



The Discussions Regarding the Belonging of the Qur'ānic Words in the Tradition of Tafsir and the Critique of Them

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Author & Translator
Zakir DEMİR

Assistant Professor, Siirt University, Faculty of Theology, Siirt/Türkiye
zakirdemir42@gmail.com | orcid.org/0000-0003-3620-7233 | ror.org/05ptwtz25

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Abstract

It's understood that God aimed to communicate with human beings and send messages to them by creating the first man as the first prophet. To exemplify, God desired to be understood by them while sending the Torah in Hebrew, the Bible in Syriac, and the Qur'an in Arabic. However, his Hebrew speech has a different nature from his Syriac, and his Arabic word has a different essence from his Hebrew and Syriac. Based on this reality, when viewing the history of Islamic thought, it is seen that scholars have tried to understand the nature of the speech of God and make sense of it. Essentially, understanding and grasping the words of God are an effort to look from the physical realm to the metaphysical one. Despite this fact, the scholars, as the indomitable seekers of truth, are searching for clues to say about it. While some of them consider the "divine speech" as an attribute of God, many others view it as a "divine act". It is also admitted by all of them that whether being attributive or an act of God, the reflection of the divine speech is the Qur'an. In this sense, three approaches have been put forward to the question of the belonging of the Qur'anic words. In compliance with the dominant and preferred point of view among these views, the Qur'an belongs to God in terms of wording and meaning. Accordingly, the revelation of the Qur'an, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, consists of both wording and meaning. Therefore, there is no intervention or contribution of Gabriel or Muhammad in constituting the Qur'an. According to the second approach, the meanings of the Qur'anic text belong to God; however, its words pertain to Muhammad. This perspective indicates that Gabriel revealed nothing more than the meanings of the Qur'an. Muhammad understood the meanings conveyed to him and then uttered them in Arabic expression patterns and phrases. In conformity with the third approach, the meanings of the Qur'anic text belong to God, however, its words pertain to Gabriel. In other words, only the meanings of the text were given to Gabriel, and its words were formed by him. In the present study, the mentioned approaches, which are asserted by scholars about the belonging of Qur'anic words, first will be explained in a descriptive style. Subsequently, they will be evaluated in terms of the integrity of the Qur'an, its natural historical atmosphere, and the transmissions of the Qur'anic exegesis (riwāyāt) of the classical period from an analytical point of view. To put it briefly, it can be said that there is no disagreement among scholars in the field of the belonging of the meanings of the Qur'anic text to God. The main disagreement is whether the Qur'anic words belong to God, Gabriel, or Muhammad. Considering the integrity of the Qur'an, its natural historical atmosphere, and tafsir transmissions regarding the circumstances of sending down the Qur'anic revelation, it has been determined that the prevailing view is more coherent than the other two views.

Keywords: Tafsir (Qur'anic Exegesis), Divine quotations, Wahy (revelation), Gabriel, al-Lafz (wording), al-Ma'nâ (meaning).

Öz

Allah'ın ilk insanı, ilk peygamber yapmak suretiyle, insanoğlu ile iletişim kurmayı ve ona hitap eden vahiyler göndermeyi amaçladığı anlaşılmaktadır. Söz gelimi Tevrât'ı İbranice, İncil'i Süryanice ve Kur'an'ı Arapça göndermek suretiyle insanlar tarafından anlaşılacak istemiştir. Bununla birlikte onun İbranice kelâmı, Süryanice sözünden ve Arapça kelâmı da diğer dillerdeki sözünden farklı bir tabiata sahiptir. Bu gerçeklikten hareketle İslâm düşünce-fikir tarihine bakıldığında ilim adamlarının ilâhî kelâmın mâhiyetini, tabiatını anlamak ve bunu anlamlandırmak konusunda bir çabanın içerisine girdikleri görülmektedir. Esasen Allah'ın nasıl bir kelâma sahip olduğunu anlamak ve kavramak, cismanî/fizik âleminden gayrı cismanî/fizikâtesine doğru bir bakış çabasıdır. Buna rağmen hakikatin yılmaz arayıcısı insan, bu konuda söyleyecek bir söz bulabilme çabası içindedir. "ilâhî kelâmı", Allah'ın bir sıfatı olarak değerlendirenler olduğu gibi bunu "ilâhî bir fiil" olarak telakki edenler de bulunmaktadır. İlâhî kelâm sıfatının veya fiilin tecellîsinin Kur'an olduğu da ehline müsellemdir. Kur'an lafızlarının aidiyeti konusunda başlıca üç görüş ortaya konulmuştur. Bu görüşler içerisinde hâkim ve râcih bakış açısına göre Kur'an metni, lafız ve mana itibarıyla Allah'a aittir. Buna göre Hz. Muhammed'e nâzil olan Kur'an vahyi hem lafız hem de manadan oluşmaktadır. Bu telakkîyi savunan müelliflere göre vahyin oluşumu ve iletimi konusunda ne Cebrâil'in ne de Hz. Muhammed'in herhangi bir müdahale veya katkısı olmuştur. Dolayısıyla peygamberin vahiy nüzûl sürecinde rolünün tamamen pasif olduğu söylenebilir. Cibrîl, Kur'an'ı önceden yazılı olarak bulunan bir mekândan, yani levh-i mahfûzdan ezberleyerek veya Allah'tan işiterek ya da Allah'ın lafızları ona vahyetmesiyle Hz. Peygamber'e indirmiştir. İkinci yaklaşıma göre Kur'an metninin manası Allah'a, lafızları Hz. Peygamber'e aittir. Bu yaklaşıma göre Cebrâil, sadece manaları Hz. Peygamber'e indirmiştir. Hz. Peygamber de kendisine bildirilen manaları kavramış ve onları Arapça ifade kalıplarında söylemiştir. Üçüncü yaklaşıma göre ise Kur'an'ın manası Allah'a, lafızları Cebrâil'e ait olmaktadır. Yani Cebrâil'e yalnız mana ilkâ edildi ve o lafızları oluşturdu. Bu çalışmada İslâm düşünce tarihinde ilim adamlarının kelâmulâhın tabiatını anlamak ve bunu anlamlandırmak konusunda lafızların aidiyeti konusunda ortaya koydukları söz konusu yaklaşımlar öncelikle deskriptif (tasvîrî/betimleyici) bir üslupla

incelenmektedir. Akabinde bu doğrultuda serdedilen yaklaşımlar Kur'ân'ın bütünlüğü ve klasik dönem tefsir merviyâtı açısından analitik (tahlîfî/istidlâlî) bir bakış açısıyla irdelenmektedir. Denilebilir ki Kur'ân'ın mana yönüyle Allah'a aidiyeti konusunda ilim ehli arasında herhangi bir ihtilâf yoktur. Temel ihtilâf Kur'ân lafızlarının Allah'a mı Cebrâil'e mi yoksa Hz. Muhammed'e mi ait olduğu hususudur. Kur'ân'ın bütünlüğü ve vahyin nüzûl keyfiyetine dair klasik dönem tefsir rivayetleri dikkate alındığında hâkim görüşün diğer iki görüşe göre daha tutarlı olduğu kanaatine ulaşılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tefsir, ilâhî nakiller, Vahiy, Cebrâil, Lafız, Mana.

Introduction*

Although the desire to understand and comprehend the nature of divine speech is an effort from the physical world to the metaphysical, scientists, as the indomitable seekers of the truth, are in search of something to say on this subject. In the history of Islamic thought, some consider the “divine speech” as an attribute of God, and there are also those who acknowledge it as a divine act (fi‘l). Within the framework of this discussion, it is also acknowledged by scholars that the Qur’ân is the reflection of the attribute or action of divine speech. In this sense, three main approaches have been put forward regarding the belonging/ownership of the Qur’anic words. Conforming to the dominant perspective among these views, the Qur’ân belongs to God in terms of wording and meaning. In agreement with this approach, the Qur’anic revelation sent down to the Prophet Muḥammad consists of both wording and meaning. In compliance with the second approach, the meanings of the Qur’anic text belong to God, and its words pertain to the Prophet Muḥammad. In line with this approach, Gabriel only sent down the meanings to the Prophet, and he pronounced the meanings in Arabic expression patterns. According to the third approach, the meanings of the Qur’ân belong to God, and its words belong to Gabriel. That is to say, only the meanings were given to Gabriel and then he created the words. In the present study, the relevant approaches asserted by scholars in the history of Islamic thought regarding the belonging of the Qur’anic words to understanding the nature of the speech of God and making sense of it are examined. These are scrutinized in terms of the integrity of the Qur’ân, its natural historical atmosphere, and the exegesis of the classical period.

To whom do the words of the Qur’anic text that the Prophet Muḥammad conveyed to people belong? I am inclined to think, this question is certainly important in the context of the belonging of the Qur’anic words. Although it isn’t known exactly when such a question was asked and how the debate started in Islamic thought, it can be said that the fact that Ahl al-Sunnah scholars differentiated the word (kalām) in two dimensions as “uttered speech” (kalām lafzî) and “interior speech” (kalām nafsî), brought about this debate to arise. When we look at the history of exegesis and kalām in the classical and contemporary periods, it is observed that there is no disagreement about the Qur’ân’s belonging to God in terms of meaning, not in terms of wording. As Muḥammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905) stated, “Even though the prophets, who communicated directly or indirectly

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with God, had the authority to unquestionably understand the nature of the divine speech, they could not explain the nature of this speech that they were aware of.”¹ For this reason, it should be considered natural the emergence of discussions about the nature of kalām and different approaches regarding the belonging of the Qur'anic words.

When we look at the history of Islamic thought, it can be seen that scholars are trying to answer the following questions: Is what Gabriel sent down as the Qur'ān its wording or its meaning, or is it a text with its meaning and wording? Or does what is revealed consist only of meaning and content? Was it transferred to the Arabic language later by the Prophet? Is this communication between Gabriel and the Prophet revelation in the sense of “inspiration” or “verbal” revelation?² The existence of many divine quotations from the Meccan polytheists in the Qur'ān and the fact that many verses were sent down in accordance with the words of the companions make it necessary to examine how the revelation was revealed to the Prophet and how it was realized.

