

tafsīr all carry the same meaning in this regard. The Salaf intended refutation of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah through negation of the *ma'nā* and *tafsīr*, since they were innovating new meanings and distorting the texts and saying "*hand means power, and seeing means knowledge, and istiwā' means conquering*", and they intended refutation of the Mushabbihah through the negation of *kayf* and *ḥadd*, since they were saying "*seeing like my seeing, and hand like my hand*", thereby affirming a *kayf* and a *ḥadd*.

As for those who came from the later Ash'arites who took the way of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah in the subjects of 'uluww, *istiwā'* and the *ṣifāt khabariyyah*, they misappropriated these statements of the Salaf in order to legitimize their innovated *tafwīḍ*. They used the statements of the Salaf in negating *kayf*, *ḥadd*, *tafsīr* and *ma'nā* - the intent of which has been made clear in what has preceded - in order to support their own innovation, which is making *ḥudūth al-ajsām* to be the foundation of their speech regarding Allāh through which the presumption of *tajsīm* and *tashbīh* for all the texts pertaining to the *ṣifāt khabariyyah* is necessitated, then using *ta'wīl* or *tafwīḍ* as methodological approaches to deal with the *problematic* texts that give the presumption of *tajsīm* and *tashbīh* in their misguided opinion.

Hamza Yūsuf's Translation of al-Ṭahāwī's Creed

Al-Ṭahāwī's creed is founded upon the affirmation of Allāh's *Ṣifāt Fī'liyyah*¹⁴⁴¹ and constitutes an invalidation and falsification of the premise that both the Ash'arī and Māturidī schools are based upon, which is negation of what they call *ḥawādith* (events, occurrences), and by which they really mean Allāh's chosen actions (*af'āl ikhtiyāriyyah*).¹⁴⁴² Al-Ṭahāwī opposed the foundation of the Kullābī, Ash'arī, Māturidī schools in this regard. Attempts by the Ash'arites to misappropriate al-Ṭahāwī's creed therefore, is an extremely dishonest exercise.

However, al-Ṭahāwī used certain vague and generalized phrases which put the hearts of these people to trial. This is why they cling to such phrases, making them prominent, highlighting them, commenting upon them, explaining them, and presenting them to the people¹⁴⁴³

¹⁴⁴¹ Those actions tied to Allāh's will and power, which He does as and when He wills. Ahl al-Sunnah consider this to be from His utmost perfection. These were denied by the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Ash'ariyyah, because they considered actions to be *ḥawādith* (events) which necessitate that the one in whom they are established must be a body (*jism*), upon the language and terminology they took from the Sabean star and idol-worshipping pagan disbelievers as part of their proof of *ḥudūth al-ajsām*. Thus, they consider the attribution of actions that are established with His essence as *tajsīm*, *tashbīh*, and *kufr*.

¹⁴⁴² The Ash'arites are united with the Jahmiyyah, Ash'ariyyah and disbelievers like Ibn Sīnā that actions established with Allāh's self (*dhāt*) implies change (*taghyīr*) in His essence, which in turn implies He is a body (*jism*) - upon Aristotle's classification of *ajsām* (bodies) and *a'rāḍ* (incidental attributes), from which are action (*fi'l*) and affection (*infi'āl*).

¹⁴⁴³ Without realising, or pretending not to realise that these obscure and general statements of al-Ṭahāwī in negating parts, limbs and the likes, are in refutation of the Rāfiḍah, the likes of Dāwūd al-Jawāribī, and Hishām bin al-Ḥakam, and the Hanafī Karrāmiyyah and others from the Mujassimah from Ahl al-Kalām who declared their Lord to be in the form of a human being with limbs, and not in refutation of those who affirm what Allāh described Himself with of the attributes of life, hearing, seeing, face, hand, eye, 'uluww and the likes which have come in the revealed texts, whilst negating *takyīf* and *tashbīh* - and they are the entirety of the Salaf, the early Kullābīyyah Ash'ariyyah as well as hordes from the Scholars amongst the followers of the four Imāms. What the Ash'arites do not reveal is that the worst and most extreme of the Mujassimah were from the Ahl al-Kalām, brethren of the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Ash'ariyyah in taking the way of *ajsām* (bodies) and

