: 329-332.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Abd al-Malik ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yūsuf al-Juwaynī, *al-Burhān fī Usūl al-Fiqh*, vol. 1: 82-83; Abū Ḥamid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī al-Tūsī, *al-Mustasfā fī ‘Ilm Usūl*, 1: 155; ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Āmidī, *al-Iḥkam fī Usūl al-Aḥkām*, ed. ‘Abd al-Razāq ‘Afīfī, (Riyāḍ: Dār al-Sumay‘ī, 2003), 1: 210-215.

¹⁷⁰ See Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Ismā‘il al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālat Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Musallīn*, (Egypt: Maktabah al-Nahdah al-Misriyyah, 1969), 2: 85.

to perform something, the issue is not the prohibition of its opposite. This is because the order also implies the opposite thing which includes all prohibitions but this is impossible. For instance, when someone is instructed to perform prayer. He is prohibited to leave it or to perform something else. Therefore, their preference is to hold that the command of something is not to prohibit one or more of its opposites. If it is regarded that the command of something is the prohibition of its opposite, then there will be interrelationship between them - command and prohibition - which the former is ordered thing and the latter is the prohibited one. This is contradictory relationship.¹⁷¹ To them, al-Bāqillānī's argument is invalid. They illustrated, that a person who has the ability to do something, at the same time cannot do the opposite thing. Such a person has the ability to write and at the same time he cannot write. This is absurd. In this aspect, al-Ghazālī added that he was worried about those who command somebody and at the same time this man is neglected of its opposites (*aḍḍād*). Thus, by ignoring the opposite of the command, the order is invalid.¹⁷² However, it seems from the argument that al-Baqillānī's notion stresses on the impossibility of contradictory relationship between command and prohibition. It is because they are parts of speech with their meaning existing in the soul. They should not be regarded merely on the expressions (*lafz*), but also the context of the speech. Furthermore, if the one who decrees is neglectful, based on al-Rāzī's argument, the command is not valid since its condition of command is by awareness of the speaker regarding his command as well as all its opposites.¹⁷³

Al-Bāqillānī further elaborated his discussion on the aspect of prohibition, which is part of the speech. He defined it as 'speech which requires avoiding from doing

¹⁷¹ Abd al-Malik 'Abd Allāh ibn Yūsuf, al-Juwaynī, *al-Burhān fī Usūl al-Fiqh*, vol. 1: 82-83; Abū al-Ḥusain ibn Muḥammad, ibn 'Alī ibn Ṭayyib, *Kitāb al-Mu'tamad*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh, (Beirūt: Dār al-Fikr, 1964), 77.

¹⁷² Al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā fī Ilm Usūl*, 1: 155.

¹⁷³ Al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Maḥṣul fī Ilm Usūl al-Fiqh*, 2: 199-201.

something.¹⁷⁴ He elucidated the prohibition is only applicable for an addressee, not for a person who prohibits it, the same thing to the command that is solely for the commanded man. He divided prohibition into obligation (*wājib*) and recommendation (*nadb*), the same division as in the case of command.¹⁷⁵ The application of command and prohibition may be employed through the agency of person who instructs to the addressee, for example, in the case of the decree of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to his companions to cut somebody's hand for theft.¹⁷⁶ Even though this was employed by the companions, the order was still from the Prophet (peace be upon him). In addition, al-Bāqillānī also maintained that all God's commands and prohibitions are not regarded as good or bad things. Since they are meanings in the soul (*ma'nā al-qāim fī al-nafs*), and eternal, they have not relationship to the linguistic aspects. The one who regarded those instructions as good and bad is from the agreement of human beings.¹⁷⁷ To this problem, al-Ghazālī also stressed the same thing. He illustrated, a man could order somebody to do a bad thing, which is actually forbidden under the Islamic laws.¹⁷⁸ The understanding that the command has relation to the good while the prohibition to the bad sometimes is not necessarily true. All these matters should be referred back to the Islamic laws. Therefore, it seems from the aforementioned argument we can conclude that the command and prohibition of God definitely signify the performing of action and avoiding of it based on their indications.

From the division of speech, al-Bāqillānī developed further concept of the characteristics of speech. He affirmed that speech and conversation are not regarded as they are unless these are delivered to an addressee. Both subjects - speaker and listener - should be in existence as part of the activity of speaking, like the word 'striking'

¹⁷⁴ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 317.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 318.

¹⁷⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Inṣāf*, ed. 'Imād al-Dīn Aḥmad Haedar, (Beirut: 'Alam Kutub, 1986), 167.

¹⁷⁷ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 2: 86.

¹⁷⁸ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā fī Ilm Usūl*, 2: 86.

(*muḍārabah*) and ‘fighting’ (*muqātalah*), which need subject and object of the action.¹⁷⁹

Furthermore, the conversation between the speaker and the listener should be in the form of statement and response. His messages should be possibly heard by his listener and vice versa. The reaction also has to be shown by the listener responding to the speaker. By such means, the activity of speech is done in a proper manner. In addition, al-Bāqillānī maintained that the speech of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his time was also meant to address the absent addressees, and regarded that it was command (*amr*) and prohibition (*nahy*) too. But, when speech is taken in the sense of conversation (*mukhāṭabāh*), it precisely requires the presence of listener.¹⁸⁰ In other words, al-Bāqillānī maintained that speech, in common usage, necessitates the presence of another person, but when it functions as command and prohibition it is meant for absent addressees as well.¹⁸¹ Al-Ghazālī also asserted the same thing with al-Bāqillānī’s notion in this aspect. He believed that command is also possible to those absent addressees. This could be done through delivering of the message to them by somebody else.¹⁸² However, this problem is contradictory to al-Juwaynī’s stance. He maintained that the existence (*wujūd*) of the addressee is prerequisite to the command because it is impossible to order somebody without an ordered person. He further reported that some theologians asserted that to decree somebody, it is also valid to order present addressees while a commander (*al-āmir*) is absent. This is exemplified by the command of the Prophet to his people and the generations after them. This continues to the present time.

Conversely, al-Bāqillānī claimed that the Mu‘tazilites maintained that command and prohibition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were intended only for the people in his time while its relevance for people after him should be considered by looking at

¹⁷⁹ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 335.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 336.

¹⁸² Al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā fī ilm al-Usūl*, 2: 97.

another indication (*dalīl*) which necessarily entails another command.¹⁸³ By virtue of this manner of understanding, only people after the Prophet will be included as the object of command and prohibition. However, this notion was rejected by a theologian after al-Bāqillānī. Al-Ghazālī in his *al-Mustaṣfā*, maintained that the command of God is pre-eternal (*al-azalī*). The command does not require the presence of an addressee. Since the meaning of speech in the form of command exists in the soul of the speaker, the fulfillment of the command will be realized when the addressee is present. This is also information to the absent addressee who necessarily has legal capacity, for example, a father may command his son when he is still in the womb of his mother.¹⁸⁴ Hence, it appears that the command of God is His pre-eternal Speech containing all instructions to human beings which delivered to the Prophet, peace be upon him. While the command of the Prophet is his instruction to his people and generation after them

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.

2.4.4. Division of Expressive Speech

Having discussed parts of speech, al-Bāqillānī 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

¹⁸³ The author has not found this notion, as mentioned by al-Bāqillānī, in some Mu‘tazilite books. It is only stated that speech, as command, may be expressed by general terms which are either directed to limited audiences or all listeners. It depends on its indications. See Abū al-Husain Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn al-Tayyib, *Kitāb al-Mu‘tamad fī usūl al-Fiqh*, ed. Muḥammad Hamīdullah, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1964), 255-256.

¹⁸⁴ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā*, 2:97; *al-Iqtīṣād Fī al-I‘tiqād*, Ed. Inṣāf Ramaḍān, (Beirut: Dār Qutaiba, 2003), 155.

perspective, Abū al-Aswad al-Duālī (d. 69 A.H./688 C.E.), 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-Bāqillānī divided two different expressive speeches; communicative (*mufīd*) and non-communicative speech (*ghairu mufīd*). The former is informative speech which has particular meaning (*maʿnā*) while the latter is divided into two kinds; 1) reversed letters (*al-ḥurūf al-maqlūbah*), like the word “*lijrun*” for “*rijlun*” (foot) and 2) arranged letters (*al-ḥurūf al-manzūmah*) 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 kind could turn into communicative one provided the speaker is helped to speak all the words correctly until they have meanings.¹⁸⁵

In addition to this discussion, al-Bāqillānī 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-Faḥ: 29,¹⁸⁶ al-Isra’: 32,¹⁸⁷ and al-Nisa’: 29.¹⁸⁸ These verses are regarded as clear sentences that on their own explain their meanings without metaphorical expressions.¹⁸⁹ Their statement has no ambiguous words which signify specific meaning. This position has been agreed upon by philologists.¹⁹⁰ The second part is that the sentence is independent

¹⁸⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 337.

¹⁸⁶ Muhammad is the apostle of God, and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other.

¹⁸⁷ Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is shameful (deed) and and evil, opening the road (to other evils).

¹⁸⁸ 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.

¹⁸⁹ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1:342.

¹⁹⁰ Uthmān ibn Qanbar, *Kitāb Sibawayh*, ed. ‘Abd. Al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, (Egypt: Maktabah al-Khanji, 1988), vol. 1: 12.

to explain its meaning (*mafhūmihi*);¹⁹¹ like the verses in chapter al-Isrā': 23,¹⁹² al-Zalzalāh: 7,¹⁹³ and al-Nisā': 77.¹⁹⁴ Those verses are known through understanding of the context.

However, several *uṣuliyyuns* have different positions in relation to this aspect of the discussion.¹⁹⁵ Some claimed that the sentences are understood by analogy (*bi al-qiyās*). 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.¹⁹⁶ These ideas are rejected by al-Bāqillānī 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.¹⁹⁷ To the second group, the adherents of the Zāhirite school, he affirmed that they are undoubtedly contradicting the mainstream position of Muslims and philologists. Al-Bāqillānī was in line with mainstream position in saying that these verses have certain hidden meanings which are the main objectives of these above related 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.¹⁹⁸ It is exemplified in some verses in chapter Yūsuf: 82¹⁹⁹ and al-Māidah: 1.²⁰⁰

¹⁹¹ 'Abd. Allāh ibn Yūsuf al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Talkhīṣ fī Usūl al-Fiqh*, ed. Abd. Allāh Jaulim al-Nibālī and Shabbir Aḥmad al-'Umarī, (Beirut: Dar al-Bashair al-Islamiyyah, 1996), vol. 1: 180-182.

¹⁹² Say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them.

¹⁹³ Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it!.

¹⁹⁴ Never will ye be dealt with unjustly in the very least.

¹⁹⁵ Aḥmad Ibn Qudāma, *Rauḍah al-Naḍir wa Janna al-Manaḍir*, ed. Muḥammad Sha'ban Ismā'il, (Makkah: Maktabah al-Makkiyah, 1998), vol. 1: 505-506.

¹⁹⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 346.

¹⁹⁷ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 343.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 1: 346.

¹⁹⁹ Ask the town where we have been.

The second division of communicative speech is partly independent that the sentence is independent from one point of view but not independent from another point of view in exposing its meanings. This occurs because 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: 5²⁰¹ and al-Taubah: 29.²⁰² The former verse states the word ‘*al-Mushrikīn*’ 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.²⁰³

The third division of communicative speech is not independent. 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. 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’: 43,²⁰⁴ and al-Hajj: 40.²⁰⁵ The first verse explains that the word ‘prayer’ (*ṣalāh*) 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-Bāqillānī elaborated from the main concept of speech.

²⁰⁰ Lawful unto you (for food) are all four footed animals.

²⁰¹ ...fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them.

²⁰² ...until they pay the *Jizyah* (compensation) with willing submission and fell themselves subdued.

²⁰³ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 349.

²⁰⁴ Ye who believe! Approach not *prayer* with a mind befogged, until ye can understand all that you say, nor in a state of ceremonial impurity (except when traveling on the road).

²⁰⁵ Did not God check one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques...

Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī 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’ (*Zaidun qāim lā qāim*).²⁰⁶ 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.²⁰⁷

Al-Bāqillānī maintained that the communicative speech should follow the division of speech, which has been established by Arab grammarians. There are three divisions of speech: word (*lafẓ*), verb (*fi‘il*), and particle (*ḥarf*). The word (*lafẓ*) 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.²⁰⁸ 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.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 338.

²⁰⁷ Ḥussein ‘Abd al-Raof, *Arabic Rethoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 77; Aḥmad al-Hishamī, *Jawāhir al-Balāghah*, (Beirut: Dār Ihya’ al-Turath al-Arabī, n. y.), 7.

²⁰⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 338.

²⁰⁹ 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 Ṭālib 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.”²¹⁰ Furthermore, Goldziher thought that the separation of vowels, like *fathah* for *nasab*, *kasrah* for *ḥafd*, and *ḍammah* for *raf* are derived from the Syriac diacritical forms.²¹¹

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 A.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 Ṭālib.²¹² 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.²¹³ 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:

²¹⁰ Ignaz Goldziher, *On the History of Grammar Among the Arabs*, trans. Kinga Devenyi & Tamas Ivanyi, (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994), 3.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

²¹² Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq ibn Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, *The Fihrist ibn Nadim*, ed. Bayard Dodge, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 88; *Encyclopedia of Islam: new edition*, “nahw”, 913-914.

²¹³ Theodore Noldeke, “Semitic Languages”, *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 13th Edition, 1926, 23: 617-619.

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.²¹⁴

In conclusion, our foregoing discussion delineates us the division of expressive speech related to its aspects. It also justifies valid argument concerning the division of speech according to the Arabic 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.

2.4.5. 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 Gabriel, 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-Bāqillānī elaborated his ideas based on that particular verse in the Qur'ān. He affirmed that God sent His speech to His Prophets through two different ways: without mediation, and with mediation. God states in the Qur'ān that His revelation reaches to prophets through three different means, as mentioned in the Qur'ān chapter al-Shūra: 51:

و ما كان لبشر أن يكلمه الله إلا وحيا أو من وراء حجاب أو يرسل رسولا فيحوي بإذنه
ما يشاء إنه علي حكيم

²¹⁴ Raphael Patai, *Ignaz Goldziher and His Oriental Diary*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 20.

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-Bāqillānī 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. It is because they were special persons chosen by Him. 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.²¹⁵ Al-Bāqillānī'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, God decrees a rite for specific man in particular time.²¹⁶

The second method is that God speaks to prophets and people through His messengers who are sent to them at His will. The way they know God is through His angels 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

²¹⁵ Like information about revelation comes to the Prophet in the form of a ringing of a bell. See Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fuād 'Abd al-Bāqī, (Egypt: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2010), Chapter on The Book of Revelation, no. 2, 8.

²¹⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 429-430.

prophets with meanings that have been known to them previously, including all His non-Quranic messages. Al-Bāqillānī stated:

The angel [Gabriel] 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 his people (*umam*).²¹⁷ This is what we presented through analysis and inference (*al-naẓr wa al-istidlāl*)...²¹⁸

Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī elaborated his discussion concerning the two ways by which the angel communicated to prophets followed by their delivery of the message to their people. First is that the prophets comprehended the meanings of the message through non-equivocal words (*naṣ gaira muḥtamil*), which do not need analysis and inference. The same thing is the case in relation to their people, they understood the speech of the prophets through this process as well. The second way is that the messages were understood through equivocal words (*al-mujmal wa al-muḥtamil*), which had different meanings. These are known through indication (*dalīl*) attached to these messages. In this aspect they have two characteristics; first is the indication of this speech is rational (*aqlī*), and second is that the indication is instructional (*tawqīfī*).²¹⁹ The former requires logical analysis to grasp messages of the angel and prophets while the latter does not require this process. This is lessening of the burden (*takhfīf*) of test and abandoning of looking for rational evidence.²²⁰ In addition, al-Ghazālī also affirmed the communication of God to angel as well as to prophets, we have to know that God has the created necessary knowledge (*ilm bi al-ḍarūra*) consisting three things; the

²¹⁷ Al-Bāqillānī does not mention what he means by *umam* (people). Perhaps, those were pious Muslims in a particular community like 'Imrān and Luqmān. 'Imrān was the father of Maryam who had been chosen by Allāh together with Prophets Ibrāhīm and Adam. While, Luqmān was the one who had been bestowed by Allāh His wisdom. He was also a *Qādī* of the people of Bani Israil. See Abū Ja'far ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Jamī al-Bayān an Ta'wīl ay al-Qur'ān*, ed. Abd Allah ibn Amad al-Muhsin al-Turkī, (Egypt: Markaz al-Buḥuth wa al-Dirāsah al-Arabiyyah wa al-Islāmiyyah, 2001), vol. 3: 156 and 18: 547.

²¹⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 431.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 432.

²²⁰ Ibid.

speaker, the content of speaking, and the purpose of speech. All these three aspects were bestowed to the angel and instilled in the prophets' hearts. Through these means, they undoubtedly recognized the Absolute Speech of God, which is different from human's speech. This complicated process is difficult to be understood by common people, notably on how God spoke to Prophet Moses directly without any intermediary, which was neither with letters nor sounds. This is like a blind man who wants to know colours and shapes.²²¹ From the aforementioned statement it appears that al-Bāqillānī delineated the two significant methods on how God speaks to human beings. In his discussion he focused on those ways of communication, yet he left his discussion on the third way which is speaking from behind the veil. Perhaps, this means, to him, is not relevant matter to be discussed in this topic.

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' view that God is invisible.²²² According to them, there is another way 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 "*wamā kāna 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'talites, yet it should be related to other verses which explain the possibility of human beings seeing God is in the hereafter.²²³ In another verse al-Qiyamah: 23,²²⁴ human beings could see God. Al-Rāzī commented that the Mu'tazilites tried to interpret the term '*al-naẓr*'

²²¹ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā fī Ilm al-Uṣūl*, 2: 22.

²²² 'Abd. Al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Khamsah*, 232.

²²³ Muḥammad Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr wa Maḥātīḥ al-Ghaib*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 27: 188.

²²⁴ Looking at their Lord.

(view) as ‘*al-intizār*’ (waiting) which is far from the context.²²⁵ Before him, al-Ash‘arī also rejected this notion saying that the word ‘*al-nazr*’ could not mean ‘thinking.’ When the word ‘*al-nazr*’ is placed together with the word ‘*al-wajh*’ (face), the meaning should be vision in physical sense, not in imagination.²²⁶ 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:

إِنَّكُمْ سَتَرُونَ رَبَّكُمْ كَمَا تَرُونَ هَذَا الْقَمَرَ لَا تَضَامُونَ فِي رُؤْيَيْهِ

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.²²⁷

A later theologian, 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 Gabriel 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-darūra*) 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.²²⁸

Ibn Taymiyya, a Hanbalīte follower, had a different analysis concerning the above verse of the Qur’ān chapter al-Shūra: 51. He believed that there are three different types of communication between God and human beings; first is delivering messages through revelation, second is through direct speaking behind a veil, and third is by sending an angel. The first may be in the form of revelation (*wahy*) or inspiration

²²⁵ Muḥammad Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr wa Mafātīḥ al-Ghaib*, 30: 229.

²²⁶ Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, *Al-Ibānah*, 32.

²²⁷ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, (Egypt: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2010), chapter on the Book of Tawhid, no. 7434, 884.

²²⁸ Muḥammad Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr wa Mafātīḥ al-Ghaib*, 27: 190.

(*ilhām*) which is addressed to prophets and devoted chosen people (*awliyā*). This method could occur with or without the mediation of an angel. He proved by stating the following *hadīth*:

عن ابن مسعود أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال: إن روح القدس في روعي، أن نفسا لن تموت حتى تستكمل رزقها، ألا فاتقوا الله و أجملوا في الطلب

Narrated by Ibn Mas‘ūd that the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) said: Indeed, the holy spirit (the angel Gabriel) blew into my mind, that soul is impossible to die until its livelihood is complete. Fear God and do right request to Him.²²⁹

Another relevant *hadīth* as quoted by Ibn Taymiyya is:

عن معاذ ابن جبل أن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال: إني قمت في الليل فصليت ما قدر لي، فنعست في صلاتي حتى استنقلت، فإذا أنا بربي عز و جل في أحسن صورة، فقال : يا مُحَمَّد أ تدري فيما يختصم الملائ الأعلی؟ ...

Narrated by ibn Jabal that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: Indeed, I woke up in the night, and prayed as I could. I was drowsy in my prayer for I felt very heavy. I found myself with my God, the almighty, in beautiful form. He (God) said: O, Muḥammad, do you know what do the angels dispute?...²³⁰

According to Ibn Taymiyya, the first and second *hadīth* explain that revelation could be delivered through different ways; with or without mediation of an angel to the prophets. This way is not only happen to prophets but also to those who are devoted persons (*awliyā*). The second type of communication, as Ibn Taymiyya maintained, is direct speaking from behind a veil. In this respect, it only occurred to Prophets Mūsā and Muḥammad (peace be upon them). God spoke to them differently from delivering of revelation. It could be inferred from the above verse that this was the second type of how God communicates to human beings. Therefore, Ibn Taymiyya concluded that

²²⁹ Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥākīm, *al-Mustadrak ‘Alā Ṣaḥīhain*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Atā, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, 2002), chapter on The Book of Transactions, no. 2866, 2: 5.

²³⁰ Abū ‘Isā Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā ibn Sūrah, *Sunan al-Tirmīdhī*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Hūt, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n. y), chapter on The Book of interpretation of the Qur’ān, no. 3235, 5: 343.

speaking is not revealing, as it is proven from the fact that God directly spoke to them without any mediation. It only occurred behind the veil which is invisible. The third type of communication of God to human beings is by sending His angel to the prophets. He sent the Angel Gabriel to deliver God's messages to them, and they went on to deliver those messages to their people. This process, as Ibn Taymiyya stated, is called by cleared revelation (*al-wahy al-jali*) which means God spoke to the prophets through His angels with audible sound. This is known through revelational signs like ringing of the bell or the Angel Gabriel appearing in the form of a man. From these types of communication Ibn Taymiyya summarized that the highest level of communication is God speaking to the prophets in plain words and meanings.²³¹ Here, Ibn Taymiyya seemed to be driven by his tendency to give literal understanding of both verse and *hadīth* as to avoid his speculation commenting those issues.

In addition, al-Bāqillānī 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.²³² 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.²³³

Moreover, Al-Bāqillānī 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 (*naṣṣ ghairu muḥtamil*). It is comprehensible to all

²³¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Risālah al-Ba'albakīyah*, (Riyāḍ: Dār al-Faḍīlah, 2004), 77-84.

²³² Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 432. This is in accordance with the verse of the Qur'ān Chapter al-Hajj: 78.

²³³ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā Fī ilm al-Uṣūl*, 2: 22.

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, 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: 141,²³⁴ 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.²³⁵ The phrase ‘*illā bi ḥaqqiha*’ is about performing prayer, giving *zakāt* and so on.²³⁶

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.²³⁷ 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.²³⁸

²³⁴ ...but render the dues that the harvest is gathered...

²³⁵ Abū al-Ḥusain Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), chapter in The Book of Faith, no. 22, 1: 35; Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Translation of the Meanings of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari*, (New Delhi: Kitāb Bhavan, 1984), chapter on the Book of Faith, no. 483, 2: 274.

²³⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 435; al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā Fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 2: 22.

²³⁷ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 435; al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā Fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 2: 23.

²³⁸ ‘I and the person who looks after an orphan and provides for him, will be in paradise like this, putting his index and middle fingers together.’ See Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Translation of the Meanings of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari*, (New Delhi: Kitāb Bhavan, 1984), no. 34, 8: 23.

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-ṣaḥābah*). 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.²³⁹ In addition to this process, Al-Ghazālī developed al-Bāqillānī's notion that if there are messages and meanings of the equivocal words are unknown by linguists, those would be grasped through their context (*qarā'in*).²⁴⁰

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 through His essence not His attribute. 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.²⁴¹

Nevertheless, according to al-Bāqillānī, all these assumptions believed by the Mu'tazilites are impossible.²⁴² He affirmed that God has the attribute of Seeing, Willing, Hearing, Living, and Knowing. If God does not have all these attributes, then

²³⁹ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 436.

²⁴⁰ al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā Fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 2: 23.

²⁴¹ See their dispute in this problem in Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, 2: 254.

²⁴² Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb*, 1: 437.

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.²⁴³ 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 are merely shallow arguments asserted by the Qadarites.²⁴⁴

Al-Bāqillānī's theological principles are also relevant to disprove the argument of contemporary Orientalists notably their involvement in 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.²⁴⁵ To this claim we can trace al-Bāqillānī's arguments rejecting them. In his *al-Tamhīd*, 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-Baqillani 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

²⁴³ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Tamhīd*, 48-49.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ Manabu Waida, "Incarnation," *Encyclopedia of Religion: Second Edition*, ed. Lindsay Jones, (New York: Thomson Gale, 2005), 7 : 4417.

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?. These problems are baseless. Hence, this notion should be rejected.²⁴⁶ 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 him, the speech of God is meaningful (*mufīd*). It 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.²⁴⁷

2.5. Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, our foregoing discussion in this chapter concerns the issue of speech related to the createdness of the Qur'ān as al-Bāqillānī's response to the Mu'tazilites' views. His arguments has also clarified several claims of the contemporary Orientalists. On this pivotal issue he affirmed that the Qur'ān is God's Speech, which is uncreated in nature. The Mu'talites' and several Orientalists' study on this group 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 polemic in the principle of theological matters was not only addressed to the Mu'tazilites, but also to another group, Mujassimites. To him, this matter should be clarified as his defense to the framework of al-Ash'arites school of thought which will be elaborated in the next chapter.

²⁴⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Tamhīd*, 109-111

²⁴⁷ See al-Bāqillānī's concept on Division of Speech on the previous page.

CHAPTER III: ANTHROPOMORPHIC APPROACH TO THE QUR'ĀN AND AL-BĀQILLĀNĪ'S RESPONSE

3.1. Introduction

The anthropomorphic understanding of God has existed even before the teachings of Islam arrived.¹ This issue was introduced to Islam as part of some theologians' attempts in viewing their theological doctrines. However, this is one of which caused crucial problem in Islamic theological discourse that called for contradictory opinions amongst theologians. Some of them were Anthropomorphists (*mujassima*), who based their principle on corporeal bodies, maintaining that God's attributes as well as His activities are based on the physical basis. It is due to their literal approach of the Qur'ān as well as certain tendency to refer their doctrines to other beliefs in Christianity and Judaism. Hence, their concepts most probably are also influenced by those two religions. Before we discuss further, we would like to elucidate the background of the role of anthropomorphism within Islamic intellectual polemic.

3.2. Background of the Anthropomorphic Approach to the Qur'ān

One of the problematic matters in understanding the Qur'ān is the existence of the *mutashābihāt* verses. The Qur'ān has two types of verses; the *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt*. Each type could have different perspectives towards their meanings. Based on some sources, both terms have been perceived differently.² Here, we rely our definition on one of them as many researchers preferred. According to them, the *muḥkam* verses give clear meanings and do not show ambiguity. All of these verses are clearly shown and have been arranged systematically. Meanwhile, the *mutashābih* verses contain ambiguous meanings. The context also shows unbinding elements,

¹ Anthropomorphism is the belief that God has physical body and limb like a human. See James Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), vol. 1: 573.

² *Muḥkamāt* is a verse that has clear meaning without further explanation. *Mutashābihāt* is verse having more than one meaning, hence, it needs further interpretation. See discussion of those concepts in Ahmad von Denffer, *Ulum al-Qur'ān*, (Leicestershire: The Islamic Foundation, 2007), 79-81.

hence, leading to differences of opinion. What happened is that most commentators of the Qur'ān as well as a number of theologians during their analyses and commentaries of those ambiguous verses (*mutashābihāt*) tended to differ amongst them, including the verses of the attributes of God.

In the course of the history of Islam, the Muslims have made contacts with other religions such as Judaism and Christianity. Based on those religions, especially Christianity, the doctrine on the attributes of God believes that God might be described in physical form. His attributes are also possibly likened to the attributes of human beings.³ Sometimes, people who converted from these religions to Islam tried to understand its teachings based on their previous beliefs. Their process of understandings might err in terms of their learning of their new religion. Somehow, such a thing may influence certain conception of Jewish and Christian doctrines, which causes misunderstanding by merging them with the teachings of Islam, notably dealing with the attributes of God for instance, as maintained in Christianity. In Islamic theological discourse, there were some sects which had similar opinions in viewing the attributes of God. They believed that God has certain physical body which could be explained through the anthropomorphic perspective. Those were the Mujassimate groups as represented by *Hashwiyya*,⁴ *Muqātiliyya*,⁵ and *Karrāmiyya*.⁶ Their theological

³ S. David Sperling, "Biblical Imaginary of God", in *Encyclopedia of Religion: Second Edition*, ed. Lindsay John (New York: Thomson Gale, 2005), 5:3542-3.

⁴ A term addressed by the Mu'tazilites to appoint the people of tradition (*aḥl al-Ḥadīth*) whom they regarded having anthropomorphic views. Further information see A. S. Halkin, "The Hashwiyya," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 54, no. 1 (1934), 1-28; E. d. "Hashwiyya," in *Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition*, ed. B. Lewis et. al., (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 3: 269.

⁵ This group was established by Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150 H/ 767 C.E.). His thought was not only inclined to Anthropomorphism but also Shi'ism. See in Abū Bakr Aḥmad al-Shahrastānī, *al-Mīlāl wa al-Niḥāl*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n. y), 104; 'Abd Allāh Mahmūd Sahāta, "preface", in *al-Ashbāh wa al-Nazā'ir*, Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, (Egypt: al-Ha'ah al-Misriyyah al-Āmmah li a-Kitāb, 1994), 54-5; Wilferd Madelung and Paul E. Walker, *An Ismaili Heresiography: the Bab al-Shaytān from Abū Tammām's Kitāb al-Shajara*, (Leiden, Brill, 1998), 62.

⁶ This group has either theology or legal system of their own; C. E. Bosworth, "Karramiyya," *Encyclopedia of Islam: Second Edition*, (1978), 4:667-9; Aron Zysow, "Two Unrecognized Karrami Texts," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 108, no. 4 (1988), 577-587.

views basically adhered to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal,⁷ yet in certain extent they practiced literal approach to the text which is different from his principle. They developed their own perspectives in viewing certain issues based on the anthropomorphic basis.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was a pivotal traditionist (*muḥaddith*) who established the theological formula. He formulated his methodological approach to grasp the text of the Qur'ān and *hadīth*, especially of those *mutāshabihāt* verses without asking how (*bilā kaifa*). In this attempt he tried to understand the text by leaving the rational basis, and interpreting them as they are by authorizing to God (*tafwīd*). Only He knows the real meaning of them. Hence, ibn Hanbal did not comprehend the text anthropomorphically.⁸ Some Orientalists claimed that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was considered as an Anthropomorphist.⁹ It is argued that his compilation of ḥadīth mentioned lots of information of the Prophet (peace be upon him) pertaining to anthropomorphic sayings. God has been described in the physical term, like the *ḥadīth* of vision (*ru'ya*) and some of his commentaries in the chapter of al-Najm 1-18. Furthermore, having studied several of Ibn Hanbal' books, Williams concludes that there is no single statement in those works that mentioned his *balkafa* formula. This is the main method used by those earlier scholars (*salaf*) to approach the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, which is also called by *bilā kaifa* (without asking how). Therefore, ibn Ḥanbal is considered as an Anthropomorphist who is very much influencing to other theologians after him, notably with his literalistic perspective that he promoted. However, the foregoing conclusion is invalid. To disprove this claim, we need to investigate Ibn Ḥanbal's works and clarify his stance. His theological principle has been recorded by one of his followers, al-Khallāl, an

⁷ H. Laoust, "Ahmad b. Hanbal," in *Encyclopedia of Islam: Second Edition*, ed. B. Lewis et. al, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 1: 273-277.

⁸ 'Abd al-Rahmān Abū al-Ḥasan al-Jawzī, *Daf' Shubha al-Tashbīh*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī, (Egypt: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li al-Turāth, n. y), 8.

⁹ Joseph Schacht, "Theology and Law in Islam", in *Theology and Law in Islam*, ed. G. E. von Grunebaum, (Los Angeles: Weisbaden, 1971), 11; Wesley Williams, "Aspect of the Creed of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal: a Study of Anthropomorphism in Early Islam," in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 2002, 34: 448.

authoritative compiler of ibn Ḥanbal's teachings.¹⁰ He elucidated his concept of *tafwīd* disproving his anthropomorphic views. Al-Khallāl stated when Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was asked about the ḥadīth on descending (*al-nuzūl*) and vision (*ru'yah*) he said that he believed without asking how (*lā kaifa*) and meaning (*lā ma'nā*). He obviously delineated that ibn Ḥanbal in this tenet left the meaning to God (*tafwīd*),¹¹ and clarified his theological basis. Such a stance stayed over the course of the time followed by later theologian, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī as well as other followers. Al-Ash'arī, in his work, confidently declared his position following ibn Ḥanbal in his theological formulation of *bilā kaifa*.¹² This formula also set his notion in rejecting the Mu'tazilite's perspectives. In addition, Al-Rāzī, in his delineation of a number of various different schools, also clarified Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's views which had been accused by the Mu'tazilites as having anthropomorphic basis in his principle.¹³ Al-Rāzī rejected such a claim and considered it as baseless. Because most of the hanābilites referred to God regarding those meanings when they had theological problems dealing with the *mutashābihāt*. Therefore, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal is a deanthropomorphist theologian who used the *bilā kaifa* principle in his method to approach the text of the Qur'ān and *hadīth*.

In the map of Islamic theological discourses, the *Mujassimates* resided at the opposite views of the Mu'zalites and contradicted with the Ash'arites.¹⁴ They relied

¹⁰ Ziāuddin Ahmad, "Abū Bakr al-Khallāl-the Compiler of the teachings of Imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Islamic Studies* 9 (1970), 245-254.

¹¹ See in the footnote quoted by al-Kawtharī in 'Abd al-Rahmān Abū al-Ḥasan al-Jawzī, *Daf' Shubha al-Tashbīh*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī, (Egypt: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li al-Turāth, n. y), 8.

¹² Abū al-Hasan Alī ibn Ismā'il al-Ash'arī, *al-Ibānah an Usūl al-Diyānah*, ed. 'Abd al-Qadīr al-Arna'ut, (Damascus: Maktabah Dār al-Bayān, 1981), 17-29; *Maqālat Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Musallīn*, (Egypt: Maktabah al-Nahḍah al-Misriyyah, 1969), 2: 350.

¹³ Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *I'tiqādāt Firqah al-Muslimīn wa al-Mushrikīn*, ed. 'Alī Sāmī al-Nasshār, (Egypt: Maktaba al-Nahḍah al-Misriyyah, 1938), 66.

¹⁴ Theologians are divided into three different kinds. First are those who preferred using rational argumentation. They are the Mu'tazilites. In rejecting the doctrines of Christianity and Judaism, they applied this method to defend the doctrines of Islam. However, later on several Mu'tazilite theologians associated with certain groups who deviated in religion and inclined to heresies. Second are those who preferred literal understanding. They are the *Hashwiyya*. This group includes *Karrāmiyya*, *Barbahariyya*, *Sālimiyya*, *Mushabbihā* and *Mujassima*. The third group are that those who resided between the Mu'tazilites and *Hashwiyya*. They are Ash'arite theologians. Their doctrines are founded by the argument of the Qur'ān and Hadīth, yet they also considered the rational basis to infer them. See further information in footnote of Kamāl al-Dīn Ahmad al-Bayḍāwī, *Isharāt al-Marām min Ibārāt al-Imām:*

their way of understanding the Qur'ān on the textual approach of humanistic perspective. On the contrary, the Mu'tazilites built their principles by understanding the Qur'ān through the rational basis (*ta'wīl*). Even though they regarded the Qur'ān and ḥadīth, their tendency was to rely much on the reason. Those two groups placed the Ash'arites in between them.¹⁵ The Ash'arites applied the middle way in approaching the text which was neither liberal nor literal. They were people of the tradition (*ahl al-Sunnah*). The founder of this group, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324 H/ 935 C.E.), was previously a supporter of Mu'tazilite's views for about forty years of his life. Yet, he finally declared himself to change his theological tendency to *ahl al-Ḥaqq*, adhering to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's principle.¹⁶ In this position, al-Ash'arī disagreed upon the Mu'tazilites' principle who possessed rationalistic basis, as well as to the Mujassimates who had anthropomorphic perspective. Therefore, his followers tried to develop his ideas to reject their arguments on several issues against those groups, including Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403 H/1013 C.E.). He formulated his theological views addressing Mu'tazilite's principles, one of which is on the issue of the speech of God as elucidated above in Chapter Two. Here, we will elaborate further our discussion on his thoughts defending against the Anthropomorphists' views on the problem of the Qur'ān. But, before we explain further his ideas, we will firstly deal with the doctrines of the Mujassimites.

Sharh Kutub al-Imām al-'dam al-Fiqh al-Akbar wa al-Awsad wa al-Wasiyyah wa al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'lim wa Risālah Abū Hanīfah, ed. Yusuf 'Abd al-Razzāk and al-Imām al-Kawtharī, (Pakistan: Zamzam Publisher, 2004), 139-141; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah ibn Khaldūn*, (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1992), 463-4.

¹⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah ibn Khaldūn*, 463-4.

¹⁶ Abū al-Hasan Alī ibn Ismā'il al-Ash'arī, *al-Ibānah an Usūl al-Diyānah*, ed. 'Abd al-Qadīr al-Arna'ut, (Damascus: Maktabah Dār al-Bayān, 1981), 17-29; *Maqālat Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Musallīn*, (Egypt: Maktabah al-Nahḍa al-Misriyyah, 1969), 2: 350.

