

What Is God's Speech (*Kalāmullāh*): Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī's Philosophical Solution to A Theological Disagreement

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ABSTRACT

Centuries after the *mihnah*, the problem of the status of the Qur'an and God's speech in general persisted as a crucial theological problem discussed among Muslim theologians. This study examines the solution to this debate suggested by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), an Ash'arite-Shafī'ite theologian, with special reference to his book *Khalq al-Qur'an Bayn al-Mu'tazilah Wa Ahl al-Sunnah*. It aims principally to discuss how al-Rāzī responds to the objections from his opponents on the nature of God's speech, its uniqueness, and its pre-eternity. This research found that despite his affiliation to Ash'arite school, al-Rāzī took a more moderate position towards the Mu'tazilah compared to his predecessors. He accepts the argument of the Mu'tazilah school that is built on the different conceptions of speech (*kalām*). We also found that the main key to understanding the debate between the pre-eternity or adventitiousness of God's speech, including the Qur'an, derived principally from the definition of speech itself. Rāzī does not reject the createdness of the external dimension of God's speech, but he defends that its inner dimension (*kalām al-nafs*) is eternal. Furthermore, al-Rāzī also does not hesitate to borrow the falsafa theory to solve the problem of the pre-eternity of *kalām* as God's attribute.

Keywords: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Kalām* (speech), *Muḥdath* (being originated), *qadīm* (pre-eternal), Qur'an

INTRODUCTION

In the course of a mission to conquer Byzantium in 218/833, al-Ma'mūn, the seventh caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, sent an emissary to the governor of Baghdad, Ishaq b. Ibrāhīm to test (*imtahana*) the scholars and judges for their opinion on the Qur'an. Whoever refuses to agree with the caliph's opinion that the Qur'an is created (*makhluq*) will incur the death penalty on the charge of polytheism (*shirk*).¹ Al-Ma'mūn's rationale and motives have been extensively discussed among scholars. Some argue that the *mihnah* was aimed at fighting the Puritan groups, while others conclude that the incident was an attempt by al-Ma'mūn to regain religious authority. There is also another thesis that states that the founder of *Bayt al-hikmah* was influenced by the rationalist group Mu'tazilah, so he adopted the doctrine of createdness of the Qur'an (*Khalq al-Qur'an*).²

The doctrine of *khalq al-Qur'an* itself was not unknown to the theologians at the time. It was first introduced during the late period of the 'Umayyad dynasty by a theologian, Ja'd b. Dirham.³ Soon, this doctrine was broadly adopted in the Mu'tazilite circle before it was imposed to be the official doctrine of the 'Abbaside Dynasty under the caliph al-Ma'mūn to the early day of al-Mutawakkil.

Although the *mihnah* lasted no more than 17 years, it heavily amplified the existing debate on the createdness of the Qur'ān among the theologians, which persisted for centuries later. In the beginning, these theologians disputed on the question of whether the Qur'ān: its letters (*ḥurūf*), and voices (*aṣwāt*) are pre-eternal (*qadīm*) or created (*makhlūq*).⁴ The Mu'tazilite, on the one hand, argued that the Qur'ān is created, while the traditionalists led by the heroic Ahmad b. Hanbal, on the other hand, defended the idea that the Qur'ān is God's eternal speech. These two doctrinal positions were shortly challenged by Ibn Kullāb (d. 241/855), who introduced the doctrine *kalām al-nafs* (speech that subsists in self) to distinguish between *kalāmullāh* as God's permanent attribute and its realization.⁵ For him, *kalām* is one of God's essential attributes (*ṣifat al-nafs*) that subsists in Him eternally, and not the letters nor the voices.⁶ This position influenced Abū l-Hasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935), founder of the Ash'arite school and later Ash'arite theologians.⁷

This study aims to discuss the later phase of the aforementioned debate between the partisans of Mu'tazilite school and Ash'arite school, represented by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210).⁸ Both sides accept that the letters and the voices of the Qur'ān are not eternal. The problem, nevertheless, lies in the status of God's speech (*kalām Allāh*), including the Qur'ān as one of its manifestations. Al-Rāzī, inherited from Ash'arite doctrine, holds the idea that *kalām*, as the divine entitative attribute, is eternal. The Mutazilites, opposingly, reject the idea of the eternity of God's speech and the presence of entitative attributes. The question I intend to answer is how al-Rāzī defends the doctrinal position of his school in this theological debate.

The concept of God's speech in Islamic theology has been the subject of many previous studies. One example is Josef van Ess in his seminal four-volume book, *Theology and Society*.⁹ In this work, Ess traces the development of this doctrine among early Muslim theologians. The introduction of the *falsafa*, especially in the post-Avicenna period, profoundly shaped the way theologians discussed this issue. Al-Rāzī is one of the most representative examples of the development of this trend.¹⁰ Several works have been on this very specific topic, including those by Fatemi and Khademi.¹¹ We share their argument about the influence of Avicennian philosophy in Al-Rāzī's argument on this issue. However, we have gone further in this work by providing details on the subject, especially the unity of God's speech.

To conduct this research, we mainly refer to al-Rāzī's book *Khalq al-Qur'ān bayn al-Mu'tazilah wa Ahl al-Sunnah*.¹² The book is likely taken from a chapter of his *Arba'īn fī Usūl al-Dīn*,¹³ a book that was written in a relatively late period of his intellectual career.¹⁴ The book is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the essence of speech, and the second part discusses God's attribute *kalām* and the status of the Qur'ān as its manifestation. In this book, al-Rāzī mainly discusses Mu'tazila's doctrine of the adventitiousness (*hudūth*) of God's speech and his rejection of this position. The book is concise but contains the principal argument of al-Rāzī on this subject.

