



Critical Review of the Mu'tazilī Theory of the Creation (Ḥudūth) of the Qur'an in Qāḍī Abd al-Jabbār's Opinion, Regarding Imam Reza's Narrations

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Abstract

The issue of creation/origin (Ḥudūth) or pre-eternity (Qidam) of the Qur'an was one of the oldest theological debates in Muslim world which has been discussed under the title of the word (Kalām or speech) attribute of God. Qāḍī Abd al-Jabbār, one the most important scholars of the Mu'tazilī school, gives several reasons to prove the origin and creation of the Qur'an. Referring to the hadiths (narrations) of Imam Reza (AS), his arguments lead to the temporal origin and gradual descent of the words and sounds of the Qur'an. However, since this is related to the word of God, the arguments of Abdul Jabbār require temporal origin, composition and change in the Divine nature, according to His Word attribute. For, the attribute could not be separated from the attributed and the sentence of creation or pre-eternity pass to each other, as well. The creation of the Qur'an and confining the Divine word in words and sounds provide you with basic challenges, which may not be accepted easily.

Keywords: Qur'an; Creation; Pre-Eternity; Abdul Jabbār; Mu'tazilīs

Introduction

The Holy Qur'an in many cases invites human beings to think and ponder on the creation of God and His names and attributes. In this way, Islamic scholars argued many issues of the natures of the names and attributes of God and various theological schools offered further ideas in this regard. Among them, Ash'arīs believed that the attributes of God were separated from the nature and pre-eternity¹, while

¹. According to 'Ash'arīs, the person (creator or creature) who reports an account or forbids of or commands to something, speaks with himself with a series of meanings and uses the informative or commanding words instead of them, called self-speech (Taftāzānī, 1409 AH; vol. 4, p. 144). To Ash'arīs, the concept of being pre-eternal of the Qur'an, is in fact the pre-eternity of such self attributes.

Mu'tazilīs stated that the pre-eternity was due to God's essence. From their point of view, the proof of the pre-eternity attributes entailed the idolatry and was against the monotheism (Jurjānī, 1325: vol. 8, p. 44-45).

In this way, the Divine Word was an attribute that became the origin of many discussions among these two great theological schools, so that the creation or pre-eternity of the Qur'an led to various debates in both groups. As the beginning of the theological discussion in Islam was with the word attribute, the science of theology has been called as such a title (Ṭabāṭabāyī, 1417 AH: vol. 2, p. 326). With that in mind, the main reason behind it was Divine attributes existing in the Qur'anic verses. This is shown in the discussions of the God's attributes, under the word attribute.²

Mu'tazilīs believe that the Qur'an was created and they denied its pre-eternity. According to them, the Qur'an is the Word of God and His creature, that was not existed but was seen afterwards. The truth of the Qur'an is a group of words and sounds that gradually were revealed. Hence, the Qur'an has a truth outside this words.

At the age of Imam Reza (AS), the numerous theological sects were prevalent more and more, which because of Abbāsī Ma'mūn, Mu'tazilīs had more followers than the others. So that, mostly those theologians who debated with Imam Reza (AS) and most of the theological questions, for example, in the issue of the infallibility of the prophets, were attributed to this school. The critical reviews of this school's theological bases hence are abundant in the traditions of Imam Reza (AS), from which one can point to the creation theory of the Qur'an. As the most important representative of Mu'tazilīs is Qāḍī Abdul Jabbār Hamedānī, the creation theory of Mu'tazilīs about the Qur'an according to his views is criticized here, regarding Imam Reza's (AS) narrations.

The Word Attribute of the Qur'an

It was stated that the divine verses about the word attribute raised the issue of creation or pre-eternity of the Qur'an. Qāḍī Abdul Jabbār uses these verses to prove the creation of the Qur'an. He defines the word attribute as: "a special order consisting of rational letters in the form of two letters or more. According to this definition, the word has a special meaning, and so the birds' voices and songs are not words, due to their non-sense natures (Abdul Jabbār, 1962: vol. 7, p. 7).