whilst making obscure, and leaving without comment or indication that which is clear and explicit in negating and invalidating the very foundations of their entire speech regarding Allāh the Most High, which is based upon the the negation of *ḥawādith* (events, occurrences) - as they claim - from Allāh, the Most High - which are in reality His chosen actions. Highlighting all the errors of Ḥamza Yūsuf requires a separate treatise, but we shall illustrate here the type of academic dishonesty that characterizes the Ash'arite school with a few examples.

Allāh's Sifāt Fi'liyyah Such as Anger and Pleasure

Al-Ṭaḥāwī states, towards the end of his 'aqīdah:

والله يغضب ويرضى لا كأحد من الورى

And Allāh becomes angry, and becomes pleased, but not [in the manner or likeness] of any human.

This follows the way of the Salaf which is *ithbāt* (affirmation) with negation of *tamthīl* (likeness).¹⁴⁴⁴ Here al-Ṭaḥāwī used the *muḍāri'* verb

a'rāḍ (incidental attributes) in theological matters. And what led them to such repugnant views was that upon this language and terminology they reasoned that since there are only bodies (*ajsām*) and their incidental attributes (*a'rāḍ*), and since Allāh cannot be an incidental attribute, then He must be a body (*jism*), and they saw no way to affirm the attribute except to affirm Allāh as a body (*jism*). So amongst them were those who said, a body but not like the created bodies (*jism lā kal-ajsām*), and amongst them were those who affirmed attributes for Him, like attributes in created bodies, and amongst them were those who said Allāh is in the form of humans with limbs - and all of these views were founded upon the same language, terminology and kalām of the Mutakallimīn, that of *ajsām* and *a'rāḍ*. It is very dishonest for people like Yusuf and Keller to conceal these facts from their audiences and deceptively malign Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah who affirm the *ṣifāt khabariyyah* without *tamthīl*, *tashbīh* and *takyīf*, just as it is deception for them to conceal from their audiences that the early Kullābī Ash'arīs also affirmed the *ṣifāt khabariyyah* without *ta'wīl* or *tafwīd*.

¹⁴⁴⁴ This clashes with the approach of the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, the later Ash'arīs, and the Māturīdīs which is that Islam itself depends upon the proof of *ḥudūth al-ajsām* for its validation, and hence, the verses pertaining to the attributes are presumptions of *tashbīh* and *taj̄sīm*, and thus it is obligatory to make *ta'wīl* of them, so as to keep these texts in conformity with this proof.

form (indicating present and future tense), which incorporates the attribute (*ṣifah*) and the action (*fi'l*), and he did not simply affirm the attributes with their nouns by saying *ghaḍab* and *riḍā*, and this is very significant because al-Ṭaḥāwī wrote in a very short, simple and concise way, and chose words carefully and with intent.

Hamza Yusuf translated this sentence as follows:

God has wrath and pleasure, but not like that of any human.¹⁴⁴⁵

This is not an accurate translation of al-Ṭaḥāwī's words, since he replaced the *verb forms* in the original to *noun forms* in the translation.¹⁴⁴⁶ When it comes to translating intricate matters pertaining to creed, it is essential to maintain standards of academic rigorousness and justice towards the one whose words are being translated. This inaccurate rendering enables the justification of the interpretation of the Kullābiyyah who affirmed these attributes but only as eternal attributes of Allāh's essence, similar to knowledge (*ilm*) and life (*ḥayāt*), without being tied to Allāh's will and power. Or it enables the false *ta'wīl*s of the Ash'ariyyah that anger means the intent to punish and pleasure means the intent to reward making these attributes synonymous with *irādah* (wish), thereby denying there are independent attributes of pleasure and anger. Al-Ṭaḥāwī's intent is to clearly affirm these attributes without *takyīf* - as is the way of the Salaf - and had he been upon the *dīn* of the Jahmites and their offshoots, operating upon the proof of *ḥudūth al-ajsām*, he would have expressed as such, and exonerated Allāh of *ḥawādith*, as they claim. However, al-Ṭaḥāwī made affirmation of these attributes with negation of likeness, and this affirmation is one of meaning, not one of mere words.