The author of this book, Abū 'Abdallāh Muhammad b. 'Umar b. Al-Husayn Fakhr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī was born into a family of the shāfi'ite-ash'arite religious elite in Rayy in 1149. His father was a preacher (*khatīb*) from whom he obtained the kunya of Ibn al-Khaṭīb. He was a very bright child. His father was his first tutor with whom he learned the Shāfi'ite and Ash'arite doctrines. He then studied philosophy with Majd Al-Dīn al-Jilī and *fiqh* with Kamāl al-Simnānī. Al-Rāzī's intellectual activity began when he wrote books on theology and his commentary on Avicenna's *Ishārāt wa l-tanbīhāt*.¹⁵ From there, al-Rāzī was influenced by philosophy both in terms of his thinking and in terms of the way he formulated his arguments in his works.¹⁶ Al-Rāzī was obsessed with the systematization of arguments that, to a certain degree, surpassed those of the philosophers.¹⁷ Al-Rāzī's tendency to be very critical in his arguments resulted in him being considered to have a harsh and aggressive character towards his opponents.¹⁸

This assessment is based on his short autobiography entitled *Munāẓarāt* (debates), in which he invited local scholars to debate in Transoxiana.¹⁹ It also explains why he was repeatedly expelled from some regions he visited.²⁰

The discussion of *kalāmullāh* by al-Rāzī is intellectually appealing for two reasons. First, al-Rāzī is known as one of the most influential Sunni theologians after al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). According to some scholars, he is the first theologian who managed to systematically combine theology and *falsafa* in his arguments on theological issues.²¹ This tendency can be observed from al-Rāzī's use of the Avicenna theory of distinction between necessary existence (*wājib al-wujūd*) and possibly existence/²² contingent (*mumkin al-wujūd*) to explain the eternity of God's attribute, including speech. Secondly, even though al-Rāzī claims to be a member of the Ash'arite school, he does not hesitate to contradict the opinion of his predecessors and accept his opponent's argument.²³ In general, his doctrine of God's speech was influenced by his predecessors, but in some details, al-Rāzī tried to refine and surpass the arguments of his predecessors using the methodological and theoretical tools that had reached him. I argue in this study that al-Rāzī's solution to this problem of *kalāmullāh* is based on his ability to reframe the theory of *kalām al-nafs* (the speech that subsists in self) that had been developed in the Ash'arite circle in the Avicennan contingency-necessity distinction.

B. The Concept of Speech (*kalām*)²⁴

What is *kalām*? The definition of this notion has created many debates between grammarians and theologians throughout the history of Islam. For both of them, the term is crucial. The grammarians generally define it as a complete (series) of sounds, beneficial (for hearer) (*aṣwātan tāmmatan mufidatan*).²⁵ The word "beneficial" in this context is best understood as "giving a perfect understanding for hearer" which corresponds perfectly to the definition given by Sībawayhi (d. 180/796), "what can be followed by silence" (*mā yaḥsunu l-sukūt 'alayhi*) and "what has no need of something else" (*mā yastaghni 'an ghayrihi*).²⁶ He thus gives an example that the phrase "'Abdullāh akhūnā" ('Abdullāh is our brother) is a *kalām* while a verb without subject is not.²⁷

Mu'tazilite theologians define *kalām* in the way the grammarians do. Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Basrī (d. 436/1044), a prominent Mu'tazilite theologian, for example, defines this term as "a composition of audible and specific letters whose meaning follows a convention" (*mā intaẓama min al-ḥurūf al-masmū'ah, al-mutamayyizah, al-mutawādi' 'alayhā fī l-ma'ānī*).²⁸ Along the same vein, Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār (d.415/1025) understands this term as "a composition of specific, understandable letters which contains at least two" (*niẓām makhṣūṣ min hādhihi al-ḥurūf al-ma'qūlah, ḥaṣala fī ḥarfayni aw ḥurūf*).²⁹ *Kalām* cannot be a single letter for both of them because there will be no composition (*intizām*). It must be audible or uttered. Therefore, a written text cannot be considered as *kalām*. The term *mutamayyiza* or *makhṣūṣ* in this context means that *kalām* distinguishes itself from the voices of animals. These specific letters are created to represent a specific meaning. Therefore, there must be a convention (*waḍ'*)³⁰ that leads these specific letters to be informative (*mufid*).

Kalām differs from *qawl*. Ibn Jinnī (d. 392/1002), a grammarian probably affiliated with the Mu'tazilite school, asserts that *kalām* is equivalent to the term *Jumla* (sentence).³¹ It is thus more specific than *qawl* because for Ibn Jinnī *qawl* means "all the words spoken by the tongue, whether complete or incomplete".³² *Qawl* can be used to designate thoughts (*ārā'*) and professions (*itiqādāt*),³³ such as *qawl* Imām Mālik (the thought or doctrine of Imām Mālik), which is not the case for *kalām*. Ibn Jinnī, like other Mu'tazilite theologians, underlines the importance of the act of speaking as one of the distinctive characteristics of *kalām*.

The Mu'tazilites theologians seem to adopt this definition consistently. For them, this definition of *kalām* could be applied to both humans and God.³⁴ Al-Rāzī perfectly understands this position. He even borrows the definition of *kalām* proposed by Abu l-Husayn al-Basrī in his *uṣūl fiqh* work, *Al-Maḥṣūl fī 'Ilm Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, by adding that the letters must be pronounced by a single capable person (*qādir wāhid*).³⁵ Al-Rāzī also argues that *kalām* is an informative sentence (*jumla mufida*), and it ceased to be so, as Ibn Jinnī argues, even when it loses its element or is added by an element.³⁶ However, unlike the Mu'tazilite theologians, he clearly distinguishes this definition of *kalām* from the concept of *kalām al-nafs*, which characterizes the Ash'arites school in this matter.

Indeed, the theologians are never solely interested in the definition of human speech. The only reason why they discuss this question is due to their interest in understanding God's speech. The invention of *kalām al-nafs* is also an effort to explain *kalām* as God's eternal attribute. A prominent Ash'arite theologian, Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) argues that there are two ways in describing that a man is speaking: firstly, using the letters and voices and secondly, using *kalām al-nafs*.³⁷ To distinguish these two, he thus gives an example of the word *qum!* (Stand up!) is an utterance (*ladz*) that denotes a meaning. *Kalām* is thus the meaning denoted by this utterance.³⁸

Following Al-Ghazālī's line of reasoning, al-Rāzī explains that the distinction between *kalām lisānī* and *kalām al-nafs* lies in the separation of quiddity (*māhiya*) and utterances (*alfāz*) of the speech. The quiddity of demand (*amr*), for example, according to al-Rāzī, "is not concerned with the change of time and space, while the word that designates this meaning transforms depending on these last two".³⁹ The linguistic difference also implies using different words to designate the same *signifié* (*madlūl*).⁴⁰ Even in the same language, a word can mean different things when used in a different context. Al-Rāzī provides another example for this argument. He says that the word "do!" (*if'al*) would be neither a request for an order, except in a context where this expression is pronounced.⁴¹ Thus, we need a specific moment for this expression to become an order. The other argument is the presence of a real speech (*kalām haqīqī*) explained by al-Rāzī as follows:

"It is said that the saying "*ḍaraba, yaḍribu*" [to strike] is information while the sayings "*iḍrib*" [strike!] and "*lā taḍrib*" [do not strike!] are respectively, an order and a prohibition. If those who invented these sayings (*wāḍi'in*) reversed the rules by saying that the sayings "*ḍaraba, yaḍribu*" are order and prohibition in the same way that the sayings "*iḍrib, lā taḍrib*" are information, all that would be undoubtedly possible and acceptable. On the other hand, if they said that the essence of information could be transposed to the essence of demand and vice versa, all that would be absurd".⁴²

The true definition of the speech, i.e., its quiddity, according to al-Rāzī, is a real and essential speech that does not need human convention (*lā yaḥtāju ilā l-waḍ' wa l-iṣṭilāḥ*),⁴³ therefore it cannot be transposed.⁴⁴ It is not the utterance or the sound we listen to but the one that subsists in self (*al-qā'im bi l-nafs*). Thus, all ideas that subsist in self, whether pronounced or not, could be considered as speech. Furthermore, al-Rāzī also distinguishes *kalām al-nafs* from conceptualization in self (*taṣawwur fil-nafs*) because the latter always depends on the language used.⁴⁵

The Mu'tazilites, on the contrary, defend the idea of an uninterrupted connection between speech and its meaning that subsists in self. For them, the realization of ideas that subsist in self to voices and oral expression is an indispensable element of speech. The speech that subsists in self (*al-kalām al-qā'im bi l-nafs*) is no more than "knowledge and perceptions attained by men and forged in their soul using the expressions and utterances".⁴⁶ This kind of speech, according to the Mu'tazilites, must be determined by oral expression.⁴⁷ Consequently, a man who does not speak Arabic, for example, cannot have the Arabic expression in his soul.

C. The utterance (*lafz*) and the meaning (*ma'nā*)

Another crucial aspect of the speech that has a significant consequence in defining the speech is the relation between the utterance (*lafz*) and its meaning (*ma'nā*). For Mu'tazilite scholars, the utterance of speech represents the knowledge (*'ilm*) of its speaker or his will (*irāda*).⁴⁸ Consequently, according to them, God's speech is the manifestation of His Knowledge and Will.⁴⁹ For this reason, al-Rāzī needs to explain that the verbal demand (*ṭalab*) is not the manifestation of the will, and the information (*khābar*) does not denote the knowledge of its speaker.

According to al-Rāzī, the utterance of the speech does not always represent the reality of a thing. On the contrary, it is related to what subsists in the mind.⁵⁰ Firstly, it is because of the limit of the human sensory organ to perceive the reality of things accurately. This limitation will often lead human beings to the wrong judgment of reality. Therefore, this judgment is based on mental activity rather than the physical activity of the sensory organ. Secondly, al-Rāzī gives us an example of the eternity of the world: everyone can have different opinions on that. It means that human opinion does not necessarily correspond to extra-mental reality.

These two arguments show that al-Rāzī emphasizes the subjective value of the mental judgment on reality. Man will subjectively judge what he perceives through his sensory organs and then pronounce his judgment by creating the sounds during the act of speaking. Thus, words and sensory organs are merely the tools to help the man construct this subjective judgment that subsists in the mind that al-Rāzī calls *ḥukm dhihnī* (mental judgment).

As for "meaning (*ma'nā*)", al-Rāzī asserts that it is a word that is used to designate the mental conceptualization (*ṣūra dhihniyya*) and not an external existence (*mawjūdāt khārijīyya*).⁵¹ Thus, when a human uses a word to designate a *ma'nā*, it means that this word does not represent the real object of a thing but its conceptualization and abstraction made by the mind. The number of utterances is limited compared to the mental concepts that human beings have. The utterance cannot explain everything the sensory organ perceives and the ideas that subsist in the mind. Al-Rāzī asserts that man must invent unlimited words to express the subtle difference between each quiddity.

The complexity of the relation between utterance and its meaning becomes even more evident in interpersonal communication. Thus, we cannot understand the word semantically only by analyzing its inner meaning, but we have to understand the intention of the speaker of this word. On this issue, al-Rāzī offers an analysis of two forms of discourse: declarative (*khābar*) and imperative (*ṭalab*).

According to the Mu'tazilites, the imperative discourse represents the will (*irāda*) of the person speaking.⁵² It means that when a man verbally demands someone a certain thing or action, this demand indicates that he wants the realization of this action by his interlocutor. Al-Rāzī rejects this view.⁵³ He asserts that there is sometimes a will without demand and a demand without will. He takes the case examples of Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab when God informs the Prophet that they will die as unbelievers. At the same time, God asks Muhammad to command them to believe, although He does not wish their faith.⁵⁴ In other words, God's demand does not represent His will in this context. From al-Rāzī's perspective, it can be understood through this anecdote that Mu'tazilite opinion can come into conflict with the Knowledge of God. Indeed, God cannot demand faith for someone whom, according to His Knowledge, will die as a non-believer. That is why al-Rāzī considers that the quiddity of demand is not the will but a real demand (*al-ṭalab al-ḥaqīqī*) that subsists in the soul (*al-qā'im bi l-nafs*).

As for the declarative discourse, the Mu'tazilites defend the opinion that the discourse represents knowledge (*'ilm*) and conviction (*i'tiqād*) on one thing.⁵⁵ That means that when we say something, this act indicates our knowledge or belief about that thing. This opinion is also rejected by al-Rāzī. He asserts

that this discourse contains a mental judgment (*ḥukm dhihni*) whose quiddity differs from knowledge and conviction but the one that subsists in the soul.⁵⁶ This opinion is based on the fact that “the mind can produce a true proposition (*al-qaḍāyā al-ṣādiqa*) as well as a false one”.⁵⁷ In other words, a human can produce a speech or say something contradictory to his knowledge or belief.