1. The Classification of the Approaches on the Belonging of the Qur'anic Words

First of all, it should be noted that on the issue of the transmission of revelation to the Prophet Muḥammad, the majority of scholars arrive at a consensus that God gradually transmitted the Qur'ān in wording and meaning to Gabriel, and he conveyed it to the Prophet. In the analysis of the tradition of Islamic thought, it is understood that this is a generally accepted approach. On the other hand, among the possibilities narrated by Badr ad-Dīn az-Zarkashī (d. 794/1392) from Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983) and quoted by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) with the same phrase, the second possibility is that Gabriel sent down the Qur'anic revelation to the Prophet's heart as meaning. In this sense, the third possibility is that the revelation of the Qur'ān came down to Gabriel as a meaning, and he expressed these meanings in Arabic and conveyed them to the Prophet in his own words.³

Therefore, there were both those who said that Gabriel revealed only the meanings to the Prophet Muḥammad, and he revealed these meanings in the Arabic language as per the occurrence of the facts and events, and those who said that the meanings were transmitted to Gabriel and after he translated these meanings into Arabic, he conveyed them to the Prophet.⁴ The relevant possibilities, narrated by al-Samarqandī, were mentioned by many scholars, including az-Zarkashī, al-Suyūṭī, Tashkoprizada Aḥmad Afandī (d. 968/1561), Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Diyārbakrī (d. 990/1582), Kātib Jalabī (d. 1067/1657), and Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī (d. 1270/1854). These have been asserted as three main approaches to the belonging of the Qur'anic words. It is possible to classify these views in some detail as follows:

¹ “Inna al-nabīya al-mukallama nafsahu lā yastaṭī'u an yufhimahu li-ghayrihi, li-annahu laysa lahu 'ibāratun tadullu 'alayhi” see Muḥammad Rashid Ridā, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-hakīm (Tafsīr al-Manār)* (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1947), 3/4.

² For different approaches put forward in the context of the nature of revelation, see Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Maḥmūd al-naṣṣ dirāsah fi 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* (al-Maghrib: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-'Arabī, 2014), 42.

³ Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fi 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1984), 1/229-230; Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fi 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, ed. Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Qur'āniyah (al-Madīnah: Mujamma'u al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibā'at al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf, n.d.), 1/292.

⁴ Mustafa Altundağ, “Kelāmullāh Halku'l-Kur'ān Tartışmaları Çerçevesinde 'Kelām-ı Nefsî - Kelām-ı Lafzî' Ayırımı”, *Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 18 (2000), 181.

1.1. Belonging the Wordings and the Meanings of the Qur'ānic Text to God

Pursuant to the dominant and preferred approach regarding the belonging of the words of the Qur'ān, the wordings, and the meanings appertain to God. Correspondingly, the Qur'ān consisted of both wording and meaning before it came to the Prophet Muḥammad. There is no intervention of the Prophet in transmitting the revelation of the Qur'ān to people in wording and meaning. Therefore, it can be said that the role of the Prophet in the process of revelation and the formation of it is completely passive. Gabriel sent down the Qur'ānic words to the Prophet by memorizing them from the preserved tablet, where it was previously written and perceived as a field of existence, or by hearing them from God, or by God revealing the Qur'ānic words to him. According to the approach that the words and meanings belong to God, neither Gabriel nor Muḥammad's intervention can be mentioned in the formation process of the revelation. There are even those who claim that every letter of the Qur'ān is fixed in the preserved tablet, and that each of the letters of the Qur'ān is the size of Mount Qāf. Therefore, there are infinite meanings in each of them that no one other than God can comprehend.⁵

1.2. Attributing the Meanings of the Qur'ānic Text to God and Its Wordings to the Prophet Muḥammad

Conforming to the second approach propounded regarding the belonging of the words of the Qur'ān, its meanings belong to God, and its words appertain to the Prophet Muḥammad. As per this approach, Gabriel only brings the meanings, and the Prophet comprehends these meanings and reveals them in Arabic expression patterns.⁶ It is seen that the scholars who asserted this view tried to determine the place (al-mahall) where the revelation was sent down by referring to the following verses: (i) “Say (O Muḥammad): *Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel, for indeed he has brought it (this Qur'ān) down to your heart by Allāh's Permission, confirming what came before it [i.e. the Torah and the Gospel] and guidance and glad tidings for the believers.*”⁷ (ii) “Which the trustworthy Rūḥ [Gabriel] has brought down. Upon your heart (O Muḥammad) that you may be (one) of the warners.”⁸ According to them, the heart is the place of meaning, not wording.⁹ Therefore, the mention of “brought down upon your heart” in these verses caused them to understand that the meanings of the Qur'ānic

⁵ al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, 1/229-230; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 1/292-293; Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī lil-fatāwā*, ed. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 2000), 1/322; Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafā b. Khalīl Ṭāshkubrī Zādah, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘ādah wa-miṣbāḥ al-siyādah fi mawḍū‘āt al-‘ulūm* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1985), 2/354; Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh al-khamīs fi aḥwāl anfas al-naḥīs* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at ‘Uthmān ‘Abd al-Razzāq, 1302), 1/9-10; Mustafa b. ‘Abd Allāh Kātib Jalabī, *Kashf al-zunūn ‘an asāmi al-Kutub wa-al-funūn*, ed. M. Şerefettin Yaltkaya - Rifat Bilge (Ankara: TTK Yayınevi, 2014), 2/1525-1526; Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī fi tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d.), 19/120-121.

⁶ al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, 1/229-230; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 1/292-293; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī lil-fatāwā*, 1/322; Ṭāshkubrī Zādah, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘ādah*, 2/354; al-Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh al-khamīs fi aḥwāl anfas al-naḥīs*, 1/9-10; Kātib Jalabī, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2/1525-1526; al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī*, 19/120-121.

⁷ *The Noble Qur’ān English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*, çev. Muḥammad Taqī-ud-Dīn al-Hilālī - Muḥammad Muhsin Khān (al-Madīnah: Mujamma‘u al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibā‘at al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf, 2013), al-Baqarah 2/97.

⁸ al-Shu‘arā’ 26/193-194.

⁹ Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1567) in his work called *al-Fatāwā al-ḥadīthiyah* criticizes the efforts to separate the unity of wording and meaning in the context of the Qur’ān. For detailed considerations on this subject, see Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *al-Fatāwā al-ḥadīthiyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, n.d.), 210-213.

text were revealed to the heart of the Prophet Muḥammad. However, in these verses, it is unclear whether what is revealed to the heart is the wording or the meaning.

It is seen that there are some advocates and proponents in the history of Islamic thought for the argument that the meanings of the Qur'anic text belong to God, and its words belong to the Prophet Muḥammad. In this context, as far as I can determine, Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) from the early period, al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240) from the classical period, and Fazlur Rahman (1919-88) from modern time are among the advocates of this approach.

1.2.1. Sufyān al-Thawrī

As specified by Sufyān al-Thawrī, the language of revelation is essentially Arabic. Every prophet translated the revelation sent down to him according to the language of his tribe.¹⁰ In conformity with this view, the prophets created the words of the holy books before the Qur'ān. Therefore, the meanings of the Torah pertain to God and its words belong to Moses. Moreover, this standpoint conveyed from him indicates that, in the context of the Qur'ān, its meanings may belong to God, and its words may be attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad.

1.2.2. al-Bāṭiniyah

When we look at the Islamic theological schools holistically, it is observed that at the level of a sect, only al-Bāṭiniyah claims that the Qur'ān was sent down to the heart of the Prophet Muḥammad as a whole.¹¹ The main argument of al-Bāṭiniyah, which alleges that the Prophet transformed the Qur'ān into Arabic, is the following verses: “*Nazala bihi al-rūḥu al-amīn ‘alā qalbika li-takūna mina al-mundhirīna/Which the trustworthy Rūḥ [Gabriel] has brought down. Upon your heart (O Muḥammad) that you may be (one) of the warners.*”¹² In Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī's (d. 333/944) words, al-Bāṭiniyah enunciates the following view: “Allah sent down the Qur'ān to the Prophet Muḥammad quickly, in full meaning, without belonging to any language. Then, the Prophet depicted the Qur'ān in his mind and composed it in his own language, clear Arabic. He did it in such a way that others were incapable of doing the same.”¹³ It is clear that the main reason for reaching this view and their inferences on this subject is the apparent/explicit meaning (al-ma'nā al-zāhiri) of the relevant verses. They reach this conclusion based on the fact that the Qur'ān was

¹⁰ “Lam yanzil waḥy illā bi-āl'arabiyati thumma yutarjimu kull nabīyin li-qawmihi bi-lisānihim”, see Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, ed. As'ad Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib (Makkah: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 1997), 7/2234; Ṭāshkubrī Zādah, *Miftāḥ al-sa'ādah*, 2/355.

¹¹ For detailed explanations of some esoteric interpretations given by al-Shī'ah al-Imāmiyah to the verses of the Qur'ān, see Abdulalim Demir, “İmāmiyye Şıası Rivāyet Kaynaklarına Göre İmāmların Masumluğu Meselesi”, *İslam Düşüncesi Araştırmaları III -Yaşadığımız Çağ* (Ankara: Araştırma Yayınları, 2021), 175-176. al-Durziyah, which is a sub-branch of the al-Bāṭiniyah sect, believes that Qur'anic text is not a divine speech in terms of both wording and meaning. They are of the opinion that the Qur'ān was changed by recitation scholars. For detailed information on this subject, see Mehmet Beşir Ergin, *Dürzilikte Kur'ân Tasavvuru ve Tefsîr Yöntemi* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Basılmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2019), 28-37.

¹² al-Shu'arā' 26/193-194.