Hamza Yusuf is not ignorant of the fact that the issue of the *ṣifāt fi'liyyah* is one in which the Kullābiyyah, Ash'ariyyah and Māturidiyyah are opponents and disputants to the Righteous Salaf, Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah. This approach of theirs is to avoid ascribing what they call *ḥawādith* (events) for Allāh, since this would invalidate their proof of

¹⁴⁴⁵ *The Creed of Imām al-Ṭaḥawī* (Zaytuna Institute, 2007), p. 74.

¹⁴⁴⁶ In what is documented from Ibn Kullāb and the Ash'ariyyah, it is apparent that they do not use the *muḍarī'* verb form in relation to the attributes of anger (*ghaḍab*) and pleasure (*riḍā*), rather they stick to noun forms. Refer to al-Maqālāt of al-Ash'arī in relation to Ibn Kullāb's creed on these attributes and also to al-Bāqillānī's books al-Tamhīd and al-Inṣaf.

ḥudūth al-ajsām. The evidence of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah that these attributes are actions tied to Allāh's will and power is from the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and Ijmā', and much of it has already preceded in the section on Allāh's *ṣifāt fi'liyāh*.

From the Qur'ān is the saying of Allāh, the Exalted:

﴿ قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ وَعَصَبٌ ﴾

He said: Torment and wrath (anger) has already fallen on you from your Lord. (7:71).

This verse indicates certain completion of the falling of Allāh's anger upon them in the past, and if this speech was eternally present with Allāh, upon the doctrine of *kalām nafsī*, of the Ash'arites, it would imply the eternal existence of those upon whom this anger fell upon, and this is futile. However, this verse, and the others presented below are all proof that Allāh has actions tied to His will and power, from which are pleasure and anger.

And also:

﴿ وَعَصَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴾

And Allāh became wrathful over them, cursed them and has prepared Hell for them, what an evil destination. (48:6)

And also:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيِّئًا هُمْ غَضَبٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَذَلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ﴾

Certainly, those who took the calf (for worship), wrath (anger) from their Lord and humiliation will come upon them in the life of this world. (Al-A'raf 7:152)

This text is explicit in that Allāh's anger befell them in the life of this world, and the verb (سَيِّئًا هُمْ) is indicative of the fact that Allāh becomes angry and wrathful according to His will and power, and that He has acations tied to His will and power. And also the saying of Allāh, the Sublime:

﴿لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ﴾

Allāh indeed became pleased with the Believers when they pledged allegiance to you beneath the tree. (48:18).

