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**CREATION IN *AL-TAFSĪR AL-KABĪR* OF FAKHR AL-DĪN
AL-RĀZĪ**

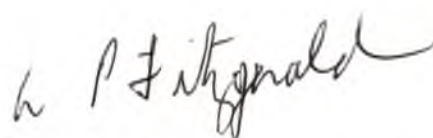
L P FITZGERALD

**A Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the
Australian National University**

April 1992

DECLARATION

Except where otherwise indicated, this Thesis is my own work

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L P Fitzgerald". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally on the page.

L P Fitzgerald

April 1992

**I dedicate this Thesis to my family and to my brothers and sisters in
the Dominican Order**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks, in the first place, must go to Professor A.H. Johns, a personal friend of many years, who went far beyond the call of a Supervisor's duty in frequent, almost daily, contact with a struggling student, both of Arabic and of Rāzī. I could not have been more fortunate than to have had as a colleague Dr. Tony Street, who himself recently trod the Rāzī path to the doctorate here at the ANU. He helped me enormously with technical aspects of Arabic, the mentality of Rāzī and the philosophical scene in medieval Islam. His thesis (see Bibliography) has been a constant companion since it gained him the *Laurea* and has enabled me to gauge the acceptable level of doctoral research in this field. He and fellow-student, Tim Drury, gave me invaluable help and much time as I struggled with the mysteries of word-processing. Mr Robert Barnes (Classics, The Faculties) has been a reader of this Thesis. I appreciated his quietly incisive comments and friendly encouragement. I was fortunate, also, to have had profitable sessions with Richard Frank during his stay at the ANU. He alerted me to some of the major potential pitfalls in a study of this kind.

It was a great privilege to spend five months in 1986 at the Dominican Institute in Cairo, in daily translating sessions with Father Georges Anawati. Cairo was a unique, if draining, experience, but nothing could match the hospitality and friendliness of my fellow-Dominicans there. Other confrères who gave me valuable assistance were Fr. J. Jomier O.P. (Toulouse) and Fr. G. Monnot O.P. (Paris).

I thank the Dominican community and the residents of John XXIII College at the ANU, where I spent several happy years.

In a particular way, I am deeply grateful to three Dominican Provincials, Fathers Peter Galvin, Nicholas Punch and David Halstead, who successively supported this project.

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The specific intention of this thesis is to study *The Great Commentary, Maḥāṭiḥ al-Ghayb (The Keys to the Unseen)*, of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī to find out what he has to say about the creation of the universe. This commentary on the *Qur'ān* cannot be taken in isolation from his other writings, but the spotlight will be explicitly on the *Tafsīr*. Thus, my purpose is not to examine in depth all Rāzī's pertinent works; nor to study the influences that contributed to his own intellectual and spiritual formation and the influence that he, in turn, exerted on others; nor yet, finally, to present a general picture of Muslim creation theology in the medieval period. It is about the *Tafsīr*: to see a) how he "takes off", so to speak, from the creation texts of the *Qur'ān*, verse by verse; and b) what his preoccupations and emphases are in this particular work.

The character of the thesis, then, is not so much analytical and philosophical as textual and descriptive. I would hope that, if I do make some contribution to Rāzī studies, it is in the close scrutiny of his creation vocabulary and in the substantial body of translation, not hitherto available in any degree to an English readership. I have also provided in an Appendix the first *Tafsīr-Qur'ān* Concordance.

In rendering pericopes of the *Qur'ān* into English, I have kept my eye on standard English translations or "interpretations", such as Sale, Arberry, Pickthall, Dawood and M. Asad, together with Blachère's French and Paret's German versions. However, I take full responsibility for the final form in which the pericopes appear. References are given according to the traditional arrangement in the Royal (Khedival) edition of Cairo.

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