3.3. The Anthropomorphists and their Doctrines

To trace the doctrines of anthropomorphists, we have difficulty referring to their original works.¹⁷ A number of their principles were recorded by their opposing theologians who criticized their stance like the Ḥanābilites,¹⁸ Ash‘arites,¹⁹ Shi‘ites,²⁰ and Mu‘tazilites.²¹ Those people criticised their literalism in approaching the text of the Qur’ān as well as their reliance on the fabricated *ḥadīths* of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The doctrine of anthropomorphism dealing with several theological topics is based on their own method.

The anthropomorphists based their principle in approaching any text literally. They affirmed the textual interpretation without involving the rational argument. In this approach, they did not add any idea to those texts. They literally fathomed and formulated their views which were believed to be their theological concepts. Hence, they let the text spoke as it is. In such a way, they built their analytical conceptual doctrines. It is known through al-Shahrastānī’s account:

The anthropomorphists also say “We do not add anything of ourselves, nor do we pursue questions which our predecessors had not raised. They said, “what is between the two covers is God’s speech. This is also what we say.”²²

Here, he delineated how the Anthropomorphists approached either the Qur’ān or ḥadīth as their sources of theological doctrines. Hence, by virtue of such method they had their own principle mainstream which was contradictory to other theologians.

¹⁷ There were possibilities that their works were burnt by their opponents which were regarded as heretical views. Their thoughts could be investigated through those who criticized against their notions. See W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh University Press, 1085), 59 and 109; Muhammad ‘Abd al-Sattār Nassār, “al-Karrāmiyyah”, in *Mausū‘ah Firaq al-Islāmiyyah*, ed. Muhammad Zaqqūq, (Egypt: Wizārah al-Awqāf, 2009), 561.

¹⁸ Ibn Qutaiba al-Dinūrī, *Ta’wīl Mukhtalaf al-Ḥadīth*, ed. Mahmūd Shukrī al-Alūsī et al, (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Arabī, n. y), 55-6.

¹⁹ Muḥammad Abū Ḥamīd Al-Ghazālī, *al-Iqtisād fī al-I’tiqād*, ed. Insāf Ramaḍan, (Damascus: Dār Qutaiba, 2003).

²⁰ Al-Ḥasan ibn Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shi‘ah*, (Beirut: Dār al-Adwā’, 1984), 15-7.

²¹ Abū Uthmān Amr ibn al-Baḥr al-Jāhiz, *Rasāil al-Jāhiz*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, (Egypt: Maktabah al-Khanjī, 1964), 2: 2-23.

²² A. K. Kazi and J. G. Glynn, “The Jabarite and the Sifāiya,” *Abr Nahrain* 9, (1969-1970), 101.

Originally, one of the sources from which we can trace their background is the circle of Abū al-Hasan al-Basrī (d. 110 H/728 C.E.).²³ During his time a number of people had initiated in understanding the text literally. They used to have long discussions among them. Those people were called by other followers as the *Hashwiyya*. Over the course of time, this group was developed very quickly and subdivided into several sects, one of which was the *Karrāmiyya*.²⁴ Some heresiographers also addressed them by other terms; *Mujassima*²⁵ and *Mushabbiha*.²⁶ Hence, all of these sects were grouped and referred to one main idea which is anthropomorphism. They dealt with several theological issues as elaborated next.

3.3.1. The Speech of God

The anthropomorphists asserted different views on the speech of God. Some believed that God originated His speech. Hence, His speech is created. The other groups maintained His speech is part of His attributes. It is one of God's properties. Al-Baghdādī reported the Anthropomorphists maintained God's speech is one variety of human speech and its words. God uttered by originating His speech as existing in His essence. To them, God's essence is space which is available for the originated things. One of their figures, the follower of Zurāra ibn A'yān al-Rāfidī believed that God's

²³ This group was established during the meeting in the circle of al-Hasan al-Basrī in Basra. When someone blundered on one particular issue, Al-Ḥasan said to his audience to seclude those people from his circle. After this time, a number of men discussed about that event by saying '*al-Ḥashwiyya*' meaning 'prolix and useless discussion.' Hence, since then this term was used to refer to those people. They also affirmed the anthropomorphic approach to the text which they claimed following the earlier scholars. Unfortunately, their argumentation is also by adding a number of fabricated and weak *ḥadīths* in their doctrines. See introduction of Muḥammad Zahīd ibn Hasan al-Kautharī ibn Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Hibah Allāh ibn Asākir, *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī*, ed. Al-Kawtharī, (Damascus: Matba'ah al-Tawfiq, 1928), p. 11; E. d, "Hashwiyya," in *Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition*, ed. B. Lewis et. al., (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 3: 269.

²⁴ C. E. Bosworth, "Karramiyya," *Encyclopedia of Islam: Second Edition*, (1978), 4: 667-9.

²⁵ Group of people who believed that God has real physical body. See in Muḥammad 'Alī al-Tahānawī, *Mausū'ah al-Kashf Istilāhāt al-Funūn wa al-Ulūm*, ed. Rafīq al-'Ajām et al, (Beirut: Maktabah Lubnān Nāshirun, 1996), 1473.

²⁶ People who likened God with His creatures and those of originated things See 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, (n. c., Dār al-Dayyān li at-turāth, n. y.), 274.

attributes are originated, hence, they are also part of human beings' attributes. God does not have special properties of living, knowing, willing, hearing, and seeing. All these attributes are created in Himself similar to as human beings.²⁷ Other Anthropomorphists, the *Karramiyya*, contradictorily maintained that the speech of God (*kalām Allāh*) is eternal, while His utterance (*qawl*) is originated consisting of words and sounds. God is able to talk and understand the other speeches with His power.²⁸ Furthermore, they maintained too that God is knowing (*'alīm*) with His knowledge (*ilm*), powerful (*qadīr*) with his power (*qudra*), living with His life (*hayā*), and willing with His will (*mashīa*). He also has another attributes like hearing, and seeing.²⁹

Al-Juwaynī also described *Hashwiyya*'s notion on the speech of God. They believed that His speech, which comprised sounds and words, is eternal. They also stressed that the heard (*al-masmū'*) by a reader of the Qur'ān is the essence of His speech because it is the sound of God. If that speech is written and arranged on any part of the body, it is regarded an eternal thing. To them, even the body is originated, yet it may switch into an eternal one including its words and sounds. Essentially, these two things are pre-existent (*qadīm*). Furthermore, commenting on their views, al-Juwaynī stated that their method was based on the denial of necessary knowledge (*juhd al-darūrāt*). They held that the speech was eternal at the same time it was originated. It consists of sentences arranged by various different letters. Every letter could precede each other depending on the proper term. The first word possibly could be placed in the middle or the last. Hence, it could be concluded that such a theoretical approach obviously leads to conclusion on turning the created things into an eternal one.³⁰ Having described those views, al-Juwaynī also analyzed their arguments and negated them. He

²⁷ 'Abd al-Qāhir ibn Tāhir al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq baina al-Firāq*, ed. Muḥammad Muhy al-Dīn 'Abd al-Hamīd, (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Asriyyah, 1995), 229-230.

²⁸ Abū Muẓaffar al-Isfīrāinī, *al-Tabsīr fī al-Dīn*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Hūt, (Beirut: Alam al-Kutub, 1983), 114; al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bain al-Firāq*, 219; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, 96.

²⁹ Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, 112.

³⁰ Al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād Ilā Qawāti' al-Adilla fī Usūl al-I'tiqād*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā and 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Abd al-Hamīd, (Egypt: Maktabah al-Khanjī, 1950), 129.

considered that notion as baseless and hence, rejected by his point of views. The critiques against his ideas will be further discussed below, together with those of other Ash‘arite theologians.

From the aforementioned reports of several theologians, we can conclude that the speech of God, according to the Anthropomorphists, contains words and sounds, either eternal or originated. They did not differentiate between them. However, it is also valid in another aspect in which they also affirmed the similarity of the terms ‘recitation’ (*qirā’ah*) and ‘recited’ (*maqrū’*). This matter will be further elaborated.

3.3.2. The Similarity of the terms ‘Recitation’ (*qirā’ah*) and the ‘Recited’ (*maqrū’*)

In the issue of the speech of God, the terms ‘recitation’ (*qirā’ah*) and the ‘recited’ (*maqrū’*) have been differently fathomed by a number of theologians. The Anthropomorphists believed that those two terms are similar. It is argued that the meaning of God’s sounds and words are audible for the readers of the Qur’ān. They even believed that the sound of man is the sound of God. They affirmed too the sounds and attributes of creature are from the attributes of God.³¹

In another place, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728 H/1328 C.E.) further reported the principle of this group. They maintained that during the reading of the Qur’ān, they believed that they were articulating it. To them, the term ‘writing’ (*kitāba*) is ‘written’ (*al-maktūb*), the same thing to the recitation and the recited. In addition, they further believed that the Qur’ān only comprises words and sounds. The expressive sound is essentially heard from the reader. However, they denied the meaning therein.³² Furthermore, some Anthropomorphists maintained similar doctrine with the

³¹ ‘Abd Rahmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim al-‘Alḥalimi al-Najdī, *Majmū’ Fatāwā Shaikh al-Islām Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya*, (Saudi Arabia: The Servant of Two Holy Mosque, n. y), 12: 374.

³² *Ibid.*, 12: 394.

Mu‘tazilites who also affirmed that the speech of God is created, even though they admitted as the Ḥanābilites, the adherents of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.³³

One of a well known Hanābilite theologians, Abū Ya‘lā (d. 458 H./1066 A.D.),³⁴ believed in the similarity of both terms ‘recitation’ (*qirā’a*) and ‘recited’ (*maqrū’*). He equated those two terms as well as ‘writing’ (*kitāba*) and ‘written’ (*maktūb*). It is evident from the verse in al-Mudathir: 25-26,³⁵ that demonstrates how the people of the Quraish addressed their statements to the recitations (*tilāwāt*) of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and regarded them as his own words. Their assumption later on was proven wrong, since those recitations are from the Qur’ān, which was revealed by God to him. Furthermore, Abū Ya‘alā argued about the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding the deliverance of the message of God to one particular community, as stated below:

It is narrated that Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) showed himself to his people saying ‘is there any person who sends me to his people, while, the Quraish has rejected me to deliver the messages of God.’³⁶

The foregoing *ḥadīth*, according to Abū Ya‘lā, elucidated the Prophet’s statement about his recitation which is called the speech of God (*kalām Allāh*). By virtue of this fact, the Muslim people agreed calling the recitations (*tilāwāt*) as the speech of God because those who used to listen to these words would say that this message is the speech of God based on their audible sounds.³⁷ He further argued that the ‘writing’ (*kitāba*) is the ‘written’ (*maktūb*) as it proven by the verse in al-Wāqī‘ah: 77-79.³⁸ Here, he argued that the Qur’ān is stated in the Book. They believed that those on which they wrote, they

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ In his introduction, Wadi. Z. Haddad informed that Abū Ya‘lā was accused by the Ash‘arites as having anthropomorphic notion together with Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. See in Abū Ya‘lā ibn al-Farra’, *Kitāb al-Mu‘tamad fī Usūl al-Dīn*, ed. Wadi Zaidan Haddad, (Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1986), 25.

³⁵ Al-Mudathir: 25-26: It is nothing but the word of a mortal.” (as a result of his disbelief) I will cast him into the fire of hell!

³⁶ Muḥammad Ismā‘il al-Bukhārī, *Khalq Af‘āl al-‘Ibād*, (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risālah, 1990), 1: 41.

³⁷ Abū Ya‘lā, *Kitāb al-Mu‘tamad fī Usūl al-Dīn*, 88.

³⁸ Waqī‘ah: 77-79: ”That (which is recited to you) is a most noble Qur’ān (which always teaches and provides guidance). In a Book well-guarded, which none can touch except the purified.”

called it as the writing of the Qur'ān (*kitāba al-Qur'ān*). The same thing for those who swear by the Qur'ān. In this sense they dealt with the speech of God. To those who attempted to write the Qur'ān, if they are in state of impurity they would have sinned due to the inimitability of the Qur'ān. It is also due to its holiness as everybody may not touch it casually. Only those who are pure are permissible to touch it. Abū Ya'lā further elaborated his argument in analyzing the term 'memorization' (*hifẓ*), which, to him, is not similar to 'memorized' (*mahfūẓ*). Because it is knowledge of how the speech reaches the intellect of the memorizer (*hāfiẓ*) those who are unable to attain that particular status might not be regarded as a memorizer (*hāfiẓ*). In addition to this, he explained that someone's knowledge is neither considered as memorization (*hifẓ*) nor writing (*kitāba*) or reading (*tilāwa*) because each is sound and word. The sounds of the writing appear during its recitation, like the hand which demonstrates motion when it is regularly moved.³⁹

Furthermore, Abū Ya'lā also rejected some Ash'arites' notion on the prohibition of speaking with the speech of God.⁴⁰ He argued that idea is contradictory to the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as he stated "no slaves are beloved by God until they speak with His speech,"⁴¹ which is the Qur'ān. This statement, according to him, is the obvious reason why we possibly utter it. It is also proven by the other *ḥadīths* that the Prophet (peace be upon him) allowed his companions to learn the Qur'ān from certain knowledgeable persons.⁴² As a result of learning from those people, Abū Ya'lā concluded, it is permissible to speak with the speech of God. In this sense, he equated

³⁹ Abū Ya'lā, *Kitāb al-Mu'tamad fī Usūl al-Dīn*, 89.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴¹ Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn al-Ḥusain ibn 'Alī al-Baihaqī, *Kitāb al-Asmā wa al-Sifāt*, ed. Muḥammad Zahīd al-Ḥasan al-Kautharī, (Egypt: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah Li al-Turāth, 1939), in *The Speech of God Is Uncreated*, 237.

⁴² It is narrated from 'Abd Allāh ibn Amr reported: Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, said: "learn the Qur'ān from my father, ibn Umm Abd, Muadz, and Salim." Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Bāqī, (Egypt: Dār ibn Hazm, 2010), chapter on *The Book of the Merit of the Qur'ān*, no. 4999, 623.

the meanings of reading (*tilāwah*), comprehension (*ifhām*), and information (*i'lām*)⁴³ based on the verses of al-Qasas: 3⁴⁴ and al-Nisā': 164.⁴⁵ Therefore, God's speech is immediately revealed in the heart of the Prophet (peace be upon him).⁴⁶

From the foregoing discussion, it seems that the doctrine of the Anthropomorphists on their equation between the recitation and recited affirms the similarity between the speech of God and the speech of human beings. Both speeches could be either eternal or originated. They also elaborated their views on the Qur'ān and its related characteristic.

3.3.3. The Qurān and Its Characteristics

Having defined the meaning of speech of God, we deal with the Anthropomorphists' ideas about the Qur'ān and its characteristics. Based on the account reported by al-Shahrastānī, the *Hashwiyya* formulated their principles in viewing the Qur'ān and its features. According to them, the contents of the Qur'ān, which comprises the words, sounds and written numbers, are eternal in nature. No speech is comprehensible without these elements.⁴⁷ This concept is contradictory to both the Mu'tazilites⁴⁸ and the Ash'arites⁴⁹ since they included certain aspects to be eternal which were excluded by both groups. Those features could be in the form of number, ink, paper and so on. They also proved their argument with the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is

⁴³ Abū Ya'lā, *Kitāb al-Mu'tamad fī Usūl al-Dīn*, 90.

⁴⁴ Al-Qasas: 3: We recite to you some of the stories of Musa and Fir'aun setting forth the truth for people who believe.

⁴⁵ Al-Nisā': 164: And Allāh spoke to Musa directly (without any intermediary).

⁴⁶ Abū Ya'lā, *Kitāb al-Mu'tamad fī Usūl al-Dīn*, 90. In this matter he also relied on verse of 26: 192-195: And indeed the Qur'ān (which consists among others of the previous stories) is revealed by Allāh, Lord of all the Worlds. It was brought down by the trustworthy Angel, Jibril. Into your heart, so that you (O Muḥammad) may be among those who give warning (to mankind).

⁴⁷ Al-Shahrastānī, *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, 106.

⁴⁸ The Mu'tazilites held that the Qur'an is the speech of God which is created and originated. See 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadānī, *Sharḥ Usūl al-Khamsah*, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm Uthmān, (Egypt: Maktabah Wahbah, 1996), 526.

⁴⁹ The Ash'arites believed that the speech is meaning existing in the soul. See 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *Nihayā al-Iqdām fī ilm al-Kalām*, ed. Alfred Guillaume, (n. c., Maktab al-Saqāfah al-Diniyyah, n. y.), 282-88.

stated in his saying that on the Day of the Judgment, God will call all creatures loudly, hence, everyone will hear and obey it.⁵⁰

In addition, the *Hashwiyya* defended their principle on the revelation of the Qur'ān. They maintained that things between the two covers are the speech of God revealed to the Angel Jibril. It is written in the text as well as in the Preserved Tablet (*Lauh al-Mahfūz*) and also heard by the Muslims in paradise from God without veil or mediation.⁵¹ Moreover, they also maintained that the Qur'ān which is uncreated is eternal existence. Its alphabetical words, bodies, colours, and sounds are created in nature by God.⁵² In this sense, His word (*kalām*) is eternal while all those features are originating (*hadīthah*) from Him.⁵³

Besides elucidating their doctrines of the Qur'ān, al-Shahrastānī also reported that the *Hashwiyya* also asserted the process of communication between Prophet Moses with God. They maintained it occurred when to him he was revealed the holy book of *Tawra*. They described how Prophet Moses was addressed by God in the holy place of Sinai mount.⁵⁴ At the very beginning, he heard God's Speech like the sound of dragging chain.⁵⁵ According to Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150 H./767 C.E.),⁵⁶ God spoke through His mouth (*mushāfaha*) to Prophet Moses when he was 40 years old. When that communication was completed he was bestowed the *Tawra* from which he told his people about the paradise and hell.⁵⁷ Furthermore, a Hanbalite follower, Abu Ya'īlā, also reported the *Hashwiyya*'s notion on how communication between God and Prophet

⁵⁰ "God the almighty will call in the day of judgment with sounds which are heard by people of all ages." This hadith has been cited by al-Shahrastani without stating its transmitter. However, the author found slightly different text (*matn*) in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* "the Prophet said: "God will gather His creatures (*ibād*) during the End of the Day, and He will call them with His sound which is audible from far and near..." See *al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in The Book of Tawhīd, no. 7481, 890.

⁵¹ Al-Shahrastānī, *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, 107.

⁵² Ibn Asākir, *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī*, 150.

⁵³ Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Kalam*, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1976), 301.

⁵⁴ Tāhā 11-12: "When he came near the fire, he was called by name "O Musa!, "I am your Lord! Take off your sandals, for you are now in the sacred Valley of Tuwa."

⁵⁵ Al-Shahrastānī, *Al-Milal al-Niḥal*, 106.

⁵⁶ 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Sahāta, preface in *al-Ashbāh wa al-Nazā'ir*, (Egypt: al-Hay'ah al-Misriyyah al-'Ammah li al-Kitāb, 1994), 60.

⁵⁷ Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Sahāta, (Beirut: Dār Ihya al-Turāth, n. y.), 1: 423.

Moses occurred. When God spoke to him, Prophet Moses was in a state of instability because he was shocked by this extraordinary event. Then, God decreed unto him to open his eyes. Prophet Moses found hundred steps in front of him. This information, however, was doubted by Abū Ya‘lā in his comment about this *ḥadīth*.⁵⁸ It was merely an argument proposed by them to promote their doctrines.

Therefore, it seems from the foregoing explanation that what the Anthropomorphists claimed is invalid. The information has been falsified by Abū Ya‘lā because the status of this information is inaccurate. Their arguments may have been supported by the *ḥadīth*, yet one of their objectives is to support their mission. This also stated by the earlier figure Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, who related their ideas to physical aspects likening God with the human’s image and activity.⁵⁹ Hence, by virtue of that the characteristic of their approach to the Qur’ān is relying on anthropomorphism.

3.3.4. The Anthropomorphic Attributes of God

Having discussed the aforementioned topic on the Anthropomorphists’ notion on the Qur’ān, here we deal with their principle of the attributes of God. It is obviously known from their theological framework that their main characteristic is likening God to the corporeal image.

Al-Shahrastānī reported that the *Hashwiyya* group maintained their theological principle on the attributes of God by relying on the physical description. They asserted God in a materialized matter by affirming that God is in the form of a physical body, either His spiritual or physical aspect. He may move from one place to another, descend

⁵⁸ Abū Ya‘lā, *Kitāb al-Mu‘tamad fī Usūl al-Dīn*, 220.

⁵⁹ Abū Hātim ibn Ḥibbān also reported that Muqātil was the one who used to refer to the Jewish and Christian sources to approach the Qur’ān. In some other aspects, he also relied on the fabricated *ḥadīth* to study the teachings of Islam. See in Sahāta’s introduction on Muqātil ibn Sulaymān al-Balkhī, *al-Ashbāh wa al-Naḍāir*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh Mahmūd Sahāta, (Egypt: al-Hai‘ah al-Misriyya al-‘Ammah Li al-Kitāb, 1994), 36.

and ascend, and steadily sit.⁶⁰ In addition, they also held that their God is allowed to be touched and shaken. It is even possible for devoted men to embrace and hug Him in this world and the hereafter if they could reach the highest level of sincerity and unity after performing and struggling with spiritual exercise. They also believed God is visible in this world. They could even visit Him or vice versa. One of the Mujassimite figures, Daūd al-Jawāribī, said that God has His specific form. He has body, flesh, and blood. He also has physical parts of a body like hands, feet, head, tongue, eyes, and ears. All those parts do not resemble any creatures. Furthermore, God also has been depicted as having certain characteristics in His body. He is hollow right from His head to the chest, yet His other parts are solid. He also has long, thick, and frizzy hair.⁶¹

In addition to their doctrines, the Anthropomorphists interpreted the *mutashabihat* verses based on their anthropomorphic principle. It is known through analyzing a number of verses which they commented to show their principle of understanding. They interpreted some verses, like God's seat (*istiwā'*), face (*wajh*), hands (*yadain*), and descending (*al-nuzūl*), in a way that they relied on corporeal basis. This is also valid in certain *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that they quoted to express their ideas. For instance, they stated the *ḥadīth* of God's creation of Ādam, in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said in his statement, "(God) created Ādam in the form of the merciful (God)."⁶² Furthermore, they added information to cement their stance even if it is invalid. As al-Shahrastānī claimed, they said:

God was sad due to the great deluge of Noah which causes His eyes red, His throne creaking like a straddle of the animal, and He pleases from every side with his four fingers.⁶³

⁶⁰ Al-Shahrastānī, *Al Milal wa Niḥal*, 105.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Muḥammad Ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fuād 'Abd al-Bāqī, (Egypt: Dār Ibn Hazm, 2010), in *The Book of Asking Permission*, no. 2667, 751; Abū al-Ḥusain Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), in *The Book of Prohibition to Beat on the Face*, no. 2612, vol. 2: 536.

⁶³ Al-Shahrastānī, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, 106; AK. Kazi and J. G. Flynn, "the Jabarites and the Sifātiya", *Abr Nahrain*, vol. 9, 1969-1970, 100.

In another place, al-Shahrastānī also narrated the Anthropomorphists' assesment about the Prophet's statement:

God met me, He shook hands with me, and, kissed me and put His hand between my shoulders until I felt His cold fingers.⁶⁴

The aforementioned facts elucidate how God was described in humanistic manner. They likened Him to human beings who have physical and material elements. They believed that God sits on His chair where He puts His body that may cause noises because of His weight. The foregoing ḥadīth also explains that the Prophet met God as if He met His companions. He shook, kissed and even putting His hands to the Prophet's shoulders. Al-Shahrastānī's account clearly delineates the detailed principle of anthropomorphic doctrines. Even though he did not mention the status of the ḥadīth, it is based on the mainstream of that particular group during his time.

The concept of attributes of God, as believed by the Anthropomorphists could be traced back to non-Islamic sources. It was proven by the fact that Muqātil ibn Sulaymān's commentary of the Qur'ān contains Jewish and Christian doctrines.⁶⁵ His anthropomorphism is derived from those religions which complemented his interpretation. He was so much influenced by their doctrines, hence, he sometimes fabricated the ḥadīth of the Prophet (peace be upon him).⁶⁶ For instance, al-Bukhārī mentioned Muqātil's statement saying that Dajjāl would appear in 150 H. His statement was truly proven that he was a liar because Dajjal did not appear then.⁶⁷ Furthermore, in elucidating his commentary Muqātil also relied on the *israiliyyat* narrations. This category of *ḥadīth* is actually not used by a traditionist (*muḥaddith*) due to its fabrication and invalidity. For instance, he narrated the *ḥadīth* below:

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ 'Alī Samī Nasshār, *Nasha al-Fikri al-Falsafi fī al-Islām*, (Egypt: Dar al-Ma'arif, n. y.), vol. 1: 289.

⁶⁶ Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Thābit ibn al-Khatīb Al-Baghdādī, *Tarīkh Madīna al-Salām*, ed. Basshār Awwād Ma'rūf, (Beirut: Dār al-Garb al-Islāmī, 2001), 211-19; Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-I'tidāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad Muawwad, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1995), 6: 314; Ibn Ḥajar Shihābuddīn al-Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Zaibaq and 'Ādil Murshīd, (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risālah, n. y.), vol. 4: 145.

⁶⁷ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-I'dāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad Muawwad, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1995), vol. 6: 505.

during the end of the day someone calls, where is the friend of Allāh?, then, the group of angels step forward to sit with Him on the throne until they touch His shoulder.⁶⁸

This *ḥadīth* explains the physical activities of God and His angels during the day of resurrection which had not been narrated by any narrators. Another Anthropomorphist, Ibn al-Karrām, also maintained his theological belief relying on Christianity in terms of the concept of God.⁶⁹ In Christianity, God is described in the form of an image. It is even possible to picture God as well as His attributes in humanistic manner.⁷⁰ The *Karrāmiyya* also depicted God as the One who has a body. They believed it as He is self-existent. He knows physical and corporal things. Therefore, according to them, He is a body who recognizes it similar form. Only the like can know the like.⁷¹ Some of their adherents also developed this doctrine maintaining that every two things existing by themselves must be either in contact or contradict with them. Like the accident and substance which require to occupy in space. They also reside in certain direction. Thus, God, who has body and self-existent, is in a high place of the world. In Him, everything could be originated.⁷² However, this concept is rejected by Ibn Jawzī. To him it is impossible for God to contradict or be in contact with other things in the physical aspect since it will belittle God's existence which is merely occupying certain directions.⁷³ His existence cannot be limited to certain space and time, therefore, He is powerful over all things. Further arguments of the Anthropomorphists would be elaborated in the discussion of their opposite ideas.

⁶⁸ 'Ali Samī al-Nasshār, *Nash'ah al-Fikr al-Falsafī fī al-Islām*, 1: 289; Abū al-Ḥusain Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Malatī, *Kitāb Al-Tanbīh wa al-Radd alā ahl al-Ahwā' wa al-Bida'*, ed. Sven Dederling, (Istanbul: Matba'ah al-Dawlah, 1936), 86-7.

⁶⁹ 'Abd al-Qāhir ibn Tāhir ibn Muḥammad al-Baghdādī al-Tamīmī, *Al-Farq Baina al-Firaq*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥy al-Dīn 'Abd al-Hamīd, (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Aṣriyyah, 1995), 216; Muḥammad 'Abd al-Sattār Nassār "al-Karrāmiyya" in *Mawsu'a al-Firaq al-Islāmiyya*, 570; Ashraf Sa'ad, "al-Mushabbihā," in *Mawsu'a al-Firaq al-Islāmiyya*, 642.

⁷⁰ Reginal H. Fuller, "God: God in New Testament," *Encyclopedia of Religion: Second Edition*, ed. Lindsay Jones, (Farmington Hills: Thomson Gale, 2005), vol. 5: 3543.

⁷¹ Muḥammad 'Abd al-Sattār Nassār "al-Karrāmiyya" in *Mawsu'a al-Firaq al-Islāmiyya*, 566.

⁷² Al-Shahrastānī, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, 109; 'Abd al-Sattār Nassār, "Al-Karrāmiyya", 566.

⁷³ 'Abd al-Rahmān Abū al-Ḥasan al-Jawzī, *Daf' Shubha al-Tashbīh*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī, (Egypt: al-Maktabah al-Azhar li al-Turāth, n. y.), 22.

3.3.5. *Ḥulūliyya*

In the history of Islamic thought, the anthropomorphist did not only comprise theologians but also lot of *ṣūfī* figures. These people were divided into several different schools consisting of the extreme (*Gulāh*) of Shi‘īte, *Ḥallājia*, *Zarāmiyya*, and *Mubayyidah*.⁷⁴ All of them agreed upon the concept of *Ḥulūl*,⁷⁵ which was rejected by a great number of Muslim scholars in the polemic of Islamic theological mainstream.

Concerning the doctrine of *ḥulūliyya*, they believed in the concept of incarnation (*ḥulūliyya*). According to them, God may reincarnate in a human body.⁷⁶ This appears in the form of man, as in the case of the Angel Jibrīl when he went to Maryam to tell her about pregnancy.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the doctrine of *ḥulūliyya* is also believed to originate from the experience of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is proven his experience in seeing his God as it is narrated that Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) said, “I saw my God in the beautiful form.”⁷⁸ The other source was also stated in the *Tawra* which happened to Prophet Mūsā. He was reported to have said, “I talked with God, and He replied so and so.”⁷⁹ By virtue of those evidence the Anthropomorphists justified their notion of *ḥulūliyya* as part of their theological beliefs.

⁷⁴ Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq baina al-Firaq*, 254-266; al-Rāzī, *I’tiqad Firaq al-Muslimīn wa al-Mushrikīn*, 73.

⁷⁵ *Hulūl* is a philosophical term dealing with the relation between a body and its place. There are two different *hulul*: 1. The union of body and soul (*ḥulūl al-rūh fī al-badan*). 2. The union between a divine spirit with man (*ḥulūl aql al-fa‘āl fī al-insān*). See further information in Louis Massignon, “*hulūl*,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam: First Edition*, (Leiden: Brill,), 3: 333.

⁷⁶ Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq baina al-Firaq*, 254-266.

⁷⁷ Maryam: 17-20: “She made a wall to protect herself from them, We sent her Our Spirit who appeared to her in the resemblance of a perfect full grown man. Maryam said “I seek refuge in Allāh Most Gracious from you; if you are conscious of Him. He replied: “I am the Messenger from your Lord, and I have come to bestow upon you the gift of a son endowed with purity.”

⁷⁸ Al-Shahrastānī, *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, 108.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*.

The doctrine of *hulūliyya* historically was initiated by the extreme Shi'ite (*Gulāh*).⁸⁰ They were divided into many different groups; *sabbāiyya*, *bayyāniya*, *janāhiyya*, *khitābiyya*, *shari'iyya*, and *namīriyya*. Each of them promoted the doctrine of the *hulūliyya* related to the people of the house (*ahl al-bait*). According to them, God's spirit was reincarnated to the Prophet (peace be upon him), 'Alī, Fātimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusein, hence, these people were considered possessing divine authority which was similar to God.⁸¹ In the course of time, this doctrine gradually spread throughout the Muslim world. Furthermore, in relation to the doctrine of *hulūliyya*, the Shi'ite also maintained that God was also reincarnated in their *imāms*. His spirit could go from one person to another. It may also go from the prophet to the *imāms*, and end up in 'Alī. In certain situation that spirit might move again to other people.⁸² In other words, their belief is that God's spirit went around in those people and ended up in someone who is regarded as a devout. As a result of this belief, they regarded that Angel Gabriel was wrong in sending God's revelations, which were actually delivered to 'Alī, conveyed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). According to them, this mistake made God shy. Therefore, He let the Prophet became His messenger and 'Alī replaced him afterwards.⁸³ This sort of doctrine, however, is still maintained by contemporary Shi'ites in certain countries.⁸⁴

Furthermore, the *Ṣūfi* Anthropomorphists affirmed that God might reincarnate in certain selected men. These people are mostly honoured by their community. Al-Baghdādī reported the *hilmāniyya* held that God personifies into a pious and good man. Hence, everytime they found a beautiful picture they bowed to it. In addition, these men who are able to achieve the highest level of spirituality will recognize their God. Hence,

⁸⁰ al-Rāzī, *I'tiqād Firaq al-Muslimīn wa al-Mushrikīn*, 73.

⁸¹ Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq baina al-Firaq*, 256.

⁸² 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Hafnī, *Mausū'ah al-Firaq wa al-Jamā'āt wa al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyya*, (Egypt: Dār al-Rashād, 1993), 192; Manabu Waida, "incarnation: Imams", *Encyclopedia of Religion: Second Edition*, ed. Lindsay Jones, (Farmington Hills: Thomson Gale, 2005), vol. 7: 4416.

⁸³ Al-Malatī, *al-Tanbīh wa al-Radd*, 18.

⁸⁴ See our discussion on their theological doctrines in Chapter Four.

in this position, they may do whatever they wish, even if it is prohibited for them.⁸⁵ In another place, this heresiographer also told another significant group, *ḥallājiyya*, who affirmed that those who purify himself in seeking God's obedience and keep their patience against those joy and passion, their state is lifted and placed into groups of people who are intimate with God. If someone attempts to further refine himself until he achieve complete purification, in this position God's spirit will inhere in himself. This is like the case of Prophet 'Īsā, the son of Maryam, who had been incarnated by Him. Such a person may wish everything, because his act is God's manifestation in himself.⁸⁶

Moreover, the state of being incarnated (*ḥhulūliyya*) occurs in the *ṣufīs* during the condition of escapades (*shatahāt*).⁸⁷ The one who has attained this particular level expresses his feelings about God's presence in his soul. His incarnation may happen in two different situations: *al-ḥulūl al-jawārī* and *al-ḥulūl al-sarayānī*. The first is the situation in which someone is contained in a container just like water in a pot while the second is like the union of a thing into another in which they will be mixed and blended like the fragrance of rose into the flower.⁸⁸ During these two conditions, as reported by al-Hujwīrī, they believed that God will become their ears, eyes, hands, and even tongues. Their speeches are "words were the outward sign of his speech, but the speaker was God."⁸⁹ Such condition had occurred to one of the important companions 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb. God spoke through his tongue as stated by His Apostle.⁹⁰ Hence, these *ṣūfī* Athropomorphists had been practicing different types of *ḥulūliyya* doctrines. They had their own views based on their founders. Essentially, the principle of *ḥhulūliyya* was

⁸⁵ Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq baina al-Firaq*, 259.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 263.

⁸⁷ 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Badawī, *Shatahāt al-Sūfiyah: Abū Yazīd al-Bustāmī*, (Kuwait: Wakālah al-Matbūah, n. y.), 14-15.

⁸⁸ 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Badawī, *Shatahāt al-Sūfiyah: Abū Yazīd al-Bustāmī*, (Kuwait: Wakālah al-Matbū'ah, n. y.), 15; M. Saeed Shaikh, *A Dictionary of Muslim Philosophy*, (New Delhi: Adam Publisher & Distributors, 2006), 56.

⁸⁹ Ali B. Uthman al-Jullabi al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, trans. Reynold Nicholson, (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1911), 254.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

similar but they are different in certain details. An Orientalist, Nicholson,⁹¹ commented on this problem by expressing his appreciation to the practice of *ḥulūliyya* as employed by those anthropomorphist *ṣufīs*. Their union with the world-soul, to him, is the happiest feelings for a *ṣufī* to express his love to each other on earth.⁹² In another place, Nicholson also described that this practice was similar to the core doctrine of Christianity.⁹³ God had incarnated into His creature, Jesus, to show His union between divinity and humanity. This similarity, perhaps, made him appreciate such concept. Even if this tradition had been practiced by a number of people in the Muslim world, a number of theologians and other scholars regarded it as religious malpractice. Therefore, the authority had sentenced al-Ḥallāj, one of the founders of *Ḥallājīa ṣūfī* school, to death due to his deviated doctrines of *ḥulūliyya*.⁹⁴

In short, the foregoing discussion elucidates the doctrine of Anthropomorphists in the Islamic theological discourse. They resided at the extreme opposite of the Mu‘tazilites. However, they were also contradictory to the Ash‘arites school. Hence, in response to their principles and to defend the Ash‘arites’ position, al-Bāqillānī criticised their doctrines which will be elaborated below.

3.4. Al-Baqillānī’s Criticism to Anthropomorphism

Having described the theological doctrine of the Anthropomorphists, we would like to highlight al-Bāqillānī’s theological responses to that particular group. As an Ash‘arite theologian, it is known through his principal arguments that he could place his position between the Mu‘tazilites and the Anthropomorphists. He was able to give the moderate solution in responding to the issues in the doctrinal polemic, which later on was

⁹¹ He was an Orientalist who had spent most of his life researching on the Sufism. See his works; *The Mystic of Islam*, (Indiana: World Wisdom, 2002); translation of the *Kashf al-Mahjūb: the Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1911); Translation of *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn al-Rūmī*, (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 1985).

⁹² Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, (Indiana: World Wisdom, 2002), 118.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁹⁴ Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq baina al-Firaq*, 263; Abū ‘Abd Rahmān al-Sulmā, *al-Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyah*, ed. Mustafā ‘Abd al-Qadīr Atā, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2003), 236.

followed and further developed by other Asharites theologians after him. As far as the doctrines of anthropomorphism are concerned, al-Bāqillānī seriously criticised through several topics which will be delineated below.

