

An Analysis of Christian Apologist James White's Polemics Regarding the Qur'ān, "Created or Not?"

**HOW CHRISTIANS EMPLOY THE MISGUIDED
VIEWS OF ASTRAY SECTS
PART 2: THE STATEMENT OF AL-ṬAḤĀWĪ**

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Bismillāh wal-Ḥamdulillāh.

In the first part of this series we explained the statement of **Imām al-Ṭabarī** (d. 310H) regarding the Qur'ān in the context of the controversies which appeared in the Muslim nation due to the foreign influences of the Hellenized nations of the Sabeans, Jews and Christians.

In the first part of his presentation in his debate with a Muslim apologist, James White also cited a statement from **Imām al-Ṭahāwī** (d. 321H), from his well-known creed. While the issue has been made sufficiently clear in the first part of this series, for the sake of completion we will provide commentary on al-Ṭahāwī's speech written ten years ago¹ and add it here to this series for the sake of completeness and comprehensiveness in response.

¹ The excerpt added to this document is from a yet unpublished work, "The Creed of the Kullābi Ash'arīs" (2010).

PART 2: THE STATEMENT OF AL-ṬAḤĀWĪ

James White provided a translation from the Ṣūfī Ash'arī called Ḥamza Yūsūf, and he is from the people of innovation, from the inheritors of the innovated doctrines of the sects of the Kullābites and Ash'arites. Such people cannot be relied upon in translation and presentation of the creed of Islām, of the Prophet (ﷺ) and His Companions (رضي الله عنهم).

He displayed the following slides:

Mahklūq or Not?

The Qur'an is the Word of God that emanated from Him without modality in its expression. He sent it down to His messenger as a revelation. The believers accept it as such literally. They are certain it is, in reality, the Word of God, the Sublime and Exalted. **Unlike human speech, it is eternal and uncreated.** (*The Creed of Imam Al-Tahawi (Al-Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah)*, translated, annotated and introduced by Hamza Yusuf [Zaytuna Institute, 2007], p. 54; bold emphasis ours)

And:

Mahklūq or Not?

We do not argue about the Qur'an. Rather, we testify that it is the Word of the Lord of the universe as revealed through the Trustworthy Spirit, who taught it to the paragon of messengers, Muhammad. It is the Word of God, the Sublime and Exalted. **No mortal speech compares to it, and we do not say it is created.** (Ibid., p. 64; bold emphasis ours)

COMMENTARY

1. The confusion regarding:

—acts of transmission and modes of conveyance and what is transmitted and conveyed through them,

—the reality of attributes and whether an attribute can leave an entity and become an entity of its own,

—the error of the Christians, following the Philosophers, in their doctrines in making what is imagined in the mind to be real and true in external reality,

have already been made clear in Part 1 of this series, as well as in the introductory article preceding that.

Refer to the following.

The Qur`ān, the Speech of Allāh, Jesus the Messiah, Christian Apologists and “The Word”

<http://www.islamjesus.ws/?zgzxla>

Part 1: Regarding the Statement of al-Ṭabarī

<http://www.islamjesus.ws/?yipmxow>

2. As for the statement of al-Ṭahāwī, then Ḥamza Yūsuf has not translated it accurately and has worded it in a way to make it aligned with the doctrines of the Kullābites and Ash`arites.

3. In the statements of the leading Imāms of the Righteous Predecessors, whenever they speak of the Qur`ān being the uncreated speech of Allāh, they are referring to Allāh's act of speaking the Qur`ān, with His speech being an attribute of His self

and the Qur'ān being an instance of that speech which is tied to His will and power. No matter how and by whom these words are then conveyed, they will always remain Allāh's words which He spoke, **since speech can only be ascribed to the one who spoke it first**. Thus, we say, “**Alḥamdu lillāhi Rabb il-‘Ālamīn**” are the words of Allāh, they are not the words of any imām or reciter, and it would be false to ascribe them to anyone other than Allāh. It is from this angle that when we hear someone recite the Qur'ān or read it in the written copy, we say, “This is Allāh's speech”.

And when we say, “It is uncreated”, we mean the actual speech that Allāh spoke, and **we are not referring to the voice of the reciter or the ink the writer**, since these are only modes of conveyance and not the actual speech itself **that was first spoken by Allāh**. All intelligent people know that when we say “uncreated” we are not speaking about voices, paper, ink and any other mediums.