The Qur'an in some verses attaches the word attribute to God: « وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا. »: "and to Mussa Allah spoke Directly" (Nisā': 164). Asking and speaking with a created being proves the creation of the asker and the addressee (who answers) (Abdul Jabbār, 1962: vol. 7, p. 90). Also the verse " نُودِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ الْأَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبَارَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ أَنْ يَا مُوسَى إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ " : "from The right side of the valley out of a Blessed tree he was addressed: 'O, Mussa! Verily, I am Allah, the Creator of the worlds'" (Qīṣas: 30) proves the creation of interjection. For, firstly the interjection was from the tree, and so it had a temporal beginning and was created, as well (Abdul Jabbār, 1962: vol. 7: p. 90). If the word of God and the Qur'an

² Some researchers attribute this to the familiarity of Muslims with ancient Greek philosophy and the translation of their philosophical books (Khū'ī, nd: p. 407-408). Others attribute the Ash'arīs' belief in the pre-eternity of the Qur'an to the familiarity of Muslims with Christian priests and their theological foundations (Sobhani, nd: vol. 3, p. 517). For Christians believe that Jesus was the word of God and so he is pre-eternal. Ash'arīs consider all the attributes, including life, knowledge and so on as pre-eternal. Therefore, the issue is not specific to the word attribute and the above justification is violated with other traits. In view of the points raised in the text, the main reason for such an issue arises is the verses of the Holy Qur'an concerning the attribute of the Word and the call to ponder and think about them. However, these two cases, especially the translation of Greek philosophical texts, may also have implications for the form of arguments and the way in which discussions are formed.

Combining the Qur'an of Letters and Words

A group of Abdul Jabbār's arguments to prove that the Qur'an is "creation" is in terms of its combination of letters and sounds. Abdul Jabbār's statements are as follow:

[1] Abdul Jabbār uses the verse “إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَنْ نَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ”: “[As for the Resurrection Day] When We [Allah, the Almighty] intend Something to come to existence, We Only state to it: "Be done!" and it comes to existence immediately” (Nahl: 40), in three ways:

A. This verse is in the conditional context, that its “if clause” is “إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ” and the answer is “كُنْ”. The answer is late on the condition and based on it, so the word of God is late to His will and based on His will too, and hence it is “creation”;

B. “*f*” in “فَيَكُونُ” indicates “therefore, after, then”. Hence, the development after the word of God is performed without delay. As a result, the saying “كُنْ” is before the development (*takwīn*) and the development is “creation” due to the delay. Hence, the saying “كُنْ” by God is “creation” and consequently the Qur'an is “creation” as well, not pre-eternity;

C. “كُنْ” in this verse is composed of two letters of “*k*” and “*n*”, respectively one after the other. As a result, the word “كُنْ” is “creation” (Abdul Jabbār, nd: p. 103). Also in the sentence “كُنْ فَيَكُونُ”, “كان” is *tāmmah* (complementary) meaning both creation and existence. That is, as soon as God commands the object will happen (Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH: vol. 2, p. 606). So the letters and sounds of the Qur'an are “creation”, not pre-eternity.

Critique: The above argument and its three interpretations are based on the order and precedence or delay of the Qur'anic speech in the verse. However, in the traditions of Imam Reza(AS) it is denied to suppose the word of God as literal, but it is interpreted as the will of God in the creation of objects: “... فَإِذَا شَاءَ شَيْئًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ بِمَشِيئَتِهِ وَ إِرَادَتِهِ” (Kulaynī, 1407 AH: vol. 1, p. 10): “But the will of God is the creation of Him, nothing else, because He say to it ‘be done’, so it becomes immediately, without the words, neither the speech of the tongue.”; “إِذَا شَاءَ شَيْئًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ بِمَشِيئَتِهِ وَ إِرَادَتِهِ” (Ibn Bābiwayh, 1378: vol. 1, p. 177): “When Allah wills something, He says to it to be done, then it becomes immediately, by His destiny and will”. In this sense, the word and command of God in the Qur'an means the creation of objects and the implement of God's will and destiny to their creation. Divine will and destiny, therefore, is the precursor to the creation of objects. As, in some verses of the Qur'an, the creation of the heavens and the earth is attributed to the word “كن” of God: “وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ” “Allah is the One Who created the Heavens and the earth based on Truth and when He says: "Be!" to the Day [of Resurrection], it comes to existence. Allah's Word of Command is the Truth” ('An'ām: 73) (Ṭabāṭabāyī, 1417 AH: vol. 12, p. 249). The creation of objects was also not temporal but separated from it (Mullā Ṣadra, 1366: vol. 7, p. 14). So “كن فيكون” is not literal but an allegory and a picture of the true meaning (Mīrdāmād, 1403: 322), and “كن” is an interpretation of the relation of objects to the will of God and “فيكون” is their being created (Nourī, 1383: vol. 3, p. 421). Because of God's non-material being, His will and creation are not temporal as well. So, the condition of “إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ” and the answer “كُنْ”, “*f*” in “فَيَكُونُ” and the combination of “كن” of the two letters “*k*” and “*n*”, do not imply temporal precedence and delay, and thus nor temporal creation, rather, the primacy of God's essence and will over objects and creatures is a causal primacy, and in contrast, objects and creatures are