3.4.1. The Meaning of Speech

Al-Bāqillānī's definition of speech is contradictory to both the Mu'tazilites and the Anthropomorphists. His rejection against the Mu'tazilites has been stated above in the previous chapter,⁹⁵ where we dealt with al-Bāqillānī's thoughts in rejecting them. We would like to highlight his refutation to the Anthropomorphists. In his works, al-Bāqillānī defined the speech:

الكلام هو معنى قائم في النفس يعبر عنه بهذه الأصوات المقطعة و الحروف المنظومة

Speech is meaning existing in the soul expressed by those articulated sounds and arranged letters.⁹⁶

His definition of speech was obviously not only addressed to criticise the Mu'tazilites,⁹⁷ but also the Anthropomorphists.⁹⁸ Al-Bāqillānī criticized the latter group which affirmed that God speaks through His sounds and words which are eternal (*qadīm*), the same thing to the sounds and words of human beings. They did not differentiate between them. As a result, this principle might cause an investigator to conclude the eternity of the creature.⁹⁹ In addition, al-Bāqillānī also reported that Anthropomorphists affirmed God's speech and considered it to be eternal, while the poem (*saj'*) is the originated thing.¹⁰⁰ They believed that our words and sounds during the reading of the Qur'ān are eternal (*qadīm*) while during reading of the poem (*shi'r*) is originated. The

⁹⁵ See our discussion on al-Bāqillānī's responses to the Mu'tazilites in Chapter Two.

⁹⁶ Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Taqrīb wa al-Irshād*, ed. 'Abd al-Hamīd ibn 'Alī Abū Zanīdh, 1: 317.

⁹⁷ His argument against the Mu'tazilites has been discussed in the Chapter Two.

⁹⁸ Anthropomorphists defined speech comprising sounds and words. See their views on this concept in relation to the attributes of God in page 81-82 of this chapter.

⁹⁹ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Insāf Fīmā Yajib I'tiqāduh walā Yajūzu al-Jahl bih*, ed. 'Imād al-Dīn Aḥmad Haedar, (n. c., Alam al-Kutub, 1986), 162.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 163.

one who recites the Qur'ān, his recitation is eternal whereas when he recites the poem his recitation is originated. Those activities have different categories depending on the recited things. In the other words, he criticised their notion that the speech of God which in one perspective is considered as eternal, and in the other it is also originated. It is impossible for God at the same time to have two contradictory attributes.

Al-Bāqillānī also responded to the concept of anthropomorphism on the eternity of words and sounds. Some anthropomorphist groups believed that God speaks through the Qur'ān which comprises words and sounds.¹⁰¹ Both words and sounds are eternal in nature different from those which belong to human beings. However, in response to this notion al-Bāqillānī stated such belief is problematic because their statement is inconsistent. They mixed between the eternal and the originated in one object (*ḥulūliyya*). By virtue of such notion, this consequently invalidates the existing *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'ān which we have. Our *muṣḥaf* is written in words and recited by a reader which is originated. That recitation is not the Qur'ān, the eternal one. Therefore, what we have is not the Qur'ān revealed to the prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) which is also eternal. The same position to when we listen to those verses.¹⁰² The verses are created which we are able to read, touch, and hold. Hence, we do not have the eternal verses of the Qur'ān. However, this is absolutely impossible since all the teachings of Islam rely on it. They referred to the eternal Qur'ān which contains God's messages.

Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī maintained the mainstream of Ash'arite theological framework through his own analysis. He asserted that the Speech of God is neither originated nor created. According to him, someone could not say that God's speech is a story or expression. He neither said that he told a story with God's speech nor expressed with His speech too. Al-Bāqillānī affirmed that we recite the speech of God, write and

¹⁰¹ Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, 106.

¹⁰² Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 163.

memorize it. We cannot attach to His speech with the originated things; sounds and words. We cannot combine between the pre-existent (*qadīm*) with the originated ones.¹⁰³ Through this argument, it seems he rejected anthropomorphism by providing their weakness in combining between the eternity and the createdness.

Al-Qurtubī reported that in his further argument against those anthropomorphists, al-Bāqillānī also clarified their stance saying that God speaks through His eternal words and sounds. The eternity of the sounds has sequential and arranged words from the reciters. God's speech may also appear in the form of the unarranged words without any sequence.¹⁰⁴ In response to this claim, al-Bāqillānī delineated that by nature all words are different. There is no any single letter which is the same. They are sequential in terms of their position, hence, they are absolutely originated. It is also valid that God speaks through various languages addressed to different communities. Those sounds may happen contradictorily which impossibly combined into single sound at the same time. Each community has its own language. All these elements clearly illustrate that every thing has its own existence. The words and languages function independently, without mixing with each other. In addition, al-Bāqillānī elaborated by showing the existence of the colour. To him, we cannot demonstrate white together with black since those colours are contrasting in nature. Hence, it is also true, Allāh is One and only in His essence. His singleness is pure without any combination, division, and composition.¹⁰⁵ To make Him possible to inhere in a human's body is committing a deviated theological principle which is rejected in the mainstream Islamic theological principle.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 162.

¹⁰⁴ Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abū Bakr ibn Farḥ al-Ansārī al-Qurtubī, *al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Asmā Allāh al-Husnā*, ed. Majdī Fathī Sayyid, (Egypt: Dār al-Sahaba li al-Turāth, 1995), 2: 172.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 174.

Another Ash'rite theologian, Al-Juwaynī (d. 478 H/1085 C.E.), upheld al-Bāqillānī's definition on the concept of speech. Based on his account,¹⁰⁶ he elucidated the Anthropomorphists of *Hashwiyya* who believed that God's speech, which comprises sounds and words, is eternal. They stressed that the thing heard (*al-masmu'*) by a reader is the essence of His speech because it is the sound of God. If that speech is written and arranged on any part of the body, it is regarded an eternal thing too. Although the body is originated, yet it could switch into an eternal one including its words and sounds. They believed that essentially these two aspects; the words and sounds, are pre-existent. According to al-Juwaynī, their method of understanding is based on the rejecting the necessity (*juhd al-darūrāt*). It aims to deny two different tenets of existence; creation and eternity. During the activity of speaking, the structure of the sentence consists of certain words which precede each other. In terms of the sequence of the alphabets, some of those words are earlier and some precede others. Those sentences also have beginnings and endings which make them originated. Hence, he concluded that the existence of those words based on their sequence is originated. This sort of approach obviously leads to the conclusion of turning the created thing into eternal one.¹⁰⁷ Their arguments on their own are invalidated because they mixed between the eternal and the originated.

His disciple, al-Ghazālī (d. 503 H/1111 C.E.), also supported al-Bāqillānī's definition and rejected the Anthropomorphists' notion on the concept of speech. According to him, the speech comprises two main things; meaning and word. In terms of the meaning of speech, it is eternal and related to its essence of God. It consists of His commands, prohibitions and information.¹⁰⁸ Al-Ghazālī further rejected their notion on who affirmed God's will and power existing in His essence which is also their substrate (*maḥall*). Those attributes are only available in God's essence and inseparable.

¹⁰⁶ Al-Juwaynī, *Al-Irshād*, 129.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Iqtisād*, 114-5.

In other words, the Anthropomorphists held that God has two different aspects; the eternal and the originated one. The eternal is His essence while His attributes will, powerful, speech are originated in His essence which is their substrate. However, al-Ghazālī disagreed upon such notion. To him, God has eternal attributes which are neither His essence nor separated from His essence. These attributes are in His essence. He questioned, how does He speak yet does not have His speaking attribute?.¹⁰⁹ The same question for other attributes like powerful, will, and knowing. In this stance, al-Ghazālī affirmed that all these attributes of God are eternal in His essence. His argument was also addressed to the Mu‘tazilites who affirmed that God is powerful, living, and knowing with His essence.¹¹⁰ He further argued that all originated things (*ḥadīth*) are possible existence (*jāiz al-wujūd*), while the eternal one is necessary existence (*wājib al-wujūd*). If His attributes originate in His essence (*ḥadīthah*), then they are contradictory to the necessity of His existence. Therefore, His attributes and essence are eternal in nature. Al-Ghazālī elaborated his argument further by affirming that it is impossible for His essence to be the substrate (*maḥāll*) of the originated thing. It is impossible for Him to change His state from being eternal into originated one. It is impossible too for God that His essence has additional aspects attached to it. All these elements are possibly annihilated (*mumkīn taqdīr ‘adamih*), hence they are originated matters.¹¹¹

Abū Hanīfa (d. 150 H/772 C.E.), one of theologians who established the Hanafite school, also asserted his definition on the speech of God which is in line with the Ash‘arite’s view. In his *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* as well as in *Waṣīyyah*, he stated:

...the Qur’ān is the speech of God, uncreated, and His revelation. It is neither He nor other. But, it is truly His attributes written on the texts, readable with tongues, preserved in the heart, not dissolvent in it. The ink, paper and writing all of which are created due to they are products of

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 105

¹¹⁰ According to this group, God does not have any of those attributes in His essence. Hence, it is aimed to prove that there is not plurality in His essence.

¹¹¹ Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtisād*, 106-8.

human acts. The speech of God is uncreated because its writings, words, and structures are indications of the Qur'ān for human's needs to it. His speech existing in His essence...¹¹²

Al-Bayāḍī, in his *Ishārāt al-Marām*,¹¹³ explained Abū Hanīfa's notions on the problem of speech of God as stated above. According to him, God is speaking which is different from our way of speaking. Our speech is sensible (*al-kalām al-ḥiss*), and we speak through means of sounds, words, including our zones of articulation (*makhārij*). As human beings, we need many mediums to utter our statement, like certain organs related to it; tongue and its muscle. We also require arranging the letters in the process of speaking. On the contrary, God speaks through His speech without any means due to His power and omniscience. He neither requires the words nor the sounds as His medium of speaking. If He needs such things, that means His speech is originated. This is impossible for Him since all words and sounds are successively arranged.¹¹⁴ In addition, al-Bayāḍī added his explanation of Abū Ḥanīfa's works by saying that the speech of God has meaning therein. To him, the meaning in the soul is that speech which is expressed thorough the different tongues. God's speech is without all those means to deliver His messages to the prophets.¹¹⁵ This principle is also a rejection of these Anthropomorphists and the Mu'tazilites. Al-Bayāḍī, as a *Maturidiyya*, could disprove them by analyzing through the syllogistic approach to the problem. According to him, the Anthropomorphists of *Hashwiyya* denied the major premise of this matter by saying that every speech arranged by words and sounds is an originated thing. Hence, they believed that God's speech is composed by such process. On the other hands, the Mu'tazilites denied the minor premise of the concept of speech. They believed that God speaks through His essence. His speech comprises systematic sounds and words

¹¹² Akmal al-Dīn al-Babratī, *Sharḥ Waṣiyyah al-Imām Abū Hanīfa*, (Jordan: Dār al-Fath, 2009), 143. This definition also stated in his *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* with slightly different statement. See in al-Hamam, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, (Egypt: Dār al-Kutub al-Arabiyya al-Kubrā, n. y.), 24.

¹¹³ Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Bayāḍī, *Ishārāt al-Maram min Ibārāt al-Imām*, 136.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 139.

existing other than His essence.¹¹⁶ In other words, God is speaking by originating those words and sounds in any body like in the *al-Lauh al-Mahfuz*, in which the Angel Gabriel had revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). In this stance, they denied the meaning of speech (*al-kalām al-nafsi*). To them, it is unintelligible if the meaning of speech exists in the soul.¹¹⁷ Conversely, the Anthropomorphists of *Karrāmiyya* also denied the major premise of the concept of speech. They held that God’s speech is His attributes. It also consists of originated words and sounds existing in His soul.¹¹⁸ They had their own definition which combines the ideas of the Mu’tazilites and the Asha’arites. Thus, al-Bayādī had clearly illustrated Abū Hanīfa’s notions in rejecting both the Mu’tazilites and the Anthropomorphists concerning the meaning of speech within their theological doctrines. In this position Abū Ḥanīfa was in line with the Ash‘arite stance.

Al-Bāqillānī in another place further elaborated his views regarding the essence of speech. He maintained that the meaning that exists in the soul expressed by the symbol indicates its aspects. These could be in the form of speech which has been routinely spoken by a number of people and firmly established in community.¹¹⁹ Allāh has sent Mūsā (peace be upon him) to the people of Israel who spoke in Hebrew. He brought and delivered His messages in their language. The same thing for Prophet ‘Īsā (peace be upon him) who was also sent to his people who spoke in Shiriac. He delivered God’s messages in their language. This also occurred to the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) who was sent to the Arabs. His community spoke Arabic through which he propagated to his people. God’s messages were delivered to them following their language background too. As a result, the people recognized His commands and

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 144.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 139. See Mu’tazilite’s view on ‘Abd. Al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Khamsah*, 527-528.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ This language has been used in a community as medium of communication amongst citizens including a number of the prophets who were sent to them by Allāh. See Ibrāhīm: 4: “and We have sent no Messenger but in the language of his own people, so that he might make clear to them (His message)...”

prohibitions very well. However, even though those messages were delivered in different languages like Hebrew, Shiriac, and Arabic, yet they are still one thing, the Speech of God. This speech does not change and contradict any object related to its relationship. In addition, al-Bāqillānī underlined that the meaning of this speech could also be grasped through its writing. The writing may express the meaning of the one who speaks in his own language.¹²⁰ Even though the words in those languages are different, the meanings exist in the soul. In other words, the speech of God could be expressed and understood by the people of each prophet.¹²¹ Al-Bāqillānī also delineated other aspects of the speech expressed by signs and symbols. Someone could employ such an act by his gestures indicating his purposes. This was evident in the expression of Maryam during her silence in responding to her people when questioned the status of her son.¹²² The same case also occurred to Prophet Zakaria during his communication to his people.¹²³ Both Maryam and Zakaria expressed the meaning of their speech existing in their soul with different facial expressions. Maryam replied to some questions addressed to her by using her hand, and Zakaria expressed to his people following the revelation from his God to praise Him (*tasbīḥ*). Both communicated to their people with different kind of communication similar thing to those who are dumb. They were able to communicate with others with their hands, expressions, and body language. Even if they were unable to speak, people around them were likely understand them.¹²⁴ By virtue of all these facts their communication proved that speech consists of meaning although expressed in different ways.

¹²⁰ See in al-Jātsiyah: 29: "This record of ours (written by the angels) speaks with truth against you, for we have (commanded the angels) to record all your actions (when you were in the world before)!"

¹²¹ Al-Baqillani, *al-Inṣāf*, 158.

¹²² Maryam: 29: So Maryam pointed to her son. They asked (in surprise): "How can we talk to a baby who is still in the cradle?"

¹²³ Alī Imran: 41: Prophet Zakaria said: "O Lord vouchsafe me a sign (to indicate that my wife has conceived)." Allāh said: "the sign is that you shall not speak to any man for three days (and three nights) except by signs..."

¹²⁴ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 159.

However, al-Bāqillānī's affirmation on the meaning of speech was strongly criticised by later Hanbalite theologian, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728 H/1328 C.E).¹²⁵ He stated that even the Ash'arites believed that speech comprises of words (*lafz*) and meaning, yet they affirmed that the earlier were merely allegory (*majāz*) while the latter was the substance (*ma'nā*). As a result, they fell into two dangerous positions; either to believe that the Qur'an is created or the Qur'an is not the speech of God.¹²⁶ He also reported that speech merely indicated one meaning in the form of command, prohibition, and information. It is expressed in Arabic in the form of the Qur'ān, in Hebrew which in the form of the *Tawra*, and in Shiriatic that is the Bible (the *Injil*). These three books of God considered the command and prohibition as elements of His speech. To him, the Ash'arites would like to simplify the different meanings of speech into one single meaning. Having criticised them, he proposed his own concept by stating that the speech is divided into two; diction (*inshā'*) and information (*khabr*). The *Inshā'* is subdivided into requesting the acts and leaving the acts while information is divided into two; negation and confirmation. The word 'one' (*wāhid*) in the Ash'arite concept is still unclear. It could be one in its type (*naw'*), category (*jins*), and class (*ṣinf*). Hence, their idea is rejected.¹²⁷

Ibn Taymiyya further argued to the Ash'arites that Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) delivered the message of the Qur'ān not only its meanings, but also its words. He criticized their arguments and said they could lead to believing that the Arab people learned the teachings of Islam from a non-Arab who merely delivered the meaning of the Qur'ān. However, the verses of the Qur'ān¹²⁸ show that the Angel

¹²⁵ H. Laoust, "ibn Taymiyya," *Encyclopedia of Islam: Second Edition*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 3: 951-5.

¹²⁶ Muḥammad Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu' Fatāwā*, 12: 535.

¹²⁷ Muḥammad Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu' al-Fatāwā*, 6: 523-4.

¹²⁸ Al-Naḥl : 102-103: "The Holy Spirit (Jibril) has brought the Revelation from your Lord setting forth the truth, to strengthen the faith of the faithful, and to give guidance and good news to Muslims. And We know well that pagans say: "actually, it is a human being who teaches him." (But) he to whom they allude speaks a foreign tongue, whereas the Qur'ān is in Arabic, pure, and clear."

Gabriel revealed to him the Qur'ān which is in the Arabic language.¹²⁹ All those who recited the Qur'ān also narrated its words and meanings. They did not read merely the meaning without words. If they recite only one aspect of them, then they were dumb people. They were able to express their will through their expression, without their words. However, such a case is inapplicable to Allāh, the Almighty because it will reduce His perfectness.¹³⁰ Ibn Taymiyya further elaborated his arguments by affirming that the contradictory elements could not be combined in God's attributes; seeing and unseeing, knowing and unknowing, and speech and dumb.¹³¹ Thus, His attributes are absolutely perfect without their opposites. Furthermore, if the speech of God is only its meaning, there would be no difference between God's speaking to Mūsā and other prophets, nor the revelation behind the veil, nor the direct revelation by God too. It was employed immediately in the heart of the Prophets.¹³² In addition, the argument that the Qur'ān is only the meaning, it could demonstrate that the verses of the Qur'ān are divided into two different parts. Some of them are speech of God while the rest are not His speech. The meaning is His speech, while the words are otherwise. However, according to Ibn Taymiyya, this is contradictory to the principle of the mainstream of theological belief of the Muslim people. The Angel Gabriel had come down to reveal all verses of the Qur'ān to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as his obedience to Allāh, the almighty to convey God's messages to his messenger. He and the Prophet (peace be upon him) could not have fabricated any single word because their task was only to deliver His words to human beings.¹³³ Moreover, in other places, Ibn Taymiyya also asserted that the speech of God which was revealed in the Qur'ān consists of word and meaning. It is proven by the fact that an interpreter or translator could not consider that his works on its interpretation and translation as the Qur'ān itself. He may say that his

¹²⁹ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu' Fatāwā*, 6: 536.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 537.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 538.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 540.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 541.

work as commentary and translation *an sich*. On the other hand, Ibn Taymiyya argued if the Qur'ān is only the meaning, hence, the translation could be also called the Qur'ān because it substitutes all its meanings.¹³⁴

In response to the aforementioned criticism, some theologians after al-Bāqillānī attempted to uphold the Ash'arites by clarifying their stance. Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 H/1273 C.E.), a commentator of the Qur'ān, was one of them who cemented the Ash'arites' notions. Regarding the speech of God, he asserted that His speech is meaning existing in the soul which is expressed in the form of words and sounds. The meaning appeared in the scriptures revealed to the Prophets. God's speech is one which is articulated in various different forms in those books based on the languages of their people. It is argued, according to Ibn Furāk, the single speech, comprising various different aspects; command, prohibition, information, inquiry, promise, and threat, is eternal which is impossible to change and contradict. This attribute is different from the speech of human beings that does not require any medium of speaking; lip and tongue.¹³⁵ Moreover, al-Qurṭubī added that God has stated in the Qur'ān that He has many names¹³⁶ and He was the one who revealed four different scriptures to His Prophets.¹³⁷ With this evidence, al-Qurṭubī affirmed that we cannot say that those different names belong to a number of existence. On the contrary, those attributes merely belong to one name. They refer to the One God, the Almighty. His speech cannot be said as Arabic, Persian, or Hebrew. Only when it is articulated in Arabic it is the Qur'ān, when it is verbalized in Hebrew it is the *Tawra*, and when it is conveyed in Divine Power (*rabbānniya*) it is the Bible (*al-injīl*). In addition to this argument, he affirmed to the other aspects on which God is worshipped. God, Who is the One, has a number of

¹³⁴ Ibid., 543.

¹³⁵ Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Asnā Fī Sharh Asmā' Allāh al-Husnā*, vol. 2:165.

¹³⁶ Al-A'raf : 180: And only Allāh has the most beautiful (and noble) names, so call on (and pray to) Him by these names.

¹³⁷ Al-Baqarah: 285: The messenger believes, and so do the believers, in the guidance revealed to him from his Lord: each of them believes in Allāh, and His angels, His Books, and His Messengers. They say: "We make no distinction between any of His messengers.

attributes as stated in His beautiful names. He is worshipped in the heaven as well as on the earth by all His creatures. They perform their obedience in different ways and expressions. Some of them remember Him in various ways. Some others also differently recite, interpret, and write the speech of God.¹³⁸ It is proven by the verse of the Qur'ān.¹³⁹ Some verses state that Allāh uses the plural term 'We' to represent His singularity. These verses give clear illustration that God's role in preserving the Qur'ān is also followed by those who memorize the Qur'ān, the memorizers.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, al-Qurtubī also proved his arguments by relying on some Ash'arite theologians concerning the single speech of God. According to Ibn Furāk, God commanded human beings to believe in Him, which implied that He prohibited His servants from disbelieving. His instructions were similar to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in which he had to pray God facing to *Bait al-Maqdis* in a specific period. At the same time He prohibited praying Him other than that particular time. This argument is also valid for other attributes like His vision. God's vision of Prophet Ādam in paradise is the same as His vision in this world. The same thing to His hearing of Zaid's speech is the same as His hearing of Amr's speech, without any changes and differences in His essence.¹⁴¹ Hence, God's attributes are absolutely eternal and have not changed His essence.

Another support for the Ash'arites is also shown by a later scholar of the Qur'ān, al-Alūsī. In his preface of commentary of the Qur'ān, he delineated the concept of speech in which he vindicates his position to al-Ash'arite theological school. He agreed with the notion that the speech has interrelated concept of the words and meanings. He divided it into two; the process of speaking (*al-takallum*) and the product of speech (*al-*

¹³⁸ Al-Qurtubī, *al-Asnā Fī Sharh al-Asmā' al-Husnā*, vol. 2:166.

¹³⁹ Luqmān: 27: And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the ocean (were ink) with seven more seas to replenish it (as ink) the writing of Allāh's words could never be exhausted. Truly Allāh the almighty, the All-wise.

¹⁴⁰ Al-Qurtubī, *al-Asnā Fī Sharh al-Asmā' al-Husnā*, 169.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 170.

mutakallam bih).¹⁴² The speech is the object of language which comprises word (*lafzī*) and mental activity of the speaker (*nafsī*). The first process is the one who is speaking in which he deals with his tongue (*lisān*) as well as his zones of articulation (*makhārij*). This process produces audible sound to a listener. Furthermore, the activity of speaking when it is meant the mental speaking (*al-kalām al-nafsī*) is the internal activity of the speaker in which he has not yet articulated through all the acts of the limbs (*jawāriḥ*). This activity is internal sound (*sawt ma'nawī*) produced by the soul. al-Alūsī further elaborated his notions pertaining to the nature of Speech of God. According to him, His speech is eternal, well arranged, limitless, and timeless. It is divine word which is mandatory statement to all creatures. When His speech (*kalām Allāh*) – the Qur'ān- is recited, it is articulated in the worldly dimension reflected in the Arabic language. All God's messages to human beings are revealed through His speech which is in the form of words and meanings. As al-Alūsī stated:

The mental speech (*al-kalām al-nafsī*) is produced by a man who internally speaks through mental and arranged words which is in conformity with the articulated words...God's Speech is divine Words comprise mandatory statements which are immaterial form. Those words are eternal, well arranged, not sequential in their nature...and when (the Qur'ān) revealed it is shown its mental words which is heard and written (in the *muṣḥaf*)...¹⁴³

He supported his argument by a number of verses in the Qur'ān as well as the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They are verses dealing with this topic in Yūsuf: 77,¹⁴⁴ Zukhruf: 80,¹⁴⁵ al-A'rāf: 205,¹⁴⁶ and Āli Imrān: 154.¹⁴⁷ The *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) narrated al-Bukhārī also affirm his notion, as shown below:

¹⁴² Abū al-Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn al-Sayyid Maḥmūd Al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī Fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azīm wa al-Sab' al-Mathānī*, (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā Turāth al-Arabī, n. y.), 1:10.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 11.

¹⁴⁴ (Hearing this humiliating remark) Yusuf suppressed his feeling and did not reveal it to them. He said (in his heart): You are in a worse position.

¹⁴⁵ Do they think that We cannot hear what they hide (in their hearts) and what they are saying (in whispers) to each other?

¹⁴⁶ And remember your Lord deep in your soul with humility and awe...

¹⁴⁷ ...they conceal within themselves what they do not disclose to you...

Al-Bukhārī also narrated the *ḥadīth Qudsī* in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*:¹⁴⁸

يقول الله عز و جل أنا عند ظني عبدي بي و أنا معه إذا ذكرني فإن ذكرني في نفسي
ذكرته في نفسي وإن ذكرني في ملا ذكرته في ملا خير منهم

Allah the Exalted says: ‘I am as my slave expects me to be, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me inwardly, I will remember him inwardly, and if he remembers Me in an assembly, I will remember him in a better assembly (i.e., in the assembly of angels).

The text of the prophetic tradition obviously delineates the inner aspect of the speech which is instilled in someone’s heart. Hence, it seems from al-Alūsī’s arguments that the speech is not merely comprises words and meanings which both elements have interrelated concepts. They are product of pronounced speech (*al-kalām al-lafzī*) and the speech in the soul (*al-kalām al-nafsī*) by which are addressing to any listeners.

In conclusion, the aforementioned arguments stated by al-Bāqillānī as well as other Ash‘arites clearly delineate the meaning of speech and its related topics. Through their views too, they fundamentally disproved the Anthropomorphists’ notions of speech. Even though ibn Taymiyya had criticized the Ash‘arites about their notions on this topic, his accusation could be invalidated by analyzing their supporters’ notions of speech, like al-Qurtubī and al-Alūsī. Ibn Taymiyya’s criticism was influenced by his stance of being the follower of Hanbalite school of thought which preferred to rely more on the textual approach to the Qur’an and avoid the rational way of understanding of the verses of the Qur’an.

3.4.2. Difference Between the Recitation (*qirā’ah*) and the Recited (*maqrū’*)

Having discussed al-Bāqillānī’s thought on the meaning of speech, we proceed with our discussion in dealing with further topic pertaining to recitation (*qirā’ah*) and the recited

¹⁴⁸ Muḥammad ibn ‘Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, (Egypt: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2010), in The Book of Tawhīd, no. 7405, 881.

maqrū'). This subject matter is commonly discussed in the problem of the speech of God and other related concepts.

In principle, the terms 'recitation' (*qirā'ah*) and 'recited' (*maqrū*') are different concepts. A number of theologians asserted that each of them has its own conceptual basis. The former is not the same as the latter. However, according to the Anthropomorphists, the recitation (*qirā'ah*) is the recited (*maqrū*').¹⁴⁹ They believed that the recitation is originated, and the recited is eternal. Both terms are similar in their nature. So, the eternal is possibly attributed to the originated. By virtue of that, they believed that God's speech is created in nature. They also argued that God is a reader. He reads to human beings His verses as exemplified in al-Baqarah: 252.¹⁵⁰ To this claim, al-Bāqillānī replied with different arguments. First is that he clarified the meaning of the verse of the Qur'ān al-Baqarah: 252 by analyzing the obvious difference between the recitation and the recited. The word '*al-ḥaqq*' (the truth) in this verse means His speech which is eternal while the recitation has not come into existence until it has been originated by the reciter.¹⁵¹ Hence, '*al-ḥaqq*' (the truth) is the recited that exists together with its essence. The recitation is the consequence of reciting the recited.¹⁵² Al-Bāqillānī in this aspect affirmed the difference between both terms. To cement his stance, he quoted al-Isra': 106¹⁵³ saying that the Qur'ān is revealed (*mūhā*) to the prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). He was the one who recited and taught his people. In doing so, he was also involved in the recitation and deliverance to his companions. Therefore, this is the Prophet's property (*ṣifah*) since he was also the reciter. The argument of al-Bāqillānī is stated as below:

¹⁴⁹ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 163.

¹⁵⁰ Al-Baqārah: 252: Such are the revelations of Allāh which We recite to you (O Muḥammad) in truth, for indeed you are one of the Messengers (sent by) Allāh.

¹⁵¹ Al-Sajdah: 3: ...in fact, the Qur'ān is the truth from your Lord (O Muḥammad), so that you may forewarn your people.

¹⁵² Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 164.

¹⁵³ Al-Isra': 106: And We divided the Qur'ān into parts, so that you may recite it to the people in a slow and deliberate way. And we have revealed it in stages, by gradual revelation.

Allāh, the Almighty told that the Qur’ān was descended and revealed from Him, while, the messenger (Muḥammad) recited and taught it. The revealed, descended and recited is the speech of God, the eternal and attribute of His essence. The recitation is the prophet’s activity which is also his attribute...the act of the prophet is deliverance (to his companions) which is his recitation.¹⁵⁴

Hence, it seems the aforementioned statement clearly elucidates the difference between the terms ‘recitation’ and ‘recited’. The recitation is the activity of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which is also part of his property¹⁵⁵ while the recited is the speech of God. The Prophet himself in this context is the reciter and deliverer of the messages of God to his companions.

Another illustration of al-Bāqillānī’s concept could be analyzed from the aspect of how a man has been commanded to worship his God. God, as Commander (*āmīr*), decreed the Prophet (peace be upon him) to pray to Him. In this matter, he, the commanded (*al-ma’mūr*), should perform His instruction (*al-ma’mūr bih*) which is in the form of prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) performed his devotion (*ibādah*) to the worshipped (*al-ma’būd*). The one who performs this activity is called the worshipper (*al-ābid*). All these terms have their own proper meanings. As a result, we cannot equate worship (*ibādah*) and the worshipped (*al-ma’bud*) since they signify different contexts.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī also supported his argument on viewing the difference between both terms ‘*tilāwah*’ and ‘*matlū*’ by comparing them with other words like ‘remembrance’ (*dhikr*) and ‘the remembered’ (*madhkūr*).¹⁵⁷ This is based on the verse al-A’rāf: 205,¹⁵⁸ explaining the text that those terms are obviously different. The remembrance (*dhikr*) is the act of the rememberer (*dhākir*) whereas the

¹⁵⁴ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 127.

¹⁵⁵ The meaning of *ṣifah* is a quality, an attribute, and a property. Under this term many words are included such as active participle (*ism al-fā’il*), passive participle (*ism al-maf’ūl*), and adjectives (*ṣifah al-mushabbihah*). See in E. W. Lane, *Arabic Language Lexicon*, (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Book Trust, 1984), 3054, entry “*ṣifa*”.

¹⁵⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 129.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹⁵⁸ Al-A’rāf: 205: “And remember your Lord deep in your soul with humility and awe (not transgressing His commands) and without raising your voice, in the morning and evening And do not be among the negligent.”

remembered (*al-madhkūr*) is God, the Almighty. By virtue of this content, the terms ‘recitation’ and ‘the recited’ are absolutely different. The recitation could differ and be contradictory, yet the recited is permanent. The recitation always refers to its reciter like in the case of the variant readings of the Qur’an; the readings of Ubay, Ibn Mas‘ūd, and so on. On the contrary, the recited cannot be referred to any of God’s creatures. It should be ascribed to His speech, the eternal one. It does not belong to anyone’s action too. Hence, we cannot say that the Qur’an belongs to Ubay or Ibn Mas‘ūd. The recitation is the act of someone whose God will reward, punish, or even praise.¹⁵⁹ Another theologian after al-Baqillānī, al-Juwaynī (d. 478 H/1085 C.E.), underlined and cemented this aforementioned proof. He affirmed that recitation (*tilāwah*) is produced by a reader who reads the Qur’an and performs the prayer. It is prohibited for those who are in a state of impurity (*junub*) to recite it, and recommended to those who are pure (*tāhir*). Hence, the reader will be rewarded. According to him, the recitation (*qirā’ah*) could happen in various different states. Sometimes it could be good, beautiful, sonorous, and interesting. The one who tries his best to read the Qur’an may sometimes make certain mistakes in his reading because there no one is always perfect in his reading.¹⁶⁰ Al-Juwaynī developed his argument about another term ‘the recited’ (*al-maqrū’*) where he believed that this term signifies the speech of God which articulates eternal speech showing the expression. The terms ‘recitation’ and ‘the recited’ are like the terms ‘remembrance’ (*dhikr*) and the ‘remembered’ (*al-madhkūr*). The former referred to the speech of those who use to remember God while the latter ascribed to God himself; each of which has different conceptual basis. Therefore, the poetic structure is called ‘anthem’ (*inshād*) while activity in relation to the unseen realm which

¹⁵⁹ Al-Baqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 169.

¹⁶⁰ Al-Baqillānī, *Al-Irshād*, 131.

is not uttered practice is called ‘remembrance’ (*dhikr*). The recitation, in this matter, is the expression of the speech of God as indicated by the sounds.¹⁶¹

In another place al-Bāqillānī also elaborated his notion concerning the difference between the recitation and the recited by interpreting other relevant verses. According to him, the word ‘you read’ (*tatlū*) in verse al-Imrān: 101¹⁶² refers to the one who reads the verses, His angel. The Angel Gabriel had read the Qur’ān to prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Even though he was told by the angel, such instruction was actually ascribed to God. In many other verses, it also stated ‘the blower’ (*al-nāfikh*),¹⁶³ ‘the carrier’ (*al-ḥāmil*),¹⁶⁴ and ‘the teller’ (*al-qāṣī*),¹⁶⁵ all these were employed by His angel, yet the decree was from Him. Hence, the aforementioned contexts are recitations referring to God’s speech, one of His attributes.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, the recitation has the possibility to change the meaning of words even though the recited things are unchanged. Al-Bāqillānī explained that the recitation (*tilāwah*) might change the meaning of certain texts, whereas the recited (*al-matlū*) remained.¹⁶⁷ This alteration may also occur in the words, writing (*al-rasm*), or regulation (*ḥukm*) as well as the speech of God when it is recited, written, and inferred by any reader. On the contrary, the recited (*al-matlū*) is unchanged. It is the eternal speech of God which is attributed to His essence which is permanent in nature.¹⁶⁸ In addition to rejecting the Anthropomorphists, al-Bāqillānī further elaborated his argument through the analysis of the concept of *kitāba* (writing) and the written (*maktūb*), instead of the recitation and the recited. He argued by asking do those who write the verses of the Qur’ān on paper with their ink,

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 132.

¹⁶² But how can you disbelieve when Allāh’s Revelations (the Qur’ān) are recited to you and His own Messenger (Muhammad) is in your midst?...

¹⁶³ Al-Anbiya’: 91: And (remember) the woman who kept her chastity: We breathed into her a spirit of our (Creation), and We made her and her son a sign (of Allāh’s might) to all people.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Haqqah: 11: Indeed! When the water (of the flood) rose high (above the mountains), We carried you (and saved your forefathers) in the floating Ark (which sailed fast).

¹⁶⁵ Yūsuf: 3: We narrate to you (O Muhammad) the best narratives by revealing this Qur’ān, though before revelation you were indeed among those who were unaware of them.

¹⁶⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 165-6.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Naḥl: 101: When We substitute one verse (of the Qur’ān) with another...

¹⁶⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 124.

could they then claim that those writings are God's?¹⁶⁹ The Anthropomorphists replied affirmatively that God is incarnated in the writings. Hence, they equated both terms '*kitāba*' and '*maktūb*'. In this problem, al-Bāqillānī strongly rejected their stance by stating that God does not embody on those words. He neither personifies His essence on the paper nor on in the ink. He is powerful and great in His position. His speech, even if it is written on our paper, swords, and preserved in our hearts, that does not mean that He inheres Himself to those materials.¹⁷⁰ Those verses of the Qur'an marked on those materials are solely to help someone in the process of learning the Qur'an. Therefore, it seems from the aforementioned arguments, al-Bāqillānī attempted to cement his principle on the affirmation that God is omnipotent and omniscient by differing between the recitation and the recited as addressed to the Anthropomorphists, who equated both terms.

Interestingly, Ibn Taymiyya, a Hanbalite theologian who used to criticise the Ash'arites, agreed with al-Bāqillānī's critique against anthropomorphism. He reported the Anthropomorphists, who held that recitation (*tilāwah*) is the recited (*matlū*), argued the meaning of God's speech is audible sounds and words produced by the reader of the Qur'an. They even believed that sound is the sound of God. They also further asserted that the sound and attributes of creature are the essence of the attributes of God, as stated below:

the recitation (*tilāwah*) is the recited (*matlū*). This means that the essence of God's speech, in which produced by words and sounds, is the audible sounds of the readers. This audible sound of a servant is the sound of God. They (further) stated the essence of the creature's speech is the essence of God's attribute.¹⁷¹

From the above statement, hence, Ibn Taymiyya accused the anthropomorphists them as practicing unionism (*Ittiḥādiyya*) and pantheism (*ḥulūliyya*) in terms of the

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 198.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, 12: 374.

attributes. According to him, they likened their doctrine to Christianity to a certain extent in terms of incarnation. However, there is no single group in Islam who believed in such a notion.¹⁷²

Al-Bāqillānī's views are also relevant to reply Abū Ya'la's support to anthropomorphists in equalizing the terms 'recitation' (*qirā'ah*) and 'the recited' (*maqrū'*). Abū Ya'la, a Hanbalite theologian affirmed the similarity of those concepts based on the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him)¹⁷³ which, according to him, claimed that the Prophet's recitation is the speech of God or the recited (*maqrū'*). Hence, as a result, the Muslims agreed that the recitations (*tilāwat*) are the speech of God due to their assumption towards reading they heard from a reader. In this sense, they would assert that this reading is the speech of God (*kalām Allāh*).¹⁷⁴ However, if we analyze by using al-Bāqillānī's points of view, we can infer that Abū Ya'la's arguments seemed very weak and invalid. Al-Bāqillānī clearly explained in his discussion on this subject by elaborating his ideas on the concept of recitation (*qirā'ah*). According to him, the activity of recitation has various different standards such as valid, good, false, and inaccurate. Therefore, if someone does this activity, his recitation may be categorized in one of those standards while the recited (*maqrū'*) does not have any aspect as stated above. The recited is the speech of God which does not contradict and change. The same goes with the term 'writing' (*kitāba*) when it is ascribed to the Qur'ān. It is shown in the form of gold, silver, and perfume carved on various different objects. These writings are different in nature. It could not be equalized amongst them. Therefore, the recitation (*qirā'ah*) is the property of the man while the recited (*maqrū'*) is the speech of God. The recitation is also the thing which is rewarded by God, whereas

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ It is narrated that Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) showed himself to his people saying "is there any person who sends me to his people, while, the Quraish has rejected me to deliver the messages of God." See in Muḥammad Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, *Khalq Af'āl al-'Ibād*, (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risālah, 1990), 1: 41.