This matter is very clear with the Predecessors, the Salaf, and it is from sound reason and well grasped by people of intellect. This is why when this matter is investigated by a Salafi and he or she comes across statements of the Salaf and discussions regarding this matter, the affair is clear. All ambiguity in any discussion or treatment of the subject is easily resolved with reference to what has been stated above.

With the above made clear, we leave the reader with:

—an accurate translation with commentary on the statements cited from al-Ṭaḥāwī

—an excerpt from our work, “The Creed of the Kullābi Ash‘arīs” discussing Yūsuf's translation.

AL--ṬAHĀWĪ'S STATEMENT REGARDING THE QUR'ĀN

He (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

وإن القرآن كلام الله ، منه بدا بلا كيفية قولاً ، وأنزله على
رسوله وحياً ، وصدقه المؤمنون على ذلك حقاً ، وأيقنوا أنه
كلام الله تعالى بالحقيقة ، ليس بمخلوق ككلام البرية ، فمن
سمعه فزعم أنه كلام البشر فقد كفر

And that the [Arabic] Qur'ān is the speech (*kalām*) of Allāh. It arose, originated, commenced² from Him— without kaifiyyah —as speech (*qawlan*).

Comment: Allāh spoke the Qur'ān with actual speech, He first spoke its words with His voice. We do not know the reality of His voice. Speech (*kalām*) is both meaning and wording in the language of the Arabs, hence, Allāh actually spoke the words and they were heard by Gabriel.

He sent it down to His Prophet as revelation (*waḥīy*) and the believers accepted it as such in reality. And they had firm conviction that it was (indeed) the speech of Allāh, the Exalted in reality.

² In the other manuscripts the verb (بدأ) is used, which means commenced, originated, began.

Comment: The sending down (inzāl) is by way of Gabriel who came down through the heavens to convey it to Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) after he had heard it from Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). The Believers accepted that what they heard from Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) were the words that Allāh spoke, and none of them believed that the voice of Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) when reciting and conveying the Qur'ān was the voice of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). Rather, they knew that the Qur'ān, in its meanings and words, was spoken by Allāh in reality, and so they affirmed it as being the speech of Allāh in reality.

| It is not created like the speech of the created beings.

Comment: Created beings came to be after not being, their essences are created, as are all their attributes and hence, their actions are created. The rulings on attributes and actions follows the rulings on essences. However, Allāh is eternal, He never came to be. His essence is uncreated and thus all of the attributes of His essence are uncreated as are all of His actions. So the words of the Qur'ān which Allāh spoke are not created. The voice of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and the writing down on parchments, scrolls and paper are not the same as the words conveyed through them. The words being conveyed were first spoken by Allāh and thus those words are uncreated, and thus, the Qur'ān being those words that Allāh spoke are uncreated. Nothing of Allāh's essence, nor His attributes have merged with the voice of anyone or the writing of anyone. And when it is said of the Qur'ān that we read or recite, "This is the speech of Allāh", then that it is true and correct, because they are

the words Allāh spoke, and the words are other than the voice and ink used to convey them.

So whoever heard it [the Arabic Qur'ān] and claimed it is the speech of man, has disbelieved.

Comment: When a person hears the Qur'ān from a reciter who recites, “**Alḥamdu lillāhi Rabb il-Ālamīn**”, and claims it is the speech of the reciter or the speech of Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), then he has disbelieved. He ascribed this speech to other than the one who actually spoke it, and thus denied it is the speech of the one who spoke it, and thus denied the Qur'ān which states that it is the speech of Allāh. And all people of sound mind know that the voice is the voice of the reciter but the words are not his words, since words are only ascribed to the one who spoke them first. The Companions knew that the voice was the voice of Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and they had full conviction that the words he was expressing through his voice were not his words, because such words—in their meaning, beauty, eloquence, form, arrangement, wisdom, perfection, guidance and so on—cannot be the words of men. They were certain that they were the words of Allāh

Hence, there is nothing ambiguous in the speech of al-Ṭaḥāwī whatsoever. We now leave you with a lengthier discussion below.