inherent creations.⁴ Abdul Jabbār, therefore, makes no difference between the intrinsic and temporal creations in this argument, and falls into a fallacy between the two.

[2] God describes the Qur'an in some verses as: “مِن لَّدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ”: “This [Qur'an] is a Book Which its Words of Revelation are Decisive and have been expounded by Allah, the Absolute Aware Sovereign” (Hūd: 1). According to Abdul Jabbār, the Qur'an's description as “*ihkām*” here indicates that it has been created (Abdul Jabbār, 1962, vol. 7, p. 89). For, “*ihkām*” means having a firm order that never disappears (Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH: vol. 2, p. 377) and then it has been detailed. These descriptions show that the Qur'an is composed of surahs (chapters), verses, letters and phrases, and therefore is not “creation”.

Critique: From the viewpoint of Imam Reza (AS), God is pre-eternal, not creature, for the created being due to non-former existence needs a cause: “أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى قَدِيمٌ” (Ibn Bābiwayh, 1398: p. 186). Imam Reza (AS) states that because of such a feature, God does not have the attributes of “creation”, rather He is free of the attributes of “creation”. Therefore, God, the Almighty, has the attribute of knowledge, life, power, etc. without attaching these attributes to a state of absence, such as ignorance, etc. For instance, Imam says about the attribute of knowledge: “إِنَّمَا نُسَمِّي اللَّهَ بِالْعَالِمِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ حَادِثٍ عِلْمٍ بِهِ” (ibid). likewise, the creation of the word attribute of God in the case of God Himself has the same mistake. In addition, the following verse testified by Abdul Jabbār uses the word *al-Khabīr* attribute for Allah, which, according to Imam Reza (as)'s interpretation, the basis of Abdul Jabbār's reasoning would be broken down: “وَأَمَّا الْخَبِيرُ فَالَّذِي لَا يَغْرُبُ عَنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَا يَفُوتُهُ شَيْءٌ لَيْسَ لِلتَّجْرِبَةِ وَلَا لِلْإِعْتِبَارِ بِالشَّيْءِ فَيَفِيدُهُ التَّجْرِبَةُ وَالْإِعْتِبَارُ عِلْمًا لَوْ لَا هُمَا مَا عِلْمٌ لِأَنَّ مَنْ كَانَ كَذَلِكَ كَانَ جَاهِلًا وَاللَّهُ لَمْ يَزَلْ خَبِيرًا بِمَا يَخْلُقُ وَالْخَبِيرُ مِنَ النَّاسِ الْمُسْتَخِيرُ عَنْ جَهْلِ الْمُنْعَلَمِ” (ibid): “But *Khabīr* is the One who knows everything and does not lose anything, not because of the experiences and experimentations, which then they creates the same experience and experiment which if not both be present, would not be known. Because if someone be like it, he is ignorant, while God is always aware of what He has created”. According to this saying, God refers to the attribute of *Khabīr*, but unlike the created beings, there is absolutely no loss in Him and no attribute of “creation”, such as the word, can be attributed to Him.

The Gradual Descent of the Qur'an

In several verses the Qur'an has been described as “*tanzīl*” and “*munazzal*”, for example some of them are as follow: “كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ”: “[O, Messenger! [This] Holy] Book is sent down to you” (A'rāf: 2), “تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ”: “These are the Words of Revelation of the Holy Book. And what has been revealed to You [O, Messenger] from your Creator and Nurturer is the Truth” (Ra'd: 1), etc. The Qur'an's description of such attributes proves to be “creation” (Rāzī, 1986: vol. 1, p. 254), because it proves the “creation” and “happening” of the Qur'an at a specific time, before when the Qur'an was not existed.