D. God’s Speech (*Kalāmullāh*): The Nature of the Qur’ān

All theological schools agree on the doctrine that God is speaking (*mutakallim*). However, they differ in their definition of *kalām*. The definition of “speech” proposed by the Mu’tazilites, as we have discussed before when applied to God, can lead to the anthropomorphic interpretation of the divine essence since God does not speak like a human being. For this reason, their definition of God’s speech is slightly different from the human speech:

“(…) we say that the Almighty when He willed or hated a thing, created these sounds in certain bodies so that they would indicate the will or hatred of the Almighty about a certain thing, as well as its affirmation or negation. This is what was meant by declaring that the Almighty is speaking”.⁵⁸

“God’s speech” in Mu’tazilite definition is thus God’s creation of sound in the human body, always representing His Will and Knowledge. According to Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār, God’s speech means that He “does a speech (*fa’ala al-kalām*)”⁵⁹ and is not merely qualified by an attribute called *kalām*. This conception of the speech is detailed by another Mu’tazilite theologian, al-Zamakhsharī (d.538/1144), the author of *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*, in his commentary on the verse LXII: 51, He states that God’s speech can be manifested in three ways. First, it is through divine revelation or inspiration (*ilhām*), such as the command of God, that is received by the Prophet Abraham to slay his son. The second form of divine speech is that behind the veil. We cannot see the character of God, but we hear his voice. Moses has this kind of experience⁶⁰ and the angels, when God asks them to transfer the divine message to the prophets. The third is through the language of the prophets.⁶¹

The Ash’arites oppose this view.⁶² According to their definition, it is impossible to speak through speech subsisting in others. The only meaning of “God is speaking” is that God is attributed by the eternal attribute of *kalām* (speech). Al-Rāzī took a more moderate position compared to his predecessors. He asserts that God can speak with the speech of others since He is capable of creating sounds in an inanimate being.⁶³ This capacity, according to him, does not contradict His Power (*qudra*). This process shows that God has the power to do all things, including creating these sounds.

Despite arguing that God’s speech, as defined by Mu’tazilite scholars, is possible,⁶⁴ al-Rāzī’s doctrinal position remains in accord with his Ash’arite predecessors. We have shown before that al-Rāzī distinguishes the utterance from its quiddity. The utterance spoken is called *al-kalām al-lisānī* while its quiddity is called *kalām al-nafs*. Only the latter form of speech can be attested to God. The true meaning of the speech is, therefore, the one that subsists in self (*al-qā’im bil-nafs*):

“Thus, one can be sure that God Most High is qualified by the actual meaning (*ma’nā ḥaqīqī*). God is the signified (*madlūl*) of His speech: “Do!” and He is qualified by the actual meaning. He is the signified of His word ‘praise God’ while it is different from His knowledge. We name this meaning ‘the real order’ (*al-amr al-ḥaqīqī*) and ‘the real information’ (*al-khabar al-ḥaqīqī*)”.⁶⁵

While the Mu’tazilites assert that demand represents will and information indicates knowledge, al-Rāzī, however, proposes that both have real meanings (*ma’nā ḥaqīqī*): “the real order” (*al-amr al-ḥaqīqī*) and “the real information” (*al-khabar al-ḥaqīqī*) respectively. “God speaks” in al-Rāzī’s definition means that God is attributed (*maṣūf*) by the actual meaning of the speech or according to the Ash’arite term, *kalām al-nafs* (the speech that subsists in self).⁶⁶ In this case, the speech, like the other attributes according to the Ash’arite doctrine, is an entity that is not identical to God or other than him. The following Diagram 1 describes al-Rāzī’s thoughts on God’s speech:

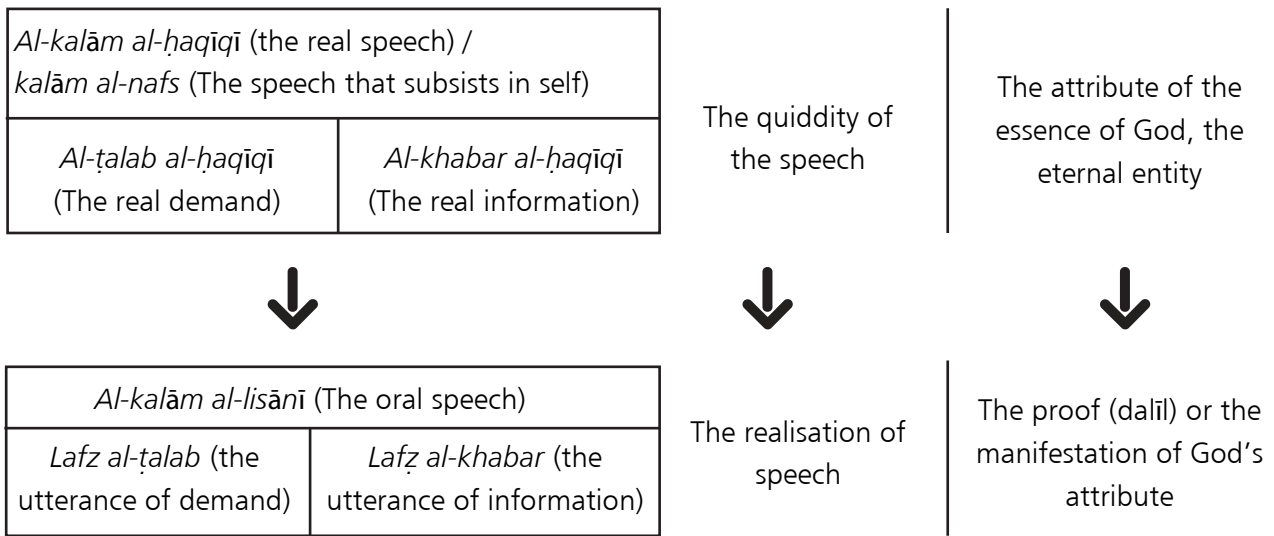


Diagram 1. God's speech, according to al-Rāzī

According to the majority of Muslim theologians, including al-Rāzī, the Qur'ān is the manifestation of God's speech⁶⁷ *par excellence*. It contains several forms of speech, such as command, prohibition, and information that prompt the interpretation of the multiplicity of God's speech as objected to by the Mu'tazilites. Furthermore, the Mu'tazilites argue that all these forms represent different realities.⁶⁸ This argument aims to refute the possibility of designating the Qur'ān as an attribute of God because this attribute cannot consist of several realities.

In response to this objection and in defense of his thesis, al-Rāzī, who asserts that God's speech is unique, explains that the speech is all "information (*khabar*)",⁶⁹ i.e., all forms of God's speech are basically information.⁷⁰

"... the command is an expression to inform the other: if he responds to this command, he deserves to be praised. On the other hand, if he does not respond, he deserves to be blamed. The idea is the same for prohibition".⁷¹

The following diagram shows al-Rāzī's solution to the uniqueness of God's speech using the idea that "God's speech is all information".