¹³ Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ahmed Vanlıoğlu - Bekir Topaloğlu (İstanbul: Dār al-Mizān, 2005), 10/337, 16/297.

sent down to the heart of the Prophet.¹⁴ However, in the next verse, it is stated that Gabriel sent it down to the Prophet “*Bi-lisānin ‘arabīyin mubīn/in the plain Arabic language.*”¹⁵ al-Māturīdī criticizes this perspective of the al-Bāṭiniyah as follows: “The Qur’ān was sent down to the Prophet Muḥammad in a written form (al-ma’alaf) and in sentences (al-manzūm). The composition of the Qur’ān is not a result of the Prophet’s action. The verse “*lā tuharrīk bihi lisanak/Move not your tongue*”¹⁶, which is about moving one’s tongue because of the rush to fully receive the revelation, is evidence of the correctness of our view. If the Qur’ān were written by the Prophet, he wouldn’t have moved his tongue in haste while the revelation was conveyed to him. Because if the Qur’ān were like a dream, he would need to describe it in his mind. Then, after thinking, it would be written down, and it would be possible to express it in language. Moving the tongue is only possible in written and edited texts.”¹⁷

1.2.3. al-Ghazālī

al-Ghazālī discusses the nature of divine speech in his treatise called *al-Ma’ārif al-‘aqliyah*. According to him, the Qur’ān was revealed to Muḥammad’s heart directly and in meaning rather than with both words and meaning. His statements on this subject are as follows: “The second level is to leave the words of wisdom and the meanings of the words through revelation into the hearts of the prophets and through inspiration into the hearts of the saints (*Ilqā’u laṭā’ifi al-ḥikmati wa al-ma’ānī al-kalimati fī qulūbi al-anbiyā’ bi-al-waḥyi*). Revelation and inspiration occur through explanation and teaching. God leaves the words of wisdom and the meanings of the words in the hearts of believers with light, opening them, making them successful, guiding and supporting them... Since the essence of the Prophet is better than anyone from the ummah in terms of rank and honor, his speech and words are more important than the words of other people in terms of honor. The letters in the Qur’ān aren’t attributed to God to exalt him (*al-ḥurūfu al-wāqī’atu fī al-Qur’āni lam tunsab ilayhi tanzīhan la-hu*). We have no doubt that the letters in the Qur’ān were born from the soul of Muḥammad as al-Shāri’; they entered into his precious and pure word, and everything about the Prophet was illuminated with the light of Ḥayy, Qayyūm, and Qadīm.”¹⁸

In line with al-Ghazālī, it is possible to find out the basis of this approach in many Qur’ānic verses and authentic hadiths.¹⁹ The verses and hadiths he referred to on this subject can be listed as follows: (i) “*Al-Raḥmānu ‘allama al-Qur’āna khalaqa al-insāna ‘allamahu al-bayān/The Most Gracious (Allāh) He has taught (you mankind) the Qur’ān (by His Mercy). He created man. He taught him eloquent speech.*”²⁰ (ii) “*Kataba Allāhu la-aghlibanna anā warusulī/God has decreed: “Verily, it is I and My Messengers who shall be the victorious.*”²¹ (iii) “*‘Ūla’ika kataba fī qulūbihimu al-īmān wa-ayyadahum bi-*

¹⁴ For al-Bursawī’s evaluations of the argument put forward by al-Bāṭiniyah on this issue, see Ismail Haqqī al-Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayān* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d.), 6/306-307.

¹⁵ al-Shu‘arā’ 26/195.

¹⁶ al-Qiyāmah 75/16.

¹⁷ al-Māturīdī, *Ta’wīlāt al-Qur’ān*, 16/297.

¹⁸ Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *al-Ma’ārif al-‘aqliyah*, ed. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-‘Uthmān (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1963), 81, 105.

¹⁹ al-Ghazālī, *al-Ma’ārif al-‘aqliyah*, 81.

²⁰ ar-Raḥmān 55/1-4.

²¹ al-Mujādilah 58/21.

rūḥin minhu/He has written Faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with Rūḥ (proofs, light and true guidance) from Himself."²² (iv) "Inna Allāha qad kataba al-Tawrāta li-Mūsā bi-khaṭṭihi/Indeed, God wrote the Torah to Moses with his own hands."²³

According to Ghazali, it is possible that what is meant by the word "*khalaqa al-insāna*"²⁴ in the ar-Raḥmān is the human species. Accordingly, God taught man knowledge through tongue and pen. It is also possible that the word "*khalaqa al-insāna*" in the mentioned verse refers to the Prophet Muḥammad. Because God taught him the Qur'ān and wrote its meanings on his heart. God revealed to him through Gabriel and ordered him to make a statement that was heard and known for his ummah and his friends in his own language.²⁵ His statements are as follows: "The speech of God (kalām Allāh) is a characteristic of His essence, without the order of phrases and fusion of letters. Because these occur over time and emerge as time varies. However, God is free from the symptoms of time and speaking with the throat and tongue. His speech is the quality of his essence, and the qualification is never separated from the qualified in any way and at any time. When God wants to speak, He reveals the meanings of His speech to His prophets and messengers. He leaves the light of revelation in their hearts through Gabriel. Until the Prophet expresses the speech of God with his own language and speaks about him with his own statement."²⁶

1.2.4. Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī

Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī is one of those who say that the Qur'ān was sent down to the Prophet Muḥammad's heart in terms of meaning. In his terminology, *waḥy al-Qur'ān* means the sending down of the Qur'ānic revelation, that is, the aspect of its descending as a whole. *Waḥy al-Furqān* means the *tanzīl* dimension of the Qur'ān, that is, the circumstance of revelation descending gradually. As per him, the fact that it is not said "We sent down a part of the Qur'ān" in the following verse; "*Innā anzalnāhu fī laylatin mubārakatin*"²⁷ This fact shows that the Qur'ān was sent down to the Prophet Muḥammad as a whole. Likewise, according to him, in the revelation of the Qur'ān that came down to the heart of the Prophet, the verses and surahs weren't made clear and were included in a summary way (*Qur'ānan mujmalan*). He names the "Qur'ān" phase of revelation as *al-waḥy al-awwal*.²⁸ However, pursuant to Ibn al-'Arabī, neither the Prophet nor Gabriel had any involvement in the construction of the words. According to him, the Prophet conveyed each of the Qur'ānic words to people in the same way he received them. His statements are as follows:

"The servant to whom the Qur'ān was revealed is commanded to deliver it to those in charge and to explain to the people what was revealed to them. While some of the things are visible to them, others are absent from them. The Prophet wasn't commanded to distort words from their proper

²² al-Mujādilah 58/22.

²³ Abū 'Abd Allāh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, thk. Abū Hājar Muḥammad al-Sa'id b. Basyūnī (Beirut, 1985), 1/281, 2/248; Muḥammad b. Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Zuhayr b. Nāṣir (Beirut: Dār Ṭawq al-Najāh, 2001), "Anbiyā'", 3.

²⁴ ar-Raḥmān 55/3.

²⁵ al-Ghazālī, *al-Ma'ārif al-'aqliyah*, 82.

²⁶ al-Ghazālī, *al-Ma'ārif al-'aqliyah*, 90-91.

²⁷ ad-Dukhan 44/3.

²⁸ Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah*, ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1999), 1/130, 6/277.

places. On the contrary, the Prophet relates the words from God, just as God conveys the words of those who speak to him (*yaḥki ‘an Allāh kamā ḥakā Allāh la-hu qawl al-qā’ilīn*). Their statement includes absence (ghaybah) and presence (ḥudūr). God does not add anything to their words when quoting from them. The Prophet is told: “*Yā’ayyuhā al-rasūlu balligh mā unzila ilayka min rabbika/ O Messenger (Muḥammad)! Proclaim (the Message) which has been sent down to you from your Lord*”²⁹ In this case, the prophet does not turn away from the truth of what has been revealed to him and says what is said. Because the meanings weren’t revealed to Muḥammad’s heart without composing these letters, arranging these words, listing these verses, and determining these surahs. This is all called the Qur’ān. When God established the Qur’ān as a form/image in his soul, he revealed himself as he saw it. Then the eyes see it in the al-Maṣāḥif, and the ears hear to it from the readers. There is nothing other than the words of God, which is heard and seen... The Prophet knows that what has been revealed to him is the words of God and preserves its form in the way it was sent down to him. If he changes anything or alters its structure, he would undoubtedly convey to us the image of his understanding, not what was revealed to him. Indeed, each of the people to whom the Qur’ān was sent down has a view of it. If the Prophet had conveyed the Qur’ān to us as per his understanding, it wouldn’t have been Qur’ān, that is, the Qur’ān that was sent down to him. We can assume that the Prophet knew all the meanings of the Qur’ān and that nothing of its meanings remained outside his words. In response, we say: If the Prophet knew this and the words he said while conveying the meaning indicated those meanings, why would he try to use other words? And if he had used words of equal meaning that would correspond to them while conveying all these meanings, the words that he used, would have to belong to other beings other than the words that were sent down to him and which he turned away from. In such a case, the words used by the prophet will be different from the words sent down to him in terms of entities, even if they have the same meaning as the words sent down to the prophet.”³⁰

As can be seen in the above passage, Ibn al-‘Arabī, on the one hand, claims that the meanings of the revelation were sent down to the heart of the Prophet Muḥammad as a whole at once. On the other hand, he states that there is no human impact in the verbalization of the meanings and in the literal dimension of the revelation. al-Sha’rānī (d. 973/1565), who largely adopted Ibn al-‘Arabī’s views and examined the allegations made about him, also asks the following question in his work titled *al-Yawāqīt wa-al-jawāhir*: “Is it permissible for anyone to believe that the Prophet Muḥammad conveyed some of the Qur’ānic text to us in terms of meaning?” He makes an assessment on this issue. Pursuant to him, it isn’t permissible for a Muslim to make such a claim and believe it. If it is assumed that the Prophet influenced Qur’ān sent down to him and narrated it with meaning, then it is understood that he explained to us the form that he understood, not the form that was revealed, that is, the unity of wording and meaning. However, Allah said: “*Wa’anzalnā ilayka aldhdhikra li-tubayyina li-nnāsi mā nuzzila ilayhim/We have also sent down unto you (O Muḥammad) the reminder and the advice (the Qur’ān), that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them*”³¹ In this case, it is impossible for the Prophet to change the words and letters of the Qur’ān. According to him, if the Prophet had any influence on the form of the letters and words

²⁹ al-Mā’idah 5/67.