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of Ibrāhīm and Allāh spoke to Mūsā (عليه السلام) after the creation of Mūsā, when he came to the sacred valley of Ṭuwā. This is because Allāh has actions tied to His will and power, and He does whatever He wills, whenever He wills, however He wills.¹⁴⁵¹ This is the belief of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah which contradicts the Tawḥid of *al-Jawhar wal-'Araḍ* that the Ash'arites, along with their brethren from the Mutkallimīn, the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah, are upon and which they made to be the greatest foundation of the religion.

The Qur'ān is the Speech of Allāh

Also from Yusuf's liberties in translation is in the passage relating to the Qur'ān.

He translated it as follows:

وإن القرآن كلام الله ، منه بدا بلا كيفية قولا ، وأنزله على رسوله وحيا ، وصدقه
المؤمنون على ذلك حقا ، وأيقنوا أنه كلام الله تعالى بالحقيقة ، ليس بمخلوق ككلام
البرية

The Qur'an is the word of God that emanated from Him without modality in its expression. He sent it down to His messenger as

beliefs alongside their proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām, however the result was that whilst they pretended to agree with Ahl al-Sunnah in wording, they were in agreement with the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah in reality, as has been established in the section on Allāh's speech, the Qur'ān, and the Ru'yah.

¹⁴⁵¹ The basis of denying Allāh's chosen actions (ṣifāt fi'liyyah, af'āl ikhtiyāriyyah) is because according to Aristotle's Categories (al-Maqūlāt al-'Ashar), action (fi'l) and affection (infi'āl) are from the incidental attributes (a'rāḍ) of bodies (ajsām), and hence to describe Allāh as having actions tied to His will and power amounts to rendering Him a body. For this reason, the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, and following them, the Ash'ariyyah, all deny Allāh's kalām (the Ash'arīs just adopted the doctrine of kalām nafsi to conceal their agreement with the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah in reality), and Allāh's istiwā' and Allāh's pleasure and anger and what is similar to this. All of these acts are tied to Allāh's will and power, but upon the proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām which they took from the Sabeen star and idol-worshipping pagan disbelievers, affirming these affairs would render Allāh a body, and hence conflict with their corrupt proof of establishing the universe is originated.

revelation. The believers accept it as such literally. They are certain, it is, in reality, the Word of God, the Sublime and Exalted. Unlike human speech, it is eternal and uncreated.¹⁴⁵²

However, the first sentence, with our translation:

وَإِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ كَلَامُ اللَّهِ ، مِنْهُ بَدَأَ بِلَا كَيْفِيَّةٍ قَوْلًا

And that the [Arabic] Qur'ān is the speech (*kalām*) of Allāh. It arose, commenced from Him - without *kaifiyyah* - as speech (*qawlan*).¹⁴⁵³

Is a refutation of the doctrinal school which holds that the Qur'ān is only a meaning in the self of Allāh and did not commence as speech (*qawl*) from Him, but as something created in the Preserved Tablet from where it was taken by Jibril, or it commenced as speech from Jibril (جبريل) ¹⁴⁵⁴ or from Muhammad (ﷺ) as a created quotation (*ḥikāyah*) or expression (*ibārah*) of that eternal meaning. We see in this statement of al-Ṭaḥāwī that a huge problem is posed for the Ash'arites. It should be remembered that Ahl al-Sunnah believe there is only one Qur'ān, that the Qur'ān is from Allāh's knowledge which He spoke as and when

¹⁴⁵² *The Creed of Imām al-Ṭaḥawī* (Zaytuna Institute, 2007), p. 54.

¹⁴⁵³ This is a refutation of the views of the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Kullābiyyah and Ash'ariyyah combined - for the Jahmiyyah deny Allāh has speech, and the Mu'tazilah claim Allāh's speech is the speech He creates in others, and the Kullābiyyah and Ash'ariyyah claim Allāh's speech is only a meaning (*ma'nā*) in His self. So al-Ṭaḥāwī refuted them all with a single adverb (*qawlan*), and in this he is in conformity with the entirety of the Salaf before him.

¹⁴⁵⁴ This is the saying of Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī who uses the verse "**Verily, it is the statement (qawl) of a noble messenger**" (81:19) as a proof for this saying. He said:

This is notification from Allāh, the Exalted, that the Arabic composition [of the Qur'ān] which is the recitation of the *kalām* [*nafsī*] of Allāh, the Exalted, is the statement (*qawl*) of Jibril, and not the saying of a poet and nor the statement of a soothsayer.