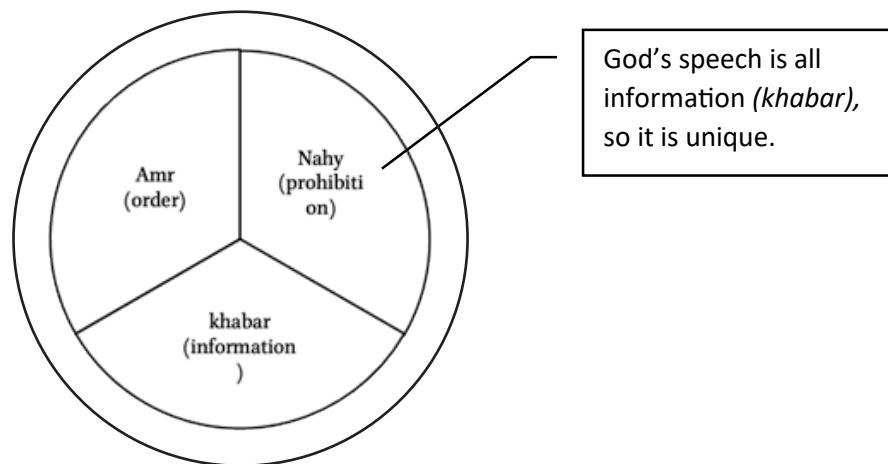


Diagram 2. al-Rāzī's concept of the uniqueness of Divine speech⁷²

Furthermore, al-Rāzī makes an analogy about God's Knowledge, which can, despite being unique, encompass many things.⁷³ Using this analogy, one can say that the real speech of God (*al-kalām ḥaqīqī*), according to al-Rāzī, is the real information (*khabar ḥaqīqī*) that subsists in His essence. The uniqueness of the divine speech can be interpreted as the uniqueness of God's universal message. This message is then manifested in several forms of speech found in the Qur'ān.

E. The pre-eternity (*qudūm*) of God's speech

The last point to discuss in this article is the question of the pre-eternity (*qudūm*) and the adventitiousness (*ḥudūth*) of God's speech. It is pointless to compare the argument of al-Rāzī *vis-à-vis* the Mu'tazilites in this context since our author recognizes the Mu'tazilites' definition of adventitiousness of God's speech. Thus, he accepts the idea that the Qur'ān – its letters and voices – are *muḥdath* (being introduced to existence). It is, therefore, more fruitful to discuss the pre-eternity of *kalām al-naḥs* as God's attribute in Rāzīan doctrine in the frame of the pre-eternity of God's attributes.

It is probable that al-Rāzī is one of the first Ash'arite theologians to productively reframe the previous Ash'arite argument based on the new contingent-necessary (*wājib al-wujūd* and *mumkin al-wujūd*) distinction. There are two main problems that al-Rāzī tries to solve: 1) If God spoke in all eternity while there was nobody, it must be absurd and nonsense.⁷⁴ 2) If there was something that coexists with Him in all eternity (i.e., His attribute), it means that there are two eternal entities that share with Him all essential attributes. It means that there will be more than one God.⁷⁵

The first problem is easier to tackle. The solution is that al-Rāzī understands *kalām* as the "potential to speak" or, in Rāzī's formulation, called *ṣifa muḥtaḍiya* (required attribute) to speak,⁷⁶ and not the act of speaking as the Mu'tazilites argue. He compares this attribute to the attribute of power (*qudra*) that can be attested to Him in pre-eternity while He did not create anything yet. Using the same analogy, the creation of God in time doesn't make his power *muḥdath*. It remains one of God's eternal attributes. It is also the case for *kalām*. Even if God speaks in time, this does not mean that His attribute of *kalām* is *muḥdath*.

To understand al-Rāzī's solution for the second problem, we must first examine the relation between God and His attributes (*ṣifa*) and then discuss its pre-eternity. Al-Rāzī, explaining God's knowledge, argues that this attribute is an entity (*amr*) that is added to His essence.⁷⁷ After proving God's essence, one still needs to provide another different proof to establish that God is omniscient.⁷⁸ This idea of additionality probably comes from al-Rāzī's distinction between essence and attribute. He rejects the idea that all essence is the same. Thus, the distinction between these essences is due to the attribute attested to them. This implies that the essence of God is the same as the essence of any corporeal object. For al-Rāzī, God's essence essentially differs from the others. So, one does not need any additional attribute to distinguish His essence from the rest.⁷⁹ The problem is, since God's attributes are claimed by al-Rāzī to be pre-eternal, he needs to explain how the attributes – which are not necessary existences (*wājib al-wujūd*)⁸⁰ – can coexist with God in pre-eternity. These attributes cannot be *muḥdath* since the essence of the *muḥdath* entity is its receptacle to both existence and non-existence,⁸¹ which is not the case for them.

Al-Rāzī thus affirms that the necessary existence in itself (*wājib al-wujūd lidhātihī*) must be pre-eternal (*qadīm*) and eternal (*azaliyy*) because it cannot be inexistent (*'adam*). On the contrary, the pre-eternal and eternal entity is not necessarily a necessary existence in itself.⁸² It is also for al-Rāzī possible that a thing is caused by another thing that necessarily exists in itself (*wājib al-wujūd lidhātihī*). Thus, this caused one (*ma'lūl*) necessarily exists perpetually thanks to the perpetual existence of its cause.⁸³ This argument provides a theoretical basis for the pre-eternity of God's attribute and its co-existence with God eternally despite being contingent (*mumkin lidhātihī*)⁸⁴ – because God is the only

necessary existence.⁸⁵ This is also the case for God's speech. In sum, God is speaking (*mutakallim*) according to al-Rāzī, which means that God speaks using the pre-eternal but contingent attribute of speech (*kalām*) – called by *kalām al-nafs* – that added (*zā'id*) to His essence.

E. Concluding Remarks

Our analyses of the arguments from al-Rāzī and the Mu'tazilites lead us to the following conclusion: the main key to understanding the opposition between the pre-eternity or adventitiousness of God's speech, including the Qur'ān derived principally from the definition of speech itself. To claim that the divine speech is *muḥdath* is to emphasize the external aspect of the speech, namely the voices and the words. On the other hand, to declare that the divine speech is pre-eternal is to emphasize its inner aspect, namely its quiddity.