This verse explicitly states that Allāh became pleased with the Believers when they gave the pledge of allegiance, and used the particle (*idh*) meaning, *when*, which indicates time.¹⁴⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴⁷ From the great confusion of the Ash'arites is the issue of time. They follow the negative theology of the Sabean Harranians and other civilizations who only described Allāh in terms of negative statements, and part of this is to make ambiguous statements such as *Allāh is outside of space and time* which comprise both truth and falsehood depending on what is intended. It is based upon these dubious and ambiguous statements that they deny Allāh's 'uluww, and that Allāh has actions tied to His will and power. However, we see in the Book and the Sunnah that there are different notions of time. There is time in this creation, which is through the motion of the planetary bodies - and this is what the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Ash'ariyyah and Philosophers intend when they say Allāh is not subject to time. Prior to this creation, there existed another notion of time, since we know that the decrees of this creation were written fifty-thousand years before its creation. And Allāh created the heavens and earth in six days (see 7:54, 10:3, 11:7, 25:59, 32:4, 50:38, 57:4), which shows that there are years and days other than the years and days of this world. Then we also see verses in the Qur'ān which indicate that our measure of time is different to the measure of time with Allāh (see 24:48, 32:5, 70:4-5), where a day with Allāh is as a thousand days of our reckoning. And further, there were created entities before the creation of the heavens and earth, such as the Throne, the Pen, the Preserved Tablet, the *dukhān* and the water, and all of these things, along with the heavens and earth, were not created at the same moment. In stating that Allāh is not encapsulated by time which is the notion of time after the creation of the heavens and the earth - about which there is no dispute and which is true - they fail to address the fact that the Book and the Sunnah affirm a notion of time that existed prior to this creation and its planetary bodies, as evidenced in the Book and the Sunnah. And we say that all measurements of time (*azminah*) were indeed created by Allāh. However, the issue of Allāh having actions tied to His will and power is a matter independent to that of time (*zamān*). Allāh's actions of creating the Throne, the Pen, the Preserved Tablet, the heavens and the earth, never occurred all at once, or in eternity. Rather, Allāh created the Throne, and the Throne existed before the pen [upon the view that the Throne preceded the Pen, which is the stronger and more correct opinion], and the Preserved Tablet preceded the creation of the heavens and the earth. And this is just like Allāh ordering the Angels to prostrate to Ādam after creating Him, and speaking to Moses, and speaking to Muḥammad and He will also speak directly to each believer on the

And also the saying of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic:

﴿وَلَا يَرْضَىٰ لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ وَإِن تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ﴾

And He is not pleased with disbelief for his slaves. If you are grateful to Him, He is pleased therewith for you. (39:7)

And in the Sāhīh of al-Bukhārī, in the ḥadīth of intercession reported by Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) referring to Allāh becoming angry:

Indeed, my Lord has become angry today, with an anger whose like He has never displayed before it, and whose like He will never display after it.¹⁴⁴⁸

Also, the ḥadīth of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī in the two Saḥīḥs that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, regarding the people who have entered Paradise:

He Allāh will say [to them], 'Are you pleased?', and they will say, 'And why should we not be pleased O Lord, when you have given us what you have not given to anyone from your creation?' He will

Day of Judgement, and all of these are different instances of speech. To Ahl al-Sunnah, this proves and establishes that Allāh performs actions as and when He wishes, and this is not to be confused with the issue of time. It is only with this belief of Ahl al-Sunnah [of affirming the *ṣifāt fi'liyyaah*] that the heresy of the Philosophers of claiming the universe is eternal, and its associated doubts can be effectively rebutted. However, to the people of *kalām*, all of these affairs (Allāh's chosen actions) amounts to events (*ḥawādith*) signifying encapsulation by time, which shows a faulty perception on their behalf. These facts from the Book and the Sunnah falsify this foreign theology which the Ash'arites took from the students of the Greeks, Sabeans, Hindus and others in whose writings there are found these obscure statements of negative theology which were brought into the Ummah by the likes of al-Ja'd bin Dirham and al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān, and subsequently transmitted to the ummah by the Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah, and which are the foundation of the *ta'ṭīl* and *tahrīf* shared by the groups of *kalām* and *falsfah*.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim in their *Ṣaḥīḥs*, Ahmad in *al-Musnad*, al-Tirmidhī in his *Sunan*, Ibn Abī 'Āsim in *Kitāb al-Sunnah*, and Ibn Khuzaymah in *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*. This ḥadīth is an explicit refutation of the *dīn* of the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah pertaining to Allāh's chosen actions, which they deem to be *ḥawādith* (events) taking place in bodies.

say, 'Shall I not give you what is better than that?' So they will say, 'O Lord, and what thing is better than that?' and He will say, 'My pleasure with you, such that I will never become angry with you after it, ever.'