³⁰ Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 5/234-235.

³¹ al-Naḥl 16/44.

of Qur'ān, it would also be said that he conveyed what was revealed to people and what wasn't revealed, which no one has ever said.³²

1.2.5. Fazlur Rahman

Conforming to Fazlur Rahman, a scholar of Pakistani origin who spent most of his life story in England, Canada, and America, Ahl al-Sunnah, which was established in the 2nd and 3rd centuries of hijrī, preferred to focus on the externality and literal nature of the Prophet's revelation in a defensive manner, in order to protect the otherness, objectivity and verbal character of revelation in the debates about the nature of revelation, which arose partly under the influence of the Christian doctrines. However, as specified by him, Ahl al-Sunnah did not emphasize its externality vis-à-vis the Prophet Muḥammad as much as necessary. Although revelation has an external reality and a literal character, it cannot be considered independent and separate from the Prophet. According to him, it is possible to trace this truth in the following verses in the Qur'ān: (i) "Say (O Muḥammad): *Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel, for indeed he has brought it (this Qur'ān) down to your heart by Allāh's Permission, confirming what came before it [i.e. the Torah and the Gospel] and guidance and glad tidings for the believers.*"³³ (ii) "And truly, this (the Qur'ān) is a revelation from the Lord of the 'ālamīn (mankind, jinns and all that exists), which the trustworthy Ruh [Gabriel] has brought down. Upon your heart (O Muḥammad) that you may be (one) of the warners."³⁴ His statements are as follows: "But orthodoxy (indeed, all medieval thought) lacked the necessary intellectual tools to combine in its formulation of the dogma the otherness and verbal character of the revelation on the one hand, and its intimate connection with the work and the religious personality of the Prophet on the other, i.e. it lacked the intellectual capacity to say both that the Qur'ān is entirely the word of God and, in an ordinary sense, also entirely the word of Muḥammad. The Qur'ān obviously holds both, for if it insists that it has come to the 'heart' of the Prophet, how can it be external to him?"³⁵ As a result, according to Fazlur Rahman, the revelation of the Qur'ān filtered out of the heart of the Prophet. Therefore, it is understood that Rahman believes that the meaning of the revelation was given to the Prophet, and he transferred it to the Arabic language patterns.

Although Fazlur Rahman seems to be consistent within himself by making inferences from the mentioned verses, he is not seen to be in a justified and proving position in his criticisms of Ahl al-Sunnah. In fact, traces of the issue of wording and meaning can be found in the history of early Islamic thought, with some clues even before the Ahl al-Sunnah. This issue can be traced in the meanings given to the terms *sunnah*, *hadith*, and *al-ḥadīth al-qudsī* as well as in the discussions about the belonging of the recitations and the issue of *khalq al-Qur'ān* (the Createdness of Qur'ān).

³² 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sharānī, *al-Yawāqīt wa-al-jawāhir* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, n.d.), 1/170.

³³ al-Baqarah 2/97.

³⁴ al-Shu'arā' 26/192-194.

³⁵ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 31. See also Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'ān* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1994), 80-105. In another work, Fazlur Rahman describes al-Ash'ariyah theology, an important branch of Ahl al-Sunnah, as follows: "It is to the credit of premodernist revivalism and modernism that they tried to undermine this thousand-year-old sacred folly and to invite Muslims back to the refreshing fountain of the Qur'ān." In this context, it is seen that he uses a pejorative style for this sect. See Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 152.

Moreover, the early projections of this issue can be elicited from Abū Ḥanīfah's (d. 150/767) differentiation of wording and meaning into origin/principal (al-aşl) and branch/secondary (al-far'). Therefore, Ahl al-Sunnah does not need to be influenced by the Christian doctrines to assert a paradigm on this issue. On the other hand, as Rahman points out, there may be some clues about the belonging of the words in the Qur'ān.

As a result, in line with those who put forward this second view, which the meanings of the Qur'ānic text belong to God and the words pertain to the Prophet Muḥammad, the linguistic formation of the revelation was carried out by the Prophet himself, not Gabriel. Probably the starting point of those who put forward the perspective that the meanings of divine revelation belong to God and the words are attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad is that about a quarter or half of the Qur'ān consists of divine quotations from the words of human beings. I can elaborate a bit on what I mean like this; there are two categories of divine quotations in the integrity of the Qur'ān. The first type of quotations is from archaic times, and the second is from the interlocutors of the timeline of Qur'ānic revelation. Both types of Qur'ānic quotations are mostly revealed in the style of "qāla/he said" and its various derivatives. These make up about a half of the holy text between the two covers.³⁶ Therefore, those arguing the words of the Qur'ān are attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad may have thought that Muḥammad must have created the linguistic form of a book that contains extensive references to the words of human beings.

1.3. Pertaining the Meanings of the Qur'ānic Text to God and Its Wordings to Gabriel

In compliance with the third approach asserted regarding the belonging of the Qur'ānic words, the meanings belong to God and the words pertain to Gabriel. As per this view, only meanings were given to Gabriel. He transferred these meanings to Arabic expression patterns and revealed them to the Prophet Muḥammad. According to those who adopt this vantage point, those in the sky and heavens (ahl al-samā') recited this in the Arabic language. Then Gabriel sent them down to the Prophet as they were.³⁷ It is seen that there are some advocates in the history of Islamic thought for the approach that the meanings of the Qur'ānic text belong to God and the words pertain to Gabriel. In this context, al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) and al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) from the classical period, and Süleyman Ateş from the modern period are prominent scholars on this subject.

1.3.1. al-Juwaynī

It is understood that while al-Juwaynī was making an evaluation about the revelation of the divine word, he opened the door to the possibility of attributing the words of the Qur'ān to Gabriel. His statement on the subject is as follows: "Gabriel, who is in his place above the seven layers of heaven, understood the speech of God. In the place called *Sidrah al-Muntahā*, he brought the speech

³⁶ For detailed considerations about the Qur'ānic quotations, see Zakir Demir, *İlâhî Nakiller Bağlamında Kur'ân'daki İktibâsların Mâhiyeti* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, 2022), 20-327.

³⁷ al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, 1/229-230; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 1/292-293; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥawī lil-fatāwā*, 1/322; Ṭāshkubrī Zādah, *Miftāḥ al-sa'ādah*, 2/354; al-Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh al-khamīs fi aḥwāl anfas al-naḥīs*, 1/9-10; Kātib Jalabī, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2/1525-1526; al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī*, 19/120-121.

of God to the Prophet without narrating al-kalam itself (*min ghayri naqlin li-dhāti al-kalām*)”³⁸ Based on this citation, it can be thought that he believed that it was possible to attribute the words of the Qur’ān to Gabriel.³⁹

1.3.2. al-Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār

Another scholar who opened the door to the possibility of attributing the words of the Qur’ān to Gabriel is al-Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār. Pursuant to him, saying that it was the Prophet Muḥammad or Gabriel who constructed the words of the Qur’ān does not prevent the Qur’ān from being a miracle. In other words, the fact that Muḥammad narrated the Qur’ān with Gabriel’s words or his own words does not mean that this style of narration cannot be considered a miracle in the name of God. Because God gave the Prophet such knowledge that he could act in an extraordinary manner that was not found in the masters of eloquence, and he had the opportunity to reach the highest level of sophistication with this knowledge. Accordingly, in both cases, the Qur’ān must be a miracle of God. al-Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār associates this situation with God conveying the news from the unseen through the Prophet’s tongue. According to him, just as the fact that God is the one who conveys such news and Muḥammad is the one who conveys it to the interlocutor does not prevent the word from being miraculous, it is also the same for the Qur’ān as a whole to be in his or Gabriel’s words.⁴⁰

1.3.3. Süleyman Ateş

Süleyman Ateş, one of the contemporary Turkish exegetes, says that the words of the Qur’ān pertain to Gabriel and its meanings belong to God by using the phrase *qawlu rasūl* in the following two verses as a basis: (i) “*Innahu la-qawlu rasūlin karīm/That this is verily the word of an honoured Messenger.*”⁴¹ (ii) “*Innahu la-qawlu rasūlin karīm dhī qūwatin ‘inda dhī al’arshi makīn/Verily, this is the Word (this Qur’ān brought by) a most honourable Messenger. Owner of power, and high rank with (Allah) the Lord of the Throne.*”⁴² Pursuant to him, Gabriel transformed the meanings of the Qur’ān into his own phraseology and sent them down to the Prophet. In his words: “There are two possibilities about the honoured messenger. According to some, this honoured messenger is Gabriel, while for others, it is Muḥammad. But the first view is stronger. With this expression, it’s explained that the Qur’ān was revealed to Muḥammad by a valuable messenger... The Qur’ān has been described as the word of the honoured messenger because Gabriel brought the meanings coming from God to the human level by putting them into verbal forms.”⁴³

³⁸ Imām al-Ḥaramayn Abū al-Ma‘ālī ‘Abd al-Malik al-Juwaynī, *al-Irshād ilā qawāṭi’ al-adillah fi uşul al-i’tiqād*, thk. Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Sāyih (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīniyah, 2009), 120-121.

³⁹ For detailed considerations about where and how Gabriel received the Qur’ān, see. Altundağ, “Kelânullâh Halku’l-Kur’ân Tartışmaları”, 174-175; Ömer Çelik, *Kur’an’ın Muhatapları* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2021), 37-39.

⁴⁰ “Annahu lā farqa bayna an yakūna al-Qur’ān min qibali al-Rasūl aw min qibali Allāh fi kawnihi mu’jizan.” see Abū al-Ḥasan Qāḍī al-Quḍāh ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī fi abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-al-‘adl*, thk. Amīn al-Khūlī (Cairo: al-Sharikah al-‘Arabiyah lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr, 1960), 16/231.

⁴¹ al-Haqqah 69/40.

⁴² at-Takwīr 81/19-20.