Refer to *al-Inṣāf* (taḥqīq, al-Kawthārī, Maktabah al-Azhar Li al-Turāth, 2000) p. 92. This is in clear opposition to the statement of al-Ṭaḥāwī who refuted this saying which is from the generality of the sayings of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah that the Qur'ān is a created entity that originated with other than Allāh, as the speech (*kalām*, *qawl*) of other than Allāh. The dispute between the Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah is regarding the innovated attribute of *kalām* *nafsī* after their agreement that the Arabic Qur'ān is created. This is acknowledged by the likes of al-Juwaynī, al-Rāzī, al-Ījī and al-Būṭī from the contemporaries.

He willed, and it was heard by Jibrīl and conveyed to Muḥammad, and then conveyed to the ummah. All of that it is one Qur'ān. And Ahl al-Sunnah believe that Allāh can speak with whatever He wills, whenever He wills as and when He pleases, and that none of His speech is created. Bearing this in mind, this passage from al-Ṭaḥāwī is in complete conformity with these beliefs, as we shall see.

The Ash'arites believe there are two Qur'āns. An eternal Qur'ān which is from the indivisible, singular meaning in Allāh's self, which is eternal, and then the created Arabic Qur'ān which is the created expression of that single, indivisible meaning present with Allah in eternity. When we look at what al-Ṭaḥāwī has stated, we see it is a complete invalidation of the Ash'arite doctrinal school:

وإن القرآن كلام الله ، منه بدا بلا كيفية قولا ، وأنزله على رسوله وحيا ، وصدقه المؤمنون على ذلك حقا ، وأيقنوا أنه كلام الله تعالى بالحقيقة ، ليس بمخلوق ككلام البرية ، فمن سمعه فزعم أنه كلام البشر فقد كفر ، وقد ذمه الله وعابه ، وأوعده بسقر ، حيث قال تعالى : (سأصليه سقر) ، فلما أوعده الله بسقر لمن قال : (إن هذا إلا قول البشر) علمنا وأيقنا أنه قول خالق البشر ، ولا يشبهه قول البشر

And that the [Arabic] Qur'ān is the speech (*kalām*) of Allāh. It arose, originated, commenced¹⁴⁵⁵ from Him - without *kaifiyyah* - as speech (*qawlan*). He sent it down to His Prophet as revelation (*wahiy*) and the believers accepted it as such in reality. And they had firm conviction that it was (indeed) the speech of Allāh, the Exalted in reality. It is not created like the speech of the created beings. So whoever heard it [the Arabic Qur'ān] and claimed it is the speech of man, has disbelieved. Allāh has rebuked him, censured him and promised him His punishment, when He said, "**I will roast him in Hellfire**" (74:26). Thus, when Allāh threatened the one who said, "**This is but the speech (qawl) of man**" (74:25), we come to know and have firm conviction that it is the speech (*qawl*) of the Creator of humanity, and it does not resemble the speech of man.

If you read this whole paragraph carefully, you should note the following matters.

¹⁴⁵⁵ In the other manuscripts the verb (بدأ) is used, which means commenced, originated, began.

Firstly, al-Ṭaḥāwī has invalidated the spurious two Qur'āns doctrine invented by the Kullābiyyah Ash'ariyyah. This is because the Qur'an which is the speech (*kalām*) of Allāh is the one that Allāh spoke with speech (*qawl*), that this speech originated with Him, which is the same one that He revealed to His Messenger, which the Believers believed in and accepted, about which they had certainty that it is the actual speech of Allāh, in reality, and that when they heard it (which can only be in letter and word), they had certainty that it was the speech of Allāh, the very one that originated with Him as speech (*qawl*). Thus, we see al-Ṭaḥāwī using the words Qur'ān, *kalām* (speech), *qawl* (statement), *wahī* (revelation), and what is heard of it (*masmū'*), all being treated as one single thing, which is all from Allāh's *kalām* (speech) in reality (bil-ḥaqīqah).