Therefore, alongside his knowledge that al-Ṭaḥāwī does not concur with the Mutakallimīn in their negation of the *ṣifāt fi'liyyah* upon their argument of *ḥudūth* (recency) he rendered the *verb forms* used by al-Ṭaḥāwī which indicate actions (*af'āl*) into *noun forms* in the English translation. From what has preceded, it is clear that Ḥamza Yūsuf has not fulfilled his trust in translating this particular passage in al-Ṭaḥāwī's creed.¹⁴⁴⁹ It should be noted that where any Scholar affirms actions that are tied to Allāh's will, he has invalidated the very premise upon which the entire Ash'arite doctrinal school is built. Thereafter, it is pointless trying to misappropriate that particular Scholar's creed to prop up the Ash'arite doctrinal school, as this is academic dishonesty. What further proves that al-Ṭaḥāwī is free and innocent of the Ash'arite's and their doctrinal school that is built upon the negation of ḥawādith is that he affirms Allāh took Ibrāhīm as His khalīl (friend) and spoke to Moses direct.

وقول إن الله اتخذ إبراهيم خليلا ، وكلم الله موسى تكليما ، إيمانا وتصديقا وتسليما

Out of firm belief, assent and submission, we say that Allāh took Ibrāhīm as His friend and spoke to Moses directly

If the Ash'arites claim that Allāh befriended Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) in eternity and spoke to Mūsā (عليه السلام) in eternity, it means that both Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) and Mūsā (عليه السلام) had to exist with Him in eternity, and this is not the case.¹⁴⁵⁰ Rather, Allāh took Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) as His friend after the creation

¹⁴⁴⁹ It is likely that doctrinal bias led him to take such liberties. As for the issue of Allāh's pleasure and anger, the Ash'arites took a particular approach in trying to deal with them as these are problematic attributes for them, implying *ḥudūth* (origination, recency), so they followed the approach of Ibn Kullāb, in the doctrine of *al-muwāfāt*, which holds that Allāh's pleasure and anger is eternal in the sense that Allāh was eternally pleased with the one whom He knew would die upon faith, and that He was eternally angry with the one whom He knew would die upon disbelief. They innovated this doctrine, following the *uṣūl* of the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah in negating ḥawādith (events, occurrences) for Allāh, by which they mean Allāh's chosen actions, which include love, anger, pleasure, *istiwā'* and so on.

¹⁴⁵⁰ These two matters posed difficulties for the Ash'arites who tried to wrangle around with rationalities and sophistries in order to accommodate these

of Ibrāhīm and Allāh spoke to Mūsā (ﷺ) 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 Tawḥīd of *al-Jawhar wal-'Arad* 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'rād) 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 nafsī 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 Sabean 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:

وإن القرآن كلام الله ، منه بدأ بلا كيفية قولا

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 Jibrīl (عليه السلام)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-Ṭaḥāwī* (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 Jibrīl, 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 (وان 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), (بدا) 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:

وان 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:

وان 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 (لَا) to the end of the sentence, which is what al-Ṭaḥāwī did, and the meaning is the same. However - and Allāḥ 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 (لَا) 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

Yūsūf 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-Bayjūrīs Hāshiyah 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 nafsi* 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 ككلام 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 nafsī* 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 (جبرئيل) 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, tashbīh 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 nafsī* 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 (جبرئيل).

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'an 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-Ṭaḥāwīyyah*, refer to the Sharḥ of Ibn Ābī al-'Izz with the *taḥqīqāt* of al-Albānī, al-Arnā'ūt and Shākīr. 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-Ṭaḥawī* (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-Huffād* (1/113-114), *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (8/28-30), and *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* of Ibn Sa'd (5/479-480).