⁴³ Süleyman Ateş, *Yüce Kur’ân’in Çağdaş Tefsiri* (İstanbul: Yeni Ufuklar Neşriyat, 1988), 10/47-48, 50, 349-350. Murat Sillün criticizes Ateş’s assessment as follows: “If Gabriel translated the divine meanings into Arabic and everything

As a result, conforming to this third view, that is, its meanings belong to God and its words are attributed to Gabriel, the linguistic formulation of the revelation was carried out by Gabriel, not God or the Prophet Muḥammad. Probably the starting point of those who put forward this view was the intense use of indirect expressions such as *qāla*, *kallama*, and *awḥā* in the narrative style of the Qur'ān. Therefore, based on the use of verbs containing indirect transfer in the Qur'ān, they may have thought that Gabriel must have made the linguistic formation of the revelation.

2. The Critique of Debates Concerning the Belonging of Qur'ānic Words

Within the scope of the approaches mentioned by al-Samarqandī, az-Zarkashī, al-Suyūṭī, Tashkoprizada, Husayn b. Muḥammad al-Diyarbakrī, Kātib Jalabī, and al-Ālūsī regarding the nature of the divine speech, it is seen that there is no evaluation on the issue of whether the Qur'ān is created or uncreated, and it is reproduction (al-hikāya) or reproduced (al-mahkī). However, it can be said that the mentioned approaches that make sense of the nature of the divine word are seminal views. The opinion that we gave first above, namely, Qur'ānic words pertain to God in terms of wording and meaning, is the dominant and preferred opinion in the history of Islamic thought. However, it seems that the second and third views also have their defenders. The three approaches mentioned so far will be evaluated and criticized below in terms of the integrity of the Qur'ān and various tafsir rumors of the classical period.

2.1. Gabriel's Attitude and Place Regarding the Transmission of Revelation

The view that the Qur'ānic text, in terms of its meaning, was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad's heart and from there to him again through Gabriel constitutes the contradictory point of the problem. This approach expressed in both classical and modern sources can be criticized in the following aspects: What is the wisdom behind the revelation of the Qur'ān, which was left to the heart of the Prophet Muḥammad through Gabriel, over a long period of twenty-three years, being transformed into words and meaning by the Gabriel and transferred back to Prophet? If the words of the Qur'ānic text belong to the Prophet Muḥammad, what will be Gabriel's duty towards the revelation? Since all the revelations came to the Prophet Muḥammad's heart as a whole, the function and importance of Gabriel is hardly ever understandable.⁴⁴ In summary, according to this approach, Gabriel's position towards revelation is dysfunctional. However, in various verses of many surahs such as al-Baqarah (2/97), Maryam (19/64), al-Shu'arā' (26/192-196), and al-Najm (53/3-6), it is clearly explained that Gabriel has an active role in sending down the revelation.

ended with him, the Qur'ān should have been sent down to the ear (hearing organ) of the Prophet Muḥammad, not to his heart. Thus, the Prophet, who was a complete human being with a genius-level mind in terms of emotions, thoughts, fear, and anxiety, would have mechanically conveyed the verses written on the screen of his mind and fully prepared to humanity, like a lifeless, emotionless, mindless and unconscious tool. see Murat Sülün, *Kur'ān Kılavuzu Mutlak Gerçeğin Sesi* (İstanbul: Ensar Yayınevi, 2013), 57.

⁴⁴ For detailed information about the meanings of the terms al-lawḥ al-mahfūz and the Qur'ān, the transmission of the words of God to Gabriel, and the transmission of revelation to the Prophet, see Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah*, 5/584; Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīm al-Zurqānī, *Manāhil al-'Irfān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, ed. Fawwāz Aḥmad Zamarlī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1995), 1/37-54; Zeki Duman, *Hakk'tan Halka Kelāmullāh (Levh-i Mahfūz'dan Mushaf-ı Şerife)* (Ankara: Fecr Yayınevi, 2016), 21-147.

Therefore, it is clear that Gabriel's role cannot be rendered dysfunctional by accepting it as an inner spirit.

God could transform the meanings that He placed in the Prophet Muḥammad's heart into words without the intermediary of Gabriel. Therefore, according to the view that is attributed the words of the Qur'ān to the prophet, Gabriel is in the position of a dysfunctional subject or an external entity. In addition, the approach that the Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet gradually over twenty-three years through Gabriel and the view that the meanings of the entire Qur'ānic text were revealed to the heart of the Prophet as a whole are seen as irreconcilable with each other. There is a clear contradiction between the following verses and the perception that the Qur'ān descended to Muḥammad's heart as a whole in terms of its meanings: (i) *"Qul man kāna 'adūwan li-jibrīla fa'innahu nazzalahu 'alā qalbika bi'idhni Allāhi/Say (O Muḥammad): Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel, for indeed he has brought it (this Qur'ān) down to your heart by Allāh's Permission."*⁴⁵ (ii) *"Nazala bihi al-rūḥu al-amīn 'alā qalbika li-takūna min al-mundhirīn bi-lisānin 'arabīyin mubīn/Which the trustworthy Rūḥ [Jibrā'īl (Gabriel)] has brought down. Upon your heart (O Muḥammad) that you may be (one) of the warners. In the plain Arabic language."*⁴⁶ (iii) *"Mā yanṭiqu 'ani al-hawā in huwa illā wahyūn yūḥā 'allamahu shadīdu alquwā/Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only a Revelation revealed. He has been taught (this Qur'ān) by one mighty in power [Gabriel]."*⁴⁷ The approach that the Prophet or Gabriel played a role in the construction and arrangement of the Qur'ān also contradicts with many verses occurred in the integrity of the surahs al-A'rāf (7/203), Yūnus (10/15), al-Naml (27/6), and al-Haqqah (69/44-67).

In the following verses, which contradict the approach that the words of the Qur'ān pertain to the Prophet Muḥammad or Gabriel, it is clearly stated that the Qur'ān is the speech of God: *"Wa'in aḥadun mina al-mushrikīna astajāraka fa'ajirhu ḥattā yasma'a kalāma Allāh/And if anyone of the Mushrikun (polytheists, idolaters) seeks your protection then grant him protection, so that he may hear the word of Allāh (the Qur'ān)."*⁴⁸; *"Yurīdūna an yubaddiluwā kalāma Allah/They want to change Allah's words."*⁴⁹ When the verses in question are examined in detail in terms of the belonging of the words, it is observed that the Qur'ān is not called the word of Muḥammad or the word of Gabriel. Considering all these verses, Gabriel had no other role other than conveying the revelation of the Qur'ān to the Prophet. Similarly, it is understood that the Prophet Muḥammad didn't have any function or power other than memorizing, interpreting, explaining, and practicing the revelation sent down to him.

2.2. The Challenge Phenomenon (al-Taḥaddī) of the Qur'ān

The reason behind the fact the Qur'ān challenged the unbelievers many times during the period of revelation and their failure to respond to this call strengthens the idea that the Qur'ān is the word of God in terms of wording and meaning, rather than the word of Muḥammad or the word of Gabriel. In other words, considering the verses in the surahs al-Baqarah (2/23), Yūnus (10/38),

⁴⁵ al-Baqarah 2/97.

⁴⁶ al-Shu'arā' 26/193-195.

⁴⁷ al-Najm 53/3-5.

⁴⁸ al-Tawbah 9/6.

⁴⁹ al-Fath 48/15.

Hūd (11/13), al-Isrā' (17/88) and al-Qasas (28/49), it is possible to conclude that each surah containing the words of the Qur'ān is miraculous as the minimum amount of invitation to challenge is to produce a single surah. In this case, claiming that the words of the Qur'ānic text are the word of Gabriel or the word of Muḥammad will mean that the words of the Qur'ān are not miraculous. It is known that although expression patterns alter regarding different languages, the meanings don't essentially change. In this context, it can be said that it's more accurate to argue that al-taḥaddī is in the unity of wording and meaning rather than only in meaning or wording. Moreover, as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) pointed out, claiming that the Qur'ānic text is the word of Gabriel in terms of its wording would completely invalidate the miracle of the Qur'ān. According to him, if it's defended that the Qur'ān is the word of Gabriel, the miraculousness of the Qur'ān can only be explained by the theory of turning away/incapacitation (al-ṣarfah). In other words, according to him, saying that the Qur'ān is the word of Gabriel in terms of its wording is not compatible with the miracle and challenge phenomenon of the Qur'ān. al-Rāzī details his approach as follows: "There is a strong problem here, which is that God has sworn that the Qur'ān is the word of Gabriel. So, we must believe Him in this way. Now, even if we do not definitively conclude that it's necessary to interpret these words of the relevant verse in their apparent meaning, there is at least such a possibility. If this is the case, it is proven that this Qur'ān may be the words of Gabriel, but not the words of God. In case it is the word of Gabriel, there is a possibility that Gabriel delivered it to Muḥammad as a means of misleading. In this case, the status of the Qur'ān as a miraculous book ceases. This problem cannot be answered on the grounds that "Gabriel is non-misleading and infallible". Because knowledge of the infallibility of Gabriel derives from the truthfulness of the Prophet. The knowledge that the Prophet is a true person is also based on the fact that the Qur'ān is a miracle. The fact that the Qur'ān is miraculous is based on the infallibility of Gabriel. Thus, a circular argument (al-dawr) occurs, which is also impossible. Those claiming that the Qur'ān is miraculous with only al-ṣarfah have adopted this doctrine to avoid this question, that is, to prevent such a question from being asked. Because, according to the theory of al-ṣarfah, the miraculousness of the Qur'ān isn't in its eloquence (al-ḥikmah wa-al-balāghah); rather, it is about turning away those knowledge/sciences and reasons from the hearts. This is something that no one can do except God Almighty."⁵⁰

There are also those claiming that it is not right to associate the Qur'ān's being the word of Gabriel with its miracle. In this context, as I have stated before, according to al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, whether the Prophet or Gabriel created the words of the Qur'ān does not prevent it from being a miracle.⁵¹ Abū Hāshim al-Jubā'ī (d. 321/933) makes the following evaluation to express its miraculousness in the context of discussions about the belonging of the words of the Qur'ān: "Even if the Qur'ān had been created before the birth of Muḥammad, it would still prove his prophethood. However, in this case, the Qur'ān would have previously indicated that he would be a prophet. Later, when he became a prophet, the Qur'ān personally proved his prophethood. As a matter of fact, we think the same thing about other evidences that prove Muḥammad's prophethood before his birth. Such evidences aren't previously described as a sign or miracle.