Al-Rāzī, who advocates the Ash'arite doctrine in the majority of his works, highlights the non-biological aspect of the speech. He distinguishes between what is called the speech that subsists in self (*kalām al-nafs*) and its realization, which is called by *al-kalām al-lisānī*. He explains, as his predecessors do, that only the first is considered as the true meaning of speech. Furthermore, in defense of the uniqueness of God's speech, he proposes the idea that God's speech is basically "information" (*khabar/i'lām*). When God asks for the performance of such an action, it means that God wants to "inform" his interlocutors. This argument enables him to avoid the interpretation of the plurality of the divine speech. The issue raised is based on the plurality of the forms of speech found in the Qur'ān. For al-Rāzī, God's speech is thus a unique and eternal entity that subsumes the essence of God and contains a unique message, namely divine "information". Al-Rāzī also does not hesitate to borrow the *falsafa* theory of the distinction between necessity and contingency to solve the problem of the pre-eternity of God's attributes. A microscopic study to compare the attitude of the pre and post-Avicennan Ash'arite theologians regarding this subject is still needed to fully understand the influence of Avicennan philosophy. It is also important to see whether this position was challenged by later theologians, as in the case of Ibn Taymiyya, who often takes a critical look at al-Rāzī's arguments.

ENDNOTES

¹ The amount of human casualties that fall in this *miḥna* incident is not as significant as the social effect it generates. Five people are recorded, namely Aḥmad b. Nāṣir al-Ḥuzā'ī who was executed by Caliph al-Wāthiq in 231/846 and four people from the region of Ṭāghūr who fell victim to the *miḥna* incident (Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīḥ Al-Rusul wa Al-Muluk* (Caire: Dār al-Ma'ārif bi Miṣra) vol. 9.

² About the *miḥna*, read Walter M. Patton, *Aḥmed Ibn Ḥanbal and The Miḥna* (Leiden: Brill, 1897)., Dominique Sourdel, "La Politique Religieuse Du Calife 'Abbaside Al-Ma'mūn", *Revue Des Études Islamiques* 30, no. 1 (1962): 27-48., Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliphs Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)., John A. Nawas, "A Reexamination of Three Current Explanations for Al-Mamun's Introduction of the Mihna", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 4 (1994): 615-29., Aḥmad Amīn, *Ḍuḥā Al-Islām* (Cairo: Mu'assasah Hindāwī, 2012)., Muḥammad 'Ābid Al-Jābrī, *Al-Muthaqqafūn Fi Al-Ḥaḍārah Al-'Arabiyyah Miḥnah Ibn Ḥanbal Wa Nakbah Ibn Rushd*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt Al-Waḥdah Al-'Arabiyyah, 2000)., Fahmī Jad'ān, *Al-Miḥnah Baḥṭ Fī Jadāliyatī Al-Dīnī Wa Al-Siyāsī Fi Al-Islām* (Amman: Dār Al-Shurūq, 1989); John P Turner, *Inquisition in Early Islam: The Competition for Political and Religious Authority in the Abbasid Empire* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013).

³ Steven C. Judd, "Ja'd b. Dirham", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE, September 1, 2016, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/jad-b-dirham-COM_30760?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.cluster.Encyclopaedia+of+Islam&s.q=Ja%CA%BFd+b.+dirham. at the moment, this theologian and his pupil Jahm b. Ṣafwān was executed for heresy, see: Turner, *Inquisition in Early Islam*.; The invention of this doctrine was probably due to the challenge from other religious belief, especially

Christian theologians. For this see: Tilman Nagel and Thomas Thornton, *The History of Islamic Theology from Muhammad to the Present*, Princeton Series on the Middle East (Princeton (N.J.): Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000). P. 100, Cf. William Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, Islamic Surveys 1 (Edinburgh: University Press, 1962). P. 65 ; Louis Gardet and Georges C Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane: essai de théologie comparée* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1981)., p. 38 see also: Ibn Ḥanbal, *Al-Radd 'alā al-Jahmiyya wa al-Zanādiqa* (Riyadh: Dār al-Thabāt, 2003). P. 93-95

⁴ See Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Al-Rusul Wa'l-Muluk*. Vol. 8, p. 637 for the argument during the *miḥna*

⁵ J. van Ess, "Ibn Kullāb", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, April 24, 2012, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-kullab-SIM_8660?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.cluster.Encyclopaedia+of+Islam&s.q=Ibn+kull%C4%81b.

⁶ Josef Van Ess and Claude Gilliot, "Ibn Kullāb et La 'Miḥna,'" *Arabica* 37, no. 2 (1990): 173-233. (p. 190)

⁷ Van Ess and Gilliot. (especially p. 232)

⁸ From this point onwards I will use simply "al-Rāzī"

⁹ Joseph Van Ess, *Theology and Society in the Second and Third Centuries of the Hijra: A History of Religious Thought in Early Islam*, trans. John O'Kane, 4 vols. (Leyde; Boston: Brill, 2017).

¹⁰ Ayman Shihadeh, "From Al-Ġazālī to al-Rāzī: 6th/12th Century Developments in Muslim Philosophical Theology", *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15, no. 1 (March 2005): pp. 141-79

¹¹ Cf. Seyyed Reza Fatemi and Eynollah Khademi, "The Nature of the Divine Speech: A Review and Critique of Fakhr al-Din Razi's View", *Islamic Denominations* 8, no. 16 (2022).

¹² Fakhr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Khalq Al-Qur'ān Bayna al-Mu'tazilah Wa Ahl al-Sunnah* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992).

¹³ Fakhr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Al-Arba 'in fī uṣūl al-dīn* (Caire: Al-Maktaba al-kulliyayāt al-azhariyya, 1986)., pp. 244-258

¹⁴ Ayman Shihadeh, *The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr Al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Leyde: Brill, 2006). I need to highlight the chronological aspect of al-Rāzī's work since he tends to adopt a more philosophical approach in his later works. For a more complete chronology of al-Rāzī's work, see: Eşref Altaş, "Fahredden Er-Rāzī'nin Eserlerinin Kronolojisi", in *Fahredden Er-Rāzī* (Istanbul: İSAM, 2013).

¹⁵ For Al-Rāzī works, see: Georges Chehata Anawati, "Fakhr Al-Dīn al-Rāzī", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, April 24, 2012, https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.acces.bibliotheque-diderot.fr/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/fakhr-al-din-al-razi-COM_0206; Georges Chehata Anawati, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī † 606/1209 : Éléments de biographie", *Mélanges d'orientalisme offerts à Henri Massé à l'occasion de son 75ème anniversaire* 1 (1963): 1-10; Georges Chehata Anawati, "Fakhr Al-Dīn al-Rāzī Tamhīd Lidirāsāt Ḥayātihi Wa Mu'allafātihi", ed. Abdurrahman Badawi, *Mélanges Taha Ḥusain*, 1962, 193-234..