¹⁷⁴ Abū Ya'la, *Al-Mu'tamad*, 88.

the recited is the object of reading.¹⁷⁵ In addition, al-Bāqillānī also criticized the concept given by Abū Ya‘lā on the possibility for human beings to speak with God’s speech. In this matter, Abū Ya‘lā argued by relying on the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying that “no slaves are beloved by God until they speak with His speech,”¹⁷⁶ which is the Qur’ān. Hence, he concluded that it is probable for man to speak with God’s speech.¹⁷⁷ In response to this idea, we can scrutinize al-Bāqillānī’s argument as he responded to Abū Ya‘lā’s claim, as stated below:

It is compulsory to know that it is forbidden to someone to say “indeed, I speak with the speech of God, I narrate the speech of God, I express the speech of God, I articulate the speech of God. My articulation of speech of God is neither created nor uncreated. The thing which is permissible is to be said: “truly, I recite the speech of God..., I memorize the Qur’ān...”¹⁷⁸

The aforementioned assertion obviously explains that a man is not allowed to say that he speaks, expresses, and narrates with the speech of God. The thing which is possible to be uttered is that he might recite and memorize the Qur’ān. It is in line with the verses in al-Naḥl: 98,¹⁷⁹ al-Muzammil: 20,¹⁸⁰ al-Naml: 92,¹⁸¹ and the *ḥadīth* of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).¹⁸² All these texts prove the possibility to practice both activities, recitation and memorization. In addition to this stance, al-Bāqillānī further elaborated his ideas by illustrating that someone is only able to speak with his own speech. It is impossible for him to speak with his colleague’s speech. For instance, supposing Zaid is speaking to somebody else, it is impossible for him to speak with Amr. In another aspect, it is invalid for Zaid to have black colour which belonged to

¹⁷⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Tamhīd*, 156.

¹⁷⁶ Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn al-Ḥusain ibn ‘Alī al-Baihaqī, *Kitāb al-Asmā wa al-Sifāt*, ed. Muḥammad Zahīd al-Ḥasan al-Kautharī, (Egypt: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah Li al-Turāth, 1939), in *The Speech of God Is Uncreated*, 237.

¹⁷⁷ Abū Ya‘lā, *Al-Mu‘tamad*, 90.

¹⁷⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 157.

¹⁷⁹ And when you recite the Qur’ān, seek refuge (first) in Allāh from the accursed Satan.

¹⁸⁰ ...Therefore, recite from the Qur’ān as much as is easy for you...

¹⁸¹ And so that I always recite the Qur’ān...

¹⁸² It is narrated that the Prophet asked one of his companion saying “Have memorization of the Qur’an. He replied: “I have memorized this and this verses...” See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in *The Book of Merit of the Qur’ān*, .no. 5030, 626.

Amr. Conversely, it is also illogical too for Amr to have Zaid's colour. Hence, according to al-Bāqillānī's views, Abū Ya'lā's argument might lead to dangerous consequence to liken the speech of God to the speech of human beings.¹⁸³

In relation the above matter, al-Ghazālī and al-Qurṭubī also dealt with the difference between the concepts of recitation and the recited they affirmed on al-Bāqillānī's argument by giving another illustration. Someone who utters the word 'fire' does not mean it is dealing with its essence, which is burning. It is perhaps only an indication (*madlūl*) of that term. If his statement about this word is essentially fire, then his mouth must be burnt. However, that is not the case. The substance of fire is represented by its word 'fire.'¹⁸⁴ Another theologian, al-Qurṭubī further affirmed that those who uttered the ḥadīth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not mean he spoke with the Prophet's sounds.¹⁸⁵ He merely narrated information of the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding the certain teachings, which had been delivered to his companions. It is similar to those who recited the poetry of Imru' al-Qais¹⁸⁶ or al-Mutanabbī.¹⁸⁷ Here, the reciter narrates and tells his poetry only as a matter of reading. The recited (*maqrū'*) is read through his activity of reading (*qirā'a*). His recitation does not mean he speaks with their speeches concerning several matters. Hence, those who read the poetry of Imru' al-Qais and Mutanabbī's poems and regarded as if they really spoke through their speeches, they were the same thing to those who recited the Qur'ān and claim that they also spoke with the speech of God. This case is impossible.¹⁸⁸ Everybody has his own speech. The process of speaking involves several related elements; mind, muscle, and tongue. Therefore, the foregoing proofs delineate the obvious arguments affirming the

¹⁸³ Al-Baqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 157.

¹⁸⁴ Al-Gazālī, *Al-Iqtisād*, 96.

¹⁸⁵ Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Asnā fī Sharh*, 2: 178.

¹⁸⁶ Imru' al-Qais (d. 561-565 C.E.) was an Arabian poet in the pre-Islamic period. His *Muallaqat* was very popular among the Quraish people. See in Philip K. Hitti, *History of Arabs*, (London: MacMillan and Co. Limited, 1937), 85.

¹⁸⁷ Al-Mutanabbī (d. 355 H./ 965 C.E.) was one of the greatest Arab poets during the Abbasid period until the dynasty of al-Ikhshid in Egypt. See Philip K. Hitti, *History of Arabs*, (London: MacMillan and Co. Limited, 1937), 456.

¹⁸⁸ Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Asnā fī Sharh*, 2: 178.

different concept of the recitation and the recited which lead to a consequence that the Creator is different from all His creatures.

3.4.3. His Arguments on the Speech of God

3.4.3.1. The Speech of God is not Words

Having discussed his notions on the recitation (*qirā'ah*) and the recited (*maqrū'*), al-Bāqillānī elaborated his thought pertaining the abbreviated letters (*al-Aḥruf al-Muqatta'ah*) by which he rejected that the speech of God is in the form of words. There are a number of chapters that prefix with those letters, scattered throughout the Qur'ān in 19 places.¹⁸⁹ Many commentators have interpreted them differently¹⁹⁰ since the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself did not clearly explain this matter. Those verses are included in the topic of *mutashābihāt*¹⁹¹ because their meanings are not clearly known by all readers. Some of their interpretations asserted that the Qur'ān is eternal by virtue of those letters. Its eternity is due to the existence of those words to form the structure of the Qur'ān.¹⁹²

However, al-Bāqillānī rejected the notion asserting that the Qur'ān was formed by the alphabetical words as represented by those abbreviated letters.¹⁹³ Al-Rāzī (d. 606 H./1209 C.E.) recorded number of opinions by commentators on the abbreviated letters (*al-aḥruf al-muqatta'ah*) of the chapters of the Qur'ān. One of them was by Abū Bakr al-Tibrizī.¹⁹⁴ He affirmed by saying:

¹⁸⁹ Ahmad Von Denffer, *Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 84.

¹⁹⁰ Maḥmūd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashāf an Haqāiq Gawamid al-Tanzīl wa 'Uyūn al-Ta'wīl*, (Riyad: Maktaba al-Ubaykan, 1998), 1: 528-9; 'Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī al-Bayḍāwī, *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī: Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl*, ed. Muhammad Subhī ibn Ḥasan ibn Hallāq and Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Atras, (Damascus: Dār al-Rashīd, 2000), 1: 244-5; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n. y.) 2: 2-3; Thamem Ushama, *Issues in the Study of the Qur'ān*, (Kuala Lumpur: Ilmiah Publisher, 2002), 305-15.

¹⁹¹ The term *mutashābihāt* is addressed to those verses which have ambiguous meanings. See Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ali al-Jurjani, *Kitāb al-Ta'rūfāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, (Dār al-Dayyān li al-Turath, n. c, n. y.), 253.

¹⁹² Muhammad al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Tafsīr al-Kabir ma Mafātīh al-Ghaib* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1981), 2: 8.

¹⁹³ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Insāf*, 174.

¹⁹⁴ He was an unknown scholar who was quoted by al-Razi in his commentary.

He said “God, the Almighty, knew that a group of this people said the eternity of the Qur’ān by stating those letters as warning that His speech (the speech of God) is formulated from those words. Therefore, (the Qur’ān) should be eternal.”¹⁹⁵

From this statement he propounded the speech of God is obviously formed by the alphabetical words. It is proven through the beginning of several chapters like al-Baqarah, āli Imrān, Yāsin, and so on. By virtue of that, it also proves that the Qur’ān is eternal in its nature. However, al-Bāqillānī rejected this claim. According to him, those who believed that the speech of God is formulated by the eternal words of the abbreviated letters (*al-aḥruf al-muqatta‘ah*) might lead to a consequence that a non-Muslim is also able to produce a similar verse even if it is an eternal matter. He can write the word ‘*alif*’ and utter it correctly. To him, this is a simple thing for them to compete with other verses which may undermine the meaning of the Qur’an. He clarified that those Muslims who recited the Qur’ān; i. e. *Alif lām mīm* or *Hā mīm* were dealing with the speech of God. In such an activity they could understand the meaning from the structural letters arranged in the verse of the Qur’ān. This is also valid in other recitations, in which expressing the sounds and words of God’s speech in different languages¹⁹⁶ occurred to several Prophets; Mūsā, Dāud, Īsā, and Muḥammad (peace be upon them).

Further, al-Bāqillānī also elaborated his notion in rejecting the idea that the speech of God is formulated by letters. Those words may be either used or unused in certain readings. In the history of the Qur’ān, one of the readers of the seven variant readings mentioned his views by highlighting the word ‘*malik*’ (without *alif*) in *al-Fātiḥah* chapter.¹⁹⁷ Here, he omitted the letter ‘*alif*.’ Alternatively, other readers read ‘*mālik*’ instead of ‘*malik*.’ They differed in viewing that letter whether it was omitted or not in the reading. However, by virtue of that, the word ‘*alif*,’ which is probably

¹⁹⁵ Muhammad al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Taḥsīn al-Kabīr ma Maḥāṭib al-Ghaib* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1981), 2: 8.

¹⁹⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 174.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

excluded or included, is impossibly considered as an eternal letter by its nature. It was merely a matter of recitation employed by the readers to follow the *mutawātir* narration of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). The status of both recitations were valid, and approved by him.¹⁹⁸ However, in this content the recited (*maqrū'*) was still the same, either with *alif* or without because it is the speech of God. Moreover, al-Bāqillānī further argued by quoting relevant *ḥadīth* to support his notion.¹⁹⁹ Here, he elucidated that the reward of God would be multiplied to those who read many verses of the Qur'ān. The words refer to the recitation and its features, not to the recited (*maqrū'*).²⁰⁰ In addition, that *ḥadīth* also delineated the word (*ḥarf*) as referring to the recitation (*qirā'ah*), not to the recited (*al-maqrū'*). It is proven that the memorizers of the Qur'ān, who are in the silence made still keep the speech of God in their hearts.²⁰¹ However, in this context this *ḥadīth* does not elucidate that the memorizers would be rewarded by Allāh by virtue of their memorization of God's speech in their hearts, but they are rewarded when they recite the Qur'ān. The *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) stating, “the best of my people's worship is the reciting of the Qur'ān.”²⁰²

To disprove the claim that the Qur'ān merely the words, al-Bāqillānī claimed the role of the alphabetical letters and the seven variant readings. In reality, there are only 28 words known to human beings. Basically, he questioned whether they are available to express the speech of God which is unlimited. According to him, His eternal speech is limitless. If it is expressed only within 28 words, then His words are limited. Moreover, al-Bāqillānī argued too in other aspects that those words also have

¹⁹⁸ Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Sharaf, *Mushaf al-Ṣahābī fī Qirā'āt al-Ashr al-Mutawātirā min Tarīq al-Shātibiyah wa al-Durrah*, (Egypt: Dār al-Sahāba li al-Turāth, 2004), 2.

¹⁹⁹ It is narrated that Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), said: “Those who recited a single word of the Qur'ān he would be rewarded (from which) every word has ten good.” Abū 'Isā Muḥammad ibn 'Isā ibn Sūra, al-Jāmi' al-Ṣahīh: *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Hūt, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n. y.), no. 2910, 5: 161.

²⁰⁰ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 177.

²⁰¹ This sort of condition is illustrated in the Qur'ān in al-Ankabut: 49: (There is no doubt that the Qur'ān is from Allāh), in fact, these are clear revelations preserved in the hearts of those who are endowed with knowledge. And none but the wrongdoers deny Our signs.

²⁰² Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusain al-Bayhaqī, al-Jāmi' Li Sha'b al-Īmān, ed. 'Abd. Alī 'Abd. Al-hamīd Hāmīd, (Egypt: Maktabah al-Rushd, 2003), chapter on the Respecting the Qur'ān, no. 1865, 396.

limitations in terms of their existence. They have beginning and ending, hence, they must be originated because such a thing is the property of creatures. Even though the number of alphabetical letters is unlimited, they cannot include the whole meaning of the speech of God. They are solely a means on which we write and recite the eternal speech of God as well as speech of human beings.²⁰³ Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī presented his proof against those who affirmed the eternity of words related to the speech of God by analyzing the *ḥadīth* pertaining to the seven variant readings of the Qur’ān.²⁰⁴ He argued that this *ḥadīth* did not explain the aspect of the 28 alphabetical words as elucidated above. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained the fact that Allāh revealed the Qur’ān in the form of seven readings.²⁰⁵ This reality is proven by the number of readers of the seven variant readings of the Qur’ān. According to al-Bāqillānī, as he inferred from the *ḥadīth* of ‘Umar in which he had disputed with Hishām regarding their recitations,²⁰⁶ he concluded that their dispute was merely on the prohibition of the different readings of the Qur’ān. To him, ‘Umar did not deny the recited thing (*maqrū’*) which is the Qur’ān, yet he disagreed upon the recitation employed by Hishām. ‘Umar regarded his colleague’s recitation as invalid because it was different from what the Prophet (peace be upon him) had read to ‘Umar. However, after both companions reported this matter to the Prophet (peace be upon him) he approved both readings (*qirā’ah*). Again, the difference here is in their recitations of the Qur’ān, not the Qur’ān itself. This *ḥadīth* also gives information that the Qur’ān is allowed to be recited in seven different variant readings. Their differences do not mean difference of

²⁰³ Ibid., 178.

²⁰⁴ Muḥammad ibn Ismāil al-Bukhārī, *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, chapter on The Book of the Merit of the Qur’ān, no. 5040, 627.

²⁰⁵ Many interpretations regarding this matter. See Chapter Four on the issue of seven variant readings in relation to the Shi‘ite doctrines.

²⁰⁶ Hadith on his dispute on the different ways of reading of the Qur’ān. See in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, (Egpt: Dār Ibn Hazm, 2010), Chapter on the Merit of the Qur’ān, no. 4992, 623.

the Qur'ān. The same thing for the recited (*maqrū'*), it is one, yet, the way of reading is possibly employed in seven ways.²⁰⁷

3.4.3.2. The Speech of God is Not Sounds

In constructing his argument against the Anthropomorphists, al-Bāqillānī complemented other aspects concerning the denial of sounds when it is related to the speech of God. This proof is to reject their notion which maintained, as reported by al-Rāzī,²⁰⁸ that the sounds which are heard from the man is the essence of God's speech. To respond to this issue, al-Bāqillānī scrutinized certain prophetic traditions as well as the verses of the Qur'ān related to the topic, and then disproved the Anthropomorphists' notions.

Al-Bāqillānī relied his stance by analyzing the *ḥadīth* which had relevant context to the divine speech of God in relation to the Day of Judgment. According to him, those who believed that God's speech comprises sounds had their proofs in this *ḥadīth*.²⁰⁹

God proclaimed, during the (coming) of the Day of the Judgment, with his sound which everybody, who are near and far, can hear (His proclaim).²¹⁰

According to al-Bāqillānī, this *ḥadīth* illustrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) neither said that Allāh spoke (*takallama*) through His sound, nor he uttered (*qāla*) that His speech is sound. The term used in this *ḥadīth* is that Allāh proclaimed (*nādā*) with His sounds. In addition, he added that the *ḥadīth* also appointed that the sound is not part of His existence, yet from somebody else whom He instructed. It is also known from the narration that when the Day of Judgment comes, Allāh, the Almighty, will assemble all creatures in one place. He will instruct one of His angels to proclaim them, and at the same time that angel will do it obediently. This case, according to al-Bāqillānī, described that the caller is the one who has been instructed to proclaim those

²⁰⁷ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 181.

²⁰⁸ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, 1: 39.

²⁰⁹ The author did not find the anthropomorphists' argument on this related issue based on their understanding to that particular *ḥadīth*. Only, it is claimed by al-Bāqillānī in his rejection of their notions. Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 183.

²¹⁰ al-Bukhārī, *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, in The Book of Tawhid, no. 7481, 890.

creatures. His sound is heard by all creatures. It is also evidenced by the verses of the Qur’ān in chapter Qāf: 41-42,²¹¹ which delineate that the angel also proclaimed human beings through God’s instruction. The sound referred to the property of the caller, not to the commander who issued the proclamation, God, the Almighty.²¹² Therefore, it seems from the aforementioned texts that his proofs invalidated the Anthropomorphists’ principle that the speech of God is eternal sound.

Another proof, as al-Bāqillānī promoted, is his clarification concerning the *ḥadīth* on how revelation revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) which was heard by the sound of the bees and the ringing of the bell.²¹³ This fact disproved that the speech of God is the audible sounds of those medium of revelation. It also proved that if we regard that His speech is sound, this *ḥadīth* would be contradictory to the earlier *ḥadīth* mentioned above.²¹⁴ The audible sound, as stated in the earlier *ḥadīth*, was heard by anyone who is close and away from Him, while in this *ḥadīth* the sound was merely heard by certain limited angels. Therefore, it is impossible that the sound is one of God’s eternal attributes because remains changing, sometimes it is heard, some other time it is unheard.²¹⁵ Al-Bāqillānī affirmed that when God revealed to His Prophet (peace be upon him) something was also heard which did not relate to His revelation, like the sound of bees and the ringing of the bell. This sort of event was preamble to revelation before it came down to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Here, things that should be fathomed is the difference between revelation (*wahy*) and the revealed (*mūḥā*). The first is an illustration of the process of the descending of the verses of the Qur’ān to inform God’s messages to human beings while the second is that

²¹¹ And listen (to what is being explained to you about the Day of Resurrection) on the day when the Crier (the Angel) will call (all the dead) from near place (hence-which can be heard by All).

²¹² Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 184.

²¹³ Al-Bukhārī, *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, Chapter on the Book of Revelation, no. 2, 8.

²¹⁴ “during the (coming) of the Day of the Judgment, God will proclaim with His sound which everybody could hear from near and far (His proclaim).” Al-Bukhārī, *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, the Book of al-Tawhid, no. 7481, 890.

²¹⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 185.

His speech is pre-existent and unchanged.²¹⁶ Al-Bāqillānī also analyzed that *ḥadīth* and clarified the purpose of the sound as information coming from the revelation of God to His Prophet (peace be upon him). During the process of revelation, as mentioned in the above *ḥadīth*, before the revelation was sent down it was initiated by the sound of the bees and ringing of the bell. In another case, it was also revealed by the appearance of the great shiver of the heaven due to its fear to Allāh, the Almighty. Having listened to this event, all inhabitants of the heaven prostrated to Him immediately.²¹⁷ In this situation the first who rose was Gabriel since he was the one whose task was to deliver God's messages. After God revealed to him certain decrees, a number of angels asked him what did He say to all audiences. Gabriel replied that God the Almighty revealed the truth. As a result, they knew that God's speech is not the sound of the shiver, even though they had heard it. That was only the sign of God who delivered His messages to His creatures. Hence, it does not mean that they heard God's speech which is in the form of great shiver, but only Gabriel who was able to listen to His messages.²¹⁸ There are a number other *ḥadīths* which are similar in their contents to the discussed matter. All those sounds do not refer to the speech of God, but they return to the related sources. Therefore, it seems from those aforementioned *ḥadīths* that al-Bāqillānī appointed the speech of God does not have any relation to the sounds. Those are merely signs.

In addition al-Bāqillānī scrutinized other significant *ḥadīth* related to his rejection against the idea of the speech of God in the form of the sound. He analyzed on the property of sound which could be either good or bad. It is created and attributed to the creatures. It is proven by information narrated by al-Awzā'ī saying that the best sound amongst God's creatures is the sound of Angel Israfil. When it is sounded, it will

²¹⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 185-6.

²¹⁷ Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusain ibn 'Alī al-Baihaqī, *Kitāb al-Asmā' wa al-Sifāt*, ed. Muḥammad Zahīd al-Kautharī, (Egypt: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah Lit al-Turāth, 1939), Chapter on The Matter of Hearing of God, 199.

²¹⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 186.

silence all seven heavens inhabitants.²¹⁹ In this event, he will blow the trumpet as instructed by Allāh to declare the coming of the Last Day. His sound does not refer to God because he produced it by himself. It refers to his property of speech. So, it is the sound of the Angel, as creature, not the sound of the Creator.²²⁰ Moreover, al-Bāqillānī provided other proof that the speech of God is not in the form of sound but it is the attribute of human beings. He analyzed through the beautiful sound belonging to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ārī, as reported below:

It is narrated that the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, together with 'Āishah one night they heard (Abū Mūsā's recitation) and stood listening to his recitation. After that they passed by him. The next day, when the Prophet met Abū Mūsā he said "Abū Mūsā, last night, I and 'Āishah passed by you during your reading of the Qur'ān and we listened to it." He replied "O the prophet of Allāh, if I knew you were around me I would have written for you." The prophet said "you have been bestowed an oboe of the oboes of Dāwud."²²¹

It seems from this *ḥadīth* that the beautiful sound attributed to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ārī is part of his property. Its beauty was likened to the oboe of Dāwud which did not relate to the speech of God whatsoever. He was praised by the Prophet since his recitation of the Qur'ān had attracted him during his walk and made him listen to it. As a result, the following day the prophet commented about his beautiful sound. Based on this report, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself did not deal with the speech of God, but he delineated the merit of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ārī notably in reading the Holy Qur'ān.

Thus, al-Bāqillānī's concepts on the speech of God are related to words and sounds. He affirmed that His speech is neither words nor sounds. Here, he disproved by clarifying several reports dealing with these two aspects and explaining his views using those facts in accordance with His divine attributes.

²¹⁹ This is stated by some commentators of the Qur'ān like al-Qurtubī and Ibn Kathīr. See in Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abū Bakr al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi' Li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risālah, 2006), 16:407.

²²⁰ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 187.

²²¹ Abū al-Ḥusain Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushairī al-Nisābūrī, *Ṣaḥīh Muslim*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 352), chapter on the Merit of the Qur'ān, no. 793, 352.

3.4.4. The Rejection against Anthropomorphic Attributes of God

The core of the Anthropomorphists' doctrine is the belief that God has the bodily material which is contradictory to the mainstream of Ash'arites' theological basis. A number of theologians refuted their doctrines, and criticized them from different perspectives.²²² Al-Bāqillānī, in his response, had delineated his stance in which he rejected their notions through different topics as discussed below.

3.4.4.1. The Concept of Body (*Jism*) and Attributes of God

The Anthropomorphists believed that God is in the form of corporeal body together with their parts. He has hands, head, tongue, and other organs.²²³ Their notion is centralized to the doctrine that God has bodily material. This doctrine was strongly rejected by al-Bāqillānī. In refuting the Anthropomorphists' views, he promoted his ideas regarding the definition of *jism* as well as its relevant matters.

According to al-Bāqillānī, the term 'body' (*jism*) is a composed thing, which comprises measurement. This definition is also commonly introduced by other theologians.²²⁴ Al-Bāqillānī highlighted the concept of body (*jism*) and asserted that it is disconnected to God. Hence, it is impossible that God has composed materials. If He has body which comprises many organs, then those parts should have space and activity. Those organs will make contact with each other depending on their necessity through that space. To him, those spatial bodies would precisely inhere in substrate. These organs somehow are contradictory to the eternity of God, which is spaceless. The claim that God has parts of bodies means comparing the Creator with the creatures, and

²²² Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, *Al-Ibāna an Usūl al-Diyānah*, ed. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Arnaut, (Damascus: Maktaba Dār al-Bayān, 1981), 17-29 ; Imām al-Haramain al-Juwaynī, *Al-Shāmil fī Usūl al-Dīn*, ed. 'Alī Samī al-Nasshār et al., (Alexandria: Al-Ma'arif Establishment, n. y.), 419-427 ; Abū Ḥamīd Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, "Iljām al-Awwām an Ilm al-Kalām," in *Majmū'a al-Rasā'il al-Imām al-Ghazālī*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2006), 4: 41-4.

²²³ Al-Shahrastānī, *Al-Mīlal wa al-Nihal*, 105.

²²⁴ 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, (n. c., Dār al-Dayyān li-Turāthī, n. y.), 103.

according to al-Bāqillānī, this is a false concept because they believed that God in His eternity has spatial parts of body,²²⁵ which in turn is contradictory to the Islamic theological mainstream.

Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī also denied that God has corporeal body. As a result, He has organs with their own properties. These properties could be knowing, powerful, or having contradictory attributes; unknowing and unpowerful.²²⁶ By virtue of that fact, it leads to confusion as to which one of these organs is being God because not every part has divine attributes. On the contrary, if every organ of that body has those properties, then, as a consequence, it also indicates that God is more than one, which is similar doctrine believed in Christianity. Furthermore, the spatial bodies are also a contradictory fact when some parts of the body are moved while others are unmoved. Their movement, however, does not work perfectly.²²⁷ It seems al-Bāqillānī's rejections against the Anthromorphists' claim had shown some consequences. The idea that God has physical body means that He is created from a number of things because that is the substance of the body. Hence, it is impossible that He is eternal. In addition, it could also be inferred that it has accident (*'araḍ*) and essence (*jawhar*) for its substrate and activity. Their routines may also seem contradictory.²²⁸ The corporal attributes of God are self-evident that they are not part of God, since they have many weaknesses as obviously explained by al-Bāqillānī in his arguments.

Further proof, as al-Bāqillānī argued, to reject the Anthropomorphists' notion is that he proposed the term 'thing' (*shay'*) instead of 'body' (*jism*) in describing God's activity. He rejected the latter and allowed the use of the former addressed to Him. The term '*shay'*', when it relates to God, does not mean having particular species (*jins*) as well as the corporal elements while the term '*jism*' is not applicable to be addressed

²²⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Tamhīd*, 220-1.

²²⁶ Ibid., 221.

²²⁷ Ibid., 222.

²²⁸ Muḥammad Ramaḍan 'Abd Allāh, *Al-Bāqillānī wa Arāuhū al-Kalāmiyyah*, (Baghdad: Matba'ah al-Ummah, 1986), 514.

altogether with His name since it has certain connotations indicating that He has physical objects. According to al-Bāqillānī, the usage of the term ‘body’ (*jism*) signifies everything related to corporeal bodies. It comprises many elements embodied into one object, yet His existence is One. Linguistically speaking, the term ‘thing’ (*shay’*) is more general to appoint to either eternal aspects or originated things.²²⁹ Hence, their problem actually lies in naming God with such physical matters. Al-Bāqillānī noted the term ‘thing’ (*shay’*) has general and multi-interpretations. When it relates to corporeal body it consists of composed materials. The same thing when it refers to accident, it also has essence. Therefore, naming something should be based on certain reasons since it has many consequences. Al-Bāqillānī further added his concept by affirming that the names of God have been revealed to us through true information of the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*. His names are derived from these stated sources, even though they contradict our reason, like God as a deceiver (*al-mākir*)²³⁰ and a mocker (*al-mustahzi’*).²³¹ In this respect, we have to retain those names for Him, because Allāh told us to do so, yet all these things should be traced back to the origin of the statement. The Anthropomorphists’ reliance was on their speculative thought to God which is baseless from the revelation.²³² The abovementioned argument illustrates clear proof that they wrongly termed in naming God as the existent possessing bodily elements. This statement definitely contradicted to the principle of theological framework, which created a number of criticisms from their opponents. Here, al-Bāqillānī through his concept of name (*al-ism*) and naming (*tasmiyya*), scrutinized the Anthropomorphists’ views.²³³ He

²²⁹ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Tamhīd*, 223.

²³⁰ Ali Imran: 54: And they (the unbelieving Jews) schemed (to kill Isa), but Allah schemed. And (remember that Allah) is the supreme schemer (and can fail any evil scheme).

²³¹ Al-Baqara: 15: Allah will mock at them, leaving them to wander blindly on (to and fro) in their contumacy.

²³² Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Tamhīd*, 223.

²³³ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 92. To name of something involves name (*al-ism*), the naming (*tasmiyya*), and the named (*al-musammā*), each of which has different referent. The ‘name’ (*ism*) is word indicates of something, the naming (*tasmiyya*) is the activity of giving name to something, and the named (*al-musamma*) is the object of the name. See also in Abū Ḥamīd ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣad al-*

said that they did not realize their technical term which was loaded with certain conceptual principle. In this regard, he also criticized them that their notion caused theological simplification in delineating God's existence as well as their naming of divine attributes and names.

In another place, al-Bāqillānī also elucidated his stance concerning *mutashābihāt* verses²³⁴ which were literally understood by the Anthropomorphists. He analysed verse Taha: 5,²³⁵ in which he commented that the God's seat on the throne is not similar with His creatures.²³⁶ He believed that the throne has neither space nor place because God continuously exists. This is also evidenced by some texts narrated by both Abū Uthmān al-Maghrībī and al-Shiblī.²³⁷ They maintained that God has always been eternal (*lam yazal wa lā yazūl*) while His throne is originated.²³⁸ Al-Ghazālī (d. 450 H/1111 C.E.), in his theological principle, also supported al-Bāqillānī's stance concerning that matter. He further commented that *mutashābihāt* verses are deanthropomorphism (*tanzīh*) of any claim that He settled down on the throne. Those who sat firmly there were precisely predestined whether they are greater, smaller or even similar in terms of its forms. When God is believed to have bodily elements, then He is touchable from any sides.²³⁹ Hence, these *mutashābihāt* verses cannot be regarded as justification of the anthropomorphic notion towards God.

Still in line with al-Bāqillānī, al-Ghazālī also asserted his other views in rejecting anthropomorphism. He elucidated clearly his theological principle in his *Iqtisād* affirming that God has different attributes from His creatures. He has neither

Asnā fī Sharh al-Asmā' al-Husnā, ed. Bassām 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jābī, (Limassol: al-Jaffān and al-Jābī, 1987), 24-39.

²³⁴ *Mutashābih* are verses which have multiple meanings. See al-Jurjani, *Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt*, 253.

²³⁵ Tāhā: 5: That is, (Allāh) Most Gracious, who is firmly established on the Throne (of authority).

²³⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Insāf*, 64.

²³⁷ One of important *Shūfī* and a student of al-Junayd. See Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm Hawazān al-Qushairī al-Nisābūrī, *al-Risālah al-Qushairiyyah fī Ilm al-Tasawwuf*, ed. Ma'rūf Zaryaq 'Alī 'Abd al-Hamīd al-Baltanjī, (Beirut: Dār al-Khair, n. y.), 419.

²³⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Insāf*, 64-5; Long discussion explaining about this concept is employed by Richard M. Frank. See his *Philosophy, Theology, and Mysticism in Medieval Islam*, ed. Dimitri Gutas, (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 243-270.

²³⁹ Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtisād fī al-I'tiqād*, 58.

bodily elements nor accidents. All physical aspects are composed from two or more substances. Al-Ghazālī further detailed that if God possesses a physical form, then He is counted with certain quantities. As a result, He will require specific and preferable form in which it alternates and assesses into one specific way. Therefore, in such a condition He will not be a Creator, which is absolutely impossible for God.²⁴⁰ Al-Ghazālī also argued in his other works,²⁴¹ that those verses which explain God’s physical descriptions do not mean the real meanings which signify the physical aspects. Those statements should not be interpreted literally, but they should be fathomed as following the proper and appropriate interpretations related to God, the Almighty. For instance, the word ‘movement’ (*intiqāl*) from one place to another does not mean that God has similar activity as human beings who move too but God has His own activities which are exclusively appropriate for Him using certain equivalent terms.²⁴²

A later theologian after al-Ghazālī, al-Rāzī (d. 606 H/1209 CE.), also cemented the position of Ash‘arites’ theological framework in rejecting anthropomorphism. Al-Rāzī reported that the *Karrāmiyya*, one school of Anthropomorphists, did not admit to saying that Allāh has corporeal body which indicates the composed matter comprising several parts of bodies.²⁴³ They meant by such term is that God does not require substrate, and it is a substance subsists by itself without any dependence of the body.²⁴⁴ According to him, their statement was unclear, since they used contradictory terms. However, according to al-Rāzī, following from their argument on the speciality of God’s attributes, it could be inferred that God requires space, direction, and all things perceived by the senses. So, He must be single or indivisible substance (*al-jawhar al-fard*) which is spaceless and undivided. However, their naming of such term by the so called ‘body’ (*jism*) has illustrated that it seems that it has been produced by the

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 53.

²⁴¹ Al-Ghazālī, *Ijām al-Awwām*, 42-43.

²⁴² Ibid., 44.

²⁴³ Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Asās al-Taqdīs*, ed. Aḥmad Hijāzī al-Saqā, (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1993), 86.

²⁴⁴ M. Saeed Shaikh, *A Dictionary of Muslim Philosophy*, 48.

composition of a number of elements. It also has certain properties; long, deep, and broad related to any directions. This is humiliating and belittling His existence, since no one Muslim would agree upon such belief. Accordingly, their argument in claiming that God does not need the substrate was merely a due to their dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) and fear.²⁴⁵

From the aforementioned delineations, we can conclude that the Ash‘arite theologians, in rejecting anthropomorphism, had different basic theological principles. They attempted to deny the epistemological foundation on the terminological background of the concept of the body and the attributes of God.

3.4.4.2. His Criticisms against the Concept of *Ḥulūliyya*

Having discussed his rejection against the notion of speech of God held by anthropomorphists, al-Bāqillānī also rejected the doctrine of incarnation (*ḥulūliyya*). This is his attempt to elaborate his concepts in refuting the principle of this group. In this issue, a number of *ṣūfī* schools, like *ḥallājiyya* and *sālimiyya* as well as the extreme (*Ghulāt*) Shi‘ites, maintained that God has the possibility to personify human bodies which have attained certain level of spirituality.²⁴⁶ This sort of personification (*ḥulūl*) may occur in two different conditions; *al-ḥulūl al-jawārī* and *al-ḥulūl al-sarayānī*. The former is a situation in which someone is contained in a container just like water in a cup while the second is that like the union of one thing into another, in which they will be blended like the aroma of rose into the rose of the flower.²⁴⁷ Al-Hujwirī reported that having reached this level, they believed that God will represent their hearing, sight, hands, and even speeches in the real sense.²⁴⁸ This notion could be seen in the *ḥadīth* of

²⁴⁵ Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Asās al-Taqdīs*, ed. Aḥmad Hijāzī al-Saqā, 86-7.

²⁴⁶ Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *I’tiqād Firaq al-Muslimīn wa al-Mushrikīn*, ed. ‘Alī Samī al-Nasshār, (Egypt: Maktaba al-Nahḍah al-Misriyyah, 1938), 73; Manabu Waida, “Incarnation: Imams,” *Encyclopedia of Religion: Second Edition*, (New York: Thomson Gale, 2005), 7: 4416.

²⁴⁷ ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Badāwī, *Shatahāt al-Sūfiyyah*, 15; M. Saeed Shaikh, *A Dictionary of Muslim Philosophy*, 56.

²⁴⁸ Ali B. Uthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwirī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, 254.

the Prophet (peace be upon him).²⁴⁹ Perhaps it is applied due to their misunderstanding of the *ḥadīth* pertaining to that particular practice. However, this *ḥadīth* could be interpreted differently. Some scholars also read this text and understood that it does not mean to the tenets, but otherwise.²⁵⁰ It might be known by investigating its background on the event (*asbāb al-wurūd*) related to the context of the discussion. This *ḥadīth* indirectly informs us that God does not become our hands, hearing and sight in the real sense as fathomed by the Anthropomorphists, but its metaphorical expression was addressed to those who had reached a certain level of spirituality.

Regarding the *ḥulūliyya*, al-Bāqillānī presented a number of arguments to reject the notion of the Anthropomorphists who maintained that the speech of God may embody into the human speech.²⁵¹ They argued that the pre-existent attributes have certain possibilities to be embodied into creatures, hence, they may change, move, develop, and even fill the void. These activities prove that God's speech might be infused into human beings, that is unknown as to which one belongs to God and to His creatures. To prove this claim, they referred to the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

Don't travel to the land of the enemy carrying the Qur'ān.²⁵²

According to the Anthropomorphists, the above *ḥadīth* demonstrates that the embodiment of God's speech into the creatures. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited the companions from bringing God's speech which is in the form of the

²⁴⁹ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, the Book of Fineness on the chapter of Modesty, no. 6502, 780.