⁵⁰ Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 31/73-74.

⁵¹ al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, 16/231.

Because these were expressed as extraordinary events related to the Prophet Muḥammad due to his existence, and this was only possible after he was sent as a prophet.”⁵²

Despite all these points, many verses show the divinity of the words of the Qur'ān. The following verse can be given as an example in this regard: “*Idhā tutlā ‘alayhi āyātunā qāla asāṭīru al-awwālīn/When Our Verses (of the Qur'ān) are recited to him, he says: ‘Tales of the men of old!’*”⁵³ As can be clearly understood from this verse, it isn't the Prophet Muḥammad who produces the words of the Qur'ān, but God. However, it can be said that explaining the relationship between the issue of the word being an ancient attribute or divine act of God, and man's deed and word constitutes the contradictory point of the problem. This problem is discussed in the context of al-hikāya-al-mahkī, as well as in the context of al-qirā'ah-al-maqrū. Contrary to al-Mu'tazilah theologians, Ahl al-Sunnah theologians evaluate the issue of the transmission of the divine word from one place to another in the context of the relationship between al-qirā'ah-al-maqrū, rather than in the context of the discussion of al-hikāya-al-mahkī. In the most general terms, according to them, kalām-al-lafzī, i.e. recitation (al-qirā'ah), is created; the essence of the divine word which is called kalām-al-nafsī, or al-maqrū is considered as the eternal word (qadīm). It is seen that Ahl al-Sunnah theologians, who consider al-qirā'ah as the opposite of al-maqrū, identify al-hikāya with al-mahkī. Because the fact that al-qirā'ah is the opposite of al-maqrū results in al-hikāya and al-mahkī being the same.⁵⁴ Therefore, while the expressions of al-qirā'ah and al-tilāwah are a matter of language and wording, al-maqrū and al-matlūw are a matter of meaning. In other words, al-tilāwah isn't related to the meaning, that is, there is no recitation without the words. In the mentioned verse, God counted the verses among the things that were recited and attributed them to Himself. In this case, it's understood that the things being recited are not only the meanings of the Qur'ān but also its words.

2.3. The Issue of al-Aḥruf al-Sab'ah

Based on the discussion of the seven aḥruf (al-aḥruf al-sab'ah) issue in the history of tafsir, it can be thought that the Prophet Muḥammad played a role in the construction of the words of the Qur'ān. However, when the narrations on this subject are examined holistically, it is seen that there was no direct intervention of the Prophet in the construction of the words of the Qur'ān. I think it is important to relate some of the narrations about the seven aḥruf here. (i) According to what al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875) narrate from Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687-88), the Prophet said: “Jibrīl recited the Qur'ān to me in one ḥarf. Then I requested him [to read it in another ḥarf] and continued asking him to recite in other aḥruf until he ultimately recited it in seven aḥruf.”⁵⁵ (ii) According to the hadith of Ubay b. Ka'b (d. 33/654), included in Muslim's *as-Sahīh*, the Prophet said: “A message was sent to me to recite the Qur'ān in one dialect, and I replied: ‘Make (things) easy for my people.’ It was conveyed to me for the second time that it should be

⁵² al-Qāḍī Abd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, 16/231.

⁵³ al-Qalam 68/15.

⁵⁴ Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Asharī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Aṣriyah, 1990), 2/267, 270-272; Sa'd al-Dīn Mas'ūd al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasaḥiyah*, ed. 'Alī Kamāl (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2014), 71.

⁵⁵ al-Bukhārī, “Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān”, 5; Muslim, “Ṣalāt al-musāfirīn”, 270.

recited in two dialects. I again replied to him: ‘Make affairs easy for my people.’ It was again conveyed to me for the third time to recite in seven dialects.”⁵⁶

It is understood that the Prophet’s authority regarding the seven aḥruf was a temporary concession (al-rukḥṣah) limited to the period of revelation to new Muslims in reading the Qur’ānic text literally while preserving its meanings (al-qirā’ah bi-al-ma’nā). As a matter of fact, according to the view adopted by most of the tafsir, fiqh and hadith scholars such as Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah (d. 198/814), Ibn Wahb (d. 197/813), Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) and al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933) regarding the seven aḥruf/dialects, it is the use of synonymous words interchangeably. Namely, what is meant by seven aḥruf is seven aspects that express a single meaning with various words. In other words, seven dialects are words with different pronunciations but the same meaning (alfāẓun mukhtalifun lafẓuhā muttāfiqun ma’nāhā). For example, the words “أَسْرِعْ”, “عَجِّلْ”, “هَلِّمْ”, “تَعَالِ”, “أَقْبِلْ” meaning “Come!” are suitable for this approach.⁵⁷ In addition, it is known that this concession does not cover all the surahs and verses of the Qur’ān, on the contrary, it is related to the reading of some words in a very small number of verses. Moreover, since these readings did not come from Muḥammad’s mouth, they cannot be attributed to him. Based on this concession, it is clear that it cannot be claimed that the words of the Qur’ān belong entirely to the word of Muḥammad.⁵⁸

2.4. The Historical Reality of al-‘Arḍah/al-Muqābalah

The activity of Jibril coming to Muḥammad every night during Ramaḍān and mutually reading the verses and surahs revealed up to that moment (al-‘arḍah/al-muqābalah)⁵⁹, which is included in the tafsir and hadith texts, also shows that the meanings and wordings of the Qur’ān belong to God. On the other hand, the historical reality of this activity contradicts the claim that the words of the Qur’ān are attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad. This comparative recitation of the Qur’ān, which was done once a year, happened twice in the year of the Prophet Muḥammad’s demise (al-‘arḍah al-akhīrah). Because if the words of the Qur’ān belonged to the Prophet, there would be no need for him to read the passages of the Qur’ān that had been revealed to him every year until his demise with Gabriel during Ramadan. In the final analysis, it is understood that this activity attempts to prevent possible errors. Therefore, the historical fact of this activity is seen as an important evidence in terms of showing the divinity of the words of the Qur’ān.

⁵⁶ Muslim, “Ṣalāt al-musāfirīn”, 270.

⁵⁷ For detailed considerations on the issue of al-aḥruf al-sab’ah, see Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn ‘Aqīlah, *al-Ziyādah wa-al-Iḥsān fī ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān* (al-Shāriqah: Markaz al-Buḥūth wa-al-Dirāsāt, 2006), 1/471-497.

⁵⁸ For the rumors about the al-aḥruf al-sab’ah in the tafsir tradition, see al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, 1/211-227; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 1/306-355; Ibn ‘Aqīlah, *al-Ziyādah wa-al-Iḥsān*, 1/471-497; al-Zurqānī, *Manāhil al-‘Irfān*, 1/130-158.

⁵⁹ al-Bukhārī, “Bad’ al-Waḥy”, 5; “Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān”, 7; “Bad’ al-Khalq”, 6; “al-Manāqib”, 25. Also see Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi’ li-aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 2006), 1/94.

2.5. The Expression of Qawlu Rasūl

It is my considered judgment that it is not an accurate approach to use the expression *qawlu rasūl*⁶⁰ in surahs al-Haqqah (69/40) and at-Takwir (81/19-20) as an evidence and claiming the words of the Qur'an belong to Gabriel or Muḥammad, and their meanings belong to God. First of all, this expression of the Qur'an is used in the context where it is stated that the Qur'anic text isn't the word of a devil, a soothsayer, or a poet, but a word sent down by Gabriel, a respected, valuable, reputable, powerful and reliable messenger sent down from God.⁶¹ Accordingly, the compound *qawlu rasūl* is a kind of *idāfah tablighiyah*, not *idāfah inshā'iyah*. In other words, Gabriel or Muḥammad do not construct the speech by conveying the words of God, of which they are the messengers; they only convey the speech of God to people. However, while doing this, the words of the Qur'an can be metaphorically attributed to them.

The expression of *qawlu rasūl* is important in terms of revealing the origin and genealogy of the Qur'an sent down to the Prophet Muḥammad. This composition is mentioned in two places in the Qur'an. Considering the integrity of the Qur'an, it can be said that the word "rasūl" in the expression *qawlu rasūlin karīm* in the 40th verse of the al-Haqqah means Muḥammad. Similarly, this word in the 19th verse of the at-Takwir means Gabriel. Among the advocates of this most common approach are Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī (d. early 5th/11th cent.), Muḥyī al-Sunnah al-Farrā' al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122), Ibn 'Aṭīyah al-Andalusī (d. 541/1147), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Sharaf al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. Rayyān (d. 770/1368), Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī (1866-1914), Muḥammad Ṭāhir b. 'Ashūr (1879-1973), Elmalılı Muḥammad Hamdi (1878-1942) and Abū al-A'lā al-Mawdūdī (1903-1979).⁶²

⁶⁰ The word "rasūl" in the compound *qawlu rasūl* is etymologically derived from the root r-s-l. The words risālat, rasūl, and mursal, which derive from the same root, mean "to send, emissary, deputation, letter, message, messenger". According to Ibn Manẓūr, the word "rasūl" is etymologically derived from the expression *jā'at al-ibīlu rasalan*, meaning "the camels came in groups, one after the other". Accordingly, the lexical meaning of the word "rasūl" is "the person who conveys the news of the one who sent him, one after another". This root, 11 forms occur 524 times in the Qur'an. When we look at the integrity of the Qur'an, it is seen that the words nabī, rasūl, and mursal are used as equivalents to the word prophet. see Muḥammad b. Mukarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), 11/281-285. Both the terms nabī and rasūl mean "the messenger chosen by God to convey His commands and advice to the addressees" in the Qur'an. See al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *al-Ta'rīfāt*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣiddīq al-Munshāwī (Cairo: Dār al-Faḍīlah, n.d.), 95-96; Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, "Peygamber", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2007), 34/257-262.