¹⁶ On the influence of Avicennism on later Ash'arism see: Robert Wisnovsky, "Towards a Genealogy of Avicennism", *Oriens* 42, no. 3-4 (2014): 323-63, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18778372-04203003>.

¹⁷ Peter Adamson, "Rāzī for the Sake of Argument", in *Philosophy in the Islamic World. A History of Philosophy without Any Gaps*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)., the author argues: "I think that in the whole history of philosophy in the Islamic world, the person best qualified to work at an Argument Clinic would have been Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. His works are almost inaccessible to the English reader, because they have hardly been translated".

¹⁸ See: Paul Kraus, "Les 'Controverses' de Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī", *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte* 19 (1937): 187-214. (especially p. 194)

¹⁹ Fakhr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt* (Hyderabad: Dā'ira al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyya, 1936). For the work on *Munāẓarāt*, see: Fathalla Kholeif, *A study on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and his controversies in Transoxiana*, 2ème édition., Recherches Série 1 Pensée arabe et musulmane XXXI (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1984).

²⁰ See: Frank Griffel, "On Fakhr Al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Life and the Patronage He Received", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 3 (2007): 313-44.

²¹ Cf. Majid Fakhry, *A Short Introduction to Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998). P. 104; Ayman Shihadeh, "From Al-Ġazālī to al-Rāzī, *op.cit*; On the Mu'tazila influence on al-Rāzī, see: Tariq Jaffer, "Mu'tazilite Aspects of Fakhr Al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Thought", *Arabica* 59, no. 5 (2012): 510-35.

²² For the Avicenna's theory of the distinction between necessary existence and possibly existence, see: Ibn Sīnā, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*, trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2005). Pp. 29-38

²³ On Mu'tazilite influence on al-Rāzī see: Jaffer, "Mu'tazilite Aspects of Fakhr Al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Thought".

²⁴ In this article we will translate the term *kalām* as "speech" and *lafẓ* as "utterance"

²⁵Tamás Iványi, “Kalām”, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, May 30, 2011, https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.prext.num.bulac.fr/entries/encyclopedia-of-arabic-language-and-linguistics/kalam-EALL_SIM_vol2_0043?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopedia-of-arabic-language-and-linguistics&s.q=kal%C4%81m. See for example: Al-Ṣanhājī, *Matn Al-Ājurrūmiyya* (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṣamay‘ī, 1998), p. 5.

²⁶Iványi, “Kalām”.

²⁷Cf. Sībawayh, *Al-Kitāb* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Khānjī, 1988), vol.1, p. 20

²⁸Abū l-Ḥusayn Al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb Al-Mu‘tamad* (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1964), vol. 1, p. 15

²⁹Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-Mughnī* (Cairo: Al-Dār al-Maṣriyyah li l-Ta‘līf wa l-Tarjamah, n.d.), vol. 7, p. 6

³⁰For waḍ‘, see: Bernard Weiss, “Waḍ‘ Al-Luġa”, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, May 30, 2011, https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.prext.num.bulac.fr/entries/encyclopedia-of-arabic-language-and-linguistics/wad-al-luga-EALL_SIM_0141?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopedia-of-arabic-language-and-linguistics&s.q=wa%E1%B8%8D%CA%BF.. Cf. Faḥr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Al-Maḥṣūl Fī ‘ilm Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Beyrouth: Mu‘assasah al-Risāla, n.d.), pp. 181-92

³¹Ibn Jinnī, *Al-Khaṣā‘iṣ* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Maṣriyya, n.d.), p. 17

³²Ibn Jinnī.

³³Ibn Jinnī., p. 18

³⁴J. R. T. M. Peters and ‘Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad Asādābadī, *God’s Created Speech: A Study in the Speculative Theology of the Mu‘tazili Qāḍī l-Quḍāt Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Jabbār Bn Aḥmad al-Hamadānī* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976). P. 293, according to Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Ġabbār, and the most of the Mu‘tazila, God’s speech and human speech belong to the same genus.

³⁵Al-Rāzī, *Al-Maḥṣūl Fī ‘ilm Uṣūl al-Fiqh.*, p. 177, he explains that if there are three persons, one says “na”, then others say “ša” and “ra” respectively to create the utterance “naṣara” (help), for al-Rāzī it cannot be regarded as *kalām*.

³⁶Al-Rāzī., p. 180

³⁷Abū Ḥamid Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Iqtīṣād Fī l-‘itiqād* (Cairo: Dār Al-Baṣā‘ir, 2008), p. 355

³⁸Al-Ghazālī., p. 358, cf. Al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat Al-Aqdām Fī ‘ilm al-Kalām* (Baghdad: Al-Maktabah al-Muthnā, n.d.), p. 282

³⁹Al-Rāzī, *Khalq Al-Qur‘ān.*, p. 52

⁴⁰See Faḥr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Al-Maṭālib al-‘ālīya min al-‘ilm al-ilāhī* (Beyrouth: Dār al-kitāb al-‘arabī, 1987), vol. 3, p. 201, cf. Faḥr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Nihāyat Al-‘uqūl Fī Dirāyat al-Uṣūl* (Beyrouth: Dār al-Dakhā‘ir, 2015), vol. 2, pp. 318-9

⁴¹Al-Rāzī, *Khalq Al-Qur‘ān.* P. 52

⁴²Al-Rāzī., p. 53

⁴³Al-Rāzī., p. 52

⁴⁴Cf. Al-Rāzī, *Nihāya.*, vol. 2, p. 307

⁴⁵Al-Rāzī., vol. 2, pp. 318-9

⁴⁶Amīn, *Ḍuḥā Al-Islām.*, p. 718

⁴⁷Amīn.