Likewise, is the verse “نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ”: “The One Who has sent down the [Holy] Book to you [O, Messenger] based on the Truth, confirming what came before It; and He has sent down the Taurat and the Injil aforetime, a Guidance for the people” (Ali 'Imran: 3). The Qur'an's description of *Inzāl* (descent) and its truth imply that the Qur'an was not created but pre-eternal, for the descent of the pre-eternity is impossible. According to this verse, the revelation of the Qur'an was after the Torah and the Gospel, and so it was “creation” (Abdul Jabbār, nd:

⁴ The cause firstly exists inherently and naturally, and then the caused would be created. In contrast, the caused due to its intrinsic possibility requires the cause and so comes after it (Sabzevarī, 1379: vol. 2, p. 308).

140). Also according to the verse “وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَى” (Hūd: 17), the Torah precedes the Qur'an, while procedure and delay are related to the created object, not the pre-eternal one (Abdul Jabbār, 1962: vol. 7, p. 88).

Next interpretation of this argument is quoted in another verse: “طه ما أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْفَى إِلَّا تَذَكُّرَةً” (Ta. Ha, [O, Messenger!] We did not send down The Holy Qur'an to become a source of Distress and hardship for you, it is only a Reminder for the one who Fears [from the disobedience of Allah], This Holy Qur'an is descended from The Presence of the Creator of the earth and the lofty heavens” (Tāhā: 1-4). This verse describes the Qur'an as “*tadhkerah*” (reminder), that implies a particular position and therefore its being as “creation”. For if it is pre-eternal, the position is meaningless, for no particular purpose. Because the addressee of reminding is “creation” and so the Qur'an is “creation” too. Thus, the descent is the cause of reminding, and the creation of the descent proves the not-pre-eternal and then the creation of the reminder (Abdul Jabbār, nd: p. 488-489), because the descent in itself or otherwise in relation to the pre-eternal object is impossible (Abdul Jabbār, 1426: p. 283). Basically, this needs to transfer it from a position to another position and consequently to be “creation”, as the pre-eternal object does not move or transfer (Rāzī, 1420: v. 14, p. 195).

Critique: Abdul Jabbār's reasoning here proves that the Qur'an was gradually revealed to the Prophet (AS) and was therefore “creation”. This is also emphasized by Imam Reza (AS): “وَالنُّورَ وَالْإِنجِيلَ وَالرَّبُّورَ وَالْقُرْآنَ وَكُلُّ كِتَابٍ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَنْزَلَهُ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نُورًا وَهُدًى وَ هِيَ كُلُّهَا مُحَدَّثَةٌ وَ هِيَ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ حَيْثُ يَقُولُ أَوْ يُحَدِّثُ” (Majlisī, 1403 AH: vol. 10, p. 344): “Torah, Gospel, Psalms, Forqan, and all revealed books were the word of Allah the Almighty. He has sent down it to the people as light and guide. It is thoroughly created and is not Allah Himself, like what He says or creates for them as reminder. He says: ‘what they take of the reminder from their Lord is creature, unless what they listen while they are playing. Allah has created all books when he sent down’. These arguments however do not prove that the truth of the Qur'an is the same words and sounds and has other truth. For the word of the Creator is fundamentally different from the word of the creature: “كَلَامُ الْخَالِقِ لِمَخْلُوقٍ لَيْسَ كَكَلَامِ الْمَخْلُوقِ لِمَخْلُوقٍ.” (*ibid*): “the word of the Creator to the creature is not like the word of the creature to the creature”. It has been stated previously that according to Shiite traditions, the word of God is not the same and has different degrees (Mullā Ṣadra, 1366: vol. 6, p. 23). Some Qur'anic verses also indicate this fact, such as: “إِنَّهُ لَفُرْقَانٌ كَرِيمٌ فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ” (Wāqī'ah: 77-78), “بَلْ هُوَ فُرْقَانٌ مَجِيدٌ فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ” (Burūj: 21-22), “إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ فُرْقَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ وَ إِنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِيَّ حَكِيمٌ” (Zukhruf: 3-4). These various attributes are because of the different degrees of the Qur'an and the divine word attribute of which the highest status is the essence of God and the lowest is in the form of the words and sounds (Mullā Ṣadra, 1981: vol. 7, p. 38). These verses also indicate the non-temporal creation of the Qur'an and not-confining it in the words and sounds, for the Qur'an's description is reserved for its high attributes and its preserved (*maknūn*) status is for its existence in the preserved (*maḥfūz*) tablet (Ṭabāṭabāyī, 1417 AH: vol. 19, p. 137). The other verse expresses also the existence of the Qur'an in *Umm al-Kitāb* before Allah (*ladaynā*).