Secondly, al-Ṭaḥāwī said that this Qur'ān which is His speech (*kalām*) speech arose, occurred (بدأ), (بدأ) from Him as a statement (*qawl*).¹⁴⁵⁶

Notice the use of the word *badā* or *bada'a* (to arise, occur, appear, originate, commence, begin), which refers to the commencement of the Qur'ān as speech (*qawl*) from Allāh. This invalidates the entire premise of the Ash'arite doctrinal school of negating what they call *ḥawādith* (events) for Allāh, which means Allāh having actions tied to His will and power, and which are actions of His essence. Al-Ṭaḥāwī has established here the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah which is that Allāh has actions tied to His will and power from which is His speech (*kalām*),

¹⁴⁵⁶ The statement, (منه بدأ واليه يعود) *From Allāh did it commence and to Him shall it return*, regarding the Qur'ān, is reported abundantly from the Salaf. Imām Aḥmad said:

I met the men, the scholars, the jurists, in Makkah, Madīnah, Kūfah, Baṣrah, Shām, Khurasān, al-Thughūr, and I saw them upon the Sunnah and Jamā'ah, and I asked the Fuqahā about it, and all of them were saying, "The Qur'ān is the speech (*kalām*) of Allāh, uncreated, from Him did it originate, commence, and to Him shall it return."

Reported by Ḍiyā al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (d. 643H) in *Ikhtisāṣ al-Qur'ān Bi 'Awdihī ilā al-Raḥīm al-Raḥmān* (Maktabah al-Rushd, 1989), pp. 21-22. And what is like this is also reported from Sufyān bin 'Uyainah and Abū Bakr bin 'Ayyāsh, and others. And this is what al-Ṭaḥāwī is referring to, in that the Qur'ān, as we have it, in letter and word, commenced, and arose from Allāh, as His speech (*qawl*), which is the view of Ahl al-Sunnah in opposition to the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah who deny this.

He speaks as and when He wills, with whatever He wills, and He spoke the Arabic Qur'ān, just as He spoke the Torah, and Injīl, and that the Arabic Qur'ān as we have it arose from Allāh as His own statement (qawl).

Thirdly, given the first two points, the very first sentence of al-Ṭaḥāwī (وإن القرآن كلام الله ، منه بدا بلا كيفية قولا) should amount to nothing but utter confusion to the Ash'arites. To the Ash'arites, al-Ṭaḥāwī is either speaking about the *kalām nafsī* (the singular, indivisible, eternal meaning), or He is speaking about the created Arabic Qur'ān, since they believe in two Qur'āns. If he is speaking about the eternal, indivisible meaning, then how can he say that it occurred, arose, commenced, began (بدا), (بدأ) as speech. This is a complete invalidation of that doctrine, so the Ash'arites cannot claim that He is speaking of the eternal, single meaning, which is the *kalām nafsī* according to them. If al-Ṭaḥāwī is speaking about what they consider the created Arabic Qur'ān, which is letters and words and about which the Ash'arites agree that it has a beginning, why did al-Ṭaḥāwī ascribe it to Allāh as His speech (qawl), and why would he emphasize in the entire passage, that this Qur'ān, qawl, *kalām*, *waḥī*, which is heard by the Believers (*masmu'*), is the very speech of Allāh, uncreated, and that whoever claims it is created or the speech (qawl) of man is a disbeliever.

From the above considerations, we see that this passage is meaningless to the Ash'arites in reality, and is nothing but utter confusion for them. It is for this reason Yusuf twisted the meaning with a careful choice of words in his translation:

وإن القرآن كلام الله ، منه بدا قولا بلا كيفية

The Qur'an is the word of God that emanated from Him without modality in its expression.

This wording completely obscures the intent of al-Ṭaḥāwī which is to refute the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah who claimed the Arabic Qur'ān, in letter and word, is created and did not occur, arise from Allāh as His actual speech. Further, al-Ṭaḥāwī's word order perhaps confused Hamza Yūsuf, since this is how the sentence is said normally:

وإن القرآن كلام الله ، منه بدا قولا بلا كيفية

And that the [Arabic] Qur'ān is the speech (*kalām*) of Allāh. It arose, originated from Him as speech (*qawlan*) - without *kaifiyyah*.

But it is permissible to delay the adverb (قولا) to the end of the sentence, which is what al-Ṭaḥāwī did, and the meaning is the same. However - and Allāh knows best - either due his ignorance or deliberate intent,¹⁴⁵⁷ seeing that al-Ṭaḥāwī chose this particular order of words, and seeing that this offered him the chance to obscure the intended meaning, we note that Yusuf obscured the function of the adverb in the sentence. He said:

The Qur'an is the word of God that emanated from Him without modality in its expression.