⁴⁸‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-Mughnī.*, vol. 7, p. 48

⁴⁹See: Al-Rāzī, *Khalq Al-Qur‘ān.*, p. 58

⁵⁰Faḥr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (Beyrouth: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), vol.1 p. 31

⁵¹Al-Rāzī., vol.1, p. 32

⁵²Al-Rāzī, *Nihāya.*, vol. 2, pp. 318-9, Cf. ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-Mughnī.*, vol. 7, p. 48

⁵³Al-Rāzī, *Nihāya.* vol. 2, p. 307. Other Aṣ‘arite theologian such as Al-Ghazālī shares this opinion. Cf. Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Iqtīṣād.*, p. 358

⁵⁴Al-Rāzī, *Khalq Al-Qur‘ān.*, p. 54

⁵⁵Al-Rāzī., p. 59

⁵⁶It seems that this type of argument has been developed in Ash‘ari circle at least since al-Ghazālī, Cf. Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Iqtīṣād.*, p. 360

⁵⁷Al-Rāzī, *Khalq Al-Qur‘ān.*, p. 55

⁵⁸Al-Rāzī., p. 58

⁵⁹‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-Mughnī.*, vol. 7, p. 96

⁶⁰It is interesting to note that in his commentary on verse II: 253, Al-Rāzī raises the question of

the speech that had been heard by Moses was God's eternal speech which has no voice nor utterance. He thus cites al-Ash'arī that according to him: "That is (God's eternal speech) what he heard, since it is not impossible to see what its modality is unknown (*mā laysa bimukayyif*), it is not impossible either to listen what its modality is unknown". See: Al-Rāzī, *TK.*, vol.6, p. 216. On *bilā kayf*, see: Binyamin Abrahamov, "The Bi-Lā Kayfa Doctrine and Its Foundations in Islamic Theology", *Arabica* 42, no. 3 (1995): 365–79.

⁶¹Abū al-Qāsim Al-Zamakhshārī, *Tafsīr Al-Kashshāf* (Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'rifa, 2009). Cf. Amīn, *Ḍuḥā Al-Islām*. p. 714

⁶²Cf. Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Iqtīṣād.*, P. 355, Abū l-Ḥasan Al-Ash'arī, *Kitāb Al-Luma' Fī l-Radd 'alā Ahl al-Zaygh Wa l-Bida'* (Cairo: Maṭba'a Maṣriyya Shirka Musāhama Maṣriyya, 1955), p. 44, Al-Bāqillānī, *Al-Inṣāf* (Cairo: Al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li l-Turāth, 2000). p. 26, Al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat Al-Aqdām Fī 'ilm al-Kalām.*, p. 281

⁶³Al-Rāzī, *Nihāya.*, vol. 2, p. 303, cf. F. al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Ḥālq al-Qur'ān*, *op. cit.*, 59

⁶⁴We showed at the beginning of this article that Al-Rāzī uses Mu'tazilite definition of *kalām* for his *Al-Maḥṣūl*

⁶⁵Al-Rāzī, *Khalq Al-Qur'ān.*, p. 61

⁶⁶Al-Rāzī shares the Ash'arite doctrine that "speech" is one of God's entitative attributes or attributes of the essence. For the Ash'arite doctrine of entitative attributes, see: Daniel Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ash'arī*, Patrimoines Islam (Paris: les Éddu Cerf, 1990), pp. 259-322

⁶⁷Al-Rāzī, *Nihāya*. Vol. 2, p. 308

⁶⁸Amīn, *Ḍuḥā Al-Islām*. *op. cit.*, p. 713

⁶⁹Al-Rāzī, *Khalq Al-Qur'ān.*, *op. cit.*, p. 62, Cf. Fakhr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Ma'ālim Usul Al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnani, 1992). P. 68 Rāzī use the term *i'lām* instead of *ḥabar*.

⁷⁰This opinion differs from slightly from that proposed by Al-Šahrastānī. He argues that *kalām* is informing what is known (*iḥbār 'an al-ma'lūm*) Al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat Al-Aqdām Fī 'ilm al-Kalām.*, pp. 291-2

⁷¹Al-Rāzī, *Khalq Al-Qur'ān*. P.62

⁷²In another work of al-Rāzī, such as *Ma'ālim Uṣūl al-Dīn*, *op.cit.*, p. 68, there is another version on forms of speech by adding *istikhbār* (interrogative) as one of the other four forms mentioned before. Here, we will highlight the uniqueness of the divine speech in an "information" framework, regardless of the form.

⁷³Al-Rāzī, *Ma'ālim*. p. 68; This analogy was also adopted by Al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat Al-Aqdām Fī 'ilm al-Kalām.*, p. 291.

⁷⁴See for example: Al-Rāzī, *Maṭālib*. vol. 3, p. 204, Al-Rāzī, *Khalq Al-Qur'ān.*, p. 67

⁷⁵Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-Mughnī.*, vol. 7, p. 86-87; cf. Al-Rāzī, *Nihāya.*, vol. 2, p. 216

⁷⁶Al-Rāzī, *Khalq Al-Qur'ān.*, p. 70

⁷⁷Al-Rāzī, *Nihāya.*, vol. 2, p. 211, even the existence (*wujūb*) of God according to al-Rāzī is the attribute added to His essence. Cf. Al-Rāzī, *Maṭālib.*, vol.1, p. 291

⁷⁸Fakhr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Me'ālimü Usūli'd-Dīn: Kelām İlminin Esaslari*, trans. Muhammet Altaytaş and Orabi Orabi (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2019), p. 111

⁷⁹Al-Rāzī, *Maṭālib.*, vol. 1, p. 313

⁸⁰Following Avicenna, al-Rāzī asserts that necessary existence must be only one entity, Al-Rāzī., vol. 2, p. 119,

⁸¹Al-Rāzī., vol.1, p. 201., cf. Ibn Sīnā, *The Metaphysics of The Healing.*, p. 34

⁸²Al-Rāzī, *Maṭālib.*, vol. 1, p. 318 this line of argumentation is (the eternity of what is caused [*ma'lūl*] through the eternity of its cause) is typically *falsafa*, that is used to support their position on the eternity of world (note: Al-Rāzī rejects the eternity of world). Al-Ghazālī argues that God's attribute must be a necessary existence (*wājib al-wujūd*) because the essence of God is so. Cf. Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Iqtīṣād.*, p. 205

⁸³Al-Rāzī, *Maṭālib*. *Op.cit.*

⁸⁴Al-Rāzī, *Me'ālimü Usūli'd-Dīn*. P. 113, in this book, al-Rāzī doesn't oppose the philosopher's objections arguing that if God has an attribute, this attribute must be contingent (*mumkin*), so it needs the cause which can be no other than Himself. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 113

⁸⁵One must notes that there can only one necessary existence (*wājib al-wujūd*) according to al-Rāzī, cf. Al-Rāzī, *Maṭālib.*, vol. 2, p. 119, but this one (*al-wāḥid*) is an existential attribute (*ṣifah wujūdiyyah*) added to His essence. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 151

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