In conclusion, the descent and sending down of the Qur'an at a particular time and therefore its “creation” do not contradict the multiple degrees of the Qur'an, so that some Qur'anic verses testify it. On the other side, according to the arguments of Abdul Jabbār, in this part the attribute of the Word of God is

gradually occurring, and therefore His existence is “temporal creation”. Also, since the created object needs to have not been existed before, God lacks the attribute of the word before the revelation of the Qur’an or other holy scriptures. The necessity of lack is not also dependent to “creation” or “pre-eternity” of a being. Imam Reza (AS) considers God and his attributes as pre-eternal, not created. Therefore, God is continually attributed to His attributes, including the Word: “الْقُرْآنُ كَلَامُ اللَّهِ لَا تُجْعَلُ لَهُ اسْمًا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الصَّالِّينَ” (Ibn Bābiwayh, 1398: p. 244): “Al-Qur’an is the word of Allah, so don’t name it from yourself. If you do that, you will go astray”. Regarding the context of this tradition, it is intended to refer to the Qur’an as a “noun”, to believe in it as “creation” and to call it “created”.

God’s Orders in the Qur’an

Abdul Jabbār's proofs in this part are divided in two: the command of God to do something in opposition to His prohibition and the command of God in the sense of His act. From the point of view of this Mu'tazilī thinker, both are proofs of the “creation” of the Qur’an:

[1] In the Qur’an, in many cases an order is issued. The owner and addressee of the order and prohibition must be present when issuing. It would be pointless if the order and prohibition were pre-eternal, but the addressee was created. As if someone in a meeting tells a person to stand up and sit down, but no one was there. It is nonsense to say it and the speaker is considered as mad. So how can one prove this meaning about God!? How can it be rationally correct to say “يا موسى إني أنا ربك فأخضع نفسك لي”: “Verily, I am your Creator and Nurturer! So put off your shoes: You are now in The Sacred Valley of Tuwa” (Tāhā: 12), but there was no Moses (AS) and no one else there (Abdul Jabbār, nd: p. 489). For this reason, God's command to read and recite in the verse “اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ”: “[O, Messenger!] Recite in the Name of Allah Who is your Creator and Nurturer and Who created all creatures of The universe” (‘Alaq: 1) requires “creation” of the material (Abdul Jabbār, 1962: vol. 7, p. 90). If someone declares the quality of things in eternity (*azal*) and such statements are informing the speaker himself, it would be futile. Because people are not in eternity due to their creation nature and it is not right to address a non-existence object. If such statements are not intended to be news about themselves or others, it would still be futile (Rāzī, 1986: vol. 1, p. 254-256), for addressing needs a definite and specific addressee.

According to Abdul Jabbār, all Qur’anic addressing states, such as “هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا”: “He is the One Who created for you all Things that are on the earth [as means of provision and comfort]” (Baqarah: 29), “يا أيها الرسول بلغ ما أنزل إليك من ربك”: “[O, Messenger!] Proclaim the Message That has been sent down to you from Your Creator and Nurturer!” (‘An‘ām: 67), and “يا أيها الذين آمنوا استعينوا بالله”: “O, you who believe! Seek help [from Allah] through patience and prayer” (Baqarah: 153) also refer to the Qur’anic “creation” (Abdul Jabbār, nd: 732). Because being “creation” of the addressee indicates that the Qur’an is not pre-eternal and so it is created.

Critique: Abdul Jabbār's reasoning in this section, confronts with numerous Qur’anic verses that make the whole of his reasoning as nonacceptable, i.e. some of the Qur’anic injunctions and their addressees are not temporal creation, such as Nahl: 40. Because according to this verse, creatures are immediately made available through Divine Will and the creation of God does not require the attributes of created and temporal affairs (Ibn Bābiwayh, 1378: vol. 1, p. 119). According to this verse and the reasoning of Imam Reza (AS), there is no existence before Allah’s order of *kun* (be), and so the argument of Abdul Jabbār about the mutual being of Qur’anic address is incorrect.