²⁵⁰ This *ḥadīth*, according to Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī, delineated how God protects and gives His privilege to those who have devoted themselves to Him. Hence, God will be their hands, hearing, and sight. This is merely a metaphor (*majāz*) and unequivocal expression (*kināyah*) pertaining to His protection of them. See in Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, ed. 'Abd al-Azīz bin Bāz and Muḥammad Fuād 'Abd al-Bāqī, (Egypt: Maktabah Miṣr, 2010), 11: 279-80.

²⁵¹ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 192.

²⁵² Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj al-Qushairī al-Nisābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), The Book of Principality, no. 1869, 2: 207.

Qur'an because His speech has been materialized into the codex.²⁵³ However, the foregoing *ḥadīth*, as understood by al-Bāqillānī, delineated that the Prophet's statement by his prohibition to carry the Qur'ān meant the codex as indicated by the last statement "afraid of its (the Qur'ān) loss and preserved to their hands". It does not mean that the speech of God which is eternal would move from the land of the Muslims to the land of the adversaries. This codex is coined by the Qur'ān due to its content. This is in conformity with other relevant report from the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding his prohibition to touch the Qur'ān unless we are in pure condition.²⁵⁴ In other words, al-Bāqillānī attempted to illustrate the position of the Qur'ān and its status as elucidated in that *ḥadīth*.²⁵⁵ He further argued that the codex should be preserved in the Muslim society because it is their holy scripture. The Muslims know very well its value, hence, they respect it by not touching it without having ablution. Another argument, as al-Bāqillānī asserted in another place, is that many Arabic structures have certain hidden words which should also be understood properly following the meaning of the content of the text. It could be analysed from the above statement in *ḥadīth* 'do not travel and you carry the Qur'ān,' which means we are not allowed to bring the Qur'ān when we are in a place where many non-Muslims stay there.²⁵⁶ Al-Bāqillānī added further proof by illustrating that a memorizer of the Qur'ān has memorization in his heart. It is clear that this case does not indicate that God's speech, which infuses into His body, is unity between humans and God. However, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not forbid them to travel to the lands of the enemy. He was only worried that the codex that mentioned the verses of the Qur'ān would be taken from the hand of the Muslims to

²⁵³ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 192.

²⁵⁴ The *ḥadīth* which prohibits touching the Qur'ān unless we have ablution. See in Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistānī bin Abī Dāud, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, ed. Muḥib al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh Subhān Wā'id, (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyyah, 2002), 2: 637.

²⁵⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Tamhīd*, 193.

²⁵⁶ This *ḥadīth* is also in conformity with verses of the Qur'ān like Yūsuf: 82: "ask the village in which we stay in." It means its citizen, al-Nisā': 43: "do not approach the prayer and you are in the state of intoxicated," it means its place, al-Isra: 60: "and the cursed tree in the Qur'ān", it means its expert in the Qur'ān.

their enemies.²⁵⁷ Therefore, it could be inferred that it is impossible that the eternal thing infuses into the originated matters.

Al-Bāqillānī further denied the union of God into His creatures which resulted from his analysis of the other relevant ḥadīths of the Prophet (peace be upon him). One of them is the Prophet’s statement that the Qur’ān is cannot be burnt when it is written on skin.²⁵⁸ In response to this information, he attempted to infer with different possibilities. Firstly, he said that the skin cannot be burnt occurred during the life of prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him); it was his miracle which was specially granted by Allāh to show his prophethood. It was only proven in his time because no one was able to do it other than him. In addition, as a Prophet, he also had other miracles to empower his status amongst his people like the ability to split the moon by his hands. This sort of inimitability, however, no longer exists after he passed away. Furthermore, according to al-Bāqillānī, this *ḥadīth* may also elucidate the merit of the memorizers of the Qur’ān. The memorization belongs to those who have memorized in their hearts, and by virtue of that makes them cool, peaceful and saved when they make contact with fire. Hence, they are cannot be burned.²⁵⁹ The same case occurred to Prophet Ibrahim (peace on him) who was thrown into the fire after it was decided that he was a guilty man by his people.²⁶⁰

Therefore, from the foregoing arguments we can scrutinize al-Bāqillānī’s understanding of those two different reports. He maintained that those who memorized the Qur’ān would be safe from hell fire. Their skin would not be burned, due to the intercession of the Qur’ān. Al-Bāqillānī also presented is that the Qur’ān cannot be

²⁵⁷ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Tamhīd*, 194.

²⁵⁸ “If you put the Qur’ān on the skin and it is closed to fire, it would not be burnt.” See Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Dārimī, *Kitāb al-Musnad al-Jāmi’*, ed. Nabīl ibn Hāshim ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Gamrī, (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāir al-Islāmiyyah, 2013), The Book of the Merit of the Qur’ān, no. 3628, 765.

²⁵⁹ This is also perhaps God has granted his servants those who attempted to memorize the Qur’ān. “what an excellent intercessor to those people of it (the Qur’ān) in hereafter.

²⁶⁰ Al-Anbiyā’: 68: (When they could not argue anymore, their leaders) said: “burn him and protect your gods, if you are going to do anything!”. We said: “O fire, be cool and safe for Ibrāhīm.”

burned when it is written on skin or any other stuff. He clarified that the Qur'ān is truly mentioned on them, which does not incarnate as if it is a uniting body to other elements. This is the same thing for those people who try to write one of the names of God on any element which can be torn, burnt, and drowned. All these can possibly happen. Their writings, colours, and all other aspects would be damaged, yet the real thing stated in that space is Allāh, the Almighty, which is eternal in nature.²⁶¹ However, the Qur'ān proves otherwise.²⁶² Therefore, the idea of the union of God with His creatures is invalidated.

In addition to his argument in rejecting the conceptual union of God and human existence, al-Bāqillānī criticized certain information regarding the relevant issue. According to him, the Anthropomorphists relied on certain information pertaining the fusion between the eternal speech of God, the Qur'ān, and the flesh of its memorizers. This is their claim concerning incarnation (*ḥulūl*) of God's attribute into human body.²⁶³ To this notion, al-Bāqillānī responded by addressing a question on how the speech of God, which is only one, could unite with much of human beings' flesh and blood. It is impossible that His attributes are combined with a number of human attributes. This sort of principle is even worse than the belief of Christianity. He criticised, according to this religion, their theologians who held that only one pre-existent word (*kalimah*) was mixed with one body of Jesus (peace on him) until his body had the attribute of God (*lāhūt*), and at the same time it also had humanity aspect (*nāsūt*) from the side of Maryam. The mixture of the eternal existence with the originated one is like a perfect mixture between water and milk.²⁶⁴ However, as al-Bāqillānī argued, the meaning of this *ḥadīth* explains the importance of the learning process done by children. At an early age, a child has the golden opportunity and ability to study. The memorization

²⁶¹ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 196.

²⁶² Al-Qasas: 88: Everything is perished, except the face of Allāh.

²⁶³ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 196.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 197.

during this age is better, stronger, and longer than that employed for an adult. It is due to the process of the mixing between blood and flesh with his memorization, and at the same time it is preserved in their hearts. This illustration is like those who love a calf.²⁶⁵ The calf itself does not unite into their hearts, yet it absorbs their love. Here, it is obviously impossible to unite between the object of the thing, which is the animal, and the inner aspect of human beings. He further argued proving his notion from other aspects of spiritual activities. For instance, a mosque where every Muslim prays is regarded by all Muslims as the holy place. To him, this does not mean it has eternal properties which unite into that mosque. They respect it accordingly due to its function to worship therein. Those who are impure are not allowed to enter the mosque, even doing circumambulation (*tawāf*) in it.²⁶⁶ Therefore, all those aforementioned facts disprove the argument promoted by the Anthropomorphists.

Another disproval fact proposed as al-Bāqillānī proposed is that the Anthropomorphists used to affirm that the writing, paper as well as the ink on the *muṣḥaf* of the Qur’ān are eternal as God’s attributes.²⁶⁷ God descended from His throne into those materials and embodied into them. These ideas are contradictory to mainstream Muslim theological dogmas believed by *aḥl sunnah wa al-Jamā’ah*. According to al-Bāqillānī, anthropomorphists belittled God’s omnipotence because they attribute material objects to God. In addition to his proof, it also elucidated in another place that the Anthropomorphists’ notion had negative consequences. It was proven by the text that the statement of Fir’aun in the Qur’ān which is opposed the Almighty God is also considered as eternal.²⁶⁸ Other texts too like concerning the prohibition and command in approaching the wealth of the orphans in al-Thūr: 19,²⁶⁹ doing the meal

²⁶⁵ Al-Baqarah: 93: ...their hearts were filled with overflowing love of worshipping the calf...

²⁶⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf*, 198.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Al-Nāzi‘āt: 24: He said: I am your Lord Most High.

²⁶⁹ Al-thur: 9: Do not approach to the treasures of the orphan.

activity in al-An‘ām: 152,²⁷⁰ performing prayer and giving alm in al-Nisā’: 77²⁷¹ and others are all included in pre-existent things (*qadīm*). This sort of argumentation, as a result, leads to confusion whether a thing is eternal or not. However, in reality all the matters are created bodies. The writing, paper, ink, and all events described in the Qur’ān are originated including Fir‘aun himself. God’s speech is eternal including His speech about Fir‘aun’s and his arrogant attitudes. The same thing in the approach of the orphans and his treasuries all these aspects are not considered as eternal ones, but they are originated. Hence, it seems that is clear difference between God’s and human’s speech. The former does not need whatsoever any other means as used by the latter; mouth, lips, words, and sounds.

3.5. Concluding Remarks

The foregoing discussions on anthropomorphism and its relation to the Qur’ān have delineated al-Bāqillānī’s responses to that problem. His critique to the doctrines of the Qur’ān, attributes of God, and *ḥhululiyya* held by the anthropomorphists seems to be driven by his attempt to maintain the mainstream of Ash‘arites’ theological doctrines. His arguments are also relevant to address certain arguments belonging to the Orientalists who tried to vindicate the practice of pseudo-*sufi* and its relevant issues. Their claim was merely against the Islamic theological mainstream. Besides that, al-Bāqillānī also deals with the other issues of the Qur’ān addressed to the Shi‘ites. In this discourse, he defended against their claim concerning the authenticity of the *Muṣḥaf* of the Qur’ān which was compiled by ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān. This matter will be further explored in the following chapter.

²⁷⁰ Al-An‘ām: 152: ...eat and drink...

²⁷¹ Al-Nisā’: 77: and perform the prayer and give the alms...

CHAPTER IV: THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE ‘UTHMĀNI *MUŞĤAF* AND AL-BĀQILLĀNĪ’S STANCE

4.1. Introduction

The discourse on the authenticity of the *muşĥaf* of the Qur’ān is one of the pivotal principal problems in the history of Islamic theological discourse. There have long discussions amongst the Muslim and non-Muslim scholars. Historically, a number of earlier Sunnite and Twelver Shi’ite theologians were involved in this polemics. They criticized each other to prove their own stance in this matter based on their own theoretical frameworks in viewing the Qur’ān and its historical background. The discrepancy of their arguments with regard to the Qur’ān, however, continues to this present time which also involves a number of Orientalists.

4.2. The Background of the Issue of the Authenticity of the *Muşĥaf* of the Qur’ān

The issue of the unauthenticity of the *muşĥaf* of the Qur’ān could be traced back to several Shi’ites’ views. The early Twelver Shi’ites claimed that the ‘Uthmāni *muşĥaf* is not original. They based their claim on several reasons. They said that there were some verses missing from the Qur’ān compiled by Caliph ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān. They believed that the Qur’ān is incomplete because during its compilation ‘Uthmān allegedly used his political power on the Muslim society. He compiled some main *şuĥuf* from the companions and Ḥafşah, but many other significant verses were burnt by his political instruction, according to the Twelver Shi’ites.¹ Another reason for the invalidity of the ‘Uthmāni *muşĥaf* is the missing verses are available in the *muşĥaf* of Fātimah and ‘Alī

¹ In this matter, a Shi’ite historian, al-Ya’qūbī, illustrated that Uthmān was the one who initiated the problem of the invalidity of the Uthmāni *muşĥaf* by his instruction to burn all the *muşĥafs* including ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd’s collection. Since he did not follow his instruction, Uthmān was described that he disputed with other companions; Ammar ibn Yāsir, Miqdād, and Abū Dzar, the ones who used to be regarded very close to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. See Aḥmad ibn Abī Ya’qūb ibn Ja’far ibn Wahb, *Tarikh*, (Leiden: Brill, 1883), 1: 196-198.

ibn Abī Ṭālib.² They believed that Fāṭimah and ‘Alī had their own *muṣḥafs* comprising different contents from the other companions. It was claimed that the number of the verses of the Qur’ān compiled by them was more than the number of the verses of the Qur’an compiled by Caliph Uthmān. The Shi‘ites further claimed that the additional verses that are not available in the ‘Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* would be revealed later on after the coming of a resurrector (*al-qā’im*) before the Day of Judgment.³ However, the contemporary Shi‘ites figures questioned the idea that the Qur’ān was initially compiled by Abū Bakr and continued to be rewritten by ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān. This was due to their disbelief in several *ḥadiths* informing the process of its codification. According to them, these *ḥadiths* are contradictory and inaccurate, hence this process is rejected. Instead, they asserted that the compilation of the Qur’ān was completed during the period of the Prophet’s life. Before his death, he had instructed ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib to compile the Qur’ān. Other companions who were scribes of the revelation like ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd and Ubay ibn Ka‘b also compiled the Qur’ān. This codification was approved by the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), which was the perfect *muṣḥaf*.⁴ It appears from the above statement that this is the evolution of the Shi‘ites’ views regarding the history of the compilation of the Qur’an from their earlier figures up to the contemporary Shi‘ites.

One of the crucial concepts in Shi‘ism is supreme leaders (*imāmah*), who claimed they possess four main scriptures; the Zaboor (*Zabūr*), *Torah* (*Tawrāh*), the Gospel (*Injīl*), and the Qur’ān. The Shi‘ites believed the *imams* had high position similar to Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) only no specific scripture had been

² Al-Kulainī, *Usūl al-Kāfi*, (Beirut: Dār al-Murtadā, 2005), Chapter on the Book Ṣahīfah, Jafr, and Jami‘a, no. 1, 1: 171-174.

³ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Nu‘mān ibn al-Mu‘allim, *Al-Masā’il al-Sarawīyyah*, ed. Saib ‘Abd al-Hamīd, (al-Mu‘tamar al-Ālamī Li alfiāh al-Shaikh al-Mufīd, 1992), 81.

⁴ See arguments presented by contemporary Shi‘ites; Muḥammad Ḥussein al-Shirāzī, *Mata Jumi‘a al-Qur’ān*, (Beirut: Markaz al-Rasūl al-A‘ḍam, 1998), 16-17; al-Imām Al-Khū‘ī, *al-Bayān Fī al-Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, (n. p.: Anwār al-Hudā, 1981), 250-251; Ja‘far Murtaḍo al-Āmilī, *Ḥaqāiq Hamah Ḥaula al-Qur’ān*, (n. c., al-Markaz al-Islāmī Li al-Dirāsāt, 2010), 110-112; Muḥammad Ḥusain Alī al-Saghīr, *Tārīkh al-Qur’ān*, (Beirut: Dār al-Muarrīkh al-Arabī, 1999), 81.

revealed for them. Since they were divinely guided, they were infallible persons. People who disobey and disregard the *imāms* would be considered infidels, as if they ignore the Prophet (peace be upon him).⁵ In addition, the Shi'ites also maintained that *imāms* possessed all four revealed books.⁶ The complete verses of the Qur'ān were solely available with them. In another place, the Shi'ites further excessively believed that the *imams* know the unseen world and future events. They even know when they would die so that they might choose whether life or death.⁷ Therefore, the special knowledge possessed by 'Alī and the *imāms* among his descendants is one of the central concepts in the epistemological aspect of Shi'ism,⁸ which is very different from the Sunnite doctrine.

Regarding the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf*, in the Sunnite perspective, the Qur'ān is believed to be the authentic holy book of the Muslims. It was compiled by 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān and comprised all verses revealed to Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).⁹ During the Prophet's time, 'Uthmān was not only the main companion of the Prophet, but he was also the secretary of the Prophet in writing the revelations. Furthermore, 'Uthmān was one of the *ḥuffadz*s (memorizers) of the Qur'ān. There were a number of companions too who memorized the Qur'ān before its compilation like Zaid bin Thābit, Ubay ibn Ka'b, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd and many others.¹⁰ Those companions were the scribes of the revelations under the direct supervision of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They were great personalities and had integrity and memorization and writing abilities and skills. Hence, in the process of the compilation of the Qur'ān, they played significant roles in collecting the scattered verses of the

⁵ Wilferd Madelung, *EI2*, 'imāmah', (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 3: 1166.

⁶ Al-Kulainī, *Usūl al-Kāfi*, Chapter on the *Imams* and their Books, no.1, 1: 164.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1: 186.

⁸ Franz Rosenthal, *the Triumphant of Knowledge: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 143.

⁹ Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Abd Allāh ibn Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risālah, 2006), 1:83; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *al-Itqān fi Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n. y.), 1: 59.

¹⁰ See in Muḥammad Mustafā al-Azamī, *Kutūb al-Nabī*, (Damascus: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1978).

Qur'ān and writing them accordingly in order to preserve them as in addition to their memorizations of the verses in their hearts.

In this discussion the present researcher aims to analyze the arguments of al-Bāqillānī, a significant Ash'arite theologian in rejecting claims asserted by the early Twelver Shi'ites regarding the originality of the *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'ān. Another aim is to see his response within the context in the development of Islamic theological thought as part of his contributions to the elaboration of Ash'arite theological principle. Here, the analysis will focus on his counter-arguments against the early Twelver Shi'ites' claims regarding the incompleteness of the Qur'ān and some additional verses of it. Furthermore, the discussion also mentions some other aspects concerning the issues related to the Qur'ān like the status of the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf*, the companions' role, and the variant readings (*qirā'āt*).

4.3. The Shi'ite and The Qur'ān

4.3.1. 'Uthmānī *Muṣḥaf* according to the Shi'ite Theologians

A number of contemporary Shi'ite scholars agreed upon the validity of the existing Qur'ān.¹¹ They believed that the Qur'ān was not a *muṣḥaf* which was compiled by 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān. They meant the existing *muṣḥaf* in our hands which consists perfectly revealed verses from Allah, the Almighty, is exactly similar to the Qur'ān compiled by the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) during his time. Therefore, it is authentic and valid.¹² However, they regard 'Uthmān's role merely unifying the

¹¹ Muḥammad Ḥussein al-Shirāzī, *Matā Jumi'a al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Markaz al-Rasūl al-A'ḍam, 1998), 16-17; Imām Muḥammad al-Shirāzī, *The Qur'ān Made Simple*, trans. Salman Tawhīdī, (Kuwait: Al-Ameen Foundation, 2004), parts 28-30, vol. 10: xxiv; al-Imām Al-Khū'ī, *al-Bayān Fī al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, (n. p.: Anwār al-Hudā, 1981), 250-251.

¹² al-Imām Al-Khū'ī, *al-Bayān Fī al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 251.

readings of the Qur'an which leaving to distortion. This was the thing causes the unauthenticity of the Qur'an.¹³

Moreover, the early Shi'ites claimed that the 'Uthmāni *muṣḥaf* is incomplete because the complete verses were in the *muṣḥaf* of 'Alī.¹⁴ It is proven that during the process of its codification, Caliph 'Uthmān instructed all verses of the Qur'an which belonged to everybody to be burnt, and commanded the Muslims to solely rely on his *muṣḥaf*. This allegedly hinted that 'Uthmān had hidden agenda with this order.¹⁵ In addition, it is also reported by al-Tabarsī (599 H/ 1202-3 C.E.) in his statement that 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib said:

...and I was busy writing the book of God, until I compiled it. This is a book of God belongs to me, consisting a complete (verses) which no one was left.¹⁶

This information signifies that when Alī finished his deeds in settling the burial of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he engaged in writing the personal *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'an. His personal collection of the *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'an was complete and authentic from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Further information also stated in his report that during the process of its codification done by 'Uthmān, the verses were unfortunately lost. Some of them also, according to this report, were eaten by a cow.¹⁷ It seems from the aforementioned reports that the only perfect *muṣḥaf* belongs to 'Alī while 'Uthmān ignoring the lost verses when they were trying to collect the *maṣāḥif* of the Qur'an scattered in Madinah.

In addition, al-Kulainī (d. 939 or 940 C.E.), one of the earliest Shi'ite figures, in his *magnum opus al-Kāfī* recorded a number of narrations claimed that the 'Uthmāni *muṣḥaf* is not authentic. The only right and true Qur'an was narrated by the *imāms* of the Shi'ites. He rejected as liars if they are not their *imams* when they claim that they

¹³ Ibid., 258.

¹⁴ Al-Kulainī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, Chapter on the Ṣahīfah, Jafr, and Jami'a, no. 6, 2: 171.

¹⁵ Aḥmad ibn Abī Ya'cūb ibn Ja'far ibn Wabb, *Tārīkh*, (Leiden: Brill, 1883), 1: 196-198.

¹⁶ Abū Manṣūr Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Ṭalib al-Tabarsī, *Kitāb al-Ihtijāj*, (Intishārāt al-Sharīf al-Riḍā, 1960), 1: 203.

¹⁷ Ibid.

have the complete Qur'ān. He stressed that no one was able to collect and memorize the Qur'ān completely except 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the *imāms* after him.

عن جابر قال: سمعت أبا جعفر عليه السلام يقول: ما ادعى أحد من الناس أنه جمع القرآن كله كما أنزل إلا كذاب، و ما جمعه و حفظ كما نزله الله تعالى إلا على بن أبي طالب عليه السلام و الأئمة من بعده عليهم السلام.

...from Jābir who had said that he heard Abū Ja'far said: No one of humans claimed to have collected the whole of the Qur'ān (in a book form) as it was revealed. If anyone would come up with such a claim, he is a liar. No one collected this Holy Book and memorized as Allāh, the Most Holy, the Most High revealed it except 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the *Imāms* after him.¹⁸

Furthermore, another significant theologian after him, al-Mufīd agreed with him regarding the incomplete Qur'ān as stated in his *Awāil al-Maqālāt*:

إن الأخبار قد جاءت مستفيضة عن أئمة الهدى من آل محمد (ص)، باختلاف القرآن وما أحدثه بعض الظالمين فيه من الحذف و النقصان، فأما القول في التأليف فالموجود يقضى فيه بتقديم المتأخر و تأخير المتقدم و من عرف الناسخ و المنسوخ و المكى و المدني...

Indeed, lot of information from the guided *Imāms* of the family of the Prophet (peace be upon him) with various forms of the Qur'ān which have been raised up by some tyrants (*zālimīn*) who regarded that it (the Qur'ān) consisting of distortion and incompleteness. The existing *muṣḥaf* comprising disarrangement of (verses) like in its chronology, abrogated and abrogative verses, and makkan and madinan verses.¹⁹

From these aforesaid reports, we can summarize that the Shi'ites maintained that the companions other 'Alī did not memorize all the verses of the Qur'ān revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Therefore, 'Uthmān could not have completely collected and compiled the *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'ān.

Furthermore, the early Twelver Shi'ites believed that the Qur'ān was not compiled by the companions but 'Alī and the *imams* after him. This was the view of

¹⁸ Al-Kulainī, *Usūl al-Kāfi*, Chapter on the Collection of the Qur'ān, no. 1, 1: 165; Al-Kulainī, *Usūl al-Kāfi*, trans. Muhammad Sarwar, (Islamic Seminary INCH NY), e-book 1-8 volumes, chapter 35, no. 607, 336.

¹⁹ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nu'mān ibn al-Mu'allim, *Awāil al-Maqālāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Ansārī, (n. c.:al-Mu'tamar al-'Alamī Li alfiah al-Shaikh al-Mufīd, 1992), 80-81.

Kulainī who divided the Qur’ān into four divisions: the first division belonged to the Shi’ites, the second division belonged to their enemies, the third division is about the tradition (*sunnah*) and parables (*amthāl*), and the last division is about the laws (*farāiḍ wa aḥkām*).²⁰ This division made by him illustrates the limited verses of the Qur’ān owned by each of these groups.²¹ Since what was possessed by each group is only one third of it, therefore, it is impossible for a certain group to declare that it has the complete Qur’ān. By such understanding, we can conclude that the Shi’ites firmly believed the verses of the Qur’ān scattered in different groups. There would be revealed the perfect Qur’ān later on at the appearance of the twelfth *imām* from his occultation before the arrival of the Last day.²²

Another important early figure of the Shi’ite, al-Shaikh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 H/ 991-992 C.E.) also asserted that many revelations have descended which number could reach about 17.000 verses, revealed by the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet (peace be upon him).²³ However, he claimed that those verses were excluded from the *muṣḥaf* of the Qur’ān compiled by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib as stated below:

the Prince of Believers (‘Alī), when he collected the Qur’ān and brought it, said to them: this is the book of Allāh, your Lord, as it was revealed to your Prophet; not a single word has been added to it or omitted from it. They said: we have no need of it; we have with us what you possess. So he (‘Alī) return saying: “But they flung it behind their backs bought therewith a little gain...”²⁴

The number of the verses of the Qur’ān as claimed above by al-Kulainī,²⁵ has been developed by al-Ṣadūq and later on followed by other Shi’ites figures.

²⁰ Al-Kulainī, *Usūl al-Kāfi*, chapter on the Book Nawādir, no. 4, 2: 822.

²¹ Al-Majlisī (d. 1698 C. E.) invalidated this report Al-Majlisī, *Mir’āt al-Uqūl*, ed. Hāshim al-Rasulī, (Tehran; Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1983), vol. 4 :517.

²² Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nu‘mān ibn al-Mu‘allim, *al-Masāil al-Sarawiyya*, (n. c., Al-Mu’tamar al-‘Alamī Li alfiyya al-Shaikh al-Mufīd, 1992), 81.

²³ Al-Shaikh al-Ṣadūq, *A Shiite Creed*, trans. Asaf. A. A. Fyzee, Tehran: World Organization For Islamic Services, 1982), 78.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁵ ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥakam narrated from Hishām ibn Sālim from Abū ‘Abd Allāh said: “Indeed, the Qur’ān which was brought down by Jibrīl to Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was seventeen thousand verses.” See al-Kulainī, *Usūl al-Kāfi*, chapter on the Book of Nawādir, no. 29, 2: 350.

Al-Mufīd (d. 1022 C. E), one of the significant Shi‘ite theologians, profoundly developed al-Kulainī’s thought in rejecting the originality of the ‘Uthmānī *muṣḥaf*. He firmly believed that even though the verses between the two covers are revelation from Allah, the Almighty, and are not speech of human beings, these verses compiled by ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān were incomplete due to some reasons; 1) the compiler might have forgotten some verses of the Qur’ān, 2) he intentionally omitted and added verses,²⁶ 3) he had limited knowledge on the verses of the Qur’ān, and 4) he hesitated and in doubt.²⁷ Al-Mufīd stressed that the Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* did not consist distortion as claimed by some other Shi‘ites except it did not have the verses compiled by ‘Alī.²⁸ However, the Shi‘ite leaders (*imāms*) ordered to read what is between the two covers of the ‘Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* without any claim of addition and deduction of the verses until the appearance of *al-qāim*, the one who will recite the whole revealed verses compiled by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.²⁹

Further claim of the Shi‘ites is also asserted by Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 329 H/940 C.E.), one of the earliest authoritative Shi‘ite commentators. He maintained that a number of verses in the Uthmanī *muṣḥaf* have been left out. He explained that in chapters Ali-Imrān: 33,³⁰ al-An‘am: 93,³¹ al-Shu‘arā’: 227,³² and many more, the term ‘Ali Muḥammad’ (the family of Muḥammad) was excluded from these verses, which should actually be mentioned. He affirmed that God revealed those verses in such a way. This perspective most likely influenced a number of later Shi‘ite exegetes like al-Ayyāshī (d. 320 H/932 C.E.),³³ al-Baḥrānī (d. 1107 H/1696 C.E.),³⁴ al-Tūsī (d. 460

²⁶ Al-Mufīd, *Al-Masāil al-Sarawiyyah*, 77.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁸ Al-Mufīd, *Awāil al-Maqālāt*, 81-82.

²⁹ Al-Mufīd, *Al-Masāil al-Sarawiyyah*, 81.

³⁰ Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *al-Tafsīr al-Qummī*, ed. Ṭayyib al-Jazā’irī, (Qum: Dār al-Kitāb li al-Tibā‘ah wa al-Nashr, n. y.), 1: 100.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1: 211.

³² *Ibid.*, 2: 125.

³³ Abū al-Nasr Muḥammad ibn Mas‘ūd ibn Ayyāsh, *Tafsīr al-Ayyāshī*, ed. Sayyid Hāshim al-Rasulī, (Beirut: Muassasa al-‘Alami li al-Matbū‘āt, 1991).

³⁴ Sayyid Hāshim al-Baḥrānī, *Al-Burhān Fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Wafā, 1983).

H/1067 CE.),³⁵ al-Kashānī (1075 H/1505 C.E.),³⁶ and al-Ṭabarsī (548 H/1153 C.E.).³⁷ Their commentaries tend to relate several features of ‘Alī and his rights, family, authority (*wilāyah*), and *imāmah* (supreme leaders). It is worthwhile to note too that those exegetes seemed to have a specific agenda to increase the Shi‘ite movement in the intellectual theological discourse. Moreover, most of them were also much influenced by the environmental and socio-cultural background when they approached the Qur’ān.³⁸ Due to their theological purposes, they benefited from the medium of Quranic commentary to clarify and elucidate the principles of Shi‘ites’ belief.

The unauthenticity of the Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* is also believed by a contemporary Shi‘ite scholar Muḥammad Ḥussein al-Shirāzī (d. 1422 H/2001 C.E.). For him, all the personal collections of the *muṣḥaf* in the hands of the companions were defective. They were scattered to many people, some were damaged and the others were incomplete. Like many students who tried to collect the sayings of their teacher would dispute each other for some of them are absent, and some are able to collect his sayings completely. The same thing with the Qur’ān. Several companions had their own personal collections which they got from Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).³⁹ These *muṣḥafs* were different in terms of their contents because they were not directly guided by the Prophet (peace be upon him). It was a different case for ‘Alī, the son of Abū Ṭālib, as his collection of the Qur’ān was under the Prophet’s supervision, guidance and *waṣiyyah*, therefore, it was complete and authentic even though it was lost.⁴⁰

³⁵ Abū Ja‘fār Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Tūsī, *Al-Tibyān Fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, ed. Aḥmad Habīb Qāsir al-Āmilī, (Beirut: Dār Ihyā al-Turāth al-Arabī, n. y.).

³⁶ Muhsin Faeḍ al-Kashshānī, *al-Sāfi Fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, ed. Zahra, (Beirut: Muassasah al-‘Alamī li al-Matbū‘ah, n. y.)

³⁷ Abū ‘Alī al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma al-Bayān Fī al-Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, (Beirut: Dār al-Ulūm, n. y.).

³⁸ Abdullah Saeed, *The Qur’an: Introduction*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 196.

³⁹ Muḥammad al-Ḥusein al-Shirāzī, *Matā Jumi‘a al-Qur’ān*, (Beirut: Markaz al-Rasūl al-A‘zam, 1998), 31-32.

⁴⁰ Abū Manṣūr Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ṭabarsī, *Kitāb al-Ihtijāj*, 1: 205-208.

In another aspect, Orientalists also studied the history of the collection of the Qur'ān such as Richard Bell, Montgomery Watt,⁴¹ Thomas Patrick Hughes,⁴² Michael Cook,⁴³ and Wansbrough.⁴⁴ Their works study the history of the Qur'ān, notably its collection method employed by the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Having studied the Qur'ān, some of them like Bell, Watt and Hughes, concluded that the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* is reliable and authentic.⁴⁵ Conversely, other Orientalists asserted that the *muṣḥaf* collected by 'Uthmān was incomplete, hence, invalid. All the narrations related to the history of the collection of the 'Uthmānī codex were merely fabricated by a number of people during the second century of Islam. One of the Orientalists who seriously stressed this view is John Wansbrough.⁴⁶ In his study of the history of the Qur'ān, Wansbrough applied the method of biblical studies used to study the Christian and Hebrew scriptures by placing the Qur'ān in a literary work. By applying biblical criticism, he analyzed the Islamic history and reconstructed Islamic origins. According to him, we do not know what really happened in history during one particular period. Hence, it is impossible for us to excerpt the Islamic history and their sources, due to their principle of belief.⁴⁷ Through such an attempt, his main purpose is not to know when the Qur'ān was compiled by those companions, but he aimed to determine when and how the Qur'ān came to be accepted and regarded as a scripture.⁴⁸ His approach has

⁴¹ Montgomery Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Quran*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 56.

⁴² Thomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam: New Edition*, (New Delhi: Cosmo Publication, 2004), 2: 502.

⁴³ Michael Cook, *The Koran: a Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 125.

⁴⁴ John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Method of Scriptural Interpretation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

⁴⁵ Thomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam: New Edition*, (New Delhi: Cosmo Publication, 2004), 2: 502; Montgomery Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Quran*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 56.

⁴⁶ Mohammad Nasrin Mohammad Nasir, "A Critique of John Wansbrough's Methodology and Conclusions," *al-Shajarah*, 13 (2008), 96.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Michael Cook, a British Orientalist, concluded that the single *muṣḥaf* exists in the history of Islam indicating that it was due to the authority of the state. See in Michael Cook, *The Koran: a Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 125.

some similarities with other Orientalists such as Michael Cook, Patricia Crone, and Andrew Rippin.⁴⁹

4.3.2. Shi'ites' Version of the Qur'ān

Having discussed the rejection of the Shi'ites against the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf*, we turn to present their version of the Qur'ān. Based on the early Twelver Shi'ite sources, they proposed their form of the Qur'ān that was collected and compiled from a private collection of the *muṣḥaf* of the Prophet's daughter, Fātimah, and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. However, those *muṣḥafs* were not available until now, for that *muṣḥaf* would be revealed to Muslim people after the Day of Judgment by Imām Mahdī *al-muntazar*, the last *Imām* of the twelver Shi'ites.⁵⁰

Al-Kulainī reported several specified narrations on the title of three different leafs; *Jafrāh*, *Jamiah*, and *Muṣḥaf* Fatimah. According to his report, the *Jafrāh* is the parchment or container made of skin comprising the knowledge of Prophets and commissioners, and knowledge of the Israelite scholars.⁵¹ While the *Jami'ah* is a paper with seventy yards long of the Prophet's hand. It comprises instruction of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to 'Alī which was written by hand. It also consists of all lawful and unlawful instructions and orders, and all things needed by human beings including the law of criminality. Al-Kulainī said that *muṣḥaf* of Fātimah consisted of the verses revealed by the Angel Gabriel to her and was written by 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. As al-Kulainī stated below:

⁴⁹ Mohammad Nasrin Mohammad Nasir, "A Critique of John Wansbrough's Methodology and Conclusions," 87.

⁵⁰ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Nu'mān ibn al-Mu'allim, *Al-Masā'il al-Sarawiyyah*, ed. Saib 'Abd al-Hamīd, (al-Mu'tamar al-Alamī Li alfi'ah al-Shaikh al-Mufīd, 1992), 81.

⁵¹ Al-Mazandarānī in his *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfi* elucidated the details of *al-jafr*. He mentioned that it consists of 28 volumes. Each volume has 20 pages, every page has 28 lines. Every line comprises 28 verses, and every verse has 4 letters. Those letters consist of different elements. The first is about the number of parts, the second is about the number of page, the third is about the the number of line, and the last is about the number of verse. The term of '*al-jafr*' was derived from the twentieth verse of the twenty seventh line of the sixteenth page of the third part. See in his *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, (Tehran: al-Maktaba al-Islāmiyya, n. y.),5: 386.

...Gabriel would come to provide her solace because of the death of her father. Jibrīl would comfort her soul. Jibril would inform her about her father and his place and of the future events and about what will happen to her children. At the same time ‘Alī would write all of them down and thus is the *muṣḥaf* of Fāṭimah (a.s).⁵²

The early Shi‘ites also affirmed that the *muṣḥaf* of ‘Alī was the only perfect version of the Qur’ān. During his life, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib was guided by Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and entrusted certain messages. It is argued through the authority of Abū Dhar, he said that when the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) passed away, ‘Alī the son of ibn Abī Ṭālib collected the Qur’ān. He then went to the people of *Anṣār* and *Muhājirin* and showed them his collection of the Qur’ān telling that his attempt in doing so was a message (*waṣiyyah*) from the Prophet (peace be upon him). When Abū Bakr opened it, he found the humiliation (*faḍā’ih*) of those people due to their mistake in compiling the Qur’ān. Then, ‘Umar admitted that some verses were left out from that *muṣḥaf*, one of which was the dishonoring of the *Muhājirin* and the *Anṣār*. Regarding this matter, Umar further told Zaid to inform Khālid ibn Walīd to kill ‘Alī. This plan failed to be employed. Furthermore, when ‘Umar became the caliph, he also asked Ali to give his *muṣḥaf* to combine with the Qur’ān collected by Abū Bakr. However, ‘Alī refused to do so as he argued that his collection was only touched by those who were purified (*muttahaḥarūn*) and authorized agents (*awṣiyā’*) of his offsprings. His perfect *muṣḥaf* would be revealed later on with the resurrection of Ali’s descendants.⁵³ This report signifies that the *muṣḥaf* of ‘Alī was believed to be the only true version of the Qur’ān.

Historically speaking, this version of the Qur’ān has also been described by a Shi‘ite historian. Al-Ya‘qūbī who stated that ‘Alī had compiled the Qur’ān and showed to Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). His *muṣḥaf* is divided into seven parts; the first is *al-Baqarah*, *Yūsuf*, *al-Ankabūt*, *al-Rūm*, *Lukmān*, *al-Sajadah*, *al-Dhāriyāt*, *al-*

⁵² Al-Kulainī, *Al-Kāfī*, trans. Muhammad Sarwar, Chapter 40, no. 5, 350.