⁶¹ In the Qur'an, the compound *qawlu rasūl* is mentioned in two surahs: al-Haqqah (69/40) and at-Takwir (81/19-20). According to Menzioğlu Ahmed Efendi (1888-1953), the reason why Jibril is described as "al-karīm" in the 19th verse of the at-Takwir is because he conveyed the Qur'an, which is the greatest of things such as knowledge, guidance and an act of showing the true path to the servants of Allah. See Menzioğlu Ahmed Efendi, *Sûre Tefsirleri*, ed. Durmuş Arslan (İstanbul: Dila Filmcilik Yayınevi, 2012), 273.

⁶² Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl āy al-Qur'an*, ed. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (al-Riyāḍ: Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub, 2003), 23/242, 24/163; Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt alfāz al-Qur'an*, ed. Şafwān 'Adnān al-Dāwūdī (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2002), 353, 689; Muḥyī al-Sunnah al-Ḥusayn al-Farrā' al-Baghawī, *Ma'ālim al-tanzīl fī tafsīr al-Qur'an*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh al-Nimr vd. (al-Riyāḍ: Dār Ṭaybah lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 1993), 8/214, 349; Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Ibn 'Aṭīyah al-Andalusī, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz fī tafsīr al-Kitāb al-'Azīz*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām 'Abd al-Shāfi Muḥammad (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2001), 5/362, 444; al-Rāzī, *Mafātiḥ al-ghayb*, 30/117; 31/73-74; Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn Ibn Rayyān, *al-Rawḍ al-Rayyān fī as'ilat al-Qur'an*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Muḥammad Naṣṣār al-Salafī (al-Madīnah: Maktabat al-'Ulūm wa-al-Ḥikam, 1994), 2/516-

In compliance with Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) and al-Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār, only Gabriel is meant by the expression of *qawlu rasūl* in both surahs.⁶³ Pursuant to al-Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār, God created the Qur’ān within the structure of Gabriel. In this context, al-Qāḍī answers the question, “How is it possible for *qawlu rasūl* to be expressed as divine speech?” as follows: “Since Gabriel heard the Qur’ān from God, it is possible to belong its words to him. Because he introduced the Qur’ān and it became known thanks to him. Moreover, it is Gabriel himself who reveals the divine word. Since the Qur’ān wouldn’t be known without Gabriel, it is permissible to attribute the divine word to him. There are many similar uses in the Arabic language.”⁶⁴

As specified by Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350), the attribution of the divine word to the messenger in the Qur’ān as *qawlu rasūl* is not because the prophet creates the divine word literally, but because he conveys it to people and they hear the word from his mouth. In other words, the divine speech is attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad as he is the intermediary in the transmission of the divine word.⁶⁵ In this case, there is an *iḍāfah ma’nawīyah* (meaning-dimensional proportion) in the composition of *qawlu rasūl*. The underlying structure (*taqdīr*) of this composition is “*qawlun makhṣūṣun li-rasūl*”, i.e., it is a special word to the prophet.⁶⁶ In this respect, this composition indicates that the Qur’ānic words belong entirely to the messenger.

While al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī explains the term *qawl* in the Qur’ān, he refers to the nature of attributing poems and orations (*khutbat*) to their creators as well as pertaining to their narrators (*ar-ruwāt*) in the context of *qawlu rasūl*. Thus, he implies that attributing the words of the Qur’ān to the Prophet Muḥammad or Gabriel is the same. According to him, while it is correct to say *qawl al-rāwī* for a poem or oration, it is not correct to say the narrator’s own poem or oration. Because poetry is a figure of speech realized in a special style, the person who narrates it does not have a status in terms of belonging.⁶⁷ Therefore, al-Iṣfahānī indicates that the attribution of the divine speech to the Prophet Muḥammad and Gabriel, who are in the position of narrators, is also of this type in terms of narration and transmission. A similar evaluation can be seen in the statements of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and al-Amīr al-Ṣan’ānī (d. 1182/1768). al-Rāzī makes the following evaluation on this issue: “The Qur’ān is the word of God the Almighty, meaning that it is He who revealed it in the preserved tablet and arranged and organized it. The Qur’ān is the word of Gabriel, meaning that he is the one who sent it down from the heavens to the earth. The Qur’ān is the word of

517; Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsīn al-ta’wīl*, ed. Muḥammad Fu’ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabīyah, 1957), 16/5919, 6078; Muḥammad al-Tāhir Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Tahrīr wa-al-tanwīr* (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tūnisīyah, 1984), 29/141, 30/154-155; Muhammed Hamdi Elmalılı, *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili* (İstanbul: Yenda Yayınevi, 2001), 8/245, 447; Abū al-‘Alā al-Mawḍūdī, *Tafhīm al-Qur’ān*, çev. Muhammed Han Kayani - Ali Ünal (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınevi, 2005), 6/451.

⁶³ Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *al-Taḥf al-kabīr*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shaḥātah (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Tārīkh al-‘Arabī, 2002), 4/425, 602; Abū al-Ḥasan Qāḍī al-Quḍāh ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Qāḍī Abd al-Jabbār, *Tanzīh al-Qur’ān ‘an al-maṭā’in* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍah al-Ḥadīthah, n.d.), 432, 452.

⁶⁴ al-Qāḍī Abd al-Jabbār, *Tanzīh al-Qur’ān*, 432, 452.

⁶⁵ Şharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd b. Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad al-Qayṣarī, “Kashf al-ḥijāb ‘an kalām Rabb al-‘arbāb”, *Majmū’ah Rasā’il ma’rifīyah: Rasā’il al-Qayṣarī*, ed. ‘Āṣim b. İbrāhīm al-Kayyālī al-Ḥusaynī (Beirut: Books Publisher, 2015), 25. For detailed considerations regarding Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī’s understanding of the Qur’ānic revelation, see Hasan Şahin, “Davud el-Kayseri’ye Göre Allah’ın Kelamı”, *Temaşa: Erciyes Üniversitesi Felsefe Bölümü Dergisi* 3 (2015), 30-43.

⁶⁶ Necdet Çağıl, *İlahi Kelamın Tabiatı* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınevi, 2003), 71.

⁶⁷ al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt*, 689.

Muḥammad, meaning that he is the one who revealed it to human beings, invited them to believe in it, and made it a proof for his prophecy.”⁶⁸ According to al-Amīr al-Ṣan'ānī, the divine speech can also be metaphorically attributed to proclaimer (muballigh), that is, to Gabriel or the Prophet Muḥammad.⁶⁹

2.6. The Issue of Translating the Qur'ān

It can be thought that in the history of Islamic thought, Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150/767) differentiated the wording and meaning in the context of the Qur'ān into origin/principal (al-aṣl) and branch/secondary (al-far'), gives rise to understand that the belongings of the Qur'anic words are also different. According to him, since the meanings of the Qur'ān are primary/necessary components and its words are secondary/additional features, when the Qur'ān is translated to other languages, “the thing that is read” can be called the Qur'ān. In other words, God's own word is not related to the words of a specific language but has a nature that is entirely related to meaning. For this reason, there should be no difference between expressing the Qur'ān in Arabic or in other languages. Abū Ḥanīfah refers to the Qur'anic quotations made by God in the Qur'ān to justify this view. According to Abū Ḥanīfah, since the meanings of the Qur'ān are essential, God translated everything He quoted, including the dialogues and prayers of other prophets with their tribes, into Arabic language. Therefore, it is valid to translate the words of the Qur'ān outside the Arabic language, just as God excerpted the expressions of the previous ummahs into Arabic.⁷⁰ Accordingly, while Abū Ḥanīfah allowed the translation of the Qur'ān into another language other than Arabic recitation, such as Persian, during the prayer, he ruled that the Qur'ān is the word of God, not in terms of its words, but in the meanings that the words indicate.⁷¹

Shams al-a'imma al-Sarakhsī (d. 483/1090), in his voluminous work called *al-Mabsūṭ*, excerpts from Abū Ḥanīfah about whether reciting passages from the Torah, the Bible or the Psalms during ṣalāh corrupts the validity of it. According to Abū Ḥanīfah, since the Qur'ān is found in previous holy books in terms of meaning, reciting the passages that are compatible with it in ṣalāh does not make the prayer invalid. However, when passages from previous books are read during the ṣalāh, and the recited passages are from passages that contradict the Qur'ān, the prayer will not be valid. Since it is permissible to read the Qur'ān in Persian or its translation from any other language, there should be no vengeance in reading the Syriac/Aramaic or Hebrew meanings of passages compatible with the Qur'ān in prayer. In this context, according to Abū Ḥanīfah, the miraculousness of the Qur'ān is related to the meaning, not to the arrangement or wording. In

⁶⁸ al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 30/117.

⁶⁹ Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Amīr al-Ṣan'ānī, *al-Īdāḥ wa-al-bayān fī taḥqīq 'ibārāt qaṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhāb Luṭf al-Daylamī (al-Ṣan'ā: Maktabat al-Irshād, 1992), 31-33. For detailed considerations on this treatise, see Zakir Demir, “Emīr es-San'ānī'nin ilāhī iktibāsıların Māhiyetine Dair el-İzāh ve'l-beyān fī tahkīki 'ibārāti kasası'l-Kur'ān İsimli Risālesi ve Ele Aldığı Konuların Kiriği”, *Bilimname* 50/2 (2023), 207-239.

⁷⁰ Sirāj al-Dīn Abī Ḥafṣ 'Umar b. 'Alī Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *al-Tawḍīḥ li-sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Nawādir, 2008), 33/543-544.