As Abdul Jabbār considers that the existence of talking is required to two sides (speaker and addressee), this reasoning results in the need of God in His word attribute to the created beings. For, as

long as there is no creature, the Divine Word will not make sense, whereas God has all the attributes of perfection and has no lack of His attributes. In this respect, according to Imam Reza (AS)'s hadith, the word attribute is like other attributes of perfection, such as knowledge, that God in eternity and without pre-knowledge possesses it: «لَمْ يَزَلِ اللَّهُ عَالِمًا بِالْأَشْيَاءِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ الْأَشْيَاءَ كَعِلْمِهِ بِالْأَشْيَاءِ بَعْدَ مَا خَلَقَ الْأَشْيَاءَ.» (Ibn Bābiwayh, 1398: p. 191-192): “Allah has known all things before He created them...” and also this narration: «سَأَلْتُ أَبَا الْحَسَنِ الرِّضَا عَ هَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ عَارِفًا بِنَفْسِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ الْخَلْقَ قَالَ نَعَمْ قُلْتُ بَرَاهَا وَ يَسْمَعُهَا قَالَ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُحْتَاجًا ... سَأَلْتُ أَبَا الْحَسَنِ الرِّضَا عَ هَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ عَارِفًا بِنَفْسِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ الْخَلْقَ قَالَ نَعَمْ قُلْتُ بَرَاهَا وَ يَسْمَعُهَا قَالَ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُحْتَاجًا ... سَأَلْتُ أَبَا الْحَسَنِ الرِّضَا عَ هَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ عَارِفًا بِنَفْسِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ الْخَلْقَ قَالَ نَعَمْ قُلْتُ بَرَاهَا وَ يَسْمَعُهَا قَالَ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُحْتَاجًا ...» (ibid: p. 145).

[2] The command ('*amr*') of God is fulfilled (passive): «وَ كَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا»: “And verily, Allah's Ordainment is always Carried out” (Nisā': 47). It is impossible for the Qur'an to be pre-eternal if the command is a specific word or speech and its application is permissible in the verbs, or if the truth is in both. As a result, this verse emphasizes the “creation” of the Qur'an. Also, in the verse «وَ كَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدْرًا وَ مَقْدُورًا»: “and Allah's Command is an Ordained matter” (Aḥzāb: 38), the creator and maker is “*maqḍūr*”. So, *maqḍūr* is not existed and then becomes created, i.e. “creation”. The command of God is therefore “creation”, not “pre-eternity”.

Critique: From the point of view of Imam Reza (AS), the Qur'anic injunctions are not always with the words unless the Qur'anic creation is necessary: «... إِحْكَامِ عِدَّتِهَا فِعْلًا مِنْهُ كَقَوْلِهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ وَ كُنْ مِنْهُ» (Ibn Bābiwayh: 1378: vol. 1, p. 173), for to perform the God's orders and their being destined (*muqaddar*), which is performed by the command of “be” (كُنْ), are related to the genuine and outward affairs, not words and sounds. If the actions of God are temporal, there will be a time gap between the Creator and the creature, and the creature will exist after a supposed time. Therefore, the criterion of time abstraction will be the essence of God. Whereas God is pre-eternal and is not subject to time: «قَدِيمٌ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ بِخَلْقِهِ الْخَلْقَ» (Ibn Bābiwayh, 1378: vol. 1, p. 171). On the other, time is the amount of motion of a material object; the assumption of the existence of time before the creation and implementation of God requires the existence of a material being (Ṭabātabāyī, nd: 63). In particular, Imam Reza (AS) uses the definitions of “*al-ṣun*” and “*al-'ibdā*”⁵ in order to prove that God's commands are not always literal and are created in some verses. There is another witness in other verses, such as: «وَ مَا أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ»: “though Firoun's order was not a right directive at all” (Hūd: 97) (Rāzī, 1420 AH: vol. 10, p. 97).

Existence of Abrogation in the Qur'an

The Islamic Community has a consensus on the existence of abrogation in the Qur'an. The abrogation means making a decree either ended or expanded after it has been established. Therefore, according to the abrogation, the command or address of God in the Qur'an towards something or someone will be lost after its establishment. Disappearance also means being not pre-eternal, but created (Rāzī, 1986: vol. 1, p. 257).