⁵³ Abū Manṣūr Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ṭabarsī, *Kitāb al-Iḥtijāj*, 1: 205-208.

Dahr, al-Nāziāt, al-Takwīr, al-Infiṭār, al-Inshiqāq, al-a'ālā, and al-Bayyinah. It consists of 886 verses and 16 chapters. This is called *al-Baqarah* chapter. The second part is *Āli Imrān, Hūd, al-Ḥajj, al-Ḥijr, al-Aḥzāb, al-Dukhān, al-Rahmān, al-Ḥāqqah, al-Mā'arij, Abasa, al-Shams, al-Ḍuḥā, al-Qadr, al-Zalzalah, al-Humazah, al-Fīl, and al-Quraish.* This is called by *Āli Imrān* part, which consists of 886 verses and 15 chapters. The third part is *al-Nisā, al-Naḥl, al-Mu'minūn, Yāsin, al-Shurā, al-Wāqī'ah, al-Mulk, al-Muddathir, al-Mā'un, al-Lahab, al-Ikhlās, al-'Aṣr, al-Qāri'ah, al-Burūj, al-Zaitūn, and al-Naml.* This is called *al-Nisā'* part, which comprises 886 verses and 17 chapters. The fourth part is *al-Mā'idah, Yūnus, Maryam, al-Qaṣaṣ, al-Shu'arā, al-Zukhrūf, al-Ḥujurāt, Qāf, al-Qamar, al-Mumtaḥanah, al-Tāriq, al-Balad, al-Inshirah, al-'Adiyāt, al-Kawthar, and al-Kāfirūn.* This is called *al-Mā'idah* part, which consists of 886 verses and 15 chapters. The fifth part is *al-An'ām, al-Isrā', al-Anbiyā, al-Furqān, al-Mursalāt, al-Ḍuḥā, and al-Takāthur.* This is called *al-An'ām* part, which consisting of 886 verses and 16 chapters. The sixth part is *al-A'rāf, Ibrāhīm, al-Kahf, al-Nūr, Ṣād, al-Zumar, al-Jāthiyah, Muḥammad, al-Ḥadīd, al-Muzammil, al-Qiyāmah, al-Nabā', al-Ghāshiyah, al-Fajr, al-Lail, and al-Naṣr.* This is called *al-A'rāf* part. This consists of 886 verses and 16 chapters. The seventh part comprises *al-Anfāl, al-Taubah, Tāhā, al-Fāṭir, al-Ṣaffāt, al-Aḥqāf, al-Fath, al-Thūr, al-Najm, al-Ṣaf, al-Taghābun, al-Ṭalāq, al-Mutaffifin, al-Falaq, and al-Nās.* This is called *al-Anfāl* part, and consists of 886 verses and 16 chapters. This version of the Qur'ān that collected by 'Alī is recorded in details by the Shi'ite historian.⁵⁴ This leads to the probability that this form might be unknown to the other companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

⁵⁴ This *mushaf* consists of seven parts with its own arrangement. See in Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 152-154.

4.3.3. Shi'ites' Views on the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).

The preceding discussion dealt with the incompleteness of the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* according to the Shi'ites. This matter is related to the problem of the integrity of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who collected and compiled the Qur'ān.

Based on the Twelver Shi'ite doctrines concerning the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), they solely and highly respected companions who were loyal and close to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. These people initially acknowledged him being a caliph right after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). During their lives, they respected 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. These companions were Abū Dhar al-Ghiffārī, Salman al-Fārisī, Miqdād ibn Amr, and Ammār ibn Yāsir.⁵⁵ In addition, the Shi'ites also maintained that these companions were could defend their religion after the death of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) while the other companions turned into apostasy (*irtidād*), as narrated by al-Ṭūsī:

from Abū Ja'far (peace on him) said that all those men (companions) became the apostasy from Islam except three of them. I asked: 'who are these three?'. He replied: 'Miqdād Ibn al Aswad, Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī, and Salman al-Fārisī...'⁵⁶

These three companions together with 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib would go to paradise while the rest of them had no guarantee to go into it, notably these three caliphs Abū Bakr, 'Umar ibn Khattāb and 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān.⁵⁷ In another place, it was narrated too that every one of the three companions had their own merits. Abū Dhar had chatted together with the Prophet and the Angel Gabriel⁵⁸ while Miqdād had a special position in the Muslim community. His status was like the word *alif* in comparison to the whole letters of the

⁵⁵ Al-Ṭūsī, *Tafsīr al-Ayyāshī*, 223; al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 196-201.

⁵⁶ Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Ikhtiyār Ma'rifa al-Rijāl al-Ma'rūf bi Rijāl al-Kāshī*, ed. Jawwād al-Qayyumī al-Isfahānī, (Qum: Muassasah al-Nashr al-Islami, n. y.), Chapter on Salmān al-Fārisī, no. 12, 18; al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Ikhtisāṣ*, 10.

⁵⁷ Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Kāshī*, Chapter on 'Ammār, no. 58, 38.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

Qur'ān,⁵⁹ which is placed at a very crucial position. Salmān, in terms of his merit had distinctive knowledge which could cover the first and the last as if he was a sea full with that could not dry forever.⁶⁰ In short, the Shi'ites claimed that three significant companions supported 'Alī. Their view was that 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib was the caliph right after the Prophet's death rather than the three caliphs Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān.⁶¹

Historically speaking, before Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) went to the war of Tabūk, he appointed 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib to replace him in Madinah. This appointment was aimed to give his authority to deal with his family and the Muslim community during his absence.⁶² Through this historical event, al-Mufid argued that the Prophet (peace be upon him) realized that some Arabs disagreed upon this appointment since they themselves hoped to be appointed to lead the Madinan society. In this matter, the Prophet himself knew who was the appropriate companion one who could replace him during his absence from Madinah. Furthermore, some envious hypocrites also tried to provoke Muslim community to cause chaotic situation. They hoped that Madinah during the absence of the Prophet would become instable and quarrelsome.⁶³ The Prophet (peace be upon him) loved 'Alī very much and expressed his relationship like the position of Moses and Hārūn. This relationship showed that to handle the Madinan people, it could only be led by either the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself or 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.⁶⁴ By this kind of delegation, it was obviously definite that 'Alī was the one who was eligible after the Prophet (peace be upon him) to lead the Muslims. From the aforementioned reports it seems that the Shi'ite stressed their view that 'Alī was the

⁵⁹ Narrated by Hisham ibn Salim who said: 'the son of 'Abd Allāh, peace be upon him, said: Indeed, Miqdād ibn al-Aswad's position amongst this people is like *alif* letter in the Qur'ān, no one can omit it'. See in *Rijāl al-Kāshī*, 10.

⁶⁰ It is reported that Zarara said: I heard the father of Abd Allah said: 'Salman has reached the first and the last knowledge. He was a sea which cannot dry (from its water). He was from us, the people of the house...' See in *Rijāl al-Kāshī*, 23.

⁶¹ Al-Tūsī, *Rijāl al-Kāshī*, Chapter on Salmān al-Fārisī, no. 13-14, 18.

⁶² Al-Mufid, *al-Irshād Fī Ma'rifa Ḥujaj Allāh 'alā al-Ībād*, (Beirut: Muassasa 'Alī al-Bait Li Ihya' al-Turath, 1995), 1: 154.

⁶³ Al-Mufid, *al-Iḥṣāḥ Fī al-Imāmah*, ed. Muassasa al-Dirasat al-Islamiyya, (Qum: al-Mu'tamar al-'Ālam Li Alfiya al-Shaikh al-Mufid, 1992), 155.

⁶⁴ Al-Mufid, *al-Irshād*, 156.

only qualified companion the replace the Prophet after his death, as shown by the appointment of the Prophet to him when he left Madinah.

Further argument on the designation of ‘Alī by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is described through the event of Ghadīr Khum. After performing *Wada’* pilgrimage, on the way back to Madinah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stopped in Ghadīr Khum.⁶⁵ In this place the Prophet stood in front of the Muslims and declared ‘*those who made me as his leader, ‘Alī was his leader...*’⁶⁶ According to al-Mufīd, this statement could be inferred that it was clear that ‘Alī was chosen by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to be his successor. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb himself commented this appointment saying that ‘Alī became the leader of all Muslims (men and women). Furthermore, this fact also shows the closeness between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and ‘Alī. The close relationship between them was not only because they were family, but also in the succession of the Muslim community. In this matter, the Prophet (peace be upon him) believed in ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib as his successor after his death rather than other companions.⁶⁷

Based on the Shi‘ite sources, the three caliphs Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān, did not have the rights to become caliphs. Abū Bakr with the support of ‘Umar ibn Khattāb usurped the position of caliphate.⁶⁸ They were not the best companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). According to al-Mufīd, when Abū Bakr was chosen as the caliph, this was not because of the agreement of the Muslim society. Many companions did not know about the process of succession from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Abū Bakr. Moreover, many *Anṣār* companions disagreed upon with his leadership as he

⁶⁵ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 1: 125.

⁶⁶ Al-Mufīd, *al-Iḥṣāh fi al-Imāmah*, 179; Al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 176; ‘فمن كنت مولاه فعلي مولاه’. After this statement, the Prophet performed *zuhur* prayer in this place, Ghadīr Khum. After that, he asked ‘Alī to come to his camp and instructed all Muslims, men and women, to congratulate him. This event was absolute designation of the Prophet to ‘Alī as definite justification for him being a caliph after the Prophet, not other companions.

⁶⁷ As narrated by Abū Ja‘far, he said: the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: ‘God revealed me to love four certain people; ‘Alī, Abū Dhar, Salmān, and Miqdād. See in al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Ikhtisāṣ*, 13.

⁶⁸ Al-Ya‘kūbī, *Tārīkh*, 1: 136-141.

was from the *Muhājirīn*. This disagreement was also maintained by the Hashimites who did not want Abū Bakr to be the caliph,⁶⁹ including ‘Alī himself.⁷⁰ There were disagreements among the companions about the caliphates of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb, and ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān.⁷¹ Furthermore, the Shi‘ites held that the three caliphs did not have integrity, which could make them eligible to become caliphs. Abū Bakr, as reported by al-Ayyāshī and al-Āmilī,⁷² was involved in poisoning Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) before his death. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb disrespected the Prophet (peace be upon him) when death approached him. He instructed ‘Umar to do something, yet he did not respond to the Prophet’s instruction to come up with a pen and paper to write certain messages, because in that situation ‘Umar realized the Prophet (peace be upon him) unconsciously said something on that matter. Therefore, he did not carry out the instruction.⁷³ ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān was regarded the one who responsible for instructing to burn all *muṣḥafs* which were not approved by him. In this respect, he was also blamed by the Shi‘ites, that since his time the Qur’ān has been corrupted from its completion due to his attempt to standardize it. They firmly believed that the complete one was the personal collection of the Qur’ān in the hands of ‘Alī.⁷⁴ With these reports, ‘Alī was the best companions person amongst the companions and the only one who was appropriate to replace the Prophet (peace be upon him) after his death.⁷⁵

The Shi‘ites also disrespectfully treated several companions involved in the war of *Jamal*. Those people urged ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib for the blood of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān to

⁶⁹ Al-Mufīd, *al-Iṣṣah fī al-Imamah*, 47.

⁷⁰ Al-Mufīd, *Al-Irshād*, 244-245.

⁷¹ Al-Mufīd, *al-Iṣṣah*, 48.

⁷² Al-Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-Ayyāshī*, 1: 224; Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Ṭahir al-Āmilī, *Tafsīr al-Burhān*, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Ālamī li al-Matbū‘āt, 2006), 2: 117.

⁷³ Al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, 184.

⁷⁴ Al-Ya‘kūbī, *Tārīkh*, 1: 166-168.

⁷⁵ Based on the Shi‘ites’ principle, al-Mufīd stressed that ‘Alī was much better than the other three caliphs. He was even the best person in this world after Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). In comparison to the five Prophets of *ulū al-‘Azam*: Nūh, Ibrāhīm, Mūsa, Isā, and Muḥammad, those people are still better than ‘Alī, yet, he himself was a better person than the Prophet Yūsuf. See in Al-Mufīd, *Tafḍīl Amīr al-Mu‘minīn*, ed. ‘Alī Mūsā al-Ka‘bī, (Qum: al-Mu‘tamar al-Ālam Li alfiah al-Shaikh al-Mufīd, 1992), 19, and 32-33.

investigate and punish the murderer of Uthmān. His murderer was unknown which caused dispute amongst the Muslim community. According to al-Mufīd, at the very beginning of ‘Alī’s caliphate, Ṭalhah and Zubair were the earliest companions who make the pledge of loyalty (*bai‘at*) to him.⁷⁶ Yet, due to some reasons, together with ‘Aisha, they demanded ‘Alī to do further investigation the murder of ‘Uthmān. With such protest, they rallied people in Basra to fight ‘Alī. This event regarded by the Shi‘ites as serious problems, since they showed their disobedience to Caliph ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. They were considered to be his rivals and infidels. Al-Mufīd states:

...سمعت رسول الله - صلى الله عليه و آله - يقول لعلي - عليه السلام - قاتل الله
من قاتلك و عادي الله من عاداك. فقالت عائشة: يا رسول الله من يقاتله و من يعاديه؟
قال : أنت و من معك، أنت و من معك.

...I heard the Prophet said to ‘Alī: ‘Allah fights people who fight you, and assault to those who assault you. Aisha asked to the Prophet (peace be upon him) ‘o Prophet, who did fight and assault him.?’ He replied: ‘you and those who with you, you and those who with you.’⁷⁷

This report illustrates that Talḥah, Zubair, and ‘Aisha were people who fought ‘Alī and protested his strategy to find the murderers of ‘Uthmān. His assassination was a serious issue to the Muslim society that should be solved by ‘Alī during his caliphate. However, as claimed by the Shi‘ites, ‘Alī was not responsible for this case since he was not involved in the polemics of ‘Uthmān’s caliphate.⁷⁸

The Shi‘ites also criticized other companions like ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abbās and Anas ibn Mālik. Al-Tūsī reported several narrations regarding them. One narration says that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib prayed to Allah to curse and blind ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abbās. It was possibly because ‘Alī accused him of stealing money from the house of property (*bait*

⁷⁶ Al-Mufīd, *al-Kāfi‘ah Fī Taubah al-Khāti‘ah*, 12-14.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁷⁸ Al-Mufīd, *Al-Jamal al-Naṣra fī Harb al-Baṣra*, (Qum: Maktaba al-Dawarī, 1983), 71-75.

al-māl) and taking it to Makkah.⁷⁹ In another report, al-Tūsī also said that after the event of Ghadīr Khum, ‘Alī met a number of people who acknowledged his designation by the Prophet (peace be upon him). However, it seemed Anas ibn Mālik refused to agree upon the matter, hence ‘Alī prayed to Allah, the almighty, to make him blind and a leper.⁸⁰ Al-Ṭusi did not explain further whether ‘Alī’s prayer is approved and or not.

Hence, these reports conclude that the companions of *Anṣār* and *Muhājirīn* were negatively illustrated since most probably they did not make the pledge of loyalty (*baiat*) to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib during the succession of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Abū Bakr. Some of them were quarrelsome with ‘Alī on certain matters. Therefore, the Shi‘ites regarded them as disobedient companions to him. The Shi‘ites also criticised some companions related to the seven variant readings of the Qur’ān, which will be elaborated below.

4.3.4. Seven Variant Readings in the Shi‘ites’ perspective

The Twelver Shi‘ites had different perspective toward the seven variant readings of the Qur’ān from the Sunnites. They viewed that the Sunnites believed in the variant readings of the Qur’ān based on number of *ḥadīths* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) narrated by narrators (*ruwāt*) as well as by some *imāms* (*qurrā’*). According to the Shi‘ites, the seven variant readings were only human endeavours (*ijtihād*) made by the readers (*qurrā’*) they were not necessarily valid.⁸¹ Therefore, those sources might be doubted and even rejected by the Shi‘ites.

Al-Kulainī (d. 329 A. H/ 941 C. E.) said that the Qur’ān revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) was only one. There is no other version descended to him, and

⁷⁹ Al-Tūsī, *Rijāl al-Kāshī*, pp. 63-64; “... اللهم العن ابني فلان و أعم أبصارهما كما عميت قلوبهما...” In this problem it did not state why ‘Alī prayed such prayer, yet, the following reports described some of Ibn Abbās’s attitudes to ‘Alī.

⁸⁰ Al-Tūsī *Rijāl al-Kāshī*, p. 52; “... اللهم إن كنا كنتمها معاندة فابتلهم فعمي البراء بن عازب ويرص قدما أنس ابن مالك...”

⁸¹ ‘Abd al-Rasūl al-Ghifārī, *al-Qirā’at wa al-Aḥrūf al-Sab‘ah*, (Qum: Markaz al-Mustafa al-Alami li al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr, 2012), 43.

different understandings merely appeared because of its narrators, as he stated in his narration:

...عن زرارة عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام قال: إن القرآن واحد نزل من عند واحد ولكن الاختلاف يجيء من قبل الرواة.

It was narrated by Zurāra from Abū Ja‘far, he said: “verily, the Qur’ān is one, it was revealed by One, yet, its difference only on account of different transmitters.”⁸²

According to al-Māzandarānī,⁸³ this *ḥadīth* shows that the Qur’ān was revealed in one reading (*qirā’ah wāḥidah*) to the people of Quraish. The Qur’ān was in the Quraish language. This was in accordance with chapter Ibrahim: 4 of the Qur’ān.⁸⁴ However, the narrators of this *ḥadīth* disputed in which language the Qur’ān was revealed. The above report has relationship with the following *ḥadīth* that was also mentioned by al-Kulainī:

عن الفضيل بن يسار قال: قلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام: إن القرآن نزل على سبعة أحرف، فقال: كذبوا أعداء الله و لكنه نزل على حرف واحد من عند الواحد.

From al-Fuḍail ibn Yasar said: I said to Abī ‘Abdillah: “verily, men say: indeed, the Qur’ān was revealed on the seven words. He said: the enemy of God lied, yet, it was revealed in one word from the One (Allah).”⁸⁵

Al-Māzandarānī insisted that the above *ḥadīth* has close meaning of the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān was revealed in seven different dialects of the Arab people: Quraish, Hudhail, Hawazān, Yaman, Qais, Dabbah, and Tay al-Rabbāb. Since there was difficulty in pronouncing the Qur’ān in one particular dialect, those readings aimed to ease the Arabs to recite the Qur’ān based on their dialects. Furthermore, al-Māzandarānī also explained the meaning of ‘*sab‘ah aḥruf*’. He based his understanding on these two *ḥadīths*. To him, there were no seven variant readings of the Qur’ān. The difference merely

⁸² Al-Kulainī, *Usūl al-Kāfī*, Chapter on the Book Nawādir, no. 12, 2: 824; ash-Shaykh as-Saduq, *A Shi’ite Creed*, trans. Asaf. A. A. Fyzee, (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 1982), 79.

⁸³ Al-Mazandarānī, *Sharḥ al-Kāfī*, 11: 65.

⁸⁴ Ibrahim: 4: “And We have sent no messenger but in the language of his own people, so that he he might make clear to them.”

⁸⁵ Al-Kulainī, *Usūl al-Kāfī*, Chapter on the Book of Nawādir, no. 13, 2: 824.

occurred in their transmitters. Therefore, the recitation of the Qur'ān revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) was the original one.⁸⁶ It seems that al-Māzandarānī rejected the seven variant readings of the Qur'ān but he accepted it was revealed in seven different Arabic dialects.

Further understanding of the concept of the seven variant readings from the Shi'ites' perspective is that they believed that this notion is metaphorical (*majāzī*). Sharīf al-Murtaḍa maintained that the meaning of the seven words (*sab'ah aḥruf*) is that every verse of the Qur'ān has its internal and external meanings. This illustrates that those verses of the Qur'ān signify clear and hidden substances. Those verses could be referred to as *al-mutashābihāt* and *al-muḥkamāt* verses.⁸⁷ Based on some narrations, the meaning of the seven words (*al-aḥruf al-Sab'ah*) could also mean seven kinds; command (*amr*), prohibition (*nahy*), promise (*wa'd*), threat (*wa'īd*), dispute (*ikhtilāf*), story (*qiṣās*), and parables (*amthal*). The seven kinds are based on the report narrated by Abū Qalama:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: the Qur'ān revealed in seven words: command, prevention, advice, threat, dispute, story, and parables.⁸⁸

This *ḥadīth* elucidates that the term '*aḥruf*' denotes to the parts and divisions. In analyzing of the term, we do not limit to the literal meaning of the word '*aḥruf*' which means 'words'. It also has allegorical interpretation that indicates wider understanding. The above meaning, as stated in the *ḥadīth*, could be related to the word '*aḥruf*' based on the context of the discussion.

⁸⁶ The meaning of seven words (*sab'ah aḥruf*) could also be understood as differences amongst Arab people in terms of their dialects. They rejected to be united in one specific dialect. This did not continue until their number of people as well as their books increased, then they could unite their community as well as their dialect. See al-Mazandarani, *Sharḥ al-Kāfi*, 11: 67-68.

⁸⁷ Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍa, *al-Majazāt al-Nabawiyyah*, ed. Maḥmūd Mustafā, (Egypt: Mustafā al-Bāb al-Halabī wa Awlāduh, 1937), no. 28, 49; Al-Kashānī, *Tafsīr al-Ṣāfi*, 1: 26.

⁸⁸ This report is quoted by al-Ghifārī in his *al-Qirā'āt wa al-aḥrūf al-Sab'ah*, 227. In another narration also stated seven different aspects of words: prevention (*zajr*), command (*amr*), lawful (*halāl*), prohibited (*harām*), (*muḥkam*), resemblance (*mutashābih*), and parables (*amthāl*). The status of this report is questioned. Further discussion on this aspect will be elaborated in al-Bāqillānī's defense on the seven variant readings in the following pages.

Furthermore, the Shi'ites maintained that the seven variant readings are not necessarily valid. This matter was product of the *qārī*'s endeavour (*ijtihād*). The *qārī*' attempted to investigate the valid and accurate readings. There were many disputes amongst the *qurrā*' (readers). Moreover, the sources of the seven variant readings were also narrated differently. Even though some sources were considered valid information (*mutawātir*). Al-Suyūṭī, as al-Ghifārī argued, elucidated various sources of the *ḥadīth* stating differences in the meaning of the seven variant readings.⁸⁹ Even if there were agreement upon the variant readings, they could not convince the people who maintained the opposite ideas of the variant readings.⁹⁰ Al-Khū'ī, a contemporary Shi'ite scholar, argued that the variant readings (*al-qirā'āt*) were not really narrated in the *ḥadīth* since they were too general or not specific. Based on his analysis, the dispute among the narrators was because the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* spread out amongst them was without any diacritical signs while all readings should be based on the *muṣḥaf*. Moreover, in terms of their personalities, all narrators of the *ḥadīths* which explained the variant readings of the Qur'ān were not trusted (*thiqah*). Their arguments in proving their stance were weak. The reports did not refer to Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), and their transmissions were also unknown in the domain of *ḥadīth* literature and their narrators also disputed among themselves. Therefore, the seven variant readings of the Qur'ān should be rejected.⁹¹

The critical study on the seven variant readings also comes from the Orientalists.⁹² They studied the history of the Qur'ān and its early compilation process. Noldeke, a German scholar, in his study asserted that the Qur'ān is a book comprising unorganized words and several different variant readings, hence, it is precisely not

⁸⁹ Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 1: 77-84.

⁹⁰ 'Abd al-Rasūl al-Ghifārī, *al-Qirā'āt wa al-Aḥrūf al-Sab'ah*, 43.

⁹¹ Al-Khū'ī, *al-Bayān Fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 165-166.

⁹² Theodor Noldeke, *Sketches From Eastern History*, Trans. John Sutherland Black, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1892), 27; Arthur Jeffery, *Materials For The History of the Text of the Qur'an: The Old Codices*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1937), ix.

divine. He attempted to rearrange the structure of the Qur'ān in a chronological order.⁹³ Another Orientalist who also tried to criticise the variant readings of the Qur'ān is Goldziher. Following Noldeke's step, he said in his study of the Qur'ān, one factor which causes the different variant readings is the dotless script at the beginning of its compilation.⁹⁴ His notion was supported by Arthur Jeffery. He claimed that the main problem of different readings is because of lack of dots in the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf*. Therefore, everybody has his right to read based on his own understanding following the context of the verses. Moreover, he also attempted to prove that the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* was not the only available version of the Qur'ān, but 'many other rival texts' available which are also reliable.⁹⁵ In all, these Orientalists seemed to promote the main problem of the variant readings of the Qur'ān due to the lack of the diacritical form of the scripts. They viewed that every reader can read the text whatever he wishes based on his understanding.

Thus, the aforementioned description delineates the Shi'ites and Orientalists's views on the issue of the Qur'ān. In their discussion on the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Shi'ites indeed respected the companions who were known to be loyal to 'Alī's leadership especially after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Shi'ites refused to acknowledge the three caliphs who preceded 'Alī. Instead, they showed their honour to 'Alī.⁹⁶ The Shi'ites also rejected the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* as well as the seven variant readings of the Qur'ān. However, their views are far different from the Sunnite's perspectives which will be further delineated below.

⁹³ Abdullah Saed, *The Qur'ān: An Introduction*, 107.

⁹⁴ Ignaz Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, trans. 'Abd al-Halīm Najjār, (Beirut: Dar Iqra', 1985), 8-9.

⁹⁵ Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, (Leiden: Brill, 1937), X.

⁹⁶ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 1: 141.

4.4. Al-Bāqillānī's Response to The 'Uthmānī *Muṣḥaf* Issues

The problem of unauthenticity of the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* promoted by the early Twelver Shi'ites has become a serious problem in the theological discourse. Since it is one of the main principles of Islam, many scholars defend the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf*. One of the significant Ash'arite figures, Abū Bakr ibn Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī defended the authenticity of the codex compiled by 'Uthmān and its related topics. Through his works,⁹⁷ al-Bāqillānī tried to counter some invalid claims from the Rafidites of the Shi'ites as mentioned above. In addition, his arguments are also relevant to address the Orientalists' claim concerning the validity of the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf*. In this matter, he clarified the position and status of that codex as well as the issue of the seven variant readings. He also elaborated his ideas in defending the qualification of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). By highlighting their roles in transmitting and spreading the Qur'ān, this could justify them properly. In this problem he also discussed the merits of the four important caliphs. These are parts of the mainstream of Islamic theological doctrines in the Sunnite perspectives. To know further his counter arguments, we will deal with them in the following discussion.

4.4.1. The Qur'ān and its Compilation

The Qur'ān is the primary source of the religion of Islam. It was revealed in *mutawatir*⁹⁸ transmission through various paths.⁹⁹ Based on a number of reliable (*mutawātir*) *ḥadīths*, the process of compilation and standarization of the Qur'ān had started since the Prophet's period until the third caliph, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān. The Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed several scribes of the revelation to write all the verses of the

⁹⁷ Abū Bakr Ibn Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd al-Awāil wa Talkhīs al-Dalāil*, ed. 'Imad al-Dīn Aḥmad Ḥaedar, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiya, 1987); Abū Bakr Ibn Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Instisar lil Qur'ān*, ed. Muhammad Isam al-Qudat, (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2001), vol. 1 and 2; Abū Bakr Ibn Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *Manāqib al-Aimma*, ed. Samīra Farhat, (Beirut: Dār al-Muntakhab al-Arabī, 2002).

⁹⁸ *Mutawātir* means report of many narrators whose consensus upon a lie is impossible. See M. Mustafa Azami, *Studies in Hadīth Methodology and Literature*, (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2002), 57.

⁹⁹ Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Bāqī, (Egypt: Dār Ibn Hazm, 2010), Chapter. The Book of Revelation, no. 1, 8-10.

Qur'ān revealed to him, which was followed too by his other companions. They wrote the verses on different materials; leaves, pieces of cloth, leather, paper and the bones of donkey and sheep.¹⁰⁰ Until the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away the writings scattered amid the companions in Madina. When Abū Bakr became the first caliph, he instructed Zaid ibn Thābit to compile the verses of the Qur'ān. One of the procedures in delivering information about the verses was that the memorizer should come with two witnesses. Having finished this codification, the *muṣḥaf* was preserved in Abu Bakr's house. After he passed away, the *muṣḥaf* was passed to 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb, his successor in the caliphate. Finally, the *muṣḥaf* was kept by Hafṣah, 'Umar's daughter. The process of standardization of reading of the Qur'ān was employed by the third Caliph 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān. In this attempt, he instructed a number of *muṣḥaf* to be written which would be sent to several places; Shām, Kūfa, Baṣra, Makka, and Madina together with their readers (*qurrā*).¹⁰¹ It was aimed to standardize the accurate readings of the Qur'ān and avoid errors. All these readings were already approved by the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself during his life.¹⁰² Thus, the mainstream of Sunnite Muslims accepted the Qur'ān and its process of compilation and standardization.

Al-Bāqillānī placed the process of compilation of the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* in the *mutawātir* category since it was reported by a number of narrators in different periods. The *mutawātir* account is narrated by so many narrators which makes it impossible for them to lie. According to al-Bāqillānī, some people might scrutinize the validity of those *ḥadiths* whether they are *mutawātir* or not. Having examined both sides, he affirmed these narrations are believed to be accurate and valid. Therefore, the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* was authentic.¹⁰³ However, the reports seemed to be doubted by the Shi'ites.

¹⁰⁰ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān Fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n. y.), 1: 60; Thamem Ushama, *Issues In the Study of the Qur'ān*, (Kuala Lumpur: Ilmiah Publisher, 2002), 163.

¹⁰¹ Muhammad Mustafa Azami, *The History of the Quranic Text: From Revelation to Compilation*, (Leicester: UK Islamic Academy, 2003), 94.

¹⁰² Ibid., 95.

¹⁰³ Abū Bakr Ibn al-Ṭayyib Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Intisar Li al-Qur'ān*, 1: 101.

Based on al-Kulainī's report, there was no single account stating such chronological process in his collection of *ḥadīth*. Instead, he gave different reports with regard to the *muṣḥaf* of 'Alī and Fātimah. The collections appeared in different forms like *Jafrā* and *Jamia*.¹⁰⁴

In response to *muṣḥaf* of 'Alī, al-Bāqillānī maintained that his *muṣḥaf* was not different from the *muṣḥafs* collected by some companions. The *muṣḥaf* of 'Alī also comprising the same verses as others. This was based on the report of Ibn mentioned by al-Bāqillānī in *Manāqib al-aimma*:

... ابن شهاب قال: شهدت علياً عليه السلام يقول على المنبر: و الله ما عندي كتاب نقرأه عليكم، إلا كتاب الله عز و جل، و هذه الصحيفة. صحيفة معلقة بسيفه (أخذتها من رسول صلى الله عليه وسلم فيها فرائض الصدقة معلقة بسيفه له، جلبته حديد).

Ibn Shihab said: "I witnessed 'Alī, said on the pulpit: By the name of Allah, I have no book which I read to you only the book of God, the Almighty, and this *ṣaḥīfa*, which hung on his sword. I took it from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in which explaining the *farā'id al-ṣadaqah*, I put it on my sword."¹⁰⁵

As stated in some sources 'Alī has his own *muṣḥaf*. This was his personal collection which he had compiled right after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him).¹⁰⁶ His *muṣḥaf* was arranged based on the reason of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) which had not been verified and agreed upon by a number of companions.¹⁰⁷ The *muṣḥaf* was totally different from the Shi'ites' claim that the *muṣḥaf* of 'Alī comprises some verses which were excluded by 'Uthmān in his compilation¹⁰⁸ as well as from the Shi'ite historian.¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī defended the perfect compilation of the *muṣḥaf* 'Uthmān. He criticized the Shi'ites' views that their *Imāms* possessed the complete

¹⁰⁴ Al-Kulainī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, Chapter on Ṣaḥīfah, Jafr, and Jami'a, no. 1, 1: 173-174.

¹⁰⁵ Abū Bakr Ibn al-Ṭayyib Al-Bāqillānī, *Manāqib al-Aimma al-Arba'ah*, 645.

¹⁰⁶ Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, ed. Muḥib al-Dīn 'Abd al-Subḥān Wa'iz, (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāir al-Islāmiyya, 2002), 290; Mannā' al-Qattān, *Mabaḥith Fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, (Egypt: Maktaba Wahba, 2007), 123.

¹⁰⁷ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūti, *al-Itqān Fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 1: 63-64.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Kulainī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, Chapter. 97, no. 6, 2: 825; al-Mufīd, *al-Masā'il al-Sarawiyya*, 81.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 1: 152-154.

verses of the Qur'ān and some companions intentionally hid some verses revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and lied about their accounts.¹¹⁰ The report by al-Kulainī in his book¹¹¹ according to al-Bāqillānī was exaggerated, because its authenticity is essentially untrue. The Shi'ites claimed that their version of the Qur'ān was authentic while other *muṣḥafs* belong to the their opponents were not authentic. This is absolutely a wrong belief of this group.¹¹² Furthermore, the Shi'ites used to refer their doctrines to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, one of the twelve *Imāms*. Many reports transmitted by a number of narrators referred to him. For instance, the issues of the Qur'ān, including the *muṣḥaf* of 'Alī as well as the other eleven *Imams*.¹¹³ However, al-Ṣādiq himself believed that the Qur'ān is complete and authentic. But, some prominent Shi'ites relied their reports on his statements, saying that he meant different things from what he said. This was a forgery to him that they continuously transmitted from one generation to the next generation.¹¹⁴ Al-Ṣādiq himself had different views from the Shi'ites with regard to the companions of the Prophet (peace upon him). He was much influenced by his father, al-Bāqir, who highly respected Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān. According to him, those who slandered the three caliphs have violated the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him).¹¹⁵ We can analyze from the reports that the Shi'ites attempted to invalidate the 'Uthmāni *muṣḥaf* which was believed by the Sunnite. Their attempt was supported by false and baseless information. As a result, it was no wonder that al-Bāqillānī strongly criticized the validity of their sources.

¹¹⁰ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 1: 112.

¹¹¹ ...from Jabir who had said that he heard Abū Ja'far said: No one of people claimed to have collected the whole of the Qur'ān (in a book form) as it was revealed. If anyone would come up with such a claim, he is liar. No one collected this Holy Book and memorized as Allah, the Most Holy, the Most High revealed it except 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib and the *Imāms* after him. See Al-Kulainī, *Usūl al-Kāfī*, Chapter. 92, no. 1, 1: 165.

¹¹² Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 1: 112.

¹¹³ Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, *Al-Imām al-Ṣādiq: Ḥayatuh wa 'Aṣruhu wa Arāuhū wa Fiqhuhū*, (Dār al-Fikr al-Arabī, n. y.), 323-324.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 331.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 207.

Al-Bāqillānī further rejected the Shi‘ites claim that the ‘*Uthmānī muṣḥaf* is incomplete due to the additional verses available in the *Muṣḥaf* of ‘Alī.¹¹⁶ During the process of its compilation, ‘Uthmān instructed to burn all personal collection of the *masahif* of the Qur’ān, and commanded the Muslims to rely solely on his *muṣḥaf*. By such endeavour, as allegedly told by a Shi‘ite historian, al-Ya‘qūbī, ‘Uthmān had hidden agenda with such order.¹¹⁷ Al-Bāqillānī viewed this notion as false. He strongly believed ‘Uthmān’s instruction was to preserve the Qur’ān and its standard of readings. Al-Bāqillānī further argued that the claim of the missing verses of the Qur’ān, as believed by the Shi‘ites, was also the consequence of the imperfectness of the teachings of Islam.¹¹⁸ This is, however, contrary to the verse of the Qur’ān regarding the completeness of the *Sharī‘a*.¹¹⁹ Al-Bāqillānī stated:

...perhaps, if the Qur’ān has extra verses from what has been revealed (to the Prophet), there will be more duties, which are not only fasting, prayer, and pilgrimage (*ḥajj*)...¹²⁰

Through this statement, it appears that if we follow the Shi‘ites’ arguments, then it could be possible that the teachings of Islam are more than what we have now. The lost verses might also be sources of Islamic jurisprudence which are not solely limited to the obligatory acts; prayer (*ṣalāh*), fasting (*ṣaum*), and giving alms (*zakāt*). This, nevertheless contradicts the verse in *al-Māidah* regarding the perfection of the religion of Islam.¹²¹

In addition, al-Bāqillānī also supported the authenticity of the ‘Uthmānī *Muṣḥaf* from the claim of missing verses dealing with the merits of the twelve *imāms*.¹²²

According to the Shi‘ites, the twelve infallible *imams* reside in the very central

¹¹⁶ Al-Kulainī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, Chapter on Ṣaḥīfah, Jafr, and Jami‘a, no. 6, 1: 171.

¹¹⁷ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 1: 196-198.

¹¹⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 1: 106.

¹¹⁹ Māidah: 3: This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed my favour to you, and I have chosen Islam to be your faith.

¹²⁰ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 1: 106.

¹²¹ Al-Ma‘idah: 3.