In this translation, the purpose of the adverb (قولا) which is crucial to the enunciation of the correct belief as al-Ṭaḥāwī intends, has been obscured, removed and invalidated.¹⁴⁵⁸ This is a clear distortion, since a more honest and accurate translation, if we were to stick with his choice of words would be:

The Qur'an is the word of God that emanated from Him as speech without modality.¹⁴⁵⁹

Yūsuf may also have used the word *expression* in his translation - even though it is nowhere to be found in the Arabic text - to direct and guide

¹⁴⁵⁷ A man such as Hamza Yūsuf whose institute teaches books like al-Bayjūrī's Hāshiyyah on al-Jawharah, and who himself has studied these books, cannot claim ignorance of the fact that the Jahmiyyah denied Allāh has speech and the Mu'tazilah also denied Allāh has speech which is tied to His essence, but they claimed that the speech Allāh creates in others can be said to be Allāh's speech, and that the Ash'arīs are in complete agreement with the Mu'tazilah - as is admitted by al-Būṭī, al-Rāzī - al-Ījī, al-Juwaynī, al-Bayjūrī and others - that the Arabic Qur'ān is created, but they affirm something [innovated and unknown to the Salaf] called *kalām nafsī* which the Mu'tazilah do not.

¹⁴⁵⁸ Which is to affirm that the Qur'ān emanated from Allāh as speech (*qawl*), which is in opposition to the view of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah and the view of the Ash'arites who claim it only originated as speech (*qawl*) with Jibrīl (جبريل) or Muhammad (محمد).

¹⁴⁵⁹ But unfortunately, this more accurate translation would render spurious the very foundation of the Ash'arite doctrinal school, which is in fact from the foundations of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah, to deny Allāh's chosen actions (*af'āl ikhtiyāriyyah*, or *ṣifāt fi'liyyah*) upon the argument that they imply recency (*ḥudūth*) in His essence.

the reader subconsciously to the heresy of the Kullābiyyah, Ash'ariyyah that the Qur'ān we have is only a created expression (*ibārah*) of what they believe is the eternal Qur'ān. Thus, he completely omitted the word *qawl* in his translation and added the word *expression* which is nowhere to be found. What further points to Yusuf's dishonesty and that he was not ignorant that al-Ṭaḥawī's speech is a refutation of all of the Mutakallimīn without exception in their view the Qur'an did not emanate from Allāh as speech (*qawl*), is that he fabricated a word against al-Ṭaḥawī in the sentence that comes immediately after. Yusuf's translated this sentence:

ليس بمخلوق كلام البرية

Unlike human speech, it is eternal and uncreated.

So he inserted the word *eternal* something al-Ṭaḥawī did not say, and this insertion is related directly to the heresy (*bid'ah*) of the Kullābiyyah Ash'ariyyah in negating Allāh has actions tied to His will and power, such as speaking with speech as and when He wills and [their innovated] claim that the [uncreated] Qur'ān¹⁴⁶⁰ is from the singular, indivisible, meaning present with Allāh's self in eternity and that the created Arabic Qur'ān is what we have with us in letter and word.¹⁴⁶¹ This is another case of doctrinal bias to be generous and academic dishonesty to be more direct.¹⁴⁶²

¹⁴⁶⁰ This is because Ibn Kullāb, Dāwūd al-Dhāhirī, and the Kullābiyyah Ash'ariyyah as a whole believe there are two Qur'āns. The uncreated Qur'ān that is the meaning in Allāh's self, and the created Qur'ān that Muḥammad (ﷺ) conveyed to the Ummah, which originated with either Jibrīl or Muḥammad as speech! And this is flatly contradicted by what al-Ṭaḥawī said and which Hamza Yūsuf tried to obscure in his extremely poor translation.

¹⁴⁶¹ Ibn Kullāb innovated the saying that the Qur'ān is *qadīm* (eternal) and he meant by this to deny the Qur'ān is from Allāh's speech which is tied to His will and power, and which consists or both meaning and wording. And this is the intent of Yusuf, to support this doctrine by adding to the words of al-Ṭaḥawī.