⁷¹ 'Alā' al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. Mas'ūd b. Aḥmad al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i' fī tartīb al-sharā'i'* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2003), 1/527-528.

compliance with his approach, the challenge of the Qur'ān is not with the wording of the text but with its meaning.⁷²

Pursuant to Burhān al-Dīn al-Marghīnānī (d. 593/1197) and Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī (d. 855/1451), Abū Ḥanīfah's main basis on this issue are the following two verses: (i) "*Wa'innahu lafi zuburi al-awwalīn/And verily, it (the Qur'ān, and its revelation to the Prophet Muḥammad) is (announced) in the Scriptures [i.e. the Torah and the Gospel] of former people*"⁷³ (ii) "*Inna hadhā lafi al-ṣṣuḥufi al-ūlā ṣuḥufi Ibrāhīma wa-Mūsā/Verily! This is in the former Scriptures, the Scriptures of Abraham and Moses.*"⁷⁴ In the verses in question, it is stated that some or most of the Qur'ān existed in previous books. It is known to everyone that the Qur'ān does not exist in Arabic words in the previous pages. Although the language of the Qur'ān is Arabic, the language of the books revealed to previous generations is not Arabic. According to this proposition put forward by Abū Ḥanīfah, although the expressions in the books of the past prophets are not in Arabic, they are called "Qur'ān" in the verses in question. In other words, the Torah, which was revealed to Moses, is called the Qur'ān, even though it is not Arabic in terms of its wording. Similarly, the Bible sent down to Jesus and the Psalms sent down to David are called the Qur'ān, even though they are not in Arabic. This means that the Qur'ān is the meaning expressed by the words rather than its words themselves. For this reason, when a person does not know anything about the Qur'ān and can't read it, he can read it in his native language like Persian. Because, as is known, meanings do not change much with the change of languages.⁷⁵ According to this approach attributed to Abū Ḥanīfah, the meanings put into the words between the two covers, starting with al-Fātiḥah and ending with the al-Nās, are called Qur'ān. Therefore, the substance called Qur'ān is not the words or the verses themselves, but its meanings.

I have previously stated that Abū Ḥanīfah deduced with the following two verses in his fatwa: "*Wa'innahu lafi zuburi al-awwalīn/And verily, it (the Qur'ān, and its revelation to the Prophet Muḥammad) is (announced) in the Scriptures [i.e. the Torah and the Gospel] of former people*"⁷⁶ "*Inna hadhā lafi al-ṣṣuḥufi al-ūlā ṣuḥufi Ibrāhīma wa-Mūsā/Verily! This is in the former Scriptures, the Scriptures of Abraham and Moses.*"⁷⁷ In summary, according to his fatwa, the main principles of the Qur'ān are also found in the holy books that were revealed before it. However, in my conviction, it is not considered an accurate approach to use the mentioned verses as a basis and claim that the revelation of the Qur'ān was sent down to the Prophet in terms of meaning, and he put the revelation into his own words/patterns. Just as the Qur'ān invites everyone to produce a book like itself, it also challenges with the Prophet Muḥammad since he is a human being. Considering the principle of respecting the integrity of the Qur'ān⁷⁸, it is seen that there are didactic and instructive styles indicating

⁷² Shams al-a'immah Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī, *al-Mabsūṭ* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1989), 1/37, 234.

⁷³ al-Shu'arā' 26/196.

⁷⁴ al-A'la 87/18-19.

⁷⁵ Burhān al-Dīn al-Marghīnānī, *al-Hidāyah sharḥ bidāyat al-mubtadī*, ed. Na'im Ashraf Nūr Aḥmad (Karachi: Idārat al-Qur'ān wa-al-'Ulūm al-Islāmiyah, 1997), 1/312-313; Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, *Umdat al-Qārī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Maḥmūd 'Umar (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2001), 6/29.

⁷⁶ al-Shu'arā' 26/196.

⁷⁷ al-A'la 87/18-19.

⁷⁸ For considerations regarding understanding the Qur'ān in its entirety, see Halis Albayrak, *Kur'ān'ın Bütünlüğü Üzerine: Kur'ān'ın Kur'an'la Tefsiri* (İstanbul: Şûle Yayınları, 2011), 43-92.

transfer, distance, inferiority, and superiority in many passages, such as “Anzala allahu ‘alayka al-kitāba wa al-ḥikmata wa ‘allamaka mā lam takun ta‘lam/Allah has sent down to you the Qur’ān, and al-Hikmah (knowledge of legal and illegal things), and taught you that which you knew not.”, “Yā’ayyuhā al-rasūlu/O Messenger”, “Yā’ayyuhā al-nabīyu/O Prophet!”, “Qul mā yakūnu lī an ubaddilahu min tilqā’i nafsi/Say (O Muḥammad): ‘It is not for me to change it on my own accord’”, “Wakadhalika anzalnā ilayka al-kitāba/And thus We have sent down the Book (Qur’ān) to you (O Muḥammad)”.⁷⁹ In this context, the following expressions are also within the scope of this style: “We reveal to you...”, “we sent you...”, “Declare this...”, “Read this...”, “Say...”, “Do not do this...”, “They will ask you...”, “Answer them...” All these expressions and styles of expression show that the Prophet Muḥammad had no influence on the formation of Qur’anic words and had no function beyond a human being.

Although Abū Ḥanīfah does not make reference in his fatwā to neither the Prophet nor Gabriel played a role in the construction of the words of the Qur’ān, his separation of wording and meaning into al-aṣl and al-far‘, may have led to different possibilities regarding the belonging of the Qur’anic words. However, it appears that such a distinction is not a widely accepted understanding in Islamic thought. Therefore, there are many scholars emphasizing that wording and meaning should be identified and making the subject of this duo inseparable from each other. In this context, the names of Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymīyah (d. 728/1328) and Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Zurqānī (d. 1367/1948) can be given as examples. It is understood that Ibn Taymīyah identified the wording with the meaning while defining the *kalām Allāh*, and in this context, he criticized the views that the essence of the Qur’ān consists only of meaning. His statements on this subject are as follows: “All Muslims arrive at a consensus that the Qur’ān is the word of God. The expression *kalām Allāh* covers not only the meaning of the Qur’ān but also its wording. The meaning of the Qur’ān cannot be attributed to God and its wording cannot be pertained to other beings. Since it is established that the *kalām* revealed in Arabic belongs to God, it cannot be said that Arabic verse is created. In short, the word of God is not created in any way. The term Qur’ān is a conception that covers both wording and meaning. Both the words and the entire meaning of the Qur’ān are the word of God, and according to the consensus of Muslims, it does not belong to anyone other than God. It is blasphemy to claim that the Qur’ān is the word of Gabriel, or Muḥammad, or any other created being. No one among the Muslim scholars has put forward such a claim. The Prophet conveyed both the wording and the meaning of the Qur’ān and not only the meaning of it revealed to him.”⁸⁰

Conforming to al-Zurqānī, the Qur’ān, which Gabriel sent down to the Prophet, starting with al-Fātiḥah and ending with the al-Nās, and consisting of miraculous words, is only the word of God. According to him, neither Gabriel nor the Prophet has a role in the construction and arrangement of these words. Pursuant to him, both ideas, i.e., the view claiming Gabriel revealed the meanings of the Qur’ān to the Prophet Muḥammad and he expressed them in the Arabic language and view putting forward the meanings of the Qur’ān belong to God and its words appertain to Gabriel are

⁷⁹ al-Nisā’ 4/113; al-Mā’idah 5/67; al-Anfāl 8/64; Yūnus 10/15; al-‘Ankabūt 29/47.

⁸⁰ Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymīyah, *Majmū’ Fatāwā*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim (al-Madinah: Mujamma’u al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibā’at al-Muṣṣḥaf al-Sharif, 2004), 6/534; 12/535-538, 555-556.

contrary to the Qur'ān, aḥādīth ṣaḥīḥ and ijtimā'. His statements on this subject are as follows: "I believe that these views were inserted into the books of Muslims by fraud. How can the Qur'ān then be miraculous when the words of the Qur'ān belonged to the Prophet or Gabriel? How can it be correct to attribute Qur'ān to God when its words do not belong to Him?"⁸¹ Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh Draz (1894-1958) and Yusuf Ziyaeddin Ersal (1879-1961) also have the same opinion as al-Zurqānī regarding accepting both wording and meaning as two pillars of the nature of the Qur'ān and make similar evaluations on this issue.⁸²

Conclusion

In the tradition of Islamic science and thought, the dominant and preferred approach is that the Qur'ānic text as a whole, with its wording and meaning, belongs to God. However, it is observed that there are some explanations contrary to this view in the statements of classical period scholars such as Sufyān al-Thawrī, al-Juwaynī, al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Ghazālī and Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī, and modern period figures such as Fazlur Rahman and Süleyman Ateş. There is no disagreement among scholars that the Qur'ān belongs to God in terms of its meaning. The main disagreement is whether the words of the Qur'ān pertain to God, Gabriel, or Muḥammad. I am inclined to think, the words of the Qur'ān belong to God, not in terms of verses or verse fragments, but as the whole text that came out of Muḥammad's mouth. The Qur'ānic text, which is collected between two covers and called al-Muḥḥaf (Codex), that is, turned into a book, must belong to God in terms of both wording and meaning, as it is recorded on the pages as it was both heard and written by the Prophet Muḥammad. The paradigm that the meanings of the Qur'ānic text belong to God and the words belong to the Prophet or Gabriel does not comply with the integrity of the Qur'ān, the material of exegesis especially various tafsir rumors (riwâyat). In fact, it seems that building an understanding of revelation based on the distinction between wording and meaning was not a fundamental issue at the beginning of the history of Islamic science and thought.

In the final analysis, it can be said that the fact that the Holy Qur'ān is the divine word in terms of wording and meaning is one of its most basic characteristics and pillars. Therefore, wording and meaning are indispensable for each other. In other words, neither the wording nor the meaning has an independent value and importance. On the other hand, it is possible to claim that the Qur'ān, with its integrity of wording and meaning, is the word of God, as it is in the form that God has revealed in the preserved tablet. It can be said that the Qur'ān is the word of Gabriel in a figurative sense in that it descends from the preserved tablet to the heavens and from the heavens to the earth. It is also possible to argue that the Qur'ān is the word of Muḥammad in a figurative sense, as it conveys the message to humanity and recites it to them.

⁸¹ al-Zurqānī, *Manāhil al-'Irfān*, 1/43-44.

⁸² Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh Draz, *al-Naba' al-'azīm nazarāt jadīdah fī al-Qur'ān* (Dawḥa: Dār al-Saqāfah, 1405), 19-23; Mustafa Bektaşoğlu, *Düzceli Âlim Yusuf Ziyaeddin Ersal: Hayatı Ve Eserleri* (Ankara: İmaj A.Ş., 2005), 93-94.

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