According to Abdul Jabbār, the possibility of abrogation (*ibdāl* and change) and forgetfulness implies to the creation of the Qur'an: «مَا نَنْسَخُ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِئُهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا»: “None of Our Decrees do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, unless We Substitute something better or similar” (Baqarah: 106). Because attributing a pre-eternal object to such features is impossible (Abdul Jabbār, nd: 103). On the other, if necessary, God converts a word or decree of a verse to another (Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH: vol. 1, p. 176).

⁵. “*ṣun*” means “creation” and “*ibdā*” means non-temporal invention.

Also, the Qur'anic verses referring to change and convert, such as: “تَحْنُ خَلْقَانَهُمْ وَ شَدَدْنَا أَسْرَهُمْ وَإِذَا شِئْنَا “: “We did indeed create them and We gave Them a great deal of strength, but if We Will [despite their strength] will bring Another nation in their place” (Insān: 28), “وَ إِذَا بَدَّلْنَا آيَةً مَكَانَ آيَةٍ “: “And when We abrogate a Word of Revelation with another one” (Nahl: 101), and those verses speak about the impossible of producing something like Qur'an, including the verse: “قُلْ لَنْ يَجْتَمِعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا “: “Say [O, Messenger!]: ‘If all mankind and Jinns should get together to produce The like of this Qur'an, they could not Produce its like, though they receive Assistance from one another’” (Isra': 88), all indicate to the “creation” of the Qur'an. Because it is impossible to describe the pre-eternal object with such traits (Abdul Jabbār, 1962: vol. 7, p. 89). In other words, change and convert about an object is created not pre-eternal, as well as the gathering of jinn and man to do something is only regarded to a created object not a pre-eternal one. The pre-eternal object is not caused (*ma'lūl*) and created by a created one.

Critique: Imam Reza (AS), in a hadith that he was asked about the next Imam, interpreted the verse Baqarah: 106 as related to the succession of the Imam: “... صَاحِبِكَ بَعْدِي أَبُو مُحَمَّدٍ ابْنِي وَ عِنْدَهُ مَا تَحْتَاوُونَ إِلَيْهِ “: “يَقْدَمُ مَا يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ وَ يُؤَخَّرُ مَا يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ مَا تَتَسَخَّرُ مِنْ آيَةٍ...” (Kulaynī, 1407 AH, vol. 1, p. 328). In other hadiths, conversion in the Qur'an is considered to be an abrogation, which, according to the hadith of Imam Reza (AS), can also be related to the issue of the succession of the Imam.

Regarding what has been said above from Imam Reza (AS), it may be concluded that the word (speech), like power, is the attribute of God and there is no difference between them. The power of God has eternally belonged to the creation of the universe. Hence, the abrogation is not in the genetic affairs, because the possibility of change, conversion, and abrogation of them is impossible due to the constant attachment of God's power. As a result, these affairs are in the legal literal, commands, and prohibitions and then prove the existence of abrogation, temporal creation of words and legal injunctions.

Another point is that the belief in the creation of the attribute of the word and the Qur'an in terms of abrogating, changing and transforming, brings about the changeability and the creation of the attribute of the word and its attributed, namely the essence of God. However, according to Imam Reza (AS), God is pre-eternal, not created.

Conclusion

According to Imam Reza (AS)'s sayings, the Mu'tazilīs' theory of the creation of the Qur'an is criticized in many aspects, which was examined in the present research. Findings are as follow:

If the Qur'an and the word attribute be created, the pre-eternal necessary existence will need something to happen in its word feature. Also, depending on the attribution and the attributed, which always come together, either God is created or His attributes, such as word, become pre-eternal.

The created object needs the lack of time. Therefore, according to Abd al-Jabbār's theory, before the descent of the Qur'an or other revealed scriptures, God would not have the attribute of the Word and therefore would be the possible existence. Addressing also entails the addressee. Hence, Abd al-Jabbār's reasoning results the need of God in His Word attribute to the created beings. In addition, to argue the composition of the attribute of the word, it is required to state that the essence of God is not simple, while composition is the feature of possible and created beings, not the pre-eternals.

It is impossible for the genetic affairs to be changed, converted, and abrogated, due to the constant attachment of the power of God to them. They include legal words, commands, and prohibitions.

Abrogating proves the temporal creation of words and legal injunctions, and so does not indicate to the creation of the true affair that refers to the words.

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