¹⁴⁶² There is a distinction between Allāh always having the attribute of speech (*kalām*), eternally - which is true, since Allāh has never ceased being one who speaks, as and when He wills, in the doctrine of Ahl al-Sunnah - and between claiming the Qur'ān is eternal. In the genus of speech (*kalām*), Allāh's speech is eternal, which means He has always been one who speaks (*mutakallim*), and in addition to this Allāh speaks as and when He wishes, this being from His utmost perfection. So Allāh spoke, ordering the Angels to prostrate after He created Ādam, He spoke the Tawrāt, Injīl and the Qur'ān, and He will speak on

Yūsuf aimed to support the Kullābī Ash'arī doctrinal school of *kalām naḥsī* by adding to the words of al-Ṭaḥāwī, which is taḥrīf (distortion) of al-Ṭaḥāwī's original and ascribing a doctrine¹⁴⁶³ to al-Ṭaḥāwī which he is free and innocent of, and this is clear dishonesty. As for al-Ṭaḥāwī's 'aqīdah in this regard, then it is in agreement with that of the Salaf, for he affirms Allāh's *ṣifāt fi'liyyah*, as has preceded, and we can present here all of his statements on the subject of the Qur'ān in his creed:

And that the [Arabic] Qur'ān is the speech (*kalām*) of Allāh. It originated from Him - without kaifiyyah - as speech (*qawlan*).¹⁴⁶⁴ He sent it down to His Prophet as revelation (*waḥiy*) and the believers accepted it as such in reality.¹⁴⁶⁵ And they had firm conviction that

the Day of Judgement. Hence, Allāh has always been one who speaks. But Hamza Yusuf's intent is to oppose this, and it is to claim the Qur'ān is a single, indivisible meaning, present with Allāh in eternity, and that this Qur'ān (which is the meaning in the self of Allāh) is eternal, and that Allāh is not able to speak as and when He wills, such that the Arabic Qur'ān we have with us, is His uncreated speech. Hence, he inserted a word not said by al-Ṭaḥāwī, the word *eternal*, in order to imply that Allāh did not speak the Arabic Qur'ān such that Jibrīl (جبريل) heard it from Allāh, who then conveyed it, in meaning, letter and word to Muḥammad (ﷺ), who then conveyed it to the ummah. To treat all of that as one Qur'ān, according to the Ash'arites is tajsīm, tashbīḥ and kufr, hence, they say that the Arabic Qur'ān is not Allāh's spoken word, rather it is the created expression originating with Jibrīl or Muḥammad. The Ash'arites do not like to publicise their belief in two Qur'āns as they know it is not something that the innate dispositions of the people readily accept. Hence, they try to clothe and conceal this doctrine by stating that the Arabic Qur'ān is from Allāh's uncreated speech because it conveys the uncreated meaning (*ma'nā*) present with Allāh's self, and they give hybridized definitions such as the *kalām* being the *kalām naḥsī* in reality and *kalām lafdhī* (expressed wording) figuratively, and hence all of it is the speech of Allāh. These approaches were used by the later Ash'arites to conceal the reality of their saying and much of the Ash'arite *kalām* and *falsafah* has this objective in mind, to conceal the true realities of their actual positions.

¹⁴⁶³ Namely, that Allāh cannot speak as and when He wills, with whatever He wills.

¹⁴⁶⁴ The Kullābiyyah Ash'ariyyah do not affirm that the Qur'ān originated with Allāh as *qawl* (speech), they believe that Allāh's *kalām* is an indivisible meaning in the self of Allāh and that the Qur'ān as we have it originated with Muḥammad (ﷺ) or Jibrīl (جبريل).

¹⁴⁶⁵ Meaning accepting that it is the speech of Allāh in reality.

it was (indeed) the speech of Allāh, the Exalted in reality.¹⁴⁶⁶ It is not created like the speech of the created beings. So whoever heard it [the Arabic Qur'ān] and claimed it is the speech of man, has disbelieved.¹⁴⁶⁷ Allāh has rebuked him, censured him and promised him His punishment, when He said, **"I will roast him in Hellfire"** (74:26). Thus, when Allāh threatened the one who said, **"This is but the speech (qawl) of man"** (74:25), we come to know and have firm conviction that it is the speech (*qawl*) of the Creator of humanity, and it does not resemble the speech of man.