¹²² Ibid., 1:110-112.

position.¹²³ The people have no right to invalidate any information except by involving the infallible *imām* (*al-imām al-ma‘šūm*). The *imāms* are required to decide on everything including claiming the authenticity of the Qur’ān¹²⁴ even if their personalities are weak. In responding to such claim, al-Bāqillānī asserted that the infallible *Imāms* are common people who possibly make mistakes. They have not been guaranteed that their intellects is always right rather than erroneous. They are not infallible persons who might lie and forget. Moreover, their existence being the *imām* (*leader*) is also not because of appointment. The category of the *imām* is the one who is knowledgeable, having the ability to lead, and those who have good personal integrity. The *imam* was chosen as *imām* because he is reliable to perform justice and truth in the community. If the *imām* is selected from among the ignorant people, he would not be able to employ his leadership properly.¹²⁵ On the contrary, he would tend to suppress his people. Another argument to reject the Shi‘ites’ claim of the extra verses of the Qur’ān is that it was intentionally done by the Shi‘ites. A contemporary scholar, Ibrāhīm ‘Iwaḍ, has meticulously investigated this claim. According to his analysis, he argued the extra verses comprising both chapters, *al-Nūrain* and *al-Wilāyah*, are impossible to be part of the Qur’ān. Linguistically speaking, the structure of the chapters is far different from the structure of the Qur’ān. The deviated style of the chapters appears within their structures while the chapters of the Qur’ān have different organization. In addition, ‘Iwaḍ also analyzed the chain of transmission and the source of the chapters. With this sort of investigation, he finally concluded that those chapters should be excluded from the Qur’ān.¹²⁶ Therefore, from the aforesaid arguments we can conclude that the Shi‘ites’

¹²³ Ibrāhīm ‘Iwaḍ, *Ṣura al-Nūrain allatī Yuz‘amu Farīq min al-Shī‘a Annahā min al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, (Egypt: Dār al-Zahra al-Sharq, n. y.); W. St. Clair Tisdall, *Muslim World*, “Shi‘ah Additions to the Qur’ān,” vol. 3 (1913), 227-241.

¹²⁴ Al-Kulainī, *Usūl al-Kāfī*, Chapter on the Collection of the Qur’ān, no. 1, 1: 165.

¹²⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *Manāqib al-Aimmah al-Arba‘ah*, 283-284; Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Intiṣār*, 1: 106.

¹²⁶ Ibrāhīm ‘Iwaḍ, Ibrāhīm ‘Iwaḍ, *Ṣura al-Nūrain allatī Yuz‘amu Farīq min al-Shī‘a Annahā min al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, 50.

stance on the inauthenticity of the Qur'ān related to the lost verses regarding the twelve infallible *imāms* and two additional chapters was untrue and false.

Another rejection as al-Bāqillānī stated against the claim of the Shi'ite is that the *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'ān was impossibly eaten by a domestic animal.¹²⁷ In defending the authenticity of the Qur'ān he arguably described the integrity of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They were the earliest generation of Muslims who seriously learned the revelation directly from the Prophet himself. They lived with him for more than twenty years. They sacrificed their lives for the religion of Islam and devoted to spreading the religion all over the place. When they had some problems, they consulted the Prophet (peace be upon him) immediately to solve them. They were really aware that the revelation descending to the Prophet (peace be upon him) were great messages from God to human beings. Furthermore, some of the companions industriously preserved the revelation through writing in their personal collection like Ubay ibn Ka'ab, Ibn Mas'ūd, and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. This kind of preservation was not only from their own initiatives but also the instructions from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to all the companions. During the revelation process, the Prophet asked his scribes to write down every time he received the verses of the Qur'ān. Therefore, the companions had special merits because of their closeness to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and their status as the people of the Qur'ān (*ahl al-Qur'ān*).¹²⁸ It seems from these activities the companions were very careful in collecting and preserving the verses of the Qur'ān. They were meticulously memorized and recorded with special guidance from the Prophet himself. This, however, was contradictory to the claim of the Shi'ites belittled the role of the companions of the Prophet in the history of Islamic civilization.

¹²⁷ The Shi'ites believed that part of the *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'ān have been eaten by domestic animal before its compilation by 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān. See Abū Manṣūr Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Tabarsī, *Kitāb al-Ihtijāj*, (n.c., Intisārāt al-Sharīf al-Ridā, 1960), 1: 203; Muḥsin Faiḍ al-Kashānī, *Tafsīr al-Sāfi*, 1: 17.

¹²⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intisār*, 1: 77-78.

The originality of the Qur'ān could also be viewed through the abrogation (*nāsikh*) and abrogated (*mansūkh*) verses of the Qur'ān. The Shi'ites maintained that certain abrogated verses understood by the Sunnites are not abrogated. The verses are regarded as the missing verses in the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf*. As a result, a number of Islamic teachings were lost, like the practice of the *mut'ah* marriage.¹²⁹ In response to this claim made by the Shi'ites, al-Bāqillānī believed that there are reasons for the abrogation of the verses. He disregarded Shi'ites' claim that all the abrogated verses have the sources become our source of the Islamic jurisprudence revealed after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Shi'ites claimed that they knew the abrogated verses of the Qur'ān become the sources of the *sharī'a*. To them the abrogated verses might be from the *aḥād* narrations. He further argued that the abrogated verses should be based on the agreement of the people through the *tawātur* process. There must be some reasons why the verses were abrogated.¹³⁰

In addition, al-Bāqillānī affirmed that the Muslims could not hide the abrogated verses from the Qur'ān, since Allah, the Almighty, who abrogated them. The companions were trustworthy maintained their truthworthiness about all information they got from the Prophet (peace be upon him) because they were obedient to him. Moreover, the process of abrogating the verses of the Qur'ān occurred during the revelation came down to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Every time the Qur'ān was revealed to him, he delivered it to his companions as well as instructed his scribes to write down the verses.¹³¹ It is impossible for the companions to hide the verses the Qur'ān. If the Shi'ites claimed that their *Imāms* know all the verses of the Qur'ān,¹³² they should give some proofs to support their claim. They came up with forgery

¹²⁹ Abū al-Qāsim al-Mūsawī al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān Fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, (n. c., Anwār al-Huda, 1981), 317-327.

¹³⁰ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Intiṣār*, 1: 114.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 1:110.

¹³² Al-Kulainī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, Chapter on the Collection of the Qur'ān, no. 1, 1: 165; “سمعت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام يقول: ...I heard Abū 'Abd Allāh said: By God, I really know the Book of God from the first until the last as if it was from my palm. Therein information of the heaven and the earth...”

accounts and false verses.¹³³ Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī also maintained the authenticity of the Qur’ān and there was no additional and missing verses. The companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who supported the Prophet (peace be upon him) and spread the religion of Islam Based on the Qur’ān. Some of them sacrificed their lives for the sake of Allah. They emigrated from Makkah to Madina because they obeyed the command of the Prophet (peace be upon him).¹³⁴ There were integrated, sincere, and serious persons in believing in the religion of Islam.¹³⁵ From the aforementioned proofs, we can see that the process of abrogation of the verses of the Qur’ān was by certain conditions, which required approval from the Prophet (peace be upon him). He dictated his scribes to write or abrogate them. Hence, to regard that some verses are missing due to this process, as claimed by the Shi’ites, is baseless because the Prophet (peace be upon him) was also involved in supervising the companions.

4.4.2. His Defense of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Having discussed al-Bāqillānī’s rejection against the claim of the Shi’ite on the authenticity of the Qur’ān, we turn our focus on his elaboration of his arguments against the twelver Shi’ites on the issue of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He clarified some personalities and roles of several significant figures like Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and many more. Those four people were the ones who led the Muslim community after the Prophet (peace be upon him) and played significant roles in preserving the Qur’ān which is still available to the present time.

¹³³ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Intiṣār*, 1: 112.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1: 114.

¹³⁵ Sa’id Yūsuf Abū ‘Azīz, *Ṣuwar wa Mawaqif min Ḥayah al-Ṣaḥāba*, (n. c., al-Maktaba al-Tauqīfiya, n. y.).

The first companion, Abū Bakr al-Siddīq, was the first caliph who was legitimately elected by the Muslim community. After the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him) the people of Madīna or *Anṣār* (helpers) and *Muhājirīn* (immigrants) gathered in a special place called Saqīfah Banī Sa‘īdah. In this place they agreed with the appointment of Abū Bakr as the Caliph. With such agreement, he was validly given the pledge of loyalty (*baiat*) to be the caliph after the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). However, the Shi‘ites accused Abū Bakr of usurping ‘Alī’s right. It was argued that the Prophet (peace be upon him) after the last pilgrimage (*al-hajj al-wadā’*) appointed ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib as his successor. This event was called by the Ghadīr Khum.¹³⁶ Furthermore, as al-Ya‘qūbī stated, the Shi‘ites argued that Ali did not take the pledge of loyalty (*baiat*) to Abū Bakr until six months after his leadership. This shows that ‘Alī disagreed with Abū Bakr’s position. In response to this claim, Al-Bāqillānī argued that a number of people from prominent *Muhājirīn* as well as *Anṣār* companions attended Saqīfah banī Sa‘īdah. Much discussion went on in this forum, and finally they agreed appointing Abū Bakr as the Caliph. This was due to several reasons. He was well-known amongst them; he excelled in many things during the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him).¹³⁷ For instance, his role in accompanying the Prophet (peace be upon him) during their emigration to Madina. This event was interestingly mentioned in the Qur’ān.¹³⁸ Furthermore, regarding Abū Bakar’s personality, it is evidenced by the fact that he was the one who initially embraced Islam as an adult, and a senior companion who was the most beloved by the Prophet (peace be upon him).¹³⁹ In another aspect, he was the one given the title al-Siddīq by the Prophet (peace be upon him) due to his belief in the Prophet (peace be upon him) after performing spritual journey *Isrā’*

¹³⁶ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 1: 136-141.

¹³⁷ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Intiṣār*, 1: 480-482.

¹³⁸ Al-Tawba: 40: ...when they two were (sheltering) in the cave, he said to his companion: “grieve not. Truly Allah is with us...”

¹³⁹ It is narrated in *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī*: ...who is the most beloved people to you? He said: Aisha, I asked: amongst the men?. He said: her father. I asked: and who else?. He said: Umar ibn al-Khattab. Narrated by al-Bukhārī in the chapter on the Merit of the companion. See Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāīl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī*, (Egypt: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2010), no. 4354, 442.

Mi'rāj. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had also married his daughter, Aisha. In terms of his religious devotion, Abu Bakr was the one who devoted himself entirely to the religion of Islām. He gave the whole of his life for God's sake. During the revelation period, he industriously memorized the whole Qur'ān. It was proven by the fact that when he led the *fajr* prayer, he used to recite long chapters of the Qur'ān, which caused 'Umar to remind him that the sun was about to rise at that time. Sometimes he also whimpered during his recitation of the Qur'ān, for he deeply contemplated its meanings.¹⁴⁰ Al-Bāqillānī also illustrated Abū Bakr as the one who used to be asked about religious matters during the absence of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as stated in the *ḥadīth* below:

عن مُحَمَّد بن جبير بن مطعم عن أبيه، قال، أتت امرأة النبي فأمرها أن ترجع إليه ، قالت: رأيت إن جئت ولم أجدك؟ كأنها تقول: الموت، قال: إن لم تجيدين فأتى أبا بكر.

It is narrated from Muḥammad ibn Jubair ibn Mut'im from his father, said: a woman came to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and he instructed her to come again to him. She said: How do you see if I come and I do not find you? As if she said (his) death. The Prophet said: If you do not find me, you can see Abu Bakr.¹⁴¹

From the foregoing evidence, in general, we can analyze that Abu Bakr was the most eligible companion to replace the Prophet (peace be upon him). His loyalty as well as his knowledge about the teachings of Islām have been proven along with his closeness with the Prophet (peace be upon him).

In another place, al-Bāqillānī also clarified the meaning of the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated Ghadīr Khum. In this event he said that:

فمن كنت مولاة فعلي مولاة

¹⁴⁰ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Intiṣār*, 1: 182-184.

¹⁴¹ Narrated by al-Bukhārī in the chapter on the Merit of the companion. See Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, (Egypt: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2010), no. 3659, 441.

When I am patron of anyone, Ali is also his patron.¹⁴²

According to al-Bāqillānī, the word ‘*mawla*’ has many different meanings; helper (*nāṣir*), cousin (*ibn al-‘am*), followers (*al-mawālī*), place (*al-makān wa al-qarār*), freer (*al-mu‘tiq*), neighbor (*al-jār*), relationship by marriage (*al-sihr*), and alliance (*al-ḥilf*). None of these meanings show ‘leader’ (*imām*) who should be respected. All these meanings have been used in several literatures to describe any relevant topics. The same thing to the Prophet’s statement is mentioned above. That hadīth has two possible meanings; the first meaning is ‘helper’. It means that ‘Alī sincerely helped either the religion of Islam or the Muslims. He also sacrificed for the Prophet (peace be upon him) in sleeping on his bed when the Prophet (peace be upon him) emigrated to Madina. Such endeavour shows his totality in helping the religion of Islam. Another meaning of the term ‘*mawlā*’ is ‘the one who is loved’ (*al-maḥbūb*). This meant that ‘Alī was the one whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) loved. So, it means that everyone should respect and love (*yuwallī*) internally and externally.¹⁴³ By analyzing the term *al-mawlā*, we conclude that the relevant meaning is ‘a helper’. It is evidenced by the stated *hadīth* which has appropriately given this meaning.

Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī clarified ‘Alī’s position during Abū Bakr’s appointment as the caliph. When all people gathered at Saqīfah Banī Sa‘īdah to discuss who would be the leader in the Muslim community after the Prophet’s death, ‘Alī was busy settling the Prophet’s burial. After a few days later, he was collecting various parts of the Qur’ān. Unfortunately, at the same time, Fātimah was severely sick he had to take care of his wife. She passed away three months after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Six months after Abū Bakr’s leadership ‘Alī came to him to take pledge of

¹⁴² Narrated by Ibn Mājah, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, ed. Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n. y.), Chapter on the Merit of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, no. 121, 2: 45.

¹⁴³ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Tamhīd*, 486.

loyalty (*baiat*).¹⁴⁴ This indicated that he agreed with Abū Bakr's appointment. He also commented on Abu Bakr's appointment that he will not ask him to stop as well as to resign, "you have been preceded by the Prophet (in prayer), and who can postpone you..."¹⁴⁵ By virtue of these facts, we could claim that 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib personally acknowledged his agreement of Abū Bakr's caliphate even though this was delayed due to several events that forced him to settle.

Through all these aforesaid reports, we can infer that Abū Bakr was a senior companion, who played an important role in early period of Islam. His seriousness in supporting the Prophet (peace be upon him) in spreading the religion of Islam, made him one of the best companions among the Muslim community. Moreover, his instruction to compile the Qur'ān was one of his greatest contributions in Islamic civilization which continues until the present time. It is, however, contradictory to the Shi'ites' accusation against him regarding his leadership of the Muslim community. This sort of claim was also addressed to Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb.

In another place, al-Bāqillānī also clarified the integrity of the second Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb. His role in the history of Islamic civilization was very significant. He was one of the senior companions who converted to Islam before Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emigrated to Madina. Through his conversion, he entrusted his loyalty to Islam. In addition, he was also the one who proposed to Abū Bakr to collect the Qur'ān since a number of memorizers (*Huffāzs*) had become martyrs in the war of Yamamah. It was aimed to preserve the authenticity of the Qur'ān, notably as the main foundation of the religion of Islam. However, such obvious facts were not regarded as true. The Shi'ites viewed 'Umar ibn Khattāb negatively. He was the one who initiatively take pledge loyalty (*bai'at*) to Abū Bakr as

¹⁴⁴ 'Abd al-Waḥīd al-Shaybānī Ibn al-athīr, *Al-Kāmil Fī al-Tārīkh*, , ed. Abū al-Fidā 'Abd Allāh al-Qādī, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1987), 2: 189-190; Majid Ali Khan, *The Pious Caliph*, Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2001), 164-165.

¹⁴⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *Manāqib al-Aimmah*, 321.

the Caliph. Everybody who attended the meeting gave their pledge to him too. He was regarded a companion who did not follow the instruction of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to appoint ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib as his succession. It was evidenced by the report of the Ghadīr Khum, as stated above. Moreover, the Shi‘ites also blamed ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb as the one who tried to poison the Prophet (peace be upon him) before his death. Such attempt led to question his loyalty to Islam especially to the Prophet (peace be upon him).¹⁴⁶ However, according to al-Bāqillānī, this was totally rejected. To him, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb was the second caliph, who was guaranteed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to go to paradise together with nine other companions.¹⁴⁷ He was also the one who devoted his whole life for God’s sake. He sincerely sacrificed all his wealth for the religion of Islam.¹⁴⁸ In another report, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself praised him ‘Umar for his piety, thus, the Devil (*Satan*) was afraid of him, as stated in the report below:

قال رسول الله ﷺ: إيهما يا ابن الخطاب، و الذي نسفى بيده ما لقيك الشيطان سالكا
فجا قط إلا سلك فجا غير فجاك.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: O, the son of al-Khattab! By the one in whose hand my soul is, whenever the devil (*shaitān*) finds you taking path, he only takes a path other than your path.¹⁴⁹

Further argument as to cement al-Bāqillānī’s stance is evidenced by the fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) also bestowed upon ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb by *al-Fārūq*. It was by virtue of the fact that his personality was strong and at the same time he was strict in the teachings of Islam. He could differentiate between the truth (*al-Ḥaq*) and

¹⁴⁶ Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Mas’ūd ibn Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr Al-Ayyāshī*, ed. Hāshim al-Rasūlī al-Mahallatī, (Beirut: Muassasah al-A’lā li al-Matbūāt, 1991), 1: 224; Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Amilī, *Tafsīr al-Burhān: Mir’āt al-Anwār wa Mishkāt al-Asrār*, (Beirut: Muassasah al-A’la li al-Matbu’at, n. y.), 2: 117.

¹⁴⁷ Abū ‘Isā Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā ibn Sūrah, *Sunan al-Tirmīdhī*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Hūt, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n. y.), Chapter on the Merit Abd Rahman ibn Auf, no. 3748, 5: 606.

¹⁴⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *Manāqib al-Aimmah*, 494.

¹⁴⁹ Narrated by al-Bukhārī in the chapter of Glorious Deeds of Umar ibn al-Khattab. See *Sahīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3683, pp. 444-445.

false (*al-Bāṭil*).¹⁵⁰ It was said in some sources that he was knowledgeable in the Qur’ān, Islamic laws, state management and administration, and military strategy. He used to teach the companions of *Anṣār* and *Muhājirīn* in the circle of the mosque on subjects like the Qur’ān, theology, and Islamic laws. His seriousness was acknowledged by a number of companions in accepting information regarding the the Qur’ān as well as the hadīth traditions. Those who had such information were required to come with a witness.¹⁵¹ Moreover, since ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb had deep understanding of the Qur’ān and hadīth, he solved various problems by extracting those sources as part of his *ijtihād*. This attempt shows his ability in applying certain laws. Currently, his method is used by many contemporary scholars as a model to solve certain problems.¹⁵² In general, we can infer from the foregoing arguments that Umar was one of the greatest companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) after Abū Bakr. He had played a significant role in the history of Islamic civilization and contributed a lot of things. All accusations claimed by the Shi‘ites were aimed to belittle his integrity and disregard his contributions. However, they are invalidated by those obvious evidence.

Al-Bāqillānī also defended the third Caliph, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, pertaining his personality and contributions in the preservation of the Qur’ān. This was addressed to reject the criticism of Shi‘ites against him. According to Shi‘ite theologian, al-Mufīd, ‘Uthmān was the one who was responsible in standardizing the Qur’ān but made serious error in the process of this work. It was due to several reasons; a number of compilers possibly forgot some verses of the Qur’ān, hence, they omitted and added verses to the Qur’ān. They also had little knowledge of the Qur’ān, which could cause their works to be inaccurate. Obviously, this was within their intellectual capacity. In addition, they

¹⁵⁰ It is narrated in the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): *إن الله جعل الحق على لسان عمر و قلبه*: “Indeed, Allah has placed truth upon Umar’s tongue and heart”. See *Sunan Tirmidhī*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Hūt, Chapter on the Merit of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb, no. 3682, 5: 576.

¹⁵¹ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 1: 186-188; Majid Ali Khan, *The Pious Caliphs*, (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2001), 83-84.

¹⁵² Muḥammad Rawwās Qal‘ajī, *Mausū‘a Fiqh ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb*, (Kuwait: Maktaba al-Falah, 1981).

were also uncertain in doing their project. This was evidenced by the fact that they produced invalid *muṣḥaf*.¹⁵³ On the contrary, al-Bāqillānī proved that this fact was invalid. He illustrated based on a number of reports that ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān was one of the earliest people who embraced Islam. He was the one who migrated to Ethiopia for about two months, due to great suppression from the Quraish people. This was in the early period of Islam in Makkah when the Muslims were small in number. Furthermore, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān was one of the few Muslims of Makkah who could write beautifully. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) entrusted him as one of his scribes of revelation.¹⁵⁴ With such a position, it helped him to learn a lot of things from the Prophet (peace be upon him). He habitually read the Qur’ān till midnight. Until the time he was murdered, he was reading the Qur’ān.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, in the history of Islamic civilization, it is obviously well-known that ‘Uthmān had contributed to safeguard the originality of the Qur’ān. He was the one who instructed to rewrite the *muṣḥaf* preserved by Abū Bakr and multiplied it into a number of copies. Having done this project, he distributed them to different places like Kūfah, Baṣrah, Makkah, and Syria. He sent those *muṣḥafs* together with its readers from among the trustworthy companions to teach the Qur’ān to the people in that place. The rest of the *muṣḥafs* which were not similar to his *muṣḥaf* should be burnt. This endeavour was his great contribution to Islamic civilization. In this respect, he standardized the Qur’ān saving authenticity from any error. Such an attempt was also supported by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. He commented to other companions that if he became the Caliph, he would do the same thing with that *muṣḥaf*.¹⁵⁶ This acknowledgment is also recorded in another place, as narrated below:¹⁵⁷

لا تقولوا في عثمان إلا خيرا : فوالله ما فعل في المصاحف إلا من ملأ منا جميعا ،

¹⁵³ Al-Mufīd, *al-Masāil al-Sarawīyah*, 77-79.

¹⁵⁴ Muhammad Mustafa Azami, *The History of the Quranic Text: From Revelation to Compilation*, Leicester: UK Islamic Academy, 2003), 94.

¹⁵⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intisār*, 1: 189-190.

¹⁵⁶ Ibn Abī Dāūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, 1: 206.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

“Do not say about ‘Uthmān except positive thing. By Allah, he did what he did with these fragments in the presence of us all (and non of us objected).”¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, in terms of his personality, Uthmān ibn ‘Affān also had wonderful characteristics. He was a pious companion who devoted his life for God’s sake. Even though he was one of the richest companions in Madina, his generosity was superb. He donated a lot of money to the Prophet (peace be upon him) for the Muslim people.¹⁵⁹ It was also evidenced by the events, when he was a Caliph, he did not receive his monthly salary, instead, he donated his own money to the Muslim people to utilize.¹⁶⁰ He also bought a well which was sincerely provided for the Muslims to benefit from it. It seems from these events that he was a very notable man in the Muslim community and devoted to the religion of Islam, who contributed his life and wealth to support the spread of Islam. Therefore, it was no wonder that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to talk about the guarantee for him to enter paradise.¹⁶¹ All these evidence invalidate al-Mufīd’s claim¹⁶² about ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān as the third caliph.

Al-Bāqillānī further clarified about the last Caliph, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and his great credibility amidst the companions. He elucidated that ‘Alī at certain level, had high intellectual achievement. Based on some reports, he stated that ‘Alī was one of the companions who was an expert in the Qur’ān. A companion, Abū ‘Abd Rahmān al-Sulāmā, testified on that ‘Alī was a very knowledgeable man on the subject of the Qur’ān. He knew the *qirā’āt* (readings), the meanings and interpretations of the verses

¹⁵⁸ The translation of this hadīth is modified by Azami, yet, his quotation on this hadīth is different in several words. See in Muhammad Mustafa Azami, *The History of the Quranic Text: From Revelation to Compilation*, Leicester: UK Islamic Academy, (2003), 94.

¹⁵⁹ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā’il al- Ṣaḥāba*, ed. Was Allāh ibn Muḥammad Abbās, (Makka: Markaz al-Bath al-Ilmī wa Iḥya al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1983), 513.

¹⁶⁰ Majid Ali Khan, *the Pious Caliph*, (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2001), 150.

¹⁶¹ Abū al-Ḥusain Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qusairī al-Nisābūrī, *Ṣaḥīh Muslim*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), Chapter on the Merit of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, no. 2403, 2: 446-447; Abū ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā’il al- Ṣaḥāba*, ed. Was Allāh ibn Muḥammad Abbās, (Makka: Markaz al-Bath al-Ilmī wa Iḥya al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1983), 514.

¹⁶² Al-Mufīd claimed that ‘Uthmān has personal problematic background during his instruction to compile the Qur’ān. See his *al-Masā’il al-Sarawiyah*, 77-79.

of the Qur'ān, its complexity and ambiguity, and other related knowledge.¹⁶³ Moreover, another companion also commented on 'Alī regarding his character. To him, he had great personality which was reflected his whole life. He was a generous person, who used to donate his wealth to the poor people around him. Therefore, in this condition he used to practise the *zuhd* tradition.¹⁶⁴ He also had close relationship with the Prophet (peace be upon him). This is evidenced by the fact that he married the Prophet's daughter, Fātimah, who passed away three months after her father's death. In another position, 'Alī himself was the Prophet's nephew and the youngest person who first embraced Islam.¹⁶⁵

It seems from these obvious facts, that those acknowledgements of 'Alī by the companions did not excessively praise him as common person. It was absolutely contradictory to the notion of the Shi'ites. They believed 'Alī was the best man in the world, even comparable to the Prophets. The *Ulū al-'Azm* Prophets were better than him, yet, 'Alī was even considered better than Yūsuf and other Prophets.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, 'Alī was regarded as the one who knew everything. He knew the whole knowledge belonging to the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Every time the Prophet (peace be upon him) received revelation from the Angel Gabriel he passed this information to 'Alī. However, according to al-Bāqillānī, these doctrines are baseless and invalid.¹⁶⁷ 'Alī was a common companion who had not reached to the level of Prophethood. The guarantee of the prophethood did not mean lifting his status to that particular position. He was a man, who sacrificed a lot for Islam. His life had been sincerely given for the religion. He was regarded as one of the greatest persons, at the

¹⁶³ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 1: 193.

¹⁶⁴ 'Abd al-Wahīd al-Shaybānī ibn Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, ed. Abū al-Fidā 'Abd Allāh al-Qādī, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1987), 2: 264-265.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 1: 191.

¹⁶⁶ Al-Mufīd, *Tafḍīl Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, ed. 'Alī Mūsā al-Ka'bī, (Qum: al-Mu'tamar al-Alami Li alfiah al-Shaikh al-Mufid, 1992), 19, and 32-33.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 1: 107-108.

similar level with other senior companions of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), who was also guaranteed entry into paradise.¹⁶⁸

In addition, according to al-Ghazālī, to respect ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib as well as the earlier caliphs, we need to view the sequence of their caliphates as indicating their merits (*fadl*) and superiority. Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, and ‘Alī were great companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Historically, the first was elected by the Muslims since he was regarded the best among the companions and the closest person to the Prophet (peace be upon him) followed by the second, third, and fourth caliphs.¹⁶⁹ However, we can conclude from these historical events that the four caliphs had their own positions which placed them based their own merits. This does not mean to prioritize Abū Bakr and belittle the others, but to do justice by putting them in their proper positions.

Al-Bāqillānī also clarified three other important figures Zubair, Ṭalhah, and ‘Aisha who involved in the *Jamal* war (*ḥarb al-jamal*). They agreed upon rallying Muslims to go to Basra to demand ‘Alī to investigate the murder of ‘Uthmān. According to al-Mufīd, due to their attempt to protest regarding the mentioned issue, the Shi‘ites considered them as infidels. As a result of that case, Allah fought them.¹⁷⁰ Conversely, al-Bāqillānī rejected such claim from the Shi‘ites. The Muslims in Mecca including ‘Āisha did justice by investigating ‘Uthmān’s assassination. This problem had caused chaos among the Muslims. Therefore, Zubair, Ṭalhah, and ‘Āisha demanded that ‘Alī to settle this crucial matter. Their involvement in the rally was an attempt to deal with the stability of the Muslim community. According to al-Bāqillānī, their endeavour was an independent reasoning (*ijtihād*). If they were correct, they would get two

¹⁶⁸ Abū ‘Isā Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā ibn Sūrah, *Sunan al-Tirmīdhī*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Hūt, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.y.), Chapter on the Merit of ‘Abd Raḥmān ibn ‘Auf, no. 3748, 5: 606.

¹⁶⁹ Muḥammad Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī, *al-Iqtīṣād Fī al-I’tiqād*, ed. Inṣāf Ramaḍān, (Beirut: Dār Qutaiba, 2003), 172-173.

¹⁷⁰ “...I heard the Prophet said to Ali: ‘Allah will fight to those who fight you, and assault to those who assault you. Aisha asked to the Prophet, peace be upon him, ‘o Prophet, who did fight and assault him.?’ He replied: ‘you and those who with you, you and those who with you.’” See Al-Mufīd, *al-Kāfi’ah Fī Taubah al-Khāti’ah*, 36.

rewards, otherwise, they would get one reward from Allah, the Almighty.¹⁷¹ This was the common thing done by some scholars who tried to resolve the problems of the Muslims, even if they failed to do so. Regarding their integrity, the three companions were special persons who had been guaranteed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to enter paradise.¹⁷² They struggled and worked their lives for the sake of God. Zubair and Ṭalḥah were also amongst the best companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him).¹⁷³ In addition, in terms of the teachings of Islam, ‘Aisha was one of the most prolific narrators of the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (peace be upon him). She was a very knowledgeable woman whose authority was recognized by other companions. For example, ‘Umar asked her about the account of the dead people who were punished in their graves due to the continuous wailing of their families. She clarified that what was said by the Prophet (peace be upon him) was the dead people punished in their graves because of their sins, not for their families wept for them.¹⁷⁴ We can analyze that Zubair, Ṭalḥah, and Aisha were trying and attempting to resolve the problems of the Muslims by their independent reasoning (*ijtihād*). Based on their intellectual capacity and loyalty to the religion of Islam and to the Prophet (peace be upon him) they seriously supported the unity and intended to make peace amongst the Muslim community by finding the murderers of ‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān.

Al-Bāqillānī also extended his clarification on Ibn ‘Abbās, the nephew of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In the history of the companions, he had been accused of making mistakes in dealing with ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. A Shi‘ite scholar, al-Tūsī, reported in his book that ‘Alī prayed to Allah to curse and make Abd Allāh ibn Abbās blind

¹⁷¹ Al-Bāqillānī, *Manāqib al-Aimmah*, 65-68.

¹⁷² Abū ‘Isā Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā ibn Sūrah, *Sunan al-Tirmīdhī*, no. 3748, 5: 606.

¹⁷³ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, Chapter on the Book of the Merit of the companions, no. 3718-3724, pp. 449-450.

¹⁷⁴ Muhammad Zubair Siddiqi, *Hadīth Literature: Its Origin and Development*, ed. Abdal Hakim Murad, (Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society, 1993), 21.

because he had stolen something from the *Bait al-māl* brought to Mecca.¹⁷⁵ In rejecting this claim, al-Bāqillānī argued through the relationship between the Prophet and the family of ‘Abbās as well as their integrity. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) loved and respected the family of ‘Abbās so much. He sometimes made *do‘ā* (prayer) for him as well as his family. In addition, this family also supported the Prophet (peace be upon him) in preaching Islam to the Quraish people. During the Conquest of Makkah (*Fatḥ Makkah*), he was invited by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to stand beside the Ka‘ba to demolish the statues.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, his son, Ibn Abbās, in his early age had been specially prayed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) that Allah may make him a knowledgeable person. This is well-known in the history of Islam.¹⁷⁷ Ibn ‘Abbās grew to be a genius commentator of the Qur’ān. This occurred through long process of studying the Qur’ān and the Islamic laws under supervision of the Prophet (peace be upon him).¹⁷⁸ During the rule of Caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb, Ibn ‘Abbās was one of the intellectuals whom the caliph used to ask the meanings of some verses of the Qur’ān. His commentaries of the Qur’ān had also been compiled by later commentator called by *Tanwīr al-Miqbas min Tafsīr Ibn ‘Abbās*.¹⁷⁹ Hence, we can conclude from these evidence that the claim of al-Tūsī on ‘Alī’s prayer for Ibn Abbās is invalid. His critique of Ibn Abbās seemed to exaggeratedly disparage his integrity.

Even al-Bāqillānī had not mentioned other companions like Anas ibn Mālīk, yet many other Sunnite scholars had defended him as one of the authoritative narrators of *hadīth*. From the Shi‘ite’s perspective, as al-Tūsī (d. 460 H/1066 C.E.) reported, during the Ghadīr Khum event, Anas ibn Mālīk did not acknowledge the appointment of

¹⁷⁵ Al-Tūsī, *Rijāl al-Kāshī*, Chapter on ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abbās, no. 7, 63-64.

¹⁷⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *Manāqib al-Aimmah*, 407.

¹⁷⁷ This prayer has been reported by a number of narrators with slightly different terms: اللهم فقهه في الدين و علمه التأويل. See in Abū ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Fada’il al-Qur’ān*, (1983), 1: 846; Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, Chapter on Ibn Abbās, no. 3756, 453; Abū Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Chapter on the Merit ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abbās, no. 2477, 2: 481.

¹⁷⁸ Muḥammad Ajjāj al-Khatīb, *al-Sunnah qabl al-Tadwīn*, (Egypt: Maktaba Wahbah, 1963), 376-377.

¹⁷⁹ See in Abū Ṭāhir Ya‘kūb al-Fairūz Zabādī, *Tanwīr al-Miqbās min Tafsīr Ibn Abbās*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n. y.)

Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) of ‘Alī. Hence, as a result, ‘Alī prayed to Allah to make him blind and a leper.¹⁸⁰ This act was very difficult to be accepted by the Sunnites, due to several reasons. The claim that Anas’s rejection to take pledge of loyalty (*bai‘at*) to ‘Alī and make him pray to Allah to make him blind and a leper was questionable. Such account is only available in Shi‘ites sources of which their validity was not reliable. In contrast, al-Nasā‘ī reported the narration on Anas stating that he was the one who used to pray many times more than what others did. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew this matter, he even prayed for him.¹⁸¹ Basically, Anas ibn Mālik was the one who served the Prophet (peace be upon him) since his early age. He assisted the Prophet (peace be upon him) for many years right after his migration to Madina until his death. He also grew in milieu while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was alive. This condition made him familiar with the Prophet’s life as well as his sayings. Further, he served the Prophet (peace be upon him) for about ten years, his knowledge on *ḥadīths* was very copious. He could narrate the *ḥadīth* of more than two thousand sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which placed him as the third companion who was among the most prolific *ḥadīth* narrators, after Aisha and Abū Huraira.¹⁸² Moreover, during the period of Caliph Abū Bakr, Anas was also entrusted as a tax-collector in Bahrain. This indicated that he was capable in administrating the state,¹⁸³ which stressed on his integrity in being one of the special companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The aforementioned reports prove the invalidity of the report by al-Tūsī regarding ‘Alī’s prayer to Anas ibn Mālik.

In conclusion, the foregoing discussion gives us obvious illustration of the role of some of the main companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), especially the companions who had been criticized by the Shi‘ites. These reports definitely reject their

¹⁸⁰ Al-Tūsī, *Rijāl al-Kāshī*, 52; “... اللهم إن كان كتمها معاندة فابتلها فاعم البراء و البرص قدما أنس بن ملك...”

¹⁸¹ “Oh my God, give him wealth and child, and bless him... اللهم ارزقه مالا و ولدا، بارك له...”. See in Abū Abd. Rahmān Aḥmad ibn Shu‘aib al-Nasā‘ī, *Faḍa‘il Ṣaḥāba*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1984), 56.

¹⁸² Muhammad Ajjāj al-Khatīb, *al-Sunnah Qabla al-Tadwīn*, 472-473.

¹⁸³ Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Hadith Literature: Its Origin and Development*, 20.

claims which are baseless and invalid. The accusations are found exaggeratedly formulated within their sources, influencing their thoughts on some companions of the Prophet and the seven variant readings of the Qur'ān.

4.4.3. Al-Bāqillānī's Stance on the Seven Variant Readings of the Qur'ān

One of the intellectual heritages in the history of Islamic civilization is the seven variant readings of the Qur'ān. They are continually learned by Muslims since the Prophet's time until today. According to Sunnite sources, the *ḥadīths* that elucidate the seven variant readings are valid based on *mutawātir* information narrated by a number of narrators in every stage, that gives no doubts regarding their authenticity.¹⁸⁴ However, the Shi'ites negated the *ḥadīths* on the seven variant readings. They rejected all reports accepted and agreed by the Sunnites.¹⁸⁵ The Shi'ites further opined that the seven variant readings of the Qur'ān did not exist in the history of Qur'anic revelation, since the Qur'ān was only revealed in one reading to the Prophet. In other aspects concerning the seven variant readings, a number of Orientalists were also involved in research on this matter.¹⁸⁶ They promoted several claims which raised some of problems in the study of the Qur'ān.¹⁸⁷ However, all those matters were contradictory to the mainstream Sunnite perspective. This group had different principles on viewing the variant readings of the Qur'ān and its causes, as represented by al-Asharite figure, al-Bāqillānī.

Al-Bāqillānī, as a defender of Sunnite views, rejected the claims of the Shi'ites.

His arguments were also relevant to reply Noldeke's notion regarding the invalidity of

¹⁸⁴ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 1: 77-85.

¹⁸⁵ Thamem Ushama, *Issues in the Study of the Qur'ān*, 261; al-Imām Al-Khū'ī, *al-Bayān Fī al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, (n. p.: Anwār al-Hudā, 1981), 240-248; Ja'far Murtaḍo al-Āmilī, *Ḥaqāiq Hamah Haula al-Qur'ān*, (n. c., al-Markaz al-Islāmī Li al-Dirāsāt, 2010), 150-154; Muḥammad Ḥusain Alī al-Saghīr, *Tārīkh al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Dār al-Muarrikh al-Arabī, 1999), 95-120.

¹⁸⁶ Theodor Noldeke, *The Sketches From Eastern History*, trans. John Sutherland Black, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1892), 27; Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an: the Old Codices*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1937), ix-x.