And later in his creed, he says:

And we do not dispute about the Qur'ān. We testify that it is the speech (*kalām*) of the Lord of the Worlds. The trustworthy spirit descended with it, and he taught it to the chief of the messengers, Muhammad (ﷺ). It is the speech of Allāh, the Exalted, nothing from the speech of created beings compares to it. And we do not speak with [the doctrine] of the creation of the Qur'ān.¹⁴⁶⁸

Everything that al-Ṭaḥāwī mentioned is from the 'aqidah of the Righteous Salaf and clashes with the 'aqidah of the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Kullābiyyah and Ash'ariyyah who are all united with each other that this Qur'ān in our presence, which we hear, recite and memorize, consisting of letters and words, the Arabic Qur'ān, is created and that it did not arise from Allāh as speech (*qawl*). The Ash'arites believe that Allāh's *kalām* is only an eternal meaning in the self (*kalām nafsī*) and that it was from Jibrīl (ﷺ) or Muḥammad (ﷺ) that the Qur'ān (as we have it) emanated as speech (*qawl*). This is a clear example of academic dishonesty and trying to misconstrue and twist

¹⁴⁶⁶ Referring to that Qur'ān that was sent down to the Prophet (ﷺ) which was certainly not the *kalām nafsī*, but the Qur'ān as we have it, in letter and word. This sentence of al-Ṭaḥāwī is very clear in invalidating the Ash'arite doctrine of *kalām nafsī* since he stated that it is this Qur'ān, that originated from Him as speech, and which was revealed, and that it is this Qur'ān that he Believers consider to be Allāh's speech in reality and in truth.

¹⁴⁶⁷ This is explicit in indicating that the Arabic Qur'ān is indeed the uncreated speech of Allāh, and in this al-Ṭaḥāwī is in complete agreement with the Salaf before him, who used the very same verse that al-Ṭaḥāwī is about to use to establish this point.

¹⁴⁶⁸ *Al-'Aqidah al-Ṭaḥāwiyyah*, refer to the Sharḥ of Ibn Ābī al-'Izz with the *taḥqīqāt* of al-Albānī, al-Arnā'ūt and Shākir. And in this last sentence al-Ṭaḥāwī has refuted the Kullābī Ash'arī doctrine that the Arabic Qur'ān is created.

al-Ṭaḥāwī's words in order to obfuscate his real intent and in order to support the very heresy that al-Ṭaḥāwī is clearly intending to refute.

The Uncreatedness of the Qur'ān

Hamza Yūsuf wrote:

The uncreatedness of the Qur'an was never discussed by the Prophet (ﷺ) or his companions (رضي الله عنهم). The debate of the Qur'an being created or uncreated was introduced by the Mu'tazilah; they concluded that the Qur'an must be created, and their position, in turn, forced the Sunnis to respond. Fifty years later, the complete doctrinal formulation of the uncreatedness of the Qur'an was articulated by Imam al-Ash'arī, and those who maintained otherwise were effectively silenced.¹⁴⁶⁹

This we can describe explicitly as both historical and intellectual fraud, without any let or hindrance, and it is shameful that one can be so brazen in committing such atrocities against the sanctity of historical fact and academic rigour. Indeed, it demonstrates doctrinal bias and bigotry. And the explanation of this is as follows:

Regarding his claim:

The uncreatedness of the Qur'an was never discussed by the Prophet (ﷺ) or his companions (رضي الله عنهم).

This is a false claim for the Companions explicitly stated that the Qur'ān is uncreated as has been related by 'Amr bin Dīnār al-Makkī (d. 126H)¹⁴⁷⁰, from the trustworthy ones (thiqāt) amongst the Tābi'īn, who had met the Companions of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). He said:

I reached the people since seventy years (ago), all of them saying: Allāh, lofty be His name, is the Creator, and whatever is besides

¹⁴⁶⁹ *The Creed of Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī* (Zaytuna Institute, 2007), p. 111.

¹⁴⁷⁰ He is the Imām and Ḥāfidh, Abū Muḥammad 'Amr bin Dīnār al-Jumḥī al-Makkī, he was born in 46H, and he heard from Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Jābir bin 'Abd Allāh, Anas bin Mālik and others (رضي الله عنهم). He was *thiqah thabt*, and was the muftī of the people of Makkah in his time. He died in 126H. Refer to *Tadhkirat al-Huffādh* (1/113-114), *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (8/28-30), and *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* of Ibn Sa'd (5/479-480).