¹⁸⁷ See the previous discussion of the Orientalists' notion on the history of the Qur'an.

the variant readings. The Shi‘tes who accused that the *ḥadīth* of the seven variant readings were forgeries done by its narrators. They relied this doctrine on several accounts as reported by al-Kulainī and al-Sayyārī.¹⁸⁸ This information continued for later scholars in contemporary times. Conversely, al-Bāqillānī maintained that the variant readings of the Qur’ān were real and transmitted in the *mutawātir* category.¹⁸⁹ This was evidenced by the fact that many reliable *ḥadīths* elucidated this matter which was narrated by a number of companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), two of which are mentioned below:

Jibril came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, ‘Allah has commanded you to recite to your people the Qur’ān in one *harf*. Upon this he said, ‘I ask for Allah’s pardon and forgiveness. My people are not capable of doing it’...¹⁹⁰

Historically speaking, the seven variant readings occurred along with the Prophet’s deliverance of the verses of the Qur’ān to the companions.¹⁹¹ He taught them verses not only in one single reading, but following the process of learning, he also recited them on the variant reading of those verses. As a matter of fact, Caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb has ever brought Hisham before the Prophet (peace be upon him) to clarify his recitation since he heard different reading recited by Hishām.¹⁹² Hence, by analyzing these aforementioned reports, we can conclude that the variant readings of the

¹⁸⁸ Al-Kulainī, *Uṣūl Al-Kāfi*, Chapter on the Book of Nawādir, no. 13, 2: 824; Abū Abd Allāh Aḥmad Muḥammad ibn al-Sayyārī, *Kitāb al-Qirā’āt aw al-Tanzīl wa al-Tahrīf*, ed. Etan Kohlberg, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2009), 6-7.

¹⁸⁹ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 2: 338-340.

¹⁹⁰ Abū al-Ḥusain Muslim al-Hajjāj, *Ṣaḥīh Muslim*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1993), chapter on the Seven Variant Readings, no. 861, 1: 274 and 362.

¹⁹¹ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 2: 339.

¹⁹² Bukhārī reported on the authority of Umar ibn al-Khattab who said: “I heard Hisham reciting Surah al-Furqan during the lifetime of the Prophet and I listened to his recitation noticed that he recited it in different ways (dialecets or tunes) which Allah’s Apostle had not taught me. So I was on the point of attacking him in salah; but I waited till he finished his prayer and then I seized him by the collar and said: Who you this surah, which I have heard you reciting? He replied: The Prophet taught it to me. I said: you telling a lie. By Allah, Allah’s Apostle taught me (in different way) this very surah, which I have heard you reciting. So, I took him to Allah’s Apostle and said: O the Apostle of Allah; verily, I heard this person reciting surah al-Furqan in a way (sound or mode) that you did not teach me, and you have taught me Surah al-Furqan. The Prophet said: O Hisham, recite! So he recited in the same way as I heard him recite before. On that, the Prophet said: It was revealed to recite in this way. Then the Prophet said: Now you recite Umar, and I recited it as the Prophet has taught me. Then the Prophet said: It was sent down like that. Then the Prophet added: Verily the Qur’ān has been revealed to be recited in seven different ways, so recite of it what is easier to you.” See in Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīh Bukhārī*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Lahore: Kazi Publication, 1986), no. 561, 6: 482.

Qur'ān are valid and true, even though the Shi'ites and Orientalists claimed otherwise. However, some other Shi'ites scholars however agreed that the variant readings (*qirāāt*) of the Qur'ān also exist and should be learnt like a commentator al-Tabarsī. In this stance he did not deny it. He further asserted that we can practise them in our recitation.¹⁹³ Therefore, we conclude from these reports that the origin of the seven variants reading were originally approved by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and validly transmitted by the companions to the later period.

In other places, al-Bāqillānī defended the variant readings of the Qur'ān against the principle of Shi'ism which asserted that those variant readings were only the *ijtihād* of the readers (*qurrā'*). Such belief was by virtue of the fact that the Qur'ān was actually revealed in one reading, and the divergence merely on account of the different transmitters as maintained by the Shi'ites.¹⁹⁴ So the status of the *hadith* of the variant readings is questioned. Nevertheless, al-Bāqillānī rejected this notion. He argued alternatively that the hadīths on the variant readings are basically *mutawātir*.¹⁹⁵ This report is narrated by a large number of people who impossibly consented upon a lie. Thus, in the variant readings of the Qur'ān there were a number of companions involved in transmitting this account like 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Hurayra, Abū Bakr, Abū Jahm, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Abū Talḥah al-Anṣārī, Ubay ibn Ka'b, Zaid ibn Arqām, Samra ibn Jundub, Salmān ibn Surat, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Auf, Amr ibn Abī Salmā, Amr ibn al-Aṣ, Muadh ibn al-Jabal, Hishām ibn Hakīm, Anas ibn Mālīk, Huzaiifa and Umm Ayyūb (the wife of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī).¹⁹⁶ As a matter of fact, those companions impossibly agreed upon errors and

¹⁹³ Abū 'Alī al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Tabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, (n. c., Dār al-Ulūm, 2005), 1: 10-11.

¹⁹⁴ It was narrated by Zurara from Abu Ja'far, he said: verily, the Qur'ān is one, it was revealed by One to one single (Prophet), yet, its difference only on account of different transmitters." See in al-Kulainī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, 824; Abū 'Abd Allāh Aḥmad Muḥammad ibn al-Sayyārī, *Kitab al-Qira'at aw al-Tanzil wa al-Tahrif*, ed. Etan Kohlberg, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2009), 6-7.

¹⁹⁵ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intisār*, 2: 353-361.

¹⁹⁶ Muḥammad 'Abd al-Aẓīm al-Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-Irfān Fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), 1: 139.

forgeries. There are number of people who narrated from different paths.¹⁹⁷ They finally referred to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Furthermore, it is to be noted too that those companions were considered trustworthy and reliable men by hadīth scholars. Their characters have been testified by Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him)¹⁹⁸ and they have been guaranteed to go to paradise.¹⁹⁹ Hence, this information is valid and reliable to prove the seven variant readings of the Qur’ān.

Al-Bāqillānī also argued that the variant readings were a means through which Allah bestowed upon His mankind blessings for reciting the Qur’ān. This is very crucial, due to the fact that humans have different tongues, speeches, and ethnicities. By virtue of the variant readings, people would be helped to read and pronounce the Qur’ān correctly. Conversely, as al-Bāqillānī argued, if the Qur’ān was merely revealed in one reading, people would have serious problems to recite the Qur’ān. They would be illiterate, since they find difficulties in uttering the verses. However, such case would weaken the Muslims in learning their main foundation in religion. During the earlier period of Islamic history, people faced a number of different challenges from the Quraish people whose their Arabic rethorics as well as poetry were highly proven in terms of their quality.²⁰⁰ Hence, to articulate the correct sentence and precise word, someone should be fluent (*faṣīḥ*), otherwise, they would make in several mistakes by mispronouncing some words during their recitation. As a result, the verses of the Qur’ān would lose their meanings.

In addition, al-Suyūṭī, in elaborating this notion, opined that the differences in the readings of the Qur’ān were aimed to ease the Muslims and to multiply the rewards from Allah, the Almighty for those who seriously attempt to recite the Qur’ān following

¹⁹⁷ Abū al-Ḥusain Muslim al-Hajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1993), Chapter on the Seven Variant Readings, no. 270-274, 1: 360-362.

¹⁹⁸ M. Mustafā Azami, *Studies in Hadīth Methodology and Literature*, Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, (2002), 78-79.

¹⁹⁹ Abū ‘Isā Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā ibn Sūrah, *Sunan al-Tirmīdhī*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Hūt, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n. y.), Chapter on the Merit of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Auf, no. 3748, 5: 606.

²⁰⁰ Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 2: 348-350.

the readers (*qurrā'*) as well as other disciplines in reciting the Qur'ān. By virtue of these endeavours, the readers are able to conclude and infer the meanings of the verses and produce laws (*aḥkāṃ*). They could also protect the authenticity of the Qur'ān from alteration and addition done by erroneous readers.²⁰¹ Moreover, the argument for the variant readings of the Qur'ān could also be analyzed from the dispute between 'Umar and Hishām regarding their reading during their prayers. 'Umar was well known amongst the companions as very stern in accepting the Qur'ān from anyone. Those who utter the Qur'ān should come with two witnesses to testify his reading. This case delineates a valuable lesson (*ḥikmah*) that any difference in the recitation of the Qur'ān does not mean to generally reject all variant readings revealed by the Angel Jibril to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Yet, it is the medium from Allah to facilitate upon human beings in order to understand His messages.²⁰² This sort of defense towards the seven variant readings is also stated by a number of scholars before and after al-Bāqillānī's period.²⁰³

Several experts on the Qur'ān also defended the principle of the variant readings of the Qur'ān. Its sources are valid and *mutawātir*. Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324 H/936 C.E.), one of the earliest scholars in *qirā'āt*, stressed the requirement that the readers of the Qur'ān should follow the earlier scholars. It is evidenced by the fact that Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed us to read the Qur'ān based on what we have learnt from earlier scholars.²⁰⁴ This was reflected in what has occurred in the history of Islam when the *muṣḥaf* sent to Madina, Mecca, Kūfa, Baṣra, and Shiria were taught by the authoritative earlier readers of the companions of the Prophet (peace be

²⁰¹ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān Fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n. y.), 1: 84.

²⁰² Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Intiṣār*, 2:350.

²⁰³ Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-Sab'ah Fī al-Qirā'āt*, ed. Shauqī Daif, (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1972); Abū Ubayd al-Qāsim, *Faḍāil al-Qur'ān*, ed. Marwan al-Atiyya, (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, n. y.); Muḥammad Fakh al-Dīn al-Rāzī ibn al-Allāma ḍā al-Dīn 'Umar, *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 1; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān Fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n. y.); Abū Bakr al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi' li Aḥkāṃ al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risalah, 2006).

²⁰⁴ Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-Sab'ah fī al-Qirā'āt*, 47.

upon him) and proceeded to be transmitted to the pious followers.²⁰⁵ Abū Ubayd al-Qāsim (d. 224 A. H/838 C.E.) also cemented Ibn Mujāhid’s account with a slightly different text. In this respect, he elucidated that he viewed a number of readers (*qurrā’*) reciting their reading to some experts of the Qur’ān in order to protect the Qur’ān from both addition and deduction.²⁰⁶ Hence, they left all unreliable variant readings. To follow the recitation of earlier readers is compulsory since no one can speculate with his own reading.²⁰⁷ Moreover, al-Rāzī (d. 606 A. H/1290 C.E.), an Ash‘arite theologian after al-Bāqillānī (d. 403 H/1013 C.E.), asserted too that the reading of the Qur’ān should be based on the *mutawātir* report. Allah, the Almighty, has chosen from His servants to become the readers whose role is to preserve and select the variant readings. Those trustworthy readings are reliable accounts that should be practiced by a reader while the untrustworthy ones were *aḥad* reports which must be ignored.²⁰⁸

Hence, the above arguments are also relevant to answer the claim of Orientalists represented by Goldziher and Jeffery,²⁰⁹ who stated the main cause for the different variant readings were the dotless scripts in the earlier compilation of the Qur’ān where every reader can read based on the context. However, those Orientalists ignored the very significant tradition of Islam which is the ‘*isnād* system’ (oral transmission) through which the Qur’ān was narrated by a number of authoritative readers. This was common practice during the period of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the companions who used to sit together in one circle (*ḥalaqah*). They listened to the Prophet’s hadīth and narrated to others who were unable to join that meeting.²¹⁰ According to al-Bāqillānī, the seven variant readings of the Qur’ān had appeared in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It was known by a number of companions.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 49.

²⁰⁶ Abū Ubayd al-Qāsim, *Faḍāil al-Qur’ān*, 359.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 378.

²⁰⁸ Fakh al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*, 1: 70-71.

²⁰⁹ Ignaz Goldziher, *Mazāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, 8-9; Arthur Jeffery, *Materials History For the Text of the Qur’an*, ix-x.

²¹⁰ M. Mustafa Azami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*, 46.

The Prophet read verses which were easy to help them in learning the Qur'an. He himself did not decide to which meaning the seven word as stated in his prophetic tradition.²¹¹ Hence, this information was in the *mutawātir* category narrated by a number of authoritative narrators in different periods. The *mutawātir* account is narrated by so many people that it was impossible for them to lie.²¹² The above claim that Goldziher stated that the main cause for the different variant readings were the dotless scripts in the earlier compilation of the Qur'an is invalid. Many Arabic sources report that Abū al-Aswād al-Du'ālī (d. 69 A. H/688 C.E.) was the one who initiated the systematization of the study of the Arabic language through its grammatical structure, including its diacritical forms, under the instruction of Caliph 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib,²¹³ after he heard several people read the Qur'an incorrectly.

Moreover, some contemporary scholars also supported the earlier stance on the validity of the seven variant readings of the Qur'an. They rejected the claim of the Shi'ites that the variant readings were merely individual judgment (*ijtihād*) of the reciters (*qurrā'*).²¹⁴ This rejection absolutely cemented al-Bāqillānī's stance regarding his defense of the variant readings. According to al-Zarqānī, the notion that the variant readings were solely individual judgment of the reciters was baseless since those readings were still available in the 'Uthmānī *mushaf*. Number of jurists (*fuqāhā*), reciters (*qurrā'*), and theologians (*mutakallimūn*) agreed upon this notion. Consequently, this also allows us to believe that the companions consented upon the standardization of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān in which he rewrote his *mushaf* from Abu Bakr's collection that comprised of the seven variant readings. In this respect, the 'Uthmānī *mushaf* also consisted of the same content taught by the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet

²¹¹ Abū al-Ḥusain Muslim al-Hajjāj, *Ṣaḥih Muslim*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1993), chapter on the Seven Variant Readings, no. 861, 1: 274 and 362.

²¹² Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Intiṣār*, 1: 336.

²¹³ Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad Ibn Ishaq ibn Muḥammad ibn Ishaq, *The Fihrist ibn Nadim*, ed. Bayard Dodge, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 88; *Encyclopedia of Islam: new edition*, "nahw", 913-914.

²¹⁴ Muḥammad 'Abd al-Azīm al-Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-'Irfan Fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 1: 168; Thamem Ushama, *Issues in the Study of the Qur'ān*, 254-258.

(peace be upon him).²¹⁵ Hence, it seems from the aforementioned evidence, we can conclude the claim that the variant readings of the Qur’ān which were only the endeavour of the readers (*qurrā’*) is an invalid argument.

Al-Bāqillānī also preponderated his stance on the meaning of the seven variant readings. A Number of scholars differed in understanding the term *sab’ah aḥruf* which has close meaning related to its context. The word *ḥarf* linguistically has different meanings; “extremity, sharp edge, border, edge, rim, brink, verge, dialect, word, and mode.”²¹⁶ Yet, the term *sab’ah aḥruf* in the context of the hadīth of the seven variant readings could be inferred in different understandings. Some said it concerns command (*amr*), prohibition (*nahyn*), information (*khobar*) and seeking of information (*istikhbār*). Some people maintained that it comprises seven aspects of the name of Allah (*asmā Allāh*). Other held it is permissible/*halāl* (thing), prohibited/*haram* (thing), command, prohibition, advice, story, and character. Some people believed in an other meaning of this term which denotes different languages. The last notion is that some believed it deals with seven aspects of variant readings. Al-Bāqillānī tended to choose the last one. He elucidated that *sab’a aḥruf* (seven aspects) indicates seven differences in the readings; difference in word order (e.g., *وجاءت سكرة الموت بالحق وجاء سكرة الحق بالموت*), difference in reading the addition and omission of the word (e.g., *وما عملت أيديهم وما عملته*), difference in reading the words formed by different words as well as meaning (e.g., *أيديهم*), difference in reading the words which alter their meaning and do not change their consonantal outline (e.g., *نُنشِرُها نُشِرُها*), difference in reading the words which change their consonantal outline not their meaning (e.g., *بالْبُخْلِ*), difference in reading the words as well as meaning (e.g., *كَالصُّوفِ كَالعَيْنِ*), difference in desinential inflection (*i’rab*) and vocalization of the word (e.g., *بَعْدَ بَعْدٍ*). This view was also quoted by al-Qurtubī in his *al-Jāmī’* in elucidating the seven aspects (*wujūh*) of

²¹⁵ al-Zarqānī, *Manāhil al-‘Irfan Fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, 1: 168.

²¹⁶ E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, (Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society, 1984), 1: 550.

variant readings. In this work, he seemed agreed upon al-Bāqillānī's notion regarding this matter, and even praised him as one of the authoritative earlier experts of this field.²¹⁷ Hence, through the analysis of the foregoing facts, we can conclude that the seven variant readings of the Qur'ān most probably mean the seven aspects of the Qur'ān.

Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī also criticized all the above meanings of *sab'ah aḥrūf* except one, which is the means seven aspects (*sab'a wujūh*). It is evidenced by the fact that the statement in the hadīth of 'Umar obviously stated: 'فاقرؤوا كيف سنتم و اقرؤوا منه ما تيسر (so recite of it what is easier to you)'. The hadīth of 'Umar as well other accounts regarding the variant readings do not clearly deal with various matters, and neither gives any choices like the word *haram* instead of *halāl*, information (*khabar*) instead of seeking of information (*istikhbār*), promise (*wa'd*) instead of threat (*wa'īd*), parable (*tashbīh*) instead of hope (*al-tamannī*), advice, story, and character.²¹⁸ This rejection also addressed the Shi'ites' notion on the meaning of *sab'ah aḥrūf*²¹⁹ as they believed its meaning refers to seven dialects. Therefore, al-Bāqillānī stressed that the term *sab'ah aḥrūf* indicates the different aspects of the process of the descending of the Qur'ān as mentioned above.²²⁰ From the foregoing evidence, we conclude that the Qur'ān is authentic. It was narrated by trustworthy companions in *mutawātir* category. Those people were reliable persons who also transmitted the seven variant readings that are continuously preserved to the present time.

²¹⁷ Al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, 1: 77-80.

²¹⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Intiṣār*, 2: 380.

²¹⁹ The Shi'ites interpreted the meaning of *sab'ah aḥrūf* in *majazī* way, which based their interpretation on the internal and external meaning. See previous page their views on the Variant Readings of the Qur'ān.

²²⁰ Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Intiṣār*, 2: 376.

4.5. Concluding Remarks

From the foregoing discussion, it appears both the early Shi'ites and Ash'arites have their arguments pertaining to the issue of the authenticity of the Qur'ān. The Ash'arites, as represented by al-Bāqillānī, have argumentatively responded to the Shi'ites' claims and disproved their views on the *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'ān. Therefore, we can conclude that the 'Uthmānī *muṣḥaf* is authentic and reliable. The Qur'ān is complete because Allah has safeguarded it in the hearts of Muslims since the very beginning of its revelation until its completion. The early Shi'ites and Orientalists doubted the completeness of the Qur'ān. However, one authoritative early Shi'ite scholar, al-Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, absolutely believed that the Qur'ān is authentic too.²²¹ Hence, their claim is invalidated. The same thing applies to another topic on the integrity of the companions, their arguments against them have been disproved by al-Bāqillānī. All their claims in the Sunnites mainstream theological discourse are considered innovations and deceptions.

²²¹ Muḥammad Abū Zahra, *al-Imām al-Ṣādiq Ḥayātuh wa Asruh Āra'uhū wa Fiqhuh*, (Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, n. y.), 321-333.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Having discussed theological issues related to the Qur'ān and scrutinizing al-Bāqillānī's thoughts in response to those problems, we can summarize certain significant findings concerning his thoughts and role in the history of Islamic theological discourse. In this field too, we are able to investigate his contributions in developing the Ash'arite theology, whose formulation he attempted to elaborate. He also promoted his own ideas to refute a number of theologians from various schools of thought namely the Mu'tazilites, the anthropomorphists (*Mujassima*) and the Shi'ites. From these three groups, we can analyse how strong and relevant his theological formula was. Therefore, we would like to summarize the main points of this study.

It appears from our foregoing chapters that al-Bāqillānī's theological method in his process of argumentation was based on the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, and rational argument. In responding to any theological issue, he described the problem in which he attempted to rebut by analyzing the core of the matter. He investigated through his examination of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. He relied his arguments on the two revealed sources together with his explanation concerning the issue and its relationship. It is therefore very crucial to scrutinize his thoughts through both sources because they are the main foundations of Islamic theology. The Qur'ān is the first source of the principles of Islam while the *ḥadīth* is its explanation and they were delivered by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Besides relying on the Qur'ān and the Prophetic tradition, al-Bāqillānī also relied his analysis on rational argument. In this respect he used both analogy and Arabic linguistic rules to present his argumentation. Hopefully this could describe al-Bāqillānī's theological position in the problem of the createdness of the Qur'ān, anthropomorphism, and the originality of the Qur'ān.

Al-Bāqillānī confidently rejected the createdness of the Qur'ān as believed by the Mu'tazilites. He refuted against the interpretations of a number of verses and *ḥadīths* which the Mu'tazilites used to depend for their belief in the createdness of the Qur'ān. Al-Bāqillānī proposed his own views regarding all aspects related to the concept of speech. He stated his definition, division, characteristics, and even how God's speech was addressed to His prophets. Regarding his views on the speech of God, Al-Bāqillānī believed that the Qur'ān by nature is uncreated. It is the speech of God ascribed to His essence. God also has other attributes like seeing, willing, hearing, living and knowing. He defined speech as meaning that exists in the soul, expressed by these articulated sounds and arranged letters. This is contradictory to the definition of the Mu'tazilites who stated that the speech is merely sounds and words. This definition was also applied to the speech of God. To reject this notion, al-Bāqillānī 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 instruments such as tongues, lips, throats, letters, and sounds. We can infer that al-Bāqillānī's definition was more comprehensive than that of the Mu'tazilites. The speech which is only limited to the arrangement of letters and sounds, and solely 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 in speech is left, simply changed by the will as well as the intention. Someone may speak whatever he intends and wills to say, yet the meaning sometimes does not exist in the speaking. If we follow the Mu'tazilite's definition, consequently, we may equate between God's speech and human speech which is unacceptable.

In addition, al-Bāqillānī's theological arguments are also relevant to refute the contemporary Orientalists' views, notably their study on the issue of the createdness of the Qur'ān. They stated that this topic is also associated with the doctrine of Christianity

relating to the Christian Logos. This was the word of God through which He incarnated into a person, Jesus of Nazareth. Hence, the divine Logos became the human flesh. This incarnation was aimed to save human beings in their lives in this world. Al-Bāqillānī strongly criticized this notion. He explained that God is eternal (*qadīm*), while Jesus is originated. He questioned how could the eternal incarnates with the originated one? If that God could incarnate into His creation, He could also contradict it. All these activities are contradictory to the nature of His attributes. 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 into human beings, it means that the flesh of Jesus was able to turn into different status; half human and half divine, which is impossible for him. He further elucidated that the flesh and blood were always originated (*muḥdath*) even if they were embodied by the word of God (Logos) which is eternal. The same thing for His word, al-Bāqillānī questioned why it was still eternal even if it was personified in the body of Jesus? He concluded that this notion should be invalidated. Furthermore, in another place, al-Bāqillānī also elucidated his concept of God and human's speech in contrast with the concept of the Christian word (Logos). These speeches are different in their nature. The former is pre-existent while the latter is originated. Their roles are also distinct. According to him, the speech of God is meaningful (*muḥdath*). It is addressed to those present addressee and the absent one. It is delivered to his Prophets and become the main guidance for human beings to reflect upon them. This word is eternal in its nature. In contrast, the speech of human beings is also meaningful, having certain characteristics but it is originated.

Further findings from this study indicate al-Bāqillānī's highlights on his critique on anthropomorphism. Al-Bāqillānī criticized their definition on the speech of God.

They affirmed that God speaks through His sounds and words which are similar to the speech of human beings. Those sounds and words are eternal in their nature. They did not differentiate between them. As a result, this principle might cause an investigator to conclude the eternity of the creature too. However, it is impossible that God has two contradictory attributes at the same time. In addition, al-Bāqillānī also criticized the Anthropomorphists' affirmation on the other aspect that God's speech is considered eternal, while the poem (*saj'*) is the originated thing. The Quranic recitation of someone is considered as eternal, whereas when he recites the poem his recitation is thought to be originated. Those activities have different categories depending on the object of recitation. However, in response to this notion al-Bāqillānī stated such belief is problematic because their statement is inconsistent. They mixed between the eternal and the originated in one object (*ḥulūliyya*). Based on such ideas, this consequently invalidates the existing *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'ān which we have. Our *muṣḥaf* is written in words and recited by a reader, thus it is originated. That recitation is not the Qur'ān, the eternal one. Therefore, what we have is not the Qur'ān revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which is also eternal. Hence, we do not have the eternal verses of the Qur'ān, and this is absolutely impossible, since, all the teachings of Islam rely on it. Through this argument, it seems he denied anthropomorphism by disapproving its weakness in combining the eternity and the createdness.

Another notion is al-Bāqillānī's critique againsts the concept of body (*jism*). He asserted that this concept is disconnected to God. It is impossible that He has composed materials due to several reasons. If He has body which comprises many organs, then those parts of bodies should have space and activity. Those organs will make contact with each other depending on their necessity through that space. To him, those spatial bodies would precisely be inhere in substrate. These organs somehow are contradictory to the eternity of God, which is spaceless. The claim that God has parts of bodies is

likening Him, the Creator, with His creatures as a result of which, it leads us to believe that He is originated by virtue of His spatial bodies, and this is contradictory to the Islamic theological mainstream.

Furthermore, we obtain al-Bāqillānī's denial against the notion that God has corporeal body. It has organs together with their own properties. These attributes could be knowing and powerful, and at the same time they may also have contradictory attributes; unknowing and unpowerful. In addition, those parts of the body may also have different number of properties. This leads to confusion as to which one of these organs is being God because not every part has divine attributes. Conversely, if every organ of that body has those properties, then, as a consequence, it also illustrates that God is more than one. This is the same thing with what is believed in Christianity which maintains the Concept of Trinity. Furthermore, the spatial bodies are also contradictory when some parts of the body can move while the others are unmoved. Their movements, however, do not completely work. It seems al-Bāqillānī's rejections against the Anthropomorphists' claim show several consequences. The idea that God has a physical body means that it is created from a number of things since that is the substance of the body. In addition, it could also be inferred that it has accident (*'arad*) and essence (*jawhar*) for its space and activity. Their routines also occur to be contradictory. The corporeal attributes of God is self-evident, that it is not God because it has a lot of weaknesses.

Al-Bāqillānī's refutation against anthropomorphism is also shown through his analysis of the *mutashābihāt* verses of the Qur'ān. He analysed different verses in which he commented that God's seat on the throne is not similar to His creatures. He believed that the throne has neither space nor place because God is continuously exists. In addition, al-Bāqillānī also elaborated his thought pertaining to the abbreviated letters (*al-Aḥruf al-Muqatta'ah*) whereby he rejected that the speech of God is in the form of

words. According to him, there are a number of chapters prefixed with those letters, scattered throughout the Qur'ān in different places. Many commentators either Mu'tazilite or Ash'arite, like al-Zamakhshārī and al-Bayḍāwī, have interpreted them differently, yet their meanings are not clearly known by all readers. Some of their interpretations stated that the Qur'ān is eternal by virtue of those letters. However, al-Bāqillānī denied such notion because it has a consequence that the speech of God is solely manifested in the words.

Al-Bāqillānī responded too to *ḥulūliyya*. He promoted a number of arguments to reject their notion which maintained that the speech of God may embody into human beings. They argued that since the pre-existent attributes have certain possibilities to personify into creatures, they may change, move, develop, and even fill the void. These activities is prove that God's speech might be fused into human beings but it is unknown which one is belong to God and which to His creatures. He then clarified the meaning of the Prophet's saying, "don't travel to the land of the enemy carrying the Qur'ān." This *ḥadīth*, according to al-Bāqillānī, delineated that the companions should not go to the enemy's place carrying the *muṣḥaf*. This is also supported by the last statement of that saying "afraid of its (the Qur'ān) loss and preserved to their hands". It does not mean that the speech of God which is eternal would move from the land of the Muslims to the land of the enemies. This codex is termed by the Qur'ān, due to its content. This is in conformity with the other relevant report of the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding his prohibition to touch the Qur'ān unless we are in pure condition. In other words, al-Bāqillānī attempted to illustrate the position of the Qur'ān and its status as elucidated in that *ḥadīth*. He argued that the codex should be preserved in the Muslim society, because it is their holy scripture. The Muslims know very well its value, hence, they respect it by not touching it without having ablution.

Another argument, as al-Bāqillānī asserted, is that many Arabic structures have certain hidden words which should also be understood properly following the meaning of the content of the text. It could be analysed from the above *ḥadīth*, “do not travel and you bring the writing of the Qur’ān,” which means that we are not allowed to bring the Qur’ān when we are in particular place where many non-Muslims stay. Al-Bāqillānī added further proof by illustrating that a memorizer of the Qur’ān has memorization in his heart. It is clear that this case does not indicate that God’s speech, which infuses into His body, is a kind of the unity between human and God. However, the Prophet himself did not forbid them to travel to the land of the enemy. Only, he was worried that the codex that mentioned the verses of the Qur’ān would be taken over from the hand of the Muslims to their enemies. It could be inferred that it is impossible that the eternal thing infuses into the originated matters.

Al-Bāqillānī further elaborated his proof to deny the union of God into His creatures which resulted from his analysis of relevant *ḥadīths* of the Prophet (peace be upon him). One of them is the Prophet’s statement that the Qur’ān is cannot be burned when it is written on skin. In response to this information, he attempted to infer with different possibilities. Firstly, he said that this only occurred during the life time of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), and that it was his miracle which was specially granted by Allāh to show his prophethood. It was only proven in his time, because no one was able to do that other than him. In addition, as a Prophet, he also had other miracles to empower his status amongst his people like the ability to split the moon by his hands. This sort of inimitability, however, no longer exist after he died. Furthermore, according to al-Bāqillānī, this *ḥadīth* may also elucidate the merit of the memorizers of the Qur’ān. The memorization belongs to those who have memorized it in their hearts, and saved them when they make contact with fire. Hence, they cannot be burned. The same thing happened to Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace on him) who was thrown

into the fire after he was found guilty by his people. Therefore, it seems from the foregoing arguments based on his understanding of those two different reports, al-Bāqillānī strongly maintained that those who memorized the Qur’ān would be safe from the hell fire. His skin would not be burned, due to the intercession of the Qur’ān. Al-Bāqillānī also presented the Qur’ān cannot be burned when it is written on the skin or any other stuff. He clarified that the Qur’ān is truly mentioned on them, which does not incarnate as if it is a uniting body to other elements. This is the same thing for those people who try to write one of the names of God on any space which can be thorn, burned, and drowned. Their writings, colors, and all other aspects would be damaged, yet, the real thing stated in that space is Allāh, the Almighty, which is eternal in nature. Therefore, the idea of the union of God with His creatures is invalidated.

Al-Bāqillānī’s arguments are also valid to refute the Orientalists’ support of the practice of the *ḥulūliyya*. Their appreciation of this doctrine is employed by those Anthropomorphist *ṣūfīs* due to their union of the soul with experience of bliss to express their love for each other on this earth. In another place, it is also claimed that this practice is similar to the core doctrine of Christianity. God has incarnated into His creature, Jesus, to show His union between divinity and humanity. This similarity, perhaps, makes him appreciated such concept. However, to this notion, al-Bāqillānī responded by addressing a question on how the speech of God, which is only one, could unite with human beings’ flesh and blood. It is impossible that His attributes are combined with a number of human attributes. This sort of principle is even worse than the belief of Christianity. He criticised, according to this religion, their theologians who held that only one pre-existent word (*kalimah*) was combined with one body of Jesus, until his body has the attributes of God (*lāhūt*), and at the same time it also has humanity aspect (*nāsūt*) from the side of Maryam. The combination of the eternal

existence with the originated one is like the perfect mixture between water and milk. Hence, he rejected this views.

Furthermore, this study also finds al-Bāqillānī's principle in rebutting the early Twelver Shi'ites who claimed that the Qur'ān is incomplete. He gave many arguments to clarify a number of issues related to the mentioned claim. Historically speaking, al-Bāqillānī explained the process of how the Qur'ān was compiled by Abū Bakr and preserved in his house. After that, 'Uthmān also instructed the compilation of the Qur'ān in the form of the *muṣḥaf* which was also agreed by 'Alī ibn Ṭālib. Al-Bāqillānī maintained that 'Alī's *muṣḥaf* was not different from the *muṣḥafs* collected by some companions. The *muṣḥaf* of 'Alī also comprised the same verses as others. It was evidenced by the report of Ibn Shihāb that 'Alī said that he did not have any book except the book of God called by *ṣaḥīfa*, which hung on his sword. By virtue of this fact, al-Bāqillānī disproved the Shi'ites' claim about incompleteness of the Uthmānī *Muṣḥaf* and their version of the *Muṣḥaf* of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Furthermore, al-Bāqillānī also showed his defense to the perfect compilation of the *muṣḥaf* employed by Uthmān. He criticized the Shi'ites' view on principle that only their *Imāms* possessed the complete verses of the Qur'ān as reported by al-Kulainī in his collection. It is said that no one could claim to have collected the whole of the Qur'ān in a book form as it was revealed. If anyone could come up with such a claim, he is a liar. No one would be able to collect this Holy Book and memorize it except 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the *Imāms* after him. According to al-Bāqillānī, this was an exaggerated account because the authenticity of the above narrative was essentially untrue. He believed that this information was only produced by the Shi'ites to assert that their version of the Qur'ān was the only valid *muṣḥaf*, while, the other *muṣḥafs* belonging to their opposite groups were not authentic.

Another finding on al-Bāqillānī's refutation against the claim of the Shi'ites is that the *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'ān was eaten by a domestic animal. To him, this is absolutely rejected. In defending the authenticity of the Qur'ān he arguably maintained the integrity of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Those people were the earliest generation of Muslims who seriously learned the revelations directly from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. They lived with him for more than twenty years. They sacrificed their lives for the religion of Islam and were devoted in spreading this religion all over the place. Every time they had a problem, they would consult the Prophet (peace be upon him) immediately. They were really aware that the revelations that revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) were great messages from God to human beings which were unchallenged by anybody in this world. Furthermore, some of those companions industriously preserved the revelations through memorizing and writing them as their personal collection like Ubay ibn Ka'ab, Ibn Mas'ūd, and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. This kind of preservation was a fact not only from their own initiative, but also firm instructions from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to all companions. During the descending of revelations, he used to ask a number of his scribes to write down what was revealed. Therefore, those people had special merits because of their closeness to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the status of the people of the Qur'ān (*ahl al-Qur'ān*). It seems from these facts that the companions were very careful in collecting and preserving the verses of the Qur'ān. They meticulously memorized and recorded in their writings, which were specially guided by the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. This, however, was contradictory to the claim of the Shi'ites who belittled their role in the history of Islamic civilization.

Al-Bāqillānī's thought is also relevant to respond to contemporary Orientalists' claim on the unoriginality of the Qur'ān because of political reasons. Michael Cook, a British Orientalist, concluded that a single *muṣḥaf* existed in the history of Islam,

indicating that it was due to the authority of the state. Al-Bāqillānī responded against such claim long before the claim appeared. It is proven by the fact that during the process of its compilation, Uthmān's instruction to burn all personal collection of the *maṣāḥif* of the Qur'ān, and commanded the Muslims to solely rely on his *muṣḥaf* was aimed to preserve the Qur'ān and its reading standard. He further argued that the claim of missing verses of the Qur'ān as believed by the Shi'ites as well as the Orientalists also resulted in the imperfectness of the teachings of Islam. This is, however, contradictory to the verse of the Qur'ān regarding the completeness of the *Sharī'a*. Through this obvious argument too, we can conclude that it would be possible that the teachings of Islam are more than what we have now. A number of lost verses might also become sources of the Islamic jurisprudence which are not only limited to these obligatory acts; prayer (*ṣalāh*), fasting (*ṣaum*), and giving alms (*zakāh*). This, nevertheless denies the verse in *al-Mā'idah*: 3 regarding the perfection of Islamic laws.

Al-Bāqillānī was an important successor of his teachers in the Ash'arite theology who laid down the logical premises and presented the significance of the notion of metaphysical principles in theological discourse. He was praised by Ibn Taymiyya for his endeavour in developing the Asharite principle by saying "the best of the Ash'arī *Mutakallimun*, having no competitor by any predecessor or successor." It is proven to certain extent his thoughts has impacted to al-Juwaynī. This is known through his acknowledgment that he had memorized the whole content of *al-Taqrīb* and he attempted to summarize it in *Kitāb al-Talkhīṣ*.

Al-Bāqillānī is one the Ash'arite followers. His theological position on the Ash'arite school is the most acceptable one in the great majority of Muslim community. This school takes the middle position between the Anthropomorphists (*Mujassima*) and the Mu'tazilites in which the former emphasized more on the application of the literalist approach in understanding the statements of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, while the latter

affirmed the more pronounced rationalistic method. The Ash‘arite theological position stands between those schools which apply 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. This school was established by Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī after his conversion to mainstream theological position, away from Mu‘tazilism. The elaboration of the details of the theological position of the school was done by later scholars of the mainstream discourse. During his life, al-Bāqillānī actively participated in various polemics facing his adversaries coming from various groups such as naturalists, astrologers, dualists, Magians, Christians, Jewish scholars, and Mu‘tazilites. Having studied about his thoughts as presented in this work, the present researcher concludes that he had deep and vast knowledge on Islamic theology, the Qur’ān, *ḥadīth*, rethorics and so on. He also played a significant role in developing the metaphysical foundation of the Ash‘arite school. Future research should focus on his thoughts in various